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for the Study and Preservation
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5-8PM**

Location

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Dec. 7th: 5-8pm



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Calendar

Fall Quarter

SEPTEMBER

25 First day of Fall Quarter

OCTOBER

9 Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day

NOVEMBER

8 *Momentum* with FHDA District Chancellor Lee Lambert; CHC patio; 4-5:30pm

8 *All My Relations* – Exhibit Opening; CHC Exhibit Hall; 5:00-6:30pm

10 Veterans Day

23-24 Thanksgiving holiday

DECEMBER

7 *Sip & Paint* – Donors and Members Recognition Evening; CHC; 5:00-8:00pm

15 Last Day of Fall Quarter

JANUARY

8 First Day of Winter Quarter

SAVE THE DATE

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March 23, 2024



California History Center & Foundation

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Cover photo: Lori Clinchard took this photo of iconic Day of the Dead display at De La Rosa Latin American Imports on King Road in San Jose, originally founded by the De La Rosa family members mentioned in this issue's feature article by Dr. Mora-Torres.

Director's Report



Lori Clinchard

Staying Human(e) in the AI Era

In the past year, developments in generative AI, and in particular the popularization of chatbots based on large language models, such as ChatGPT and Google Bard, are raising all kinds of questions, excitement and fears. In education, teachers and students alike are feeling their way forward into a new era, with a new set of tools to explore. Even instructors who are wary of the ways these new tools might undermine their control over students' work and grading processes are experimenting with AI software and often finding its potential exciting. Some compare the rise of generative AI to the advent of the printing press – or the calculator – or the computer itself. They ask: “haven't we always been afraid of change? Of new technologies? And haven't we always found ways to adapt?!”

Others worry that machines might take over and do our jobs better than we do. An AI model recently developed by researchers at MIT identified coughs due to Covid, even among asymptomatic people. Another study, published in *The Lancet Oncology* in August 2023, found that AI-supported mammogram reading detected 20% more instances of cancer than the standard two-radiologists method. Our Silicon Valley neighbors

Mark Zuckerberg and Dr. Priscilla Chan are launching an initiative to use AI to help eradicate all disease by 2100. It's clear that big changes are underway, and we can see clear positive potential.

As I watch and listen, I feel myself both on guard and also intrigued. I've played with OpenAi, and it was fun. My daughter and I asked the chatbot to create a 300-word fairy tale about goblins and beekeepers. Within seconds we had our story, written in a familiar way, with heroes and dangers and a meaningful resolution. We then asked the chatbot to retell the story in a new way – twice and then three times. And each time, the model gave us a new version of the story, with characters having switched places, or with a different lesson learned. It wasn't deeply meaningful, and there was a certain flatness to the stories, but we did enjoy the novelty of it. It felt a bit like magic. It also felt a bit like fast-food - yummy but not very nutritious. Yet, I want to be careful not to minimize the power or potential of generative AI. Just because the output

can sound rather banal today doesn't mean it won't improve dramatically over the next few years. In fact, that's both the promise and the threat of artificial intelligence today, and the reason many in the AI community themselves have urged caution. Programs that were created by human programmers are now able to create their own new programs. As this process develops, some fear that humans will become less and less necessary to the functioning of the machine, writ large. The idea that we humans will be okay because we can always “turn off the switch” may be simplistic and unrealistic.

All of these changes, and the inevitability of even bigger changes to come, are raising important questions. For example, as we create machines with ever greater capacity for rational “thinking,” where does that leave us, in terms of our value to the world and to ourselves? And what is it that makes us human, after all? We have spent the past few hundred years distinguishing ourselves from animals and from nature, so much so that we now refer to the natural world as our “natural resources.” British writer and researcher on nature, the environment and philosophy, Melanie Challenger, opens her most recent book, “How to Be Animal,” with the startling statement that “the world is now dominated by an animal that doesn't think it's an animal. And the future is being imagined by an animal that doesn't want to be an animal.” We are setting ourselves up for a sort of identity crisis, although it may play out subconsciously if we don't intentionally consider these questions.

I've realized that I'm less concerned about machines becoming more like humans than I am about humans becoming more like machines. And in this concern, I know I'm not alone. Almost 100 years ago, the English filmmaker and comic actor Charlie Chaplin used his 1936 comedy, “Modern Times,” to critique the dehumanization of factory workers. Environmental activists and historians sometimes point to the modern practice of commodifying the natural world as the root of our ecological crisis. We engage with life – trees, rivers, fishes, and minerals – as if they were things - inanimate objects - rather than as fellow beings we are in relationship with. In education, we teach children to value rational thinking and objectivity over imagination and feeling. And even

continued on page 14

I've realized that I'm less concerned about machines becoming more like humans than I am about humans becoming more like machines.



Ethnic Mexicans in the Santa Clara Valley, 1900-1930

Outsiders Establishing Roots in the Colonias

The second in a 3-part series
by Gregorio Mora-Torres

Mexican grandmother of migrant family picking tomatoes in commercial field. Santa Clara County, California. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. 1938. Photograph by Dorothea Lange.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, the Mexican Pobladores continued to live at the site of their former Pueblo. Yet, while their population experienced steady growth, the surge of Italian immigrants from their homeland and the East Coast challenged the survival of the old Mexican neighborhood. When Italians first settled in San Jose, the Anglo-Americans did not allow them to move into their neighborhood east of Market Street. They did not want strangers that spoke a foreign tongue and practiced different customs and traditions to reside among them. Hence, the Italian newcomers had no choice but to live in the old Mexican neighborhood. Within a generation, the Italians' need for more space motivated them to expand west across the Guadalupe River and create new communities. Very shortly, they also began

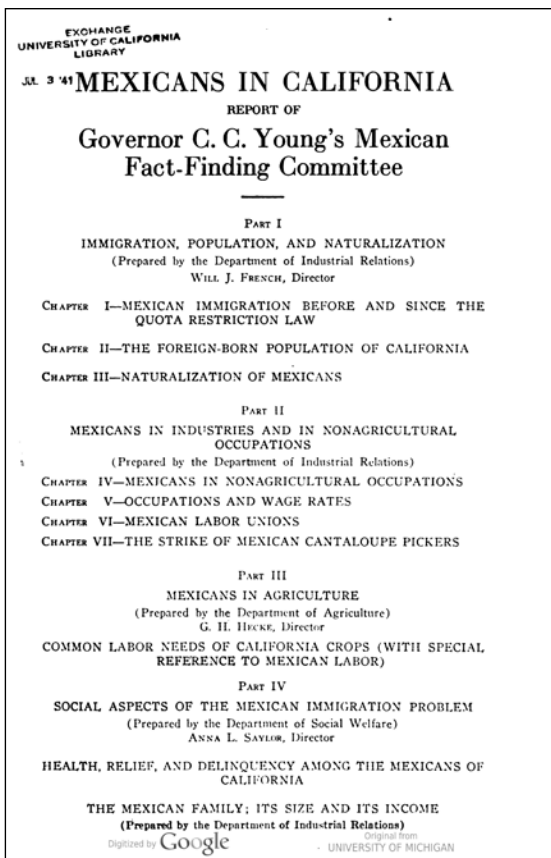
to build residential areas south of San Carlos Street. By the 1920s, Italians had moved into the Mexican neighborhood and built an expansive community that eventually reached Alma Street on the southern edge of San Jose.

As it turned out, the Mexicans never left their neighborhood; they learned to coexist with the larger Italian community. Nevertheless, after 1900, their population numbers began to grow, and consequently, so did the need for more housing. Immigration from Mexico prevented the population of Mexicans in San Jose from dropping. As it turned out, since 1850, Mexicans and other Latin Americans had continued to arrive in San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley. Some Mexicans came to the area to escape the violence of their country's constant civil wars during the 19th Century. However, the New



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Gregorio Mora-Torres has a BA from Santa Clara University and a Master's and Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine. In 1989, Dr. Mora-Torres started working as a lecturer at San Jose State University in the Mexican American Studies Department and stayed until his retirement in the fall of 2020. In addition to teaching students, Professor Mora-Torres enjoyed giving tours of the first Mexican pueblo and the first Mexican neighborhood in Downtown San Jose.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Mora-Torres has done extensive research and writing on Northern Mexico and Chicano history. In 2005, he edited and translated *Californio Voices*—the Spanish language oral memoirs of a 19th-century Californio soldier, Don Jose Maria Amador, published by the University of North Texas Press. He finished editing the manuscript "A Californio at Santa Clara College: the 1861-62 Diaries of Jesus Maria Estudillo." Estudillo was a native 19th-century Californio from San Leandro who studied at Santa Clara College. He has completed a two-volume history of Mexicans in the Santa Clara Valley during the 19th and 20th centuries. The first book deals with the creation of Mexican Colonias in the Santa Clara Valley. The second book analyses the rise and evolution of the Chicano Movement in the Santa Clara Valley from 1960 to 1975. Dr. Mora-Torres also serves as a resource for radio, television, and print media on Latinos in the United States and issues dealing with Latin America, particularly Mexico. Lastly, he is now an Emeritus Faculty and a founding board member of the La Raza Historical Society of Santa Clara Valley.



Almaden Mines drew the most Mexican immigrants; most lived around the mines. By 1900, the booming agricultural areas triggered the need for more farm workers. Initially, farms, orchards, and vineyards recruited the local Mexicans and Japanese, Italians, and Portuguese immigrants to pick the crops. In time, most Italians and Portuguese shifted to working in the numerous canneries and packinghouses, which paid better wages. Japanese families also moved to either rented or bought small plots of land where they grew vegetables. As these ethnic groups left the fields

and their employers' properties. Because the winters were harsh and jobs disappeared after harvest, most farm workers had to return to their homes. However, many of these farm workers and their families liked the Valley's climate, the availability of jobs, and the earnings, so they became determined to stay and settle down permanently. Many succeeded, found jobs away from agriculture, and became members of the growing Mexican Colonia. They found homes in the San Jose Downtown Colonia, displacing the Italian families, who moved away as their economic status improved. Some Mexicans would establish newer Colonias in the eastern part of San Jose, Alviso, Mountain View, and Gilroy.

The Anglo-Americans of the Santa Clara Valley became familiar with the local Mexican families, the descendants of the Californios. By the early 1900s, these Mexicans had largely assimilated into the dominant society. However, Anglo-Americans had difficulty understanding the culture and the ways of the Mexican migrants arriving in the Valley. While these "strangers" were vitally needed to maintain and harvest crops, they did not speak English or know American culture. Because Anglo-Americans doubted these workers could be absorbed into the local community, they preferred that they follow the pattern of the swallows—come every year to work and be banished when no longer needed. When the Great Depression hit the United States, many Anglo-Americans began to call for removing Mexican immigrants from the Valley. The problem was that it was impossible to decipher Mexican nationals from those thousands born in the United States.

Ethnic Mexican Migrants and Mexican Immigrants' Arrival in the Santa Clara Valley

In 1929, California Governor Clement C. Young established a fact-finding committee to study the status of Mexicans in the state. The Committee noted that the number of individuals born in Mexico and living in Santa Clara County had not grown much since 1910. It estimated that 242 Mexican citizens lived in the County in 1910, 319 in 1920; and approximately 420 by 1930. With a total population of 39,642, San Jose had 114 Mexican nationals in 1910 and 106 in 1920. Margaret Clark noted that most Mexicans who fled their homeland during the 1910 Revolution first settled in other parts of the United States, especially in Southern California, before relocating to the Santa Clara Valley.

Many ethnic Mexicans hailed from the American Southwest also began moving to the Valley after 1920.

The Mexican migrants who moved to the Santa Clara Val-

and orchards, they were replaced by Filipino migrant workers, who moved up and down the American Pacific coast. Mexican immigrants also began to arrive in higher numbers to work in agriculture. Yet, like other immigrants, they also transitioned into other lines of work. These Mexicans found homes in the old San Jose downtown neighborhood and subsequently contributed to the growth of the Mexican Colonia in numbers and physical size.

By the early 1920s, more and more Mexicans poured into the Santa Clara Valley to harvest its bountiful crops. In 1929, Governor Clement C. Young established a commission to study the status of Mexicans in the state. Its reports stated that only a few hundred Mexicans resided in the Valley. This report, however, only counted the number of Mexican immigrants and ignored those ethnic Mexicans that were born locally, in other parts of the state, or those migrants coming from other parts of the country, particularly the Southwest. Hence, no accurate numbers of Mexicans residing or temporarily living in the Santa Clara Valley exist. The evidence suggests that more and more Mexicans were coming yearly to pick the crops. Most came from Southern California or the Central Valley and initially lived in the Valley's rural areas, usually on

Mexicans in California report of... 1930. Google Books.

ley worked in vast orchards. Not very many Mexican migrants worked outside of agriculture.

Historian Glenna Matthews argued that the foreign workforce of the Valley's canneries were mostly Italian immigrants. She writes: "In 1913, for example, nearly ninety-percent of the laborers were of foreign birth, almost half of them Italian."

The other immigrant workers were mostly Portuguese from the Azores Islands or Spaniards. Except for a few local Californios, administrators hired an almost insignificant number of Mexican immigrants to work in canneries. Undoubtedly, most Mexican immigrants were kept out of the canneries by the European immigrants who favored the employment of their compatriots.

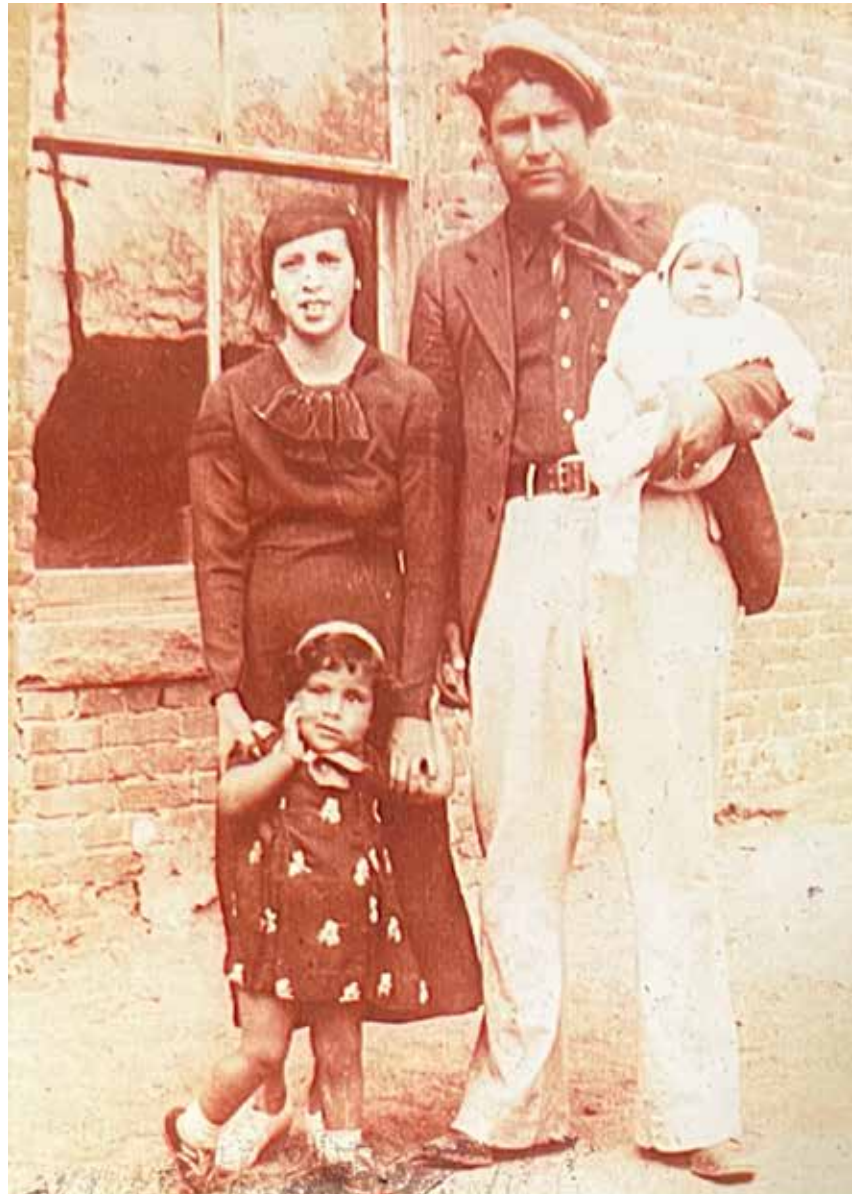
Most Mexicans who settled in the Santa Clara Valley abandoned their homeland at different times. Some left before the outbreak of the 1910 Revolution, others fled the violence of the civil war, and still others left as economic refugees. Torona Morales was born near Guadalajara in 1828.

While living in Mexico, she observed the U.S. occupation of her country in 1846 and the French invasion of it in the 1860s; she also experienced the impoverishment of her compatriots under President Porfirio Diaz. After seeing her children separated from her or killed during the 1910 Revolution, Mrs. Morales immigrated with only one son to the United States. Mrs. Morales came "by burro, up through the mountains of Durango and across the arid hills of Sonora. For three days, they were without water before reaching the border settlement of Sombrerete."

From there, mother and son went to the desert town of Indio in California's Imperial Valley.

In time, the pair eventually made their way to San Jose, and it became their new home. At 113 years of age, Mrs. Morales wanted her son to take her from the hospital where she was convalescing. "Tell my boy to come and get me," she pled. On the other hand, Placida Martinez Amarillas also fled the civil wars and violence of 19th Century Mexico until finally settling in the United States. She was born in 1830 in Sonora, Mexico. During her long life, she saw the rampant violence of the revolutions, and like many of her compatriots, she also experienced long bouts of hunger. As she migrated to Arizona, she also witnessed Indian fighting.

Not everyone left Mexico to escape civil wars, poverty, or chronic hunger. Clara Chavez, the wife of a prominent cattle rancher in Chihuahua, came to the town of Santa Clara after the death of her husband.

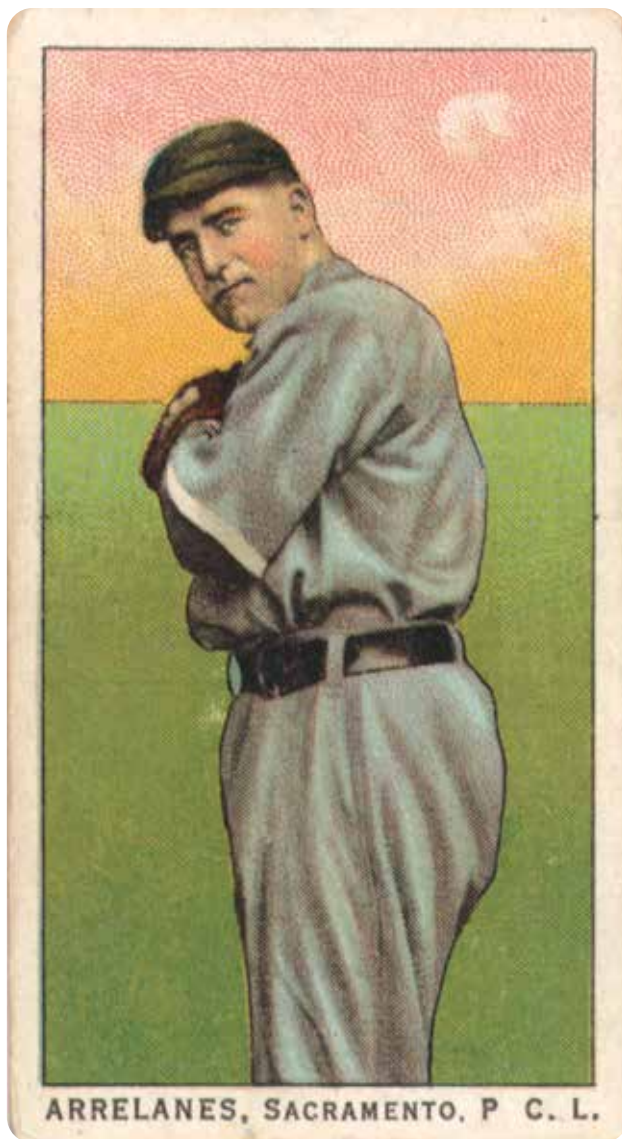


Although Mexican migrations to the Santa Clara Valley started in the 1850s, larger numbers of Mexicans went there with the advent of the 20th Century. During the 1920s and 1930s, hundreds arrived in the Valley to work mostly in agriculture. Most of these Mexicans first went to work in other places in the United States before reaching the Santa Clara Valley. According to obituaries that appeared in the San Jose Mercury Herald or San Jose Mercury, many of these individuals came with their families. Hundreds had settled in the Valley since the first decade of the 20th Century.

Many ethnic Mexicans who settled in the Santa Clara Valley were Mexican nationals or the children of Mexicans born in other parts of the United States. Josephine C. Guerrero was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1919, and when she was only two years old, her family moved to Milpitas. Josephine loved learning but had to leave school early to work, most likely in agri-

Victor and Maximina (Maxine) Carrasco and children, left to right, Grace and Isabel. Courtesy of Jose Carrasco.

Frank Arellanes, formerly of the Boston Red Sox, played for the Sacramento Solons in 1911. Original card from the personal collection of Gilberto Garcia. Scan provided by Eastern Washington University Archives and Special Collections.



culture, to support the family.¹ Concepción “Connie” Caudillo was born in 1924 in Hutchinson, Kansas. His father, Salomé, had found railroad work in Hutchinson and had relocated his family there. After refusing a transfer to Oregon, Salomé quit the railroad, and the entire family began following the crops as migrant workers. The Caudillo family reached the Santa Clara Valley during the 1930 fruit-picking season. The Caudillos stayed in Gilroy after Salome’s wife refused to continue following the crops; she insisted that her thirteen children stop moving from place to place and set roots somewhere.² Once in the Santa Clara Valley, Connie Caudillo established himself as a musician and led several bands for decades beginning in the early 1940s. Caudillo organized several bands that played big band music for the larger community. Yet, his bands could also perform various types of Mexican music at birthday fies-

¹ San Jose Mercury News, Obituary, September 13, 2016. Mrs. Guerrero would later come back to school and became an actual “Rosie, the Riveter” when she started working as a machinist for the Joshua Hendy Iron Works during WWII. After getting married, she worked for the U.S. Post Office and eventually rose to the position of Assistant Post Office Master for Milpitas. Later in life, she engaged in public activities such as becoming the first woman to serve on the Milpitas Planning Commission (1954), the Library Commission for Santa Clara County, and being a member of the Santa Clara County Grand Jury.

² San Jose Mercury News, Obituary, July 26, 1996.

tas, weddings, dance clubs, and events celebrating Mexico’s national holidays for generations.

Hundreds of Mexicans from Texas came to the Valley in the 1920 and 1930s. In the 1930s, the parents of Dora Garcia and her future husband Raul left Del Rio, Texas, when the two were children. Before reaching the Santa Clara Valley, the two families arrived in Santa Paula and worked in the citrus industry. Still, when friends from Del Rio who were already living in San Jose told them about the availability of jobs, they decided to relocate there. The families ended up working in numerous and extensive prune orchards.³

Some individuals were born in other parts of California and came to Santa Clara Valley to harvest crops or work in the food packing industry. Lena Fierro Manriquez, for example, was born in Montebello in 1915. She attended San Jose High School and became a tax preparer; in 1935, she married Joe Manriquez, a masonry contractor.⁴ On the other hand, Michabela Armada was born in Bakersfield and worked as a fruit packer after moving to San Jose.⁵ Frank Arellanes was born in Santa Cruz and went to Santa Clara College to play baseball. In the first decade of the 1900s, Arellanes, a pitcher, played for the Boston Red Sox. He died in San Jose during the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918. Similarly, Manny Gomez, from the Central Valley, played football at Santa Clara College in the 1930s, and his team won the Sugar Bowl in 1937.⁶ Sofia Mendoza was born in the Sespe Ranch, supposedly the largest in the state, in Fillmore, California, in 1934. The daughter of Tiburcio Magdaleno, a labor organizer, moved to Arizona as her father attempted to organize the copper mine workers. After a while, the Magdaleno family relocated to the Santa Clara Valley and settled in Los Gatos, which only had a few Mexican families.⁷

Lucio Yglesias Bernabe is not a well-known labor organizer, but in the 1930s and 1940s, he was a leading Mexican labor leader in the Santa Clara Valley. A native of Usmajiac, Jalisco, Bernabe probably migrated to the United States in the 1910s. By the 1930s, he was working as a cannery worker and served as a union activist for the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA), which was then trying to build a union among the 30,000 cannery

³ El Excentrico, June 20, 1975. As it turned out, the 1930s marked the beginning of a massive movement of people from Del Rio to the Santa Clara Valley. These Santa Clara Valley residents from Del Rio believe that from 1920 to 1970s, between 10,000 to 15,000 natives from their hometown moved to the valley. They thought these numbers were a conservative estimate.

⁴ San Jose Mercury News, Obituary, March 29, 1999.

⁵ San Jose Mercury, Obituary, August 23, 1962.

⁶ After his years in college football, Gomez went to law school, and in 1942, began practicing law in San Jose.

⁷ The Sofia Mendoza Memoirs, March 2, 1988, Chicano Library, San Jose State University.

and packinghouse workers. He participated in several unsuccessful strikes. By the end of the 1930s, he collaborated with Bert Corona, the best-known Mexican American labor organizer. Bert Corona moved to San Jose and, under the banner of Food, Tobacco, and Agricultural Workers, he and Bernabe began to organize workers to establish a union in the thirty-eight canneries that operated in the Santa Clara Valley.⁸

Some Mexican families went to the Santa Clara Valley to pursue business opportunities. Neftali Gonzalez Sandoval was born in Mexico City and came to the United States when she was eight. After marrying Rafael de la Rosa, a barber, in Fresno, the couple moved to San Jose in the mid-1930s. In San Jose, the de la Rosas established several businesses. The Mercury News writer Mack Landstrom wrote: "In their first store, at 76 W. St. John St., Rafael would cut hair on one side of the shop, and Neftali began to sell first records, then all manner of imports." Over the years, the de la Rosas operated in several places and owned other businesses, including a grocery and Mexican bakeries. The de la Rosa downtown store enjoyed great popularity among Mexican Colonia residents who would visit it, especially on weekends, to buy Mexican food products and imported products from Mexico, such as records, newspapers, and magazines.⁹ The coming of the Great Depression would make life hard for all ethnic Mexican residents, especially domestic migrants and Mexican nationals.

Moises Rosendin was an intriguing individual who became the most economically successful Mexican immigrant. Rosendin, a native of Veracruz, probably apprenticed as an electrician in Mexico City. He left Mexico during the 1910 Mexican Revolution. By 1919, he had a small electrical repair shop named Rosendin Electric Motor Works on Race Street, located on the western edge of the Mexican Downtown Colonia. From his workshop, he traveled throughout the Santa Clara Valley, repairing water pumps for farmers, ranchers, orchardists, and wine growers that depended on river water or underground aquifers to irrigate their crops. By the 1930s, he had six employees and expanded his business to installing utility lines in the Valley's rural areas and wiring houses. He also took advantage of WWII opportunities by offering wiring services to shipbuilders in the Bay Area. Rosendin Company lore noted that by the 1950s, it had fifty employees, making it a highly respectable company by Santa Clara Valley stan-

dards.¹⁰ Undoubtedly, Moises Rosendin was a millionaire by his death in the late 1950s.

The Faceless and Nameless Mexicans Who Sought to Make the Valley Their New Home

Newspapers, community magazines, and family memoirs have documented the histories of some ethnic Mexican families that settled in the Santa Clara Valley since the late 1800s. However, the majority of ethnic Mexicans who migrated to this region essentially remain faceless and nameless. Some of these families have lived in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado since Spain established territories more than two hundred years ago. They started leaving their homelands in the late 1800s and came to California for a better life.¹¹ On the other hand, Mexican immigrants have been coming to the United States since the 1850s, but their numbers dramatically increased with the start of the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Many immigrants settled in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, or even the Midwest before relocating to California. Another large segment of immigrants left Mexico during the Mexican Revolution and settled in Southern California. By the 1920s, these ethnic Mexican families drove to the Santa Clara Valley by way of Highway 101 or Highway 99 and then west on Route 152. A few of them took the train from Los Angeles to San Jose.

For most of the early 1900s, only sprinkles of ethnic Mexicans came to the Santa Clara Valley. While a few managed to find jobs outside of agriculture, including some who found work in canneries, most ethnic Mexican migrants were drawn to vegetable and fruit harvests. Hence, they did not start arriving in the Valley until the spring vegetables were ready to be picked by early May. Most migrants came in late May to



Pocho, José Antonio Villarreal, Doubleday, 1959, 1989.

⁸ In the early 1950s, the US Government sought to deport Lucio Bernabe for his labor activities. However, lawyers representing the National Lawyers Guild successfully defended Bernabe's rights and it led to the suspension of his deportation order.

⁹ San Jose Mercury News, Obituary, May 28, 1993.

¹⁰ The Rosendin Company does not provide much of a biography on its founder. It ignores or chooses not to emphasize that Moises was born in Mexico and its list his name as Moses.

¹¹ In early 1900, many Tejanos started to leave their home state in search of jobs that offer better pay. At this point in time, Texas offered very low wages and local officials tended to enforce anti vagrancy laws which allowed them to arrest unemployed people and rent them out to local growers. So, Tejano labor contractors packed workers in the back of trucks and took them to the Midwest, where these workers engaged in harvesting fruits, sugar beets, and potatoes. Tejano workers started a tradition of performing migrant work, which lasted the rest of the 20th century. In a similar way, Midwest farmers relied on Mexican labor contractor based in El Paso, Texas to recruit Mexican immigrants that were just arriving in the United States. The recruits would travel by truck or train to work in the Midwest. Soon, other Midwestern industries came to rely on El Paso labor contractors to tap the Mexican labor market. By the 1920s, thousands of Mexicans, recruited in Texas, were working in the Midwest. Many chose to settle down in Midwest states permanently.



Doreen Garcia Nevel, daughter of Ernestina Garcia, was active in the Santa Clara Valley Chicano Movement. Here is a photo of Doreen and her little aunt, Becky.

harvest the cherries and apricots; by July and later, they were picking pears, prunes, walnuts, and grapes. Many Mexican families also collected summer vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, string beans, and onions.

To save their meager earnings, most ethnic Mexican migrants had no choice but to find lodging wherever they could. Often, they asked their employers to allow them to establish a camp next to the fields or the orchards. They set up tents or slept in their cars, cooked on an open fire, and drew water from irrigation ditches for cooking or bathing. Other migrants rented chicken sheds, barns, or any empty structure from the farmers or orchardists. The migrants often had to deal with a lack of privacy, especially women, when sharing sleeping quarters, bathing, or relieving themselves. They also had problems caring for children since they often had to leave them to fend for themselves at their camp or their vehicles when spouses and older children had to go to work. Although the migrants were keenly aware that their lives were harsh and difficult, they also felt better days were ahead. Usually, these

individuals or families were relatively satisfied with their earnings in the Santa Clara Valley because, although they were not great, they represented much more money than they would have acquired in their home states or Mexico. Nonetheless, the end of summer meant the end of work, and they had to move elsewhere in search of work or go back home to Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico to await a new harvest season.

Every year, a few migrant workers opted to winter in the Santa Clara Valley so that they could be the first in line to get jobs once the harvest season started the following year. Wintering in the Santa Clara Valley was difficult. Workers and their families needed substantial savings to get them through at least four months of unemployment. They also needed adequate housing to survive the Valley's cold temperature. In addition, they had to have sufficient food supplies—a few bags of flour (to make tortillas), beans, and rice were essential. It would be a blessing if they could spare a little money for meat, chile peppers, eggs, and coffee. Getting through the first winter usually meant that Mexican families would be able to make the Valley their new home. Most ethnic Mexican migrants had no choice but to return home in the fall and return in the spring. After several years in the migrant cycle, more and more ethnic Mexicans chose to stay in the Santa Clara Valley and struggled to make it their new home. By the late 1920s, they kept adding to the physical expansion of the Mexican Colonia, especially the one in Downtown San Jose.

In the next decade, ethnic Mexicans became aware that while welcomed to work in the fields, the more established residents of the region resented them if they became an economic liability to them. With the collapse of the American economy, white Americans saw all immigrants as detrimental to their interests and as competitors for jobs. It would not take long before Mexicans and, to an extent, Filipinos would be encouraged to return to their homelands. The push to remove Mexicans also affected the Californios, the Mexicans native to the Southwest, or the children of Mexican immigrants born in the United States, because white Americans could not distinguish them from the Mexican nationals.

Ethnic Mexicans Facing the Great Depression

In the autumn of 1929, the American economy collapsed, triggering the loss of jobs for millions of workers, causing hunger among countless families, and massive social upheavals across the country. The loss of jobs made it impossible for millions of individuals to feed their families. To survive, people had to rely

on local charities or public agencies to provide small monetary allowances. In 1932, Labor Secretary Doak planned to repatriate 400,000 foreign nationals worldwide. Mexicans would be the primary targets of the repatriation.¹² Local charities and regional governments accepted Doak's plan to return the Mexicans to their homeland to reduce expenses. It was hard to accurately estimate the number of Mexicans and their U.S.-born children sent to Mexico, but some figures indicate that at least 500,000 had left the United States by 1935.¹³ Although various studies have examined the repatriation in Southern California communities, historians have written little about its impact on Mexicans in Santa Clara Valley.¹⁴

Almost as soon as the Great Depression hit, elected officials proposed bills in the U.S. Congress to limit the number of Mexicans legally entering the country. Congressmen Johnson and Box, for instance, wanted to place a quota of 50,000 immigrants per year for all countries in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁵ However, southwestern business interests, especially railroads, and agriculture, felt that this bill would significantly cut their chief labor source—Mexican immigrants. The San Jose Mercury Herald grew seriously concerned with too many Mexican immigrants residing in California and covered the issue substantially.

By March 1930, some San Jose Mercury Herald readers called to remove the Mexicans from the United States. The newspaper supported the demands to expel Mexicans. Hence, it readily published materials calling for removing Mexicans from the country. In a letter by C.M. Goethe, President of the Immigration Study Commission, published by the Mercury Herald, he called for the deportation of Mexicans and placing quotas on Latin American immigration to the United States. He wrote:

American inventive genius is so accelerating labor-saving machinery that unemployment must increase. The last available statistics show the number of unemployed American whites just about equals the number of Mexican aliens unlawfully in this country. Would not a solution to current unemployment be the deportation of Mexicans across the border till all white Americans who wanted jobs could have employment? Certainly, there exists no reason why Congress should postpone placing

*Latin America under the same immigration quota as England, Ireland, Germany, or Italy.*¹⁶

The anti-immigrant sentiment spread nationwide, emboldening politicians to push legislation to shut the door to Mexican immigrants. California farmers were worried about the passage of the Johnson and Box bills. Fred J. Hart, manager of the California Farm Bureau radio station KQW and a lettuce grower in the Salinas Valley, appeared before the House Immigration Committee. Before the U.S. Congress voted on these bills, he asked that an “independent unbiased committee” of representatives travel to investigate the West’s labor situation. He forewarned the Immigration Committee that some other source would have to be secured if the farmers lost their Mexican labor.¹⁷ Although Radio KQW stood in opposition to the Johnson and Box bills, it allowed some anti-immigrant congressmen to air their views, calling for reducing Mexican immigrants to the U.S. In August 1930, for example, Congressman Arthur M. Free announced his bill to reduce immigrants from the Western Hemisphere from 62,000 to 7,000.¹⁸ The Mercury Herald reported that Immigration Committee Chairman Johnson had endorsed the Free Bill.

The pressure to reduce the non-white population of the country began to be expressed openly in public in the Santa Clara Valley. Emmet Rittenhouse told members of the Exchange Club at the Hotel Sainte Claire that Filipinos and Mexicans posed an even more severe problem than African Americans. He charged that Filipinos and Mexicans were taking jobs away from native-born, white American men and women. Moreover, he argued that Mexican labor was more expensive than white workers because Mexicans represented half the jails’ cost. Also, Mexicans used other services provided by the County and other public institutions.¹⁹ Rittenhouse was not the first to argue that California incurred hidden costs by relying on Mexican labor. A few years earlier, even the “Young Fact-Finding Committee Report on the Status of Mexicans in California” suggested that Mexicans were becoming a prob-

This photo shows Doreen Garcia Nevel's grandfather and his brother-in-law who came from Arizona in 1936.



¹² Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pg. 126.

¹⁴ Other sources that deal with the Great Depression’s impact on Mexican Americans or Mexican immigrants are Camille Guerin-Gonzalez’ *Mexican Workers & the American Dream* and Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez’ *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.

¹⁵ San Jose Mercury Herald, January 14, 1930.

¹⁶ San Jose Mercury Herald, March 24, 1930, “Lauds Editorial on Immigration.”

¹⁷ San Jose Mercury Herald, January 31, 1930, “Farm Bureau Head Fights Ban on Mexican Laborers.”

¹⁸ San Jose Mercury Herald, August 7, 1930, “Free to Talk on Mexican Labor.”

¹⁹ San Jose Mercury Herald, July 16, 1930, “Race Problems Discussed Here in Club Speech.”

lem for the state. It noted that Mexicans came to the U.S. to settle down instead of permanently returning to their homeland after a sojourn there. The Young Report further noted Mexicans did incur a social and economic cost to the United States. It estimated that only a minute percentage of Mexicans sought naturalization—2.7%—yet they constituted many patients in county and city hospitals. Finally, Mexicans were also an extra burden to private charities.²⁰

As federal authorities initiated the repatriation in 1930, Santa Clara County officials began encouraging the local Mexican-born residents to return to their homeland. Other counties in the state did the same. A San Jose Mercury Herald article reported that the County Charities Department “assisted” Mexican families to return voluntarily to Mexico in the fall of 1931.²¹ The newspaper suggested that the Mexican Government, not Santa Clara County, should encourage these families to return home. Yet, the newspaper contradicted itself when it noted the Mexican Government had recently promised all returning families a five-acre lot of tillable land. Also, it would pay the transportation costs from the U.S. border to the regions where it was allocating tracts to the repatriated families. Like Los Angeles County, Santa Clara County would provide the departing families with transportation costs to the border.

Even before the Mexican Government had offered to

assist its foreign nationals, Santa Clara County officials had sent several families to the California border with Mexico. They were making plans to return others. Hence, the County solicited its residents’ assistance in locating Mexican nationals willing to return to their homeland. Social workers felt that many Mexicans would take the County’s offer, given the scarcity of employment and the coming winter. Undoubtedly, the County offered to pay for the repatriates’ transportation to the Mexican border.

There are no reliable statistics on the number of Mexicans that left Santa Clara County due to its authorities’ effort to repatriate them during the Great Depression. Nonetheless, their departure worried local growers, who feared not having a sufficiently large workforce. Heney Hicks, a San Jose Mercury Herald writer, noted that lettuce growers could not secure enough crews to harvest their crops in Salinas. Thus, the loss of Mexicans triggered the labor shortage. Nevertheless, he believed that Santa Clara residents need not worry about the loss of Mexican or Filipino workers. He observed that the departure of Mexicans and Filipinos would only be slight since their labor was no longer needed for the harvest. However, he felt that if other regions kept the migrant workers, it could create work opportunities for local workers.²² To illustrate the temporary nature of Mexican labor, Hicks wrote:

Mexican labor in this County is used only for picking prunes, peas, tomatoes, and cauliflower. During the peak of the prune harvest, there are about 3,000 itinerant Mexicans

about the Valley, according to Thomas Graham of the State Employment Bureau. At present, there are 100 transient families. Most of them left this section after the tomato harvest to pick cotton in the San Joaquin Valley.²³

Notably, Hicks published his article in November when most Mexican migrants had already departed from the area to work elsewhere. The writer ignored that despite the departure of Mexicans due to the Repatriation Program, a renewed new migrant cycle emerged characterized by Mexican workers from Mexico and Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and even

*New Almaden
Hacienda School,
Sept. 15, 1908.
Courtesy History
San José.*

²⁰ San Jose Mercury Herald, October 13, 1930, “Gain in Mexican Influx is shown by State Report.”

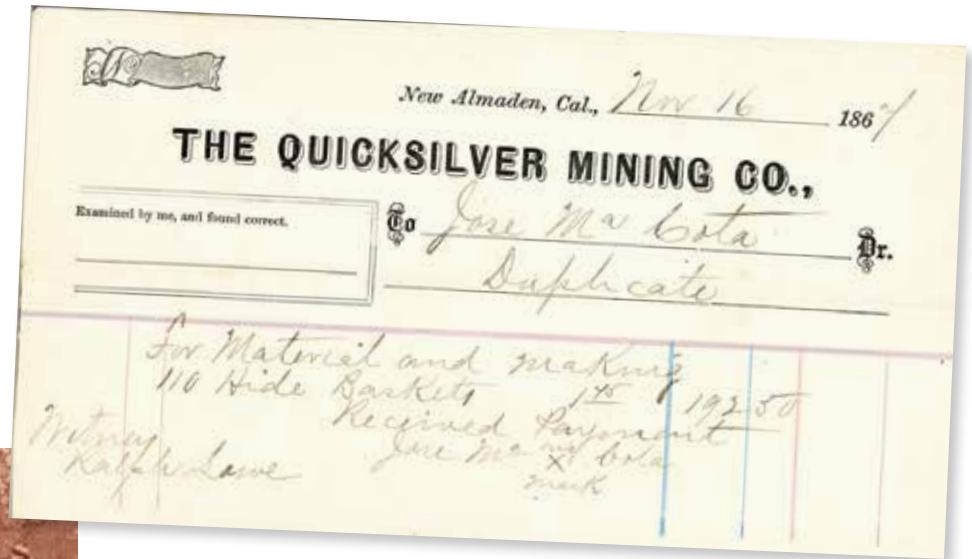
²¹ San Jose Mercury Herald, October 21, 1931, “Mexican Families Begin to Return to Native Land.”



²² San Jose Mercury Herald, November 30, 1932, “Heney Hicks ‘Mexican, Filipino Migration Aids County Jobless.’”

²³ Ibid.

Quicksilver Mining Co. receipt for payment Nov. 16, 1864, Jose Cota. Courtesy California History Center Archives.



New Almaden Spanishtown miners with rail cars. California History Center Archives.



southern California who would move to Santa Clara Valley in the spring and summer. These workers would leave en masse by the last harvests in the fall. This sojourner pattern would remain in place for several generations.

Hicks noted that Filipino workers were also used to harvest the same crops as Mexicans, except for prune picking. In 1932, there were 1,500 Filipino workers in the Valley. They, too, were impacted by the federal and local authorities' calls for the repatriation of all immigrants. Hicks also observed that only some Filipino workers opted to leave for their homeland. Like their Mexican counterparts, the local authorities encouraged them to return to the Philippines. Yet, Hicks believed fewer Filipinos left because they could find year-round employment in hotels and restaurants or seek work as gardeners or find general ranch work.²⁴ The newspaper writer also felt that Filipino workers were more adaptable to different jobs, while Mexicans preferred traditional agricultural work.

Unlike Mexican immigrants returning home to escape the hard economic times, Heney Hicks maintained that the Filipinos, on their own accord, were heading back to their island home, driven by patriotic convictions. Seemingly, nationalists in the Philippines had been conducting a spirited campaign to keep workers at home. The writer concluded: "All of the Mexicans are going home without funds, whereas

every Filipino is taking a substantial bankroll with him, which he intends to invest in agricultural pursuits, having learned modern methods from his American employers."²⁵

The loss of Mexican and Filipino workers was a pressing worry for California growers. Lettuce and sugar beet growers claimed that white workers could not efficiently replace these "stoop" laborers. Some growers sometimes tried out "Okie" workers and found them a reliable workforce. For Hicks, the campaign to replace Mexican and Filipino workers with white migrants from the dustbowl areas of Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma was only a temporary solution. He contended that most white workers would abandon agricultural work once better times arrived; under normal economic conditions, they would not work for the typical wages paid to Filipinos and Mexicans.²⁶ Hicks was incorrect. Many historians and novelists observed that the "Okies"—the white migrants who had fled economic ruin and poor soils "in Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma—filled the labor vacuum created by the departure of Filipinos and Mexican repatriates."²⁷ In his first novel *Pocho*, José Antonio Villareal, a native of Santa Clara, described these impoverished white migrants' arrival to the Valley, whose lives were so desperate that even the poor Mexican residents took pity.²⁸ Villareal also noted that the Mexican

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ On July 14, 1940, the San Jose Mercury Herald published one of a six article series on the mid-West's white migrants that were by then residing in California. Unlike the way it covered the Mexican farm workers, the newspaper is much more sensitive to the plight of the white migrants. Between 1936 and 1937, according to the newspaper, 187,000 white migrants entered California while only 8,000 Mexicans, 3,000 Blacks, and 3,000 Filipinos did so. The Mercury Herald cited the main causes of the white migrants' departure from their home states were increasing mechanization of farms, reduced agricultural acreage, and meager local aid in places of origin. Historian Devra Weber in *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) noted that deep cultural differences as well as racism by the white migrants led to much distrust between the Mexicans and white workers. Similarly, John Steinbeck, the author of *The Grapes of Wrath*, depicted tension between Mexican and Anglo Americans as they encountered each other in the Central Valley of California.

²⁸ Antonio Villareal, *Pocho*. New York: Doubleday, 1989, pp. 49-50.

²⁴ Ibid.



Japanese workers who farmed beans on Senter Road about 1 mile south of Kelley Park in 1913. Iwamatsu Kawahara, far right, flanked by his wife and his daughter carrying her child. Courtesy Kawahara Family, California History Center Archives.

farmworkers, who had been residing in the Valley for years, often fed and provided other assistance to the desperate “Okies.” No doubt, in their desperation, the white migrants would take even the lowest-paid jobs.

Conclusion

By the 1930s, the Mexican Colonias in the Santa Clara Valley were thriving. The descendants of the Californios and the hundreds of ethnic Mexicans coming from elsewhere in the United States and Mexico constituted the Colonias. Although most of these Mexicans faced much hardship, they were content living in the Valley even if most worked in agriculture and obtained the lowest wages. Every passing year, more and more of the ethnic Mexican migrants stayed in the Valley, adding to the population and physical expansion of the Colonias, especially the one in Downtown San Jose.

The Great Depression caused the white Anglo-Americans

in the Santa Clara Valley to consider for the first time what to do with the ever-growing population of non-whites coming to the region. Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, and Mexican farmworkers came to care for and harvest crops, making the Valley very wealthy. In earlier decades, Anglo-Americans had welcomed these farm workers and deemed them necessary for the further prosperity of agriculture. The Great Depression, however, ended the white Americans’ belief that non-white workers benefited the Valley’s economy. Instead, many came to feel that these workers were replaceable, and a widespread sentiment set in among them that Mexicans were detrimental to the region and generally agreed that they must return to their homeland. Local government officials also concurred.

This new view proved to be a harbinger of Anglo-Americans’ feelings about ethnic Mexicans and other non-white workers. During the Great Depression, Anglo-Americans felt Mexicans cost society too much in social benefits and other services (health, schools, policing, and jail). They also came to see Mexicans as unassimilable in the dominant culture. They felt Mexicans were intent on keeping their ways and unwilling to acculturate into American culture and civilization. Many Anglo-Americans also came to believe that ethnic Mexicans were inferior people and possessed a primitive, unequal culture. These Anglo-American attitudes would prevail for several generations and largely dictated the tense relations between the two groups.

Director’s Report *continued from page 4*

while we express concern over the seemingly addictive pull of our smart phones, we are drawn, like moths to the flame, perhaps, toward the blue glow of the electronic world. We carry our little machines with us in our pockets, and we rarely leave home, or even go from room to room, without our little companions. How many of us will resist when we begin to incorporate this software – and hardware - into our bodies? I don’t mean to suggest that we should resist. I, for one, love the miracle of the new lens I have in my eye after cataract surgery and a lifetime of extreme myopia. But I do think we should be conscious of the path we are walking on. If we intend to fully merge with machines, we should at least do so intentionally. And if we don’t think that’s where we are headed, we probably aren’t paying enough attention.

I think we need to get curious: what impact will generative AI technologies have on our sense of self and our experience of being human? How will we continue to feel human, in relation

to AI as well as in relation to the living world? How much of our bodies could we replace with artificial parts and still consider ourselves human? How many of our decisions can we hand over to artificial intelligence and still consider ourselves conscious beings? Have we already crossed that line? How will the use of AI affect our relationships with other living beings? What might the impact of generative AI technologies be on our creativity, self-expression, or what some might call divine inspiration or received knowledge? What will the consequences be of looking at, listening to, and engaging with AI-created art, music and other forms of creative expression? How will our mirror neurons respond to ongoing AI engagement? Why are some institutions of higher learning expanding from STEM to STEAM, adding Arts? How can the arts and humanities respond to the demands of this moment in uplifting and helpful ways?

How will we stay human(e) in the AI era?

At the Center

RECENT EVENTS



California History Center shining warm and bright on the chilly November evening of the Momentum forum with Chancellor Lee Lambert and opening of the Exhibit "All My Relations."



Chancellor Lee Lambert talking with CHC Foundation Board President Mark Healy before the Momentum dialogue.

Momentum with Chancellor Lee Lambert: ***"The Relevancy of Liberal Arts in the AI Generation"***

Social Science and Humanities Division Dean Elvin Ramos' Momentum series serves as an ongoing forum for dialogue and is the Dean's vehicle for fostering deep mindfulness and productive conversations. Its primary aims are to close the equity gap, champion inclusivity, advance social justice reform, and deliberately confront structural racism within our educational institutions, both in the classroom and throughout the broader community. Its overarching goals are to bolster optimism, emotional regulation, empathy, diverse perspectives, pro-social objectives, and mindful awareness among all participants. Faculty, administrators, staff, students, community and FHDA Foundation members gathered in the late afternoon on November 8th, 2023 to hear Chancellor Lambert talk about his own educational journey and his thoughts on the intersection of liberal arts, humanities and technology. Dialogue and questions were moderated by CHC Faculty Director Lori Clinchard. Participants were treated to a vegetarian meal while enjoying the new exhibit, "All My Relations."

Chancellor Lee Lambert sharing his ideas about education, equity, systemic change and the challenges and opportunities of the current moment in time.



Social Sciences and Humanities Dean Elvin Ramos introducing Chancellor Lee Lambert, as CHC Faculty Director and moderator Lori Clinchard looks on.

At the Center

RECENT EVENTS

Opening Exhibit: "All My Relations"

Honoring the Rescue and Rehabilitation of Domestic & Wild Animals in this Time of Ecological Peril

This photography and oral history exhibit had its opening on Nov. 8, 2023, following the Momentum series dialogue with Chancellor Lee Lambert. Photographs were taken by Ruth Morgan and oral histories recorded by Janet Clinger. These images and stories document the experiences of staff, volunteers, and animal ambassadors from animal rehabilitation and rescue organizations. Their testimony raises awareness of the ethical questions and consequences of our complex relationship with animals.



De Anza faculty member Chesa Caparas taking a look at the "All My Relations" exhibit on opening night.



Photographer Ruth Morgan and oral historian Janet Clinger showing their work at the opening of new exhibit, "All My Relations."

At the Center

Volunteers and Interns

We have been fortunate this Summer and Fall quarters to benefit from the enthusiasm and hard work of many students, interns and volunteers at California History Center. Their presence and support mean everything to us, as they brighten our days, contribute meaningfully to our archival work, and help to make this historic house feel like a home.

Margaret Butcher, Volunteer

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing friendship and support of Margaret Butcher, a retired school teacher and supporter of CHC work — also honoring the memory of Margaret’s mother Audrey Edna Butcher, in whose name CHC carries on a civil liberties education initiative. We are grateful for the many hours Margaret spent this past year helping librarian/archivist Lisa Christiansen process archival materials.

Edwin El-Kareh, Volunteer

Enormous thanks to CHC volunteer, Edwin El-Kareh, who took on the important and challenging task of scanning our earliest Californian issues, so that they are now available, in full, on our website. He has made himself available, as well, in the process of finding new homes for some materials as we process our collections.

Anya Nazarova, Student Employee



Anya Nazarova is a highly valued CHC student employee, in her third year at Foothill College, majoring in Graphic and Interactive Design. She is currently helping to redesign the CHC website and to organize and manage the newly digitized oral history files. She is interested in making the

archives at CHC more accessible online, so that these rich materials can inspire and inform even outside the Trianon.

Mykala Irvin, Student Employee



Mykala Irvin worked with great dedication over the summer, helping us to process our vast collection of books, both in the library and in the basement we all lovingly refer to as “the dungeon”. Her focus, work-ethic and friendly demeanor contributed to a successful and positive working environment. We wish her good luck in her studies this year, and we hope she may return to work with us again in the future.

Bobby Banks, Humanities Mellon Scholar intern



Bobby Banks was a huge help to us over the summer, in his last quarter as a CHC Intern. He was a Humanities Mellon Scholar at Foothill College where he majored in Geography. He applied to Foothill as a geography major simply based on a childhood interest in maps and the Earth as a whole. The idea of using maps as a useful tool to manage and analyze data opened his eyes to a possible career path that continued to pique his interest with every GIS class he took. We wish him a happy and successful future.

Esteban Harkins, Humanities Mellon Scholar intern



Born in San Francisco, Esteban cultivated a lasting interest in architecture while growing up amidst the Eichler homes that lined his path to school. Currently, he is planning to transfer from De Anza to pursue studies in both architecture and philosophy. Looking ahead, Esteban hopes either to serve as an architect for the UNHCR or to engage in architectural interventions for underserved communities through participatory planning to create uplifting living environments. As an intern with the Mellon Scholars Program, Esteban is serving as an epitomist for the CHC, summarizing oral history transcriptions.



Student interns Bobby Banks and Vivian Doss and student employee Anya Nazarova celebrate and honor librarian/archivist Lisa Christiansen on her birthday.

At the Center



Intern Lakshmi Kandala and student employee Anya Nazarova helping CHCF Board President Mark Healy hang a display in the Exhibit Hall.

Lakshmi Kandala, Humanities Mellon Scholar intern



Lakshmi Kandala is a Humanities Mellon Scholar majoring in Computer Science at De Anza College. Her current goal is to transfer to an esteemed 4-year university by Fall 2024 and complete her undergraduate degree at a respected university. She is an intern at the California History Center through the HMS internship program. She has learned much historical information about California and its history from the place itself and also from Lori and Lisa. Her current project is to research more about the history of CHC itself and to make an informational project that will be accessible to all of the willing public. [I can only say that my](#) time as an intern at CHC has been equally educational and immensely enjoyable.

Marcus Jacobs, Humanities Mellon Scholar intern

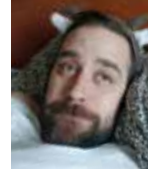


Marcus Jacobs is a biology major and Humanities Mellon Scholar, and he is extremely passionate about dessert. He aspires to use the skills he learns at Foothill College and California History Center to make a positive impact on the environment. Marcus' work focuses on transcribing some of the Yvonne Jacobson oral history recordings.

Michael Sulit, Humanities Mellon Scholar intern

Michael Sulit is helping CHC through oral history gathering and transcribing of oral history interviews. We are grateful for his willingness to learn new skills and to do whatever is needed at the time.

Matt Piasecki, California Youth Leadership Corps Intern



Matt was discovered abandoned in a box on the steps of the California History Center - a strange fate for a 40-year-old adult. Unsure of what to do with him, it was discovered that he had rudimentary audio/video skills and a passion for history. He was put to work creating content for the history center, until a more permanent home can be found for him. He lives off of coffee and snacks, while serving as a valued and competent intern.

Kammy Chiu, Student Volunteer

Kammy Chiu is a sophomore majoring in Communications. She is glad to have joined CHC this Fall quarter to have a chance to be involved in the oral history interviews. She wishes to accomplish this project by making full use of her Communication strengths, and to get to know interesting people in different communities as well.

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