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CALIFURNIAN

Magazine of the California History Center Foundation/De Anza College—
A Foundation Supporting the Study and Preservation of State and Regional History

The Environmental Movement

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

From Ordinary to Extraordinary



Tom Izu

There are many lessons one can learn from my father's story. But for me, one of the most important lessons has always been that extraordinary people are simply ordinary people, like my father, who rose to the challenge in an extraordinary crisis.

—John Mandelbaum, son of a Holocaust survivor

The above quote comes from the book *Surviving Hitler* (Andrea Warren, Scholastic Inc., 2001). I was introduced to this book about the experiences of a Holocaust survivor by my son, a fourth grader and avid

history fanatic, who liked it because "it's about a real person—an ordinary kid—who had to learn how to be extra brave and strong in order to survive." This biography follows a 14-year-old Polish boy through his harrowing experiences as a prisoner in one of the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. The story ends with his release and start of a new life in the U.S. The quote, along with all of the current talk of the "greatest generation" and comparisons between their World War II exploits and those now involved in the so called "war on terrorism," made me think of my own parents' strength in facing their own extraordinary crisis.

I think of their experiences growing up during the depression, and the persecution they faced as Japanese Americans—their wartime imprisonment and loss of their families' homes and livelihoods, and my father's service in the famed segregated 442 combat regiment in Italy. How did they endure all of this? They were pretty ordinary people with strengths and weaknesses common to most others. But they did extraordinary things to survive and to take care of their family. And in the latter part of their lives, with much dedication, they supported the movement to win reparations for the wartime abrogation of their civil liberties, writing and collecting letters and petitions and attending countless events their activist son had helped to organize. They did this because they felt they owed it to all who suffered and to "make sure it didn't happen to anyone else."

In regard to their membership in the "greatest generation," they would be the last to call what they did at anytime in their lives as heroic. They were modest, unassuming, and content to live quiet lives. But they possessed an inner strength that allowed them to do whatever they thought needed to be done to protect their family and make things right for others. As a team, they complemented each other perfectly, my mother, always critical, never satisfied to accept what was, and my father,

doggedly optimistic to the end. As proud as I am of my parents' accomplishments, I believe their strength is not unique, but can be found in all of us. But I do believe this inner strength needs a sense of social connection and history in order to flourish and push people to do extraordinary feats of activism.

Activism starts with the most basic concerns and responses grounded in ordinary, day-to-day life and springs from people of all ages and backgrounds taking on issues that confront all of us. Contrary to the stereotypical image of activists as "hippies," immature idealists, and outcasts of society, they step forward from many walks of life. The founders of the California History Center Foundation were activists of sorts. Concerned with the future promotion of local historical study and certain that such an endeavor is key to the functioning of a democratic society they helped to found an organization dedicated to "hands-on" education and a "case-study" method that enveloped learners in actual community and civic issues.

The center will place the spotlight on activism this quarter. Our feature article covers the beginnings of the modern environmental movement and was written by a member of De Anza's History Department, Ben Kline. And, beginning this month, we open an exhibit entitled, "The Whole World's Watching: Peace and Social Justice Movements of the 1960s and 1970s." Consisting of photographs taken by numerous photojournalists and participants in social justice causes, this exhibit was produced by the Berkeley Arts Center. Lastly, our annual California Studies Conference, entitled "Change by Design or Default: Silicon Valley Activism in the 21st Century," will feature the makers of and participants in the documentary film "The Secrets of Silicon Valley."

After the tragedy of September 11th and the launching of the "war on terrorism," we are once again entering a period of turmoil and uncertainty. Now more than ever, it is essential we remain committed to revealing this past that helps instruct and inspire us to uphold our democratic ideals. And, we must all be ready to make that leap from ordinary to extraordinary.



Please keep your eyes peeled for notices to be sent regarding events in celebration of *Milestones: A History of Mountain View* by Mary Jo Ignoffo. Also, be sure to check your mail for the invitation to our opening reception for "The Whole World's Watching," and look for the registration form and flyer for our annual California Studies Conference on May 16.

-Tom Izu, Director

COVER: A silhouetted Ansel Adams at Yosemite. See feature article on page 5.

CALENDAR

April 8	Spring Quarter Begins	May 25	Early Japanese and Chinese Communities in San Jose Field Trip	
April 8– June 10	Exhibit—"The Whole World's Watching: Peace and Social Justice Movements of the 1960s and 1970s"	June 1	Mountain View Celebrates its Centennial Field Trip	
April 27	History of Northern California to 1850 Field Trip	June 8 and 15	Four in a Landscape: Vallejo, Haraszthy, London and Burbank in Sonoma County Field Trip	
May 4 May 11	Early Japanese and Chinese Communities in San Jose Field Trip History of Northern California to 1850	June 20 End of the Year Barbecue at CHC (tentative)		
May 11	Field Trip	June 28	Spring Quarter Ends	
May 16	CHC's 6th Annual California Studies Conference—"Change by Design or Default:			

Back Issues of CHC Publications Available

For over 25 years the California History Center Foundation's publication program has been centered around books

Celebrating a Collection: The Work of Dorothea Lange, Documentary			Passing Farms, Enduring Values		Janet L.K. Bryniolfsson	\$2.50 softco	
			\$29.95 hardcover	\$19.95 softcover	N. Kathleen Peregrin and		
	By Cora Baggerly Older	\$2.50 softcover	By Marjorie Pierce		Written and Edited by Elizabe	th Daniels Sore	
Diaries of Cora Baggerly Older		Martin Murphy Family Saga		San Francisco: Spirit of the City			
					nd available for purchase:		
	have been used as texts	s in California h	istory classes. Many	of the early volumes	are no longer in print bu	it are avail-	
	by professional historians as well as gifted avocational writers. Three have won national book awards and severa						
					lumes. The books have b		

Photographer By Yvonne Jacobson By Oakland Museum

\$9.95 softcover

Gilroy's Old City Hall

Silicon Valley Activism in the 21st Century"

\$50.00 hardcover, signed and numbered

\$29.95 softcover

By Angela Woollacott, and Carroll Pursell Pomo, Dawn of Song with Chuck Myer \$14.95 softcover Lois Prante Stevens and Jewell Malm Newburn

\$15.95 softcover Gold Rush Politics: California's First Legislature **Rise of Silicon Valley**

By James C. Williams By Mary Jo Ignoffo \$5.50 softcover \$5.00 softcover Japanese Legacy Santa Clara Saga

By Austen Warburton and Edited by Mary Jo By Timothy J. Lukes and Gary Y. Okihiro \$14.95 softcover \$29.95 hardcover \$19.95 softcover Ignoffo

Like Modern Edens: Winegrowing in Saratoga Stereopticon Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz By Willys Peck \$8.50 softcover Mountains, 1798-1981

Scow Schooners of San Francisco Bay By Charles L. Sullivan By Roger Olmsted and Edited by \$11.00 hardcover \$8.98 softcover Nancy Olmsted \$14.95 softcover

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Sunnyvale: From the City of Destiny to the Heart of Silicon Valley By Mary Jo Ignoffo \$14.95 softcover

World of Fort Ross, A Picture Book By David W. Rickman \$5.50 softcover

CHC'S NEXT PUBLICATION **COMING SOON!**

Milestones: A History of Mountain View, California By Mary Jo Ignoffo



20% discount on publications available to CHC members.

Shipping and handling fees are \$5 for one publication and \$1 for each additional publication ordered.

Ordering directly from CHC via phone or email is just as fast as ordering through other non-CHC internet sites. You can order CHC publications by calling 408-864-8712 or via email at info@calhistory.org. More detailed descriptions of each publication and the ability to order CHC publications online will soon be added to CHC's website (www.calhistory.org.)

EDUCATION

State and Regional History

The following courses will be offered Spring Quarter through the California History Center. Please see the California History Center class listings section of the De Anza College Spring Schedule of Classes for detailed information. For additional course information, call the center at (408) 864-8712. And don't forget, as a benefit of being a history center member, you can register for history center classes (CHC classes only, not other De Anza classes) at the Trianon building.

EARLY JAPANESE AND CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN SAN JOSÉ

Betty Hirsch

The Santa Clara Valley was developed in large part by Chinese and Japanese agricultural workers who tilled the soil, planted orchards and harvested fruit. They were the backbone of San Jose's first industry. The Chinese came in the early 1850s and the Japanese in the 1890s. In the face of anti-Chinese violence and segregation in every area of American society, many Chinatowns developed during the 19th and 20th centuries. These were sanctuaries offering physical and emotional protection for Chinese workers and the few Chinese families, a cultural home base in a hostile world. By the late 1860s the Chinese had established a large community in San Jose with shops, restaurants and recreational pursuits for single men. A fire swept through this Chinatown, located at Market and San Antonio streets, in January 1887. The refugees relocated on Vine Street beside the Guadalupe River. John Heinlen, a wealthy San Jose rancher/businessman, built a new Chinatown after the old one burned, bounded by 5th, 7th, Taylor and Jackson streets and corresponding roughly to the site of today's Japantown. He signed contracts with 11 Chinese merchants, leasing his land and buildings to them. Theodore Lenzen, San Jose's preeminent architect, designed the complex. Known as Heinlenville, it was a brightly decorated quarter with kites flying above the rooftops and colorful lanterns in the doorways. Heinlenville flourished in the 1890s and early 1900s, serving all the needs of the community. When the Japanese came to San Jose, they settled near Chinatown. In 1942 Japantown was evacuated and the families were sent to internment camps. They returned in 1946 and basically had to start over. The class will explore the stories of these indomitable people and tour the areas discussed.

Lectures: Thursdays, April 18, May 16. **Field trips:** Saturdays, May 4 and May 25.

FOUR IN A LANDSCAPE: VALLEJO, HARASZTHY, LONDON AND BURBANK IN SONOMA COUNTY

Chatham Forbes Sr.

United in their attachment to the Sonoma region and its productive soil and climate, these four historical figures played pivotal roles in the development of their adopted home. By visiting their homes and worksites, and by tracing their lives and relationships,

a fuller comprehension will be gained of both the history and special character of Sonoma County.

Lectures: Thursdays, May 23 and June 13. **Field trips:** Saturdays, June 8 and June 15.

HISTORY OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TO 1850

Chatham Forbes Sr.

The strategic location and rich natural endowment of the region north of the Tehachapi Mountains gave it a vital role in the growth and development of California. Accessibility to resources by sea and inland routes attracted increasing numbers of immigrants. The discovery of gold in 1848 brought a flood of newcomers and radical change to every sector of society.

Lectures: Thursdays, April 25 and May 9. **Field trips:** Saturdays, April 27 and May 11.

MOUNTAIN VIEW CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL

Betty Hirsch

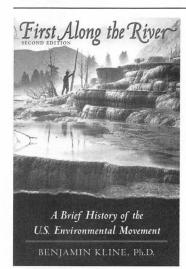
The City of Mountain View received its charter in the year 1902 and celebrates its Centennial this year. The land on which Mountain View has developed was once home to Ohlone Indians who relied on the natural water and food sources of an abundant landscape. Today it is recognized as part of Silicon Valley. Some of its past citizens have included Lope Inigo, the first Native American to receive a land grant, Rancho Posolmi; Dona Maria Trinidad Peralta de Castro, daughter of Luis Peralta of San Jose, and wife to Mariano Castro, patent holder of the Rancho Pastoria de las Borregas and the man for whom Castro Street was named; Chinese merchant Yuen Lung, the entrepreneur who found work for many of his fellow Chinese people; newspaperman P. Milton "Pop" Smith, the original city historian. Each life began entrenched in a particular cultural tradition and witnessed sweeping social and economic changes. Their stories, along with many others, combine to tell the larger story of Mountain View, of evolutions and transitions such as rail track cut through ranchos, hangers built on dairy farms, and freeways slicing through orchards. This class will explore these evolutions and patterns of transitions, take tours and take part in some Centennial celebrations.

Lectures: Thursday, May 30. **Field trip:** Saturday, June 1.

FEATURE

The 1940s through the 1960s: Prelude to the Green Decade

By Benjamin Kline



The following is excerpted from First Along the River:
A Brief History of the U.S.
Environmental Movement—
a book by De Anza College instructor Benjamin Kline. The second edition was published in 2000 by Acada Books of San Francisco.

The two decades after World War II were years of confusion and inconsistent activity for conservationists. Preoccupied by the traumas of "hot" and "cold" wars, public

officials often lacked the drive of either Theodore or Franklin Roosevelt, or the determination of Gifford Pinchot for conservation. As victors in the world conflict, Americans thought they deserved improved living standards and material comforts. Conservationists struggled as the nation focused on these expectations rather than on environmental concerns. The public at large did not begin to comprehend the environmental damage caused by two hundred years of uncontrolled industrial expansion until the mid-1960s. At that point, historian Roderick Nash explains, Americans focused their attention on environmental issues, but with different priorities, as the proper-use concepts of the past were being replaced with a more altruistic view of nature.

By the 1960s this concept challenged utilitarianism as the central purpose of conservation. Continued improvements in technology, for one thing, eased fears of overpopulation and resource exhaustion. More importantly, many Americans were coming to realize that an environment conducive to survival—even to affluence—was not enough. They demanded that the land had to do more than just keep people alive.¹

Environmental Costs of Scientific Progress in the 1940s

Immediately following World War II, America entered a new age of scientific and technological achievements that made it the most powerful nation in the world. As the first atomic bomb exploded in the New Mexico desert on July 16, 1945, physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer recalled the words of Krishna from the *Bhagavad Gita*, "I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." Humanity had gained not only the ability to destroy all life on earth but also the confidence that science could control nature.

As historian Donald Worster observes,

The Age of Ecology began on the desert outside Alamogordo, New Mexico on July 16, 1945, with a dazzling fireball of lights and a swelling mushroom cloud of radioactive gases. One kind of fallout from the atomic bomb was the beginnings of widespread, popular ecological concern around the globe. It began, appropriately, in the United States, where the nuclear era was launched.³

Driven by the power to command nature, some scientists, government officials, and social leaders started to replace the early-nineteenth-century myth of superabundance with the myth of scientific supremacy, which rationalized that science would fix everything...tomorrow. Corporate America, land developers, and other users of natural resources eagerly justified short-term gains by minimizing the long-term losses. Because science could and would solve any future problems, "Present the repair bill to the next generation" became the unspoken slogan of those who exploited nature for short-term gains.

Despite America's confidence in the benefits of technology and science, alarming evidence soon appeared that these innovations came with a high price. In 1940, 130 million Americans had a spacious National Park system of 22 million acres; twenty years later, a more mobile population of 183 million inherited an overcrowded system that had been enlarged by only a few acres. Of 21,000 miles of ocean shoreline in the contiguous forty-eight states, only 7 percent was reserved for public recreation. In addition, the most eroded lands in the United States—the overused grasslands of the western public domain—

About the Author

Benjamin Kline, who teaches world history at De Anza College, is a member of both the Social Science and Intercultural/International Studies divisions of the campus. In addition to his book *First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement* (excerpted here), Kline also is the author of *Genesis of Apartheid: British African Policy in the Colony of Natal, 1845-93* and numerous articles. His pri-



Benjamin Kline

mary fields of interest are the British Empire, modern Europe, Ireland and Africa. A native of San José, he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from San José State University and his Ph.D. degree from University College in Cork, Ireland.

John Muir

were not restored to full fertility despite the new American awareness of the importance of soil conservation.⁴ In October 1947 a deadly smog settled over the small steel-mill town of Donora, Pennsylvania, in the Monongahela River Valley. Before winds swept away the acrid air inversion, twenty people died and some six thousand fell ill.

Chemicals such as DDT, which reduce insect damage to agriculture, were hailed as miracles of modern science when they first became available in the post-World War II era. Their use spread rapidly. In 1947 the United States produced 124,259,000 pounds of chemical pesticides. Few people questioned the use of such deadly chemicals or their effect on the environment, and by 1960 the country was producing 637,666,000 pounds of DDT potent pesticides.

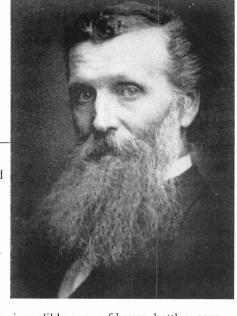
By 1949 air pollution damaged almost half a million dollars in crops in Los Angeles County. Leafy greens, such as lettuce and spinach, were most seriously affected. In 1959 industrial, private, and other sources of pollution emitted 24.9 million tons of soot into the air throughout the nation. In 1961 the estimate of crops lost in California to air pollution was \$8 million.⁵

The Conservative 1950s

With the Cold War, McCarthyism, and the civil rights movement shaking the comfortable stability of the "good life" that Americans craved in the 1950s, conservation hardly made a ripple on public or political agendas. There were exceptions. In 1956 the Sierra Club, with the Wilderness Society and other groups, blocked the construction of the Echo Park Dam in Dinosaur National Monument on the Utah-Colorado border. Still, these types of victories were uncommon. In fact, President Dwight Eisenhower's secretary of the interior, Douglas McKay, tried but failed to block public power projects, turn energy resources over to the private sector, abolish a number of federal Fish and Wildlife Service areas, and transfer Nevada's big Desert Game Reserve to the state's fish and game department. McKay's constant efforts to get rid of federal property earned him the nickname "Giveaway McKay." But McKay was only one manifestation of the homage most Americans of that era were paying to the gods of unrestrained economic growth.6

During the postwar era of the 1950s and 1960s, Americans often took their parks and wilderness for granted. Irresponsible management and overuse steadily devastated the remaining unprotected wilderness areas. Americans became accustomed to outdoor recreation—hunting, fishing, hiking, and swimming—as a way of life and found the public areas increasingly overcrowded each year. As cities, and the population in general, continued to grow, city and state governments had little time to devise plans

for the urban development. Litter started to accumulate as people carelessly dumped their garbage wherever they liked. Each year 5 million battered autos were dragged into junkyards.



Industries produced an incredible array of boxes, bottles, cans, gadgets, and a thousand varieties of paper products. Litter threatened to become a permanent part of the landscape.⁷

In response, the conservation movement sought to associate the quality of the environment with human needs. Books such as William Vogt's Road to Survival (1948) and Fairfield Osborn's Our Plundered Planet (1948) and The Limits of the Earth (1953) grimly raised the old Malthusian specter that population was surpassing the world's productive ability. These writers contended that birth control, the prevention of needless waste, and new processes to provide food were essential for the survival of the human race. From this perspective, conservation was the way to maintain the physical basis of life. Osborn's Our Plundered Planet roused strong alarms because it warned that the leaps in food production from new scientific methods could not continue indefinitely. This was one of the first manifestations of the neo-Malthusian theory, which states that the natural resources humans need for survival cannot last forever because of society's penchant for over-consumption. This was a new, and unappealing, concept for Americans.8

Rather than investigate the environmental predicament of the 1950s and early 1960s, many Americans preferred to contemplate the romanticized naturalists of the past. John Muir's popularity surged, though academics continued to ignore him, in part because his family locked away his papers and personal records. The revival was spurred along by several publishing events: a biography of Muir won a Pulitzer Prize in 1945; a collection of nature photographs by Ansel Adams paired with Muir's quotations was published in 1948; and an anthology of Muir's essays was put out in 1954. In 1964, the fiftieth anniversary of Muir's death, the government issued a commemorative stamp and renamed a half million acres in the Sierra Mountains the John Muir Wilderness Area. The following year, Time commented that "the real father of conservation is considered to be John Muir, a California naturalist." (Several additional biographies appeared in the 1980s shortly after the Muir archives were opened to researchers.)9

As Muir's popularity grew, a new generation was about to

shatter the complacency of the American conservation movement. Marine biologist Rachel Carson demonstrated an uncanny ability to convey the technical and complex problems of environmental issues in her book *The Sea Around Us*, published in 1952. From a very modest first printing, to everyone's astonishment, most of all hers, the book became a titanic best-seller, making its author famous across America.

Emerging Voices in the 1960s

Since the end of World War II, environmental values have reflected the search by increasingly affluent Americans for new, nonmaterial amenities—such as clean air and water, better health, open space, and recreation. By the 1960s many Americans, with their increased leisure time and security, demanded these amenities, which they considered consumer items. Public concern arose after numerous environmentalists clearly described the condition of these amenities.

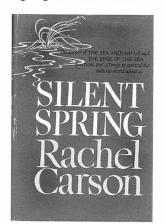
Although some scientists had raised cautionary flags, most Americans were unaware of how synthetic chemicals poisoned the environment until the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962. Carson, a former researcher for the Fish and Wildlife Service, discussed the problems created by the indiscriminate use of the insecticide DDT and its spread through the food chain. The "silent spring" of her title refers to the death of robins from DDT toxicity. As Roderick Nash says, Carson's work was both timely and effective.

Carson was less concerned about the "ethics" of pesticides, as Aldo Leopold might have been, and more about the possible consequences for man's health of unenlightened use of his ability to kill other forms of life. Keyed to react strongly to Miss Carson's message by the radioactive "fall- out" scare that occurred simultaneously, many Americans were horrified at her revelations.¹⁰

Carson warned that the speed of change in society was based not on natural factors but on the impetuous pace of human inventiveness. Atomic power, she wrote, had created an "unnatural" overabundance of radiation; the chemicals being poured into the nation's waters were "the synthetic creations of man's inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories, and having no counterparts in nature." These manufactured creations proliferated as people who were "largely or wholly ignorant of their potentials for harm" heralded their perceived benefits and often used them indiscriminately. As a result, an enormous number of people were unknowingly contaminated by the poisonous wastes of an unregulated industrial economy. Carson wrote,

I contend, furthermore, that we have allowed these chemicals to be used with little or no advance investigation of their effect on soil, water, wildlife, and man himself. Future generations are unlikely to condone our lack of prudent concern for the integrity of the natural world that supports all life.¹¹

Silent Spring clearly presented the widespread harm that pesticides caused birds and other wildlife, as well as the damage agricultural runoff did to waterways. Carson's



pro-environmental work was effective and timely for an American public that had blindly accepted the comforts technology provided. The book's passionate warning about the inherent dangers in the excessive use of pesticides ignited the imaginations of an enormous and disparate audience. The realization that the new synthetic chemicals in agriculture and industry had potentially disastrous consequences captured the public's attention. Individual states gradu-



Rachel Carson

ally banned DDT use, and in 1972 the federal government followed suit.

The responses to Carson's best-selling book included not only a multitude of scientific and popular debates about the issues she raised, but also a groundswell of public support for increased controls over pollution. Yet some scientists and, of course, the chemical companies that manufactured pesticides, dismissed her fears as unfounded. Several industry representatives charged that Silent Spring was part of a communist plot to ruin U.S. agriculture; the president of a DDT manufacturer called Carson "a fanatic defender of the cult of the balance of nature." John Maddox, a theoretical physicist, charged that Carson had played "a literary trick" on her readers.

The most seriously misleading part of the narrative is the use of horror stories about the misuse of DDT at create an impression that there are no safe uses worth consideration. Miss Carson's sin was the use of "calculated overdramatization." ¹³

Maddox's own view was much more optimistic. He believed in humanity's ability to overcome future problems, unlike the disbelieving environmentalists, whom he called "prophets of doom." In conclusion he warned that "in the metaphor of spaceship earth, mere housekeeping needs courage. The most serious worry about the doomsday syndrome is that it will undermine our spirit." ¹⁴

Other critics "sexualized their contempt" for Carson, charging her with "emotionalism." A Federal Pest Control Review Board member said he "thought she was a spinster, [so] what's she so worried about genetics for?" Yet Carson had awakened Americans to the pending catastrophe of unrestricted consumption and environmental decay.

Silent Spring was the most popular environmental book published in the early 1960s, and it heralded the beginning of the modern environmental movement. Other books from the time had less impact on the general public but nonetheless influenced the growing environmental movement. For example, in *Our Synthetic Environment* (1962), social ecologist Murray Bookchin contended that technological growth and the pollutants industry dumped into the environment caused ecological disasters and damaged human health. Bookchin accepted that technology was part of modern life, but believed machinery should be adapted in a more nature-friendly way,

a reordering and redevelopment of technologies according to ecological sound principles . . . based on non-polluting energy sources such as solar and wind power, methane generators, and possibly liquid hydrogen that will harmonize with the natural world.\(^{17}\)

Bookchin concluded that "there can be no sound environment without a sound, ecologically orientated social environment." To achieve this he recommended decentralizing society into compact, biologically rational spheres where economies would serve human needs rather than the appetites of industry. The relationship between humanity and nature was a public issue by the early 1960s, and its importance was reflected in the political arena.

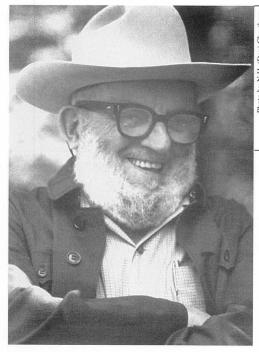
The election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 brought a young, vital, popular leader to the presidency. The Kennedy administration was strongly aware of the public's concern for environmental issues. In 1962 President Kennedy hosted a White House Conference on Conservation, which was attended by politicians and conservationists. He then proposed the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which, with a 1968 congressional amendment, used federal revenues from offshore oil drilling to acquire land for national and state parks and recreation areas. Congress set up the fund in 1965. The Kennedy administration made additional advances in 1963. The Clean Air Act appropriated funds for a federal attack on air pollution. and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation coordinated federal environmental efforts from within the Department of the Interior.

Stewart L. Udall was President Kennedy's secretary of the interior in 1961 and remained in office under President Lyndon B. Johnson. Udall believed that a society could not consider itself a success if, despite its material abundance, it permitted its land to become blighted and uninspiring. He wanted to bring about more responsible use of natural resources and also to institute a policy that would preserve nature for the future benefit of all Americans.

We have reached the point in our history where it is absolutely essential that all resources, and all alternative plans for their use and development, be evaluated comprehensively by those who make the over-all decisions. As our land base shrinks, it is inevitable that incompatible plans involving factories, mines, fish, dams, parks, highways, and wildlife, and other uses and values will increasingly collide. Those who decide must consider immediate needs, compute the value of competing proposals, and keep distance in their eyes as well

One of the paradoxes of American society is that while our economic standard of living has become the envy of the world, our environmental standard has steadily declined. We are better housed, better nourished, and better entertained, but we are not better prepared to inherit the earth or to carry on the pursuit of happiness.¹⁸

Secretary Udall's ideas represent the sentiment of the Kennedy administration, although not its action, and created a



Ansel Adams at the Landell-Hill Big Creek Reserve dedication on the Big Sur coastline in 1978.

precedent for future administrations to recognize the environment as an important political issue.

After President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson continued the government's efforts to respond to the public's concerns about environmental issues. Like the Kennedy administration, President Johnson's team provided a great deal of rhetoric and promises but also showed some real progress. In 1964 the Wilderness Act established the National Wilderness Preservation System to designate sections of forests as protected wilderness areas. The high point for the environmental movement during the Johnson administration was the White House Conference on Natural Beauty. On February 8, 1965, President Johnson sent a special message to Congress about the importance of natural beauty in the United States. His message became a landmark in defining the aims of the government's conservation policies in the post-World War II era, and stimulated action on local, state, and federal levels. The conference, held on May 24 and 25, 1965, was similar in many ways to Theodore Roosevelt's 1908 White House Conservation Conference; "again the power and prestige of the executive office was used to dramatize the most pressing conservation issue of the time." However, Johnson's "new conservation" emphasized a concern for aesthetic rather than material issues.

To deal with these new problems will require a new conservation. We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction, we must restore what has been destroyed and salvage the beauty and charm of our cities. Our conservation must be not just the classic conservation of protection and development, but a creative conservation of restoration and innovation. Its concern is not with nature alone, but with the total relation between man and the world around him. Its object is not just man's welfare but the dignity of man's spirit.

In this conservation the protection and enhancement of man's opportunity to be in contact with beauty must play a major role. 20

President Johnson advocated a new attitude toward nature along with an appreciation for its intrinsic beauty, as in the days of Thoreau. In a practical sense, Johnson's approach did more to define a problem than to enact specific methods of solving it. Still, the influence of the conservation movement had again reached the White House—and that was progress.

Despite this political action, some people failed to see the significance of the government's involvement. "Environmental science" was blasted in a 1966 *Science* magazine editorial as "one of the newest fads in Washington—and elsewhere." The writer feared that the government was about to take responsibility for all of man's surroundings "in the heavens, beneath the sea, and upon and under the dry land." While the White House was becoming more aware of and responsive to conservation and environmental issues, other forces were also taking action to save land and wildlife.

The Environmental Movement Begins to Mobilize

The 1960s were a decade of social turbulence in the United States. Many people, especially the younger generation, supported such issues as the civil rights movement, sexual freedom, feminism, alternative lifestyles, and the anti-Vietnam War movement—all of which countered traditional American views. These activists rallied against the evils they perceived in American life. One of these evils was the uncontrolled exploitation of the environment. The mobilization of environmentalists reflects the mood of the times as people organized to promote their cause.

During the early 1960s the Sierra Club, led by nature photographer Ansel Adams and his colleague David Brower, became much more publicly visible and active. Brower, a

prominent environmentalist of the time, was twice elected as a director of the Sierra Club (1941-1943 and 1946-1953) and then appointed its executive director in 1952, a position he held until 1969. He also narrated motion pictures about endangered wilderness areas and wrote many books about nature. Brower and the Sierra Club parted ways in 1969; the organization accused him of financial mismanagement, while he countered that he left because the group was too conservative. Brower soon



David Brower

formed Friends of the Earth (FOE), taking the name from the John Muir quotation, "The earth can do all right without friends, but men, if they are to survive, must learn to be friends of the earth." Friends of the Earth took an aggressive stand on many environmental issues, attempting to publicize diverse issues, from forest conservation to whale hunting to air pollution. In the 1980s, after Brower's relationship with Friends of the Earth soured, he left to form another environmental group, Earth Island Institute, which publishes books on environmentalism and ecology and fights for the protection of wildlife and other natural resources.

In the 1960s television was used for the first time to bring public attention to an environmental issue. The National Advertising Council released a commercial that showed a Native American dressed in traditional garb staring at a littered landscape while a tear rolls slowly down his cheek. This powerful image helped raise the public's awareness of the problem of litter.

Since *Silent Spring*, a plethora of popular magazines, technical journals, organizational newsletters, and books devoted to environmental issues appeared. Books by Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (1962), and Rene Dubos, *So Human an Animal* (1968), contended that nature was being permanently damaged by human activity.²³ Their basic concept was that ecosystems are interdependent and, unlike machines, cannot be easily manipulated by humans. Ralph Nader became famous for his book *Unsafe at Any Speed* (1965), which charged that defective mechanical design in the Corvair was the cause of accidents and injuries. His fight for consumer protection has continued and includes a strong emphasis on the dangers of pollution, in



The Cuyahoga River near Cleveland caught fire in 1969.

particular the problem of auto emissions. By 1967 auto emissions had become a serious issue for Americans, who owned half the world's 200 million motor vehicles and burned 80 billion gallons of fuel. Paul Ehrlich's *Population Bomb*, published in 1968, sounded an alarm about the dangers of overpopulation and became a best-seller.

Barry Commoner helped establish the modern environmental movement by writing popular and widely read books. His most famous were *Science and Survival* (1963) and *The Closing Circle* (1972), a best-seller. These books combined science and moral sensibility in an easy-to-read text. They called attention to the natural limits inherent in all resources, a central idea of the neo-Malthusian theory. Commoner was the most prominent scientist of the 1960s to highlight the problem of industry being a threat to the environment. He added nuclear fallout to his warnings about the environment.²⁴

Activism was growing and continued to gain supporters as a barrage of ecological disasters befell the country at the end of the decade.

the turning point, when people had had enough, came in 1969, a year that included the Santa Barbara oil spill, the seizure of eleven tons of coho salmon in Wisconsin and Minnesota because of excessive DDT concentrations, application for permission to build a trans-Alaska pipeline, and the burning of the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland.²⁵

On June 22, 1969, an oil-slicked, debris-choked section of the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland caught fire. Firefighters quickly doused the flames, but the incident acquired a notoriety

that lingers. To many Americans, the blazing Cuyahoga—the absurdity of a river catching fire—symbolized the growing environmental problems in the country. But there were more serious signs of trouble.

Oil spills from offshore wells and grounded tankers were devastating beaches. Air pollution in some large cities occasionally forced residents indoors. For example, in July 1969, California radio and TV stations announced, "The children of Los Angeles are not allowed to run, skip, or jump inside or outside on smog alert days by order of the Los Angeles Board of Education and the County Medical Association." The Florida Everglades were drying out. And the bald eagle, the very symbol of the United States, was near extinction, poisoned by decades of exposure to DDT and other agricultural pesticides.

The public was also outraged by their outdoor surroundings. Secretary of the Interior John C. Whitaker put it this way in 1969,

As Americans traveled in their automobiles, which had doubled in number from 1950 to 1970, they saw garish road signs, fields of junked automobiles, choked and dying streams, overgrazed and eroded hills and valleys, and road-sides lined with endless miles of beer cans, pop bottles, and the tin foil from candy wrappers and cigarette packages. They could no longer move a few hundred miles West: the frontiers were gone.²⁷

The generation that took on these environmental problems was the post-World War II "baby boomers," born between 1944 and 1964. Population growth during this period was dramatic. The fertility rate, births per thousand women, rose from 80 in 1940 to 106 in 1950 and 123 in 1957. The nation's population during the 1950s surged from 151 million to 180 million. Born when the United States was the richest nation in history, the baby boomers enjoyed many opportunities that had not been available to their parents. The gap between them was educational as well as generational. Only 13 percent of twenty- to twenty-four-year-olds attended college in 1960; by 1970 this number had jumped 10 percent.²⁸ The baby boomers' influence grew substantially in 1971 after passage of the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution, which lowered the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen, instantly created 11 million possible new voters. These voters became the activists who would energetically attack the country's traditional values and assumptions.

Older Americans also were active in the environmental movement, though their approach tended to follow traditional avenues through established organizations. However, their desire to improve the environment was no less than that of their younger compatriots. As historian Victor B. Scheffer explains, they were alarmed at the deterioration of America's natural surroundings.

They had watched their surroundings worsen and had been forced to accept a declining standard of living. Many longed, naively, for a return to the pastoral America that Norman Rockwell used to paint for the covers of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Ecology, the miracle science, now promised to bring back the landscapes they remembered. Their contribution was not less than that of the young but less intense. ²⁹

In 1974 the well-established environmental organizations were substantially the same as those existing in 1950. These traditional groups remained a stable force in the environmental movement and often acted as an incubator for the younger generation.

The environmental movement, which erupted from the social changes of the 1960s, was not merely an expression of organized conservation groups but also a manifestation of growing anger among the public. There were daily reminders of the deteriorating condition of the environment, in both rural and urban areas, as well as alarming reports of humanity's wasteful behavior. As Victor B. Scheffer describes,

It was the daily commuters who drove with smarting eyes through city smog, the mothers who learned that DDT was present in their breasts and that arsenic from smelter smoke was accumulating in the bodies of their children, the poultrymen who wondered why eggshells broke more easily then they used to, the fishermen who saw trout streams, once pure, now running brown, the farmers who wondered where all the bluebirds had gone, and why the water level in the wells had dropped and why the water tasted queer. To

Opinion polls results indicated a rapid rise in public concern about environmental issues in the United States. Surveys taken in 1965 and 1970 showed an increase from 17 to 53 percent in the number of respondents who rated "reducing pollution of air and water" as one of the three problems to which they wanted the government to pay more attention. President Richard M. Nixon, who had previously ignored the environmental issue, found it expedient to declare in his February 1970 State of the Union that the 1970s "absolutely must be the years when America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters It is literally now or never." His secretary of the interior, John C. Whitaker, later recalled,

When President Nixon and his staff walked into the White House on January 20, 1969, we were totally unprepared for the tidal wave of public opinion in favor of cleaning up the environment that was about to engulf us.³¹

The increased attention to the environment culminated in the first Earth Day celebration on April 22, 1970. Some 20 million Americans took part. The event was the brainchild of Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, a longtime advocate for clean water and a leader whom many conservationists regarded as one of the few voices of conscience on Capitol Hill. Nelson originally envisioned the event as The National Environmental Teach-In where participants could debate issues and share information, hoping to capture the spirit, if not the politics, of the "sit-ins" of the fractious 1960s. As the planning for the event progressed, however, Nelson and his followers (mainly campus activists) focused more on environmentalism. Earth Day spotlighted such problems as thermal pollution of the atmosphere, dying lakes, the profusion of solid waste, ruinous strip mining, catastrophic oil spills, and dwindling natural resources. The event emphasized that the obsession with industrial growth and consumerism was straining the environment to the breaking point, and introduced many Americans to the idea of "living lightly on the earth." Earth Day took place largely as a result of the efforts of these former antiwar and civil rights activists. Nelson recalled,

No one could organize 20 million people, 10,000 grade schools and high schools, 2,500 colleges and 1,000 communities in three and a half months, even if he had \$20 million. [Nelson had \$190,000.] The key to the whole thing was the grass-roots response. And that has been true every year since.³²

The older conservation groups—the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Izaak Walton League, and others—played little or no role in Earth Day. They were, in fact, surprised by the surge of national emotion and tremors of activism. Still preoccupied by traditional land and wildlife preservation issues, most of the old guard in conservationism ignored the growing national anger over pollution and other environmental threats to human health. In a few years, the fissure between the traditional conservation groups and the pollution- and public health-oriented activist national organizations would narrow and largely close.

In the aftermath of Earth Day, new environmental institutions emerged that combined strong social sensibility with concern for the natural world. Environmental Action, formed in 1970 to coordinate Earth Day activities, became an aggressive lobbying and public information group that focused on issues such as solid waste and alerted voters to the "Dirty Dozen"—

companies with the worst pollution records. Leaders of a number of national groups pooled resources in 1970 to create the League of Conservation Voters. The league tracked voting records and policy decisions of members of Congress and the executive branch, and endorsed and organized electoral support for environmentally minded politicians while attempting to maintain a bipartisan approach.³³ Such organizations exemplify the fact that by the 1970s, the environmental movement had matured and begun to effectively promote its cause.

Conclusion

The modern environmental movement in the United States was ushered in between the publication of Silent Spring in 1962 and the Earth Day celebration of 1970. In many ways the movement was a product of the times. The rabid consumerism and dependence on science of the immediate post-World War II years (late 1940s and 1950s) was contrasted by the ever-increasing decay and devastation of the environment. It was a condition that could not be ignored for long—particularly by a people whose traditional love for nature was well established. Environmentalism was an integral part of the social protest movements of the '60s generation. Rising from the cult of materialism in the 1950s and the turbulence of the 1960s, the environmental movement found its place in every part of American life—political, economic, generational, urban, and rural. The foundations of the environmental movement were well laid by the beginning of the 1970s—the Green Decade, though its greatest triumphs and challenges were yet to be faced.

FOOTNOTES

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CHC'S SPRING EXHIBIT

The Whole World's Watching

Peace and Social Justice Movements of the 1960s and 1970s

April 8-June 10 • California History Center

An exhibition of documentary photography, "The Whole World's Watching" examines the rich history of the social movements of the 60s and 70s. With a focus on Northern California where many of these activities were born, distinguished photographers illuminate the rise of the Black Panthers, the free speech and anti-war movements, feminism, disability rights, environmental activism, the struggle for gay rights and the cultural milieu which formed and informed them. The exhibit was sponsored by the California Council for the Humanities in association with the Berkeley Art Center.

The CHC and Activism Go Hand in Hand

Born of civić-academic and historic preservation activism on the San Francisco Bay Peninsula of the 1960s, the California History Center is an appropriate venue for our Spring 2002 documentary photographic exhibition "The Whole World's Watching: Peace and Social Justice Movements of the 1960s and 1970s."

As librarian for the center in its early days, Russ Nicholas produced an inventory called Hidden Treasures: A Descriptive Catalog of Books and Other Material in the California History Center (De Anza College, Learning Center Press, 1973). An essay, "The California History Center-Our Story," introduces the inventory. In his essay, Nicholas chronicles the progress of the CHC from concept to reality, from classroom use of the "case-study" method of teaching, to a political science laboratory serving "courses [in which] students conducted surveys and became involved in the study and the solution to real problems in the community." He concludes his essay describing the eventual realization of the history center as a multi-faceted program collecting student research papers, building a document collection, and offering internships and student scholarships, museum practice, lectures, teacher instruction, and classes with elaborate field trips.

Another kind of activism gave the history center a place to live. Individual and then community interest in historic preservation saved an elegant old building from destruction and turned it to new use. The pavilion standing on the estate which was to become De Anza College's new home, was first in the way, then stood derelict on the sidelines, and finally was resurrected by grass-roots efforts and funding to a second life as home for the innovative California History Center program.

Not surprisingly, activism as part of history became a recurring theme for the center. Exhibit and oral history projects such as the "Regional Greenbelt," "Passing Farms, Enduring Values," "California Woman Suffrage" and "By the Sweat of Thy Brow: The Story of Labor in Santa Clara Valley"

showed the power of individual and concerted efforts toward conservation, equality, and justice. Foothill-De Anza College District founders voiced passion for the community college movement in their taped oral histories also on file in the Stocklmeir Library and Archives.

Dramatic documentary examples of local community efforts at promoting peace, improving public education, breaking down barriers to decent housing, and incorporating cities may be found among our archival materials here at the center. A photo collection from the local *Union Gazette* and a partial clipping file from *the Palo Alto Times/Peninsula Times Tribune* demonstrate breadth of human concerns socially, politically, and culturally.

Our collection also contains two examples of journalistic activism: *Cry California* from California Tomorrow alerting us to the destruction of California's environment and the *California Farmer Consumer Reporter*, which monitored world food issues and the small farmer's struggle to survive in his or her work in a changing economy. The United Farm Workers video "No Grapes" or "Uvas No" is available in English and Spanish. Also documenting this struggle is the video "Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers' Struggle" by Ray Telles and Rick Tejada-Flores.

The Spring 2000 "Rock and Roll" exhibit contained a panel pointing to the many causes taken up by individuals and groups in Northern California in the 1960s and 1970s. Civil rights, free speech, women's rights, labor, environmentalism, and peace and war were premier concerns. Individual and community challenges to institutions and the responses of those institutions were intense and varied. The documentary evidence in "The Whole World's Watching" will provide glimpses of our actions and reactions under pressure and will help us consider the consequences of action, reaction, and inaction.

—Lisa Christiansen, Librarian California History Center

FOUNDATION NOTES

"Passing Farms" Exhibit Available

A mini-exhibit based on Yvonne Jacobson's book, *Passing Farms*, *Enduring Values—California's Santa Clara Valley*, is available to community organizations and businesses. The CHCF

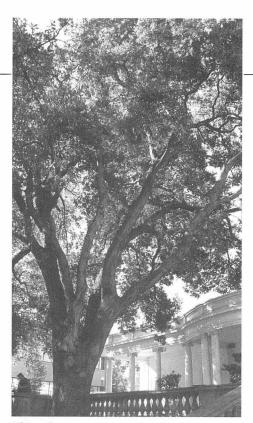


Author Yvonne Jacobson

recently published a second edition of her award-winning book that chronicles the rise of the orchard period of our valley up to the modern day growth of Silicon Valley and decline of local agriculture. Containing 44

framed photographs from her book, the exhibit may be installed at appropriate venues, including private businesses and community centers.

Please call CHC Director Tom Izu at 408-864-8712 for more information. A fee will be charged to cover expenses including hanging and care of the exhibit.



This oak tree was removed earlier this year from in front of the CHC.

Trianon Loses Another Oak Tree

In February of last year, one of two Coastal Live Oak trees in front of the CHC building fell and was removed—the victim of Oak Root Fungus. We were sad to see such a magnificent tree go, but thankful its fall did no serious damage to our building.

Unfortunately, the partner of the fallen oak was removed this winter by the college after it was determined to be suffering from the same disease and in danger of falling, this time directly onto our building. A number of other oak trees were removed for safety reasons from other parts of the campus as well, including one in front of the Flint Center.

The college is currently discussing landscaping plans for the sunken garden area, including possible replacements for the oaks. If you have any creative ideas about our garden area, please contact the office and talk with CHC Director Tom Izu.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY CENTER'S 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Change By Design or Default: Silicon Valley Activism in the 21st Century

Thursday, May 16
De Anza College—Hinson Campus Center • Conference Rooms A & B

The CHC's 6th Annual Conference will examine 21st century activism at the turning point of modern activism—Silicon Valley. It is a place and people immersed in the designing of an age, redefining freedom all the while defaulting on the American mechanics of democracy. The conference will feature a screening of the "Secrets of Silicon Valley," a film produced by Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman. There also will be a Visiting Speaker Series presentation by Raj

Jayadev, who will discuss "Silicon Valley Debugged: Organizing Workers in Silicon Valley." This conference hopes to:

- Increase the larger community's awareness of societal issues, inform them of different avenues of activism and express what it means to be an activist in the 21st Century.
- Define, interpret and analyze 21st Century activism. (what is it and what is it not)

 Discuss what the role of activism will be in the future as well as the wanted outcomes of current efforts.

Conference participants also will be able to visit the CHC's spring photo exhibit, "The Whole World's Watching: Peace and Social Justice Movements of the 1960s and 1970s."

If you would like to be placed on the conference mailing list, please call the California History Center at 408-864-8712 and leave your name/address and telephone number.

Thanks to Supporters of "Culturally Connected" Exhibit

The CHC gratefully acknowledges the support of the following individuals with the recent exhibit "Californians Keeping Culturally Connected." The exhibit, curated by CHCF Trustee and De Anza instructor Cozetta Guinn, focused on art, crafts and memorabilia linked to African Americans and the African Diaspora.

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Exhibit Curator Cozetta Guinn, right, and Loretta Green, newspaper columnist who loaned material for the "Keeping Culturally Connected" exhibit.

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