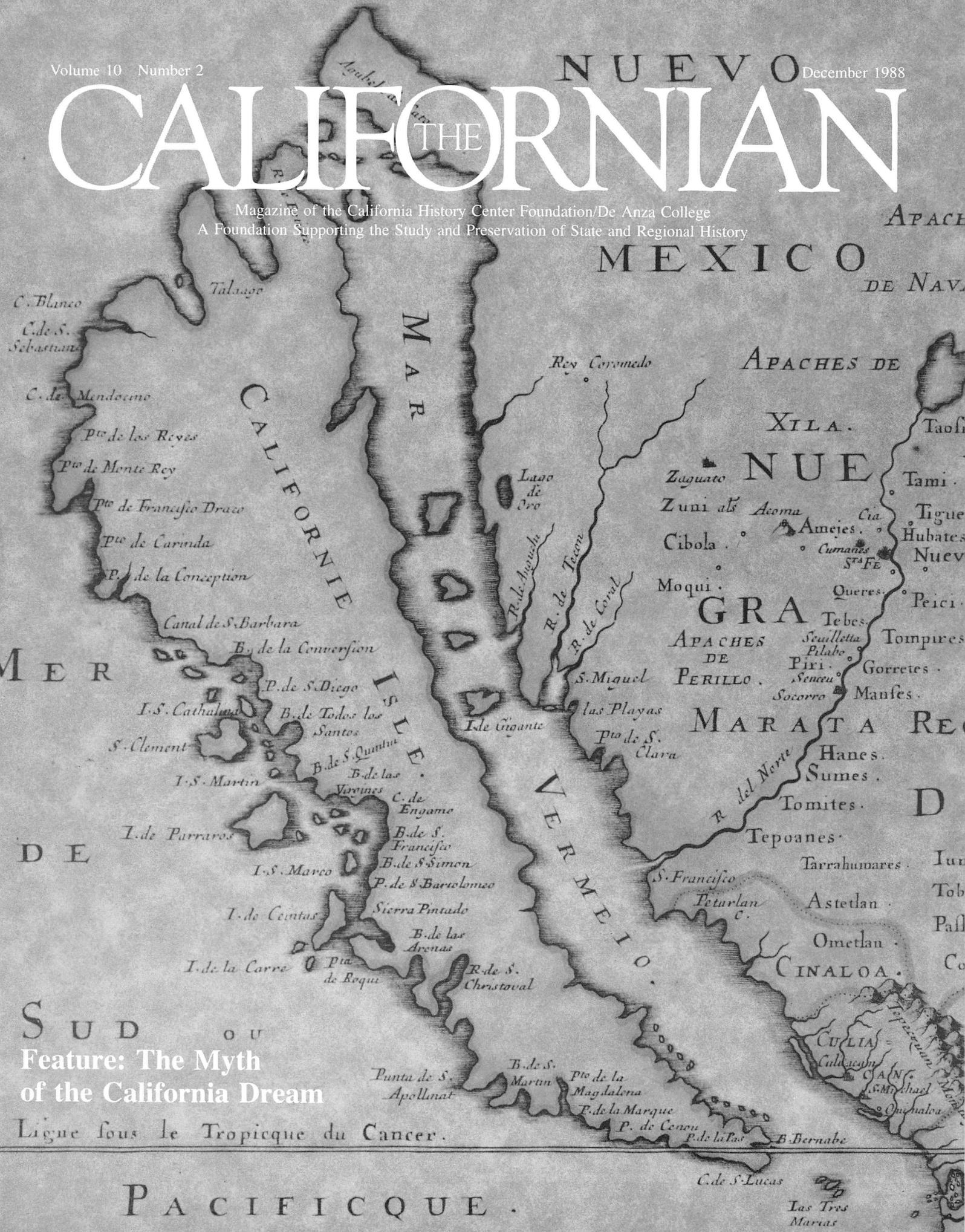


# CALIFORNIA THE ORNIAN

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



Feature: The Myth of the California Dream

Ligne sous le Tropicque du Cancer.

PACIFICQUE

## Collective Voices: Creating a Heritage Network

Recently a *San Jose Mercury News* guest editorialist observed that it is unfortunate so many people routinely refer to Santa Clara Valley as "Silicon Valley." To do so blocks out at some level "the heritage of our natural environment, of Costanoan and Spanish-colonial history, of mining and agriculture and academia and the arts. This heritage . . . ought not to be denied, for it is part of our identity."

This is an intriguing yet troubling commentary. On one hand, it recognizes that the growth and change associated with our "high tech" society dominates much of our thinking about ourselves and our community. I suppose we should not be too surprised by this. On the other hand, however, it suggests that the enormous work accomplished by our valley's heritage organizations is not very visible to our neighbors, and this should be cause for alarm.

How many Santa Clara County residents know the extent of heritage activity in our valley? Do they know that, not including our own history center, there are 10 historical museums in the county, stretching from Gilroy to Los Altos and covering topics from local and regional history to women, electronics, and quilts? Do they know there are some 20 historical societies and associations in our valley with a combined membership of at least 10,000 people? Do they know that over 100,000 people a year visit our historical museums, thousands more go on heritage tours and take classes in state and local history, and probably 1,000 people work as volunteers for historical museums and societies? Do they know that almost every city and the county has an official preservation or heritage commission, and that several communities have completed historical resources surveys?

I doubt it, and even some of us who are regularly involved with local historical societies and museums probably don't

know the real extent of people's interest in our state and local history or the breadth and variety of heritage activities in our valley.

One reason for the low visibility of heritage activities is because we have very weak ties between our own organizations and groups, and there is no central leadership in the heritage community. Historical societies and associations generally carry on without knowledge of the activities of other similar groups. Activity calendars are not shared. Publicity efforts are never coordinated. We have no ties to chambers of commerce, tourist bureaus, and the travel industry. Our ties to the educational community are limited, and we rarely work with the arts community. In short, we aren't blowing our own horn very well.

This year the history center hopes to begin addressing this issue by urging the formation of a Santa Clara Valley Heritage Network. In February we will host at the Petit Trianon a special gathering of representatives from all the valley's heritage organizations. To help us launch our discussions, we will be joined by an advocate of regional heritage networks, Nathan Sumner, the new director of the California Historical Society, and we then will spend an afternoon discussing mutual needs and problems.

In the end we can strengthen our valley's heritage community to the benefit of us all, for through cooperation we will gain strength and each of our groups will be able to better accomplish our primary goals of preserving, understanding, and sharing with others our rich heritage.

### James Williams

Director



#### Cover Photo:

*California has always been a somewhat mythical place for the rest of the world as this reproduction of a 1656 map shows. The map was recovered from the storerooms of a long-closed Western historical museum, accompanied by a history of "California as an Island." It wasn't until the mid-1700s that the first physical proof was presented that California was not an island. Map from the California History Center Collection.*

*CHC Trustee Ward Winslow, right, and long-time history center member and supporter Charles Duckwald, left, joined other guests at the preview opening of "By the Sweat of Thy Brow: The Story of Labor in Santa Clara Valley," on Friday evening October 7. The exhibit commemorates 100 years of organized labor in the valley and will be on display at the center through March 18, 1989. Photo by Jim Cochrane.*

# CALENDAR

**1/3 De Anza College classes begin**

**1/13 Volunteer Recruitment Reception**

1:30 p.m. at the CHC Trianon Building. Anyone interested in finding out more about the CHCF volunteer program is welcome to join us at our January meeting, followed by a special reception to introduce prospective volunteers to the history center. R.S.V.P. to 996-4712.

**1/16 Martin Luther King's birthday observed.  
CHC closed; De Anza classes do not meet.**

**1/27 Architectural restoration workshop**

This workshop co-sponsored with Marben Associates is geared for architects, city planners, preservationists, and real estate agents, and will be held all day at the CHC Trianon Building. For information and reservations, call 996-4712.

**1/28-29 A Weekend in Napa Valley**

Bus departs 8:00 a.m. Saturday and returns 5:30 p.m. Sunday. Instructor Lee Van Fossen leads a weekend exploration of the beautiful Napa Valley, including visits to several wineries, the Petrified Forest, and Sonoma State Historic Park. Cost to members: \$150; non-members: \$172 includes transportation, double-occupancy lodging, dinner, continental breakfast, honorarium, and fees. Reservation and payment due January 13.

**2/4 Penmanship as an Art: Exploring Spencerian Script**

10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at the CHC Trianon Building. Artist and calligrapher Carol Verbeeck examines the history of this elegant nineteenth century writing form. Participants learn the craft and have the opportunity to create a Victorian-style valentine. Cost to members: \$18; non-members: \$25 includes calligraphy pen, ink, paper, light refreshments, and honorarium. Bring a bag lunch. Reservation and payment due January 25.

**2/10 Lincoln's birthday observed. CHC closed;  
De Anza classes do not meet.**

**2/20 Washington's birthday observed. CHC closed;  
De Anza classes do not meet.**

**2/25 Discovering the Monterey Bay Aquarium**

8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. This trip down the coast led by naturalist Lee Van Fossen includes visits to the famed Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Point Pinos Lighthouse, as well as a walk along the shore to discuss coastal ecology. Cost to members: \$34; non-members: \$44 includes transportation, fees, and honorarium. Reservation and payment due February 10.

**3/3 Women Inventors in California**

7-9 p.m. at the CHC Trianon Building. A slide presentation by Mickey Karpas of the Oakland Museum focuses on the lives and projects of some of California's women inventors. Co-sponsored by the Women's Heritage Museum. Cost: \$3 includes honorarium and refreshments. Reservation and payment due February 24.

**3/4 Estates and Orchids: A Visit to Filoli and Acres of Orchids**

9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. The magnificent gardens of the Filoli estate will be the focus of this tour led by local horticulturist Claire-Norman Trine. The tour includes a walk through parts of the Filoli mansion and surrounding grounds, lunch at the Redwood City Cafe, and a visit to Rod McLellan Company's Acres of Orchids. Cost to members: \$44; non-members: \$54 includes transportation, lunch, honorarium, and fees. Reservation and payment due February 17.

**3/18 Last day to view "By the Sweat of Thy Brow"  
labor exhibit at the CHC Trianon Building.**

**3/24 Last day De Anza classes meet.**

## Of Interest to Members

**Joys of Winter** — An Exhibition of Antique Toys, toys representative through 1950s, Octagon Museum, 118 Cooper Street, Santa Cruz, through December 30, (408) 425-2540.

**Contemporary Bay Area Painting Survey**, exhibit of selected works by outstanding Bay Area painters, Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Rd., Palo Alto, mid-December through February, 1989, (415) 329-2366.

**Early Artists of Monterey Bay: 1800-1920**, exhibit featuring such painters as Frank Heath, Francis John McComas, William Keith, James Walker and more, Octagon Museum, 118 Cooper St., Santa Cruz, Jan. 13-March 10, 1989, (408) 425-2540.

**Memories of the Treasure Island Fair, 1939**, photos, artifacts, memorabilia, Forbes Mill Museum, 75 Church St., Los Gatos, through March, 1989, (408) 395-7375.

**Juana Briones House**, docent-led tours of the 1840s Palo Alto rancho house, by reservation only through the Women's Heritage Museum, (408) 252-9091, continuing.

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## State and Regional History

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As a benefit of membership in the California History Center Foundation, the center provides registration assistance to members who are taking history center classes only. All other students wishing to take history center classes, or members taking classes in other departments, must register through De Anza College. The center will register members Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-noon and 1-4:30 p.m. beginning Monday, November 28. For more complete details see the De Anza College winter quarter schedule of classes.

**Treasure and Yerba Buena-Island Treasures:** *Laurie Boetcher*

Treasure and Yerba Buena: Island Treasures traces the cultural heritage and history of these two small islands, one natural, one man-made, joined to each other by a causeway and to the Mainland on either side by the Bay Bridge. In a day-long tour students will see a film and tour the Treasure Island Museum and be afforded the opportunity to see the few cultural treasures remaining from the Golden Gate International Exposition, which are not normally available for public viewing. On Yerba Buena Island students will view several historic homes and buildings including: Nimitz House, home to the current commander of the naval base; a Victorian built in 1875 for the island's lighthouse keeper and current home to the Coast Guard Commander; and an historic lighthouse. The day concludes with a brief tour and film at the Vessel Traffic Service, the Coast Guard organization responsible for all water traffic between Sacramento and San Francisco. Seven-year Navy veteran Boetcher is currently a resident of Yerba Buena Island, a docent at the Treasure Island Museum and is completing her master's degree, specializing in California and Bay Area history.

**Historic Marin County:** *Betty Hirsch*

Historic Marin County provides a historical perspective to this unique area which, from the beginning, has had a cast of characters who brought controversy to everything, and whose beauty today is adamantly protected by its resident conservationists. Some of the more illustrious luminaries to be discussed include: Chief Marin, for whom the county was named; Quentin, his assistant; William Richardson, shipbuilder and developer; Don Timoteo Murphy; John Reed; Dr. Benjamin Lyford, the controversial embalmer; William Kent; and Sally Stanford. Two Saturday field trips take students to Marin Headlands, Marine Mammal Center, Old St. Hilary's, Lyford House, Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary and more.

**Northern California Missions:** *Chatham Forbes*

Northern California Missions explores the history of California's missions from San Antonio to Sonoma. Students will learn about the Spanish, Mexican and California Indian heritage which is revealed in the art and architecture, as well as the political and religious background of these preserved remnants of California's colorful past. On site field study of the following missions are included: San Antonio de Padua and Soledad; San Juan Bautista, Carmel and Monterey's Royal Presidio chapel; Santa Clara and San Jose; and San Francisco (Dolores), San Rafael, and Sonoma.

**Wine in California:** *Charles Sullivan*

Wine in California 1769-1989 is a survey course which examines the history of wine in California and the Pacific Northwest from Mission days to the present. Wine is a topic of great interest today, but its history is often shrouded in myth and misinformation. This course places the myths in their proper historical perspective and supplies factual information based on analysis of materials contemporary to the period being studied. Students will be introduced to the major periods of wine history; major personalities, wineries, and vineyards; data concerning grape varieties; wine types and styles; and recent information useful to the wine consumer. Two Saturday field trips take students into the wine districts. Several evaluations of California and Northwest wines are included.



*There are many photographs in the CHC Library Archives that are not identified, including the two on this page. Occasionally we run the photos in the **Californian** to see if any of our members might be able to help us with identification. These*

### **Santa Clara Valley Labor History: Jim Williams**

Santa Clara Valley Labor History is a one-day class tracing the experiences of working people in Santa Clara Valley from the early years of organizing efforts in the 1800s through the Depression of the 1930s to the present day. The current CHC exhibit "By The Sweat of Thy Brow: The Story of Labor in Santa Clara Valley" serves as the class focal point. James Williams, who wrote the exhibition text, will be your guide through this important piece of our past. Bring a bag lunch.

### **Portraits of Three Women: Nancy Mason**

Portraits of Three Women looks at the lives of three remarkable mid-19th century Santa Clara County women: rancher Juana Briones, artist/writer Mary Hallock, and attorney Clara Shortridge Foltz. Juana Briones de Miranda was granted title to Rancho Purisima Concepcion, 4,400 acres in the heart of the Peninsula, in 1847. She managed her vast holdings through the years with skill and acumen. Reared and educated in the genteel tradition of New England, Mary Hallock headed west to Colorado and New Almaden after marrying mining engineer Arthur Foote. Her sketches were published in Scribner's magazine and Century Illustrated. Clara Shortridge Foltz threw over the traces of traditional Victorian womanhood when she, a matron with several children, became California's first woman lawyer, and founded the public defender system. One-day field trip to the home of Juana Briones is included. Instructor Mason is a member of the Santa Clara County Heritage Commission.



*two photos were numbered consecutively in our files, which leads us to believe that the people may be from the same family. Is there anyone out there who can help us identify the pioneers pictured here?*

### **John Muir and Hetch Hetchy: Jerry Ifft**

John Muir and Hetch Hetchy explores the controversy surrounding the decision to dam the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park to supply water for San Francisco. Muir led the Sierra Club, itself split over the issue, in a vain attempt to prevent the project. The issue involved, utilization vs. preservation, is still with us today. A Saturday field trip to Martinez, site of Muir's home, is included.

### **Four Ethnic Groups – The California Experience: Jerry Ifft**

Four Ethnic Groups: The California Experience examines the history of the Chinese, Italian, Filipino and Mexican immigrants to California. A series of recent videotapes and guest speakers will provide personal insights. Exploited for their labor, discriminated against in law, these groups persevered to become part of California's colorful mosaic of cultures. A Saturday trip to Santa Cruz is planned.

### **North Beach and Telegraph Hill: Betty Hirsch**

North Beach and Telegraph Hill covers the history of North Beach and Telegraph Hill highlighting the various ethnic groups and the important pioneers who developed and shaped the area, including Apolinario Miranda, Henry Meiggs, John Fugazi and others. North Beach, still known as "Little Italy", contains a blending of many cultures, and Telegraph Hill, once smooth, round and covered with goats, is now highlighted by Coit Tower and elegant homes. A Saturday field trip will include walking tours of both North Beach and Telegraph Hill led by a guest lecturer from San Francisco City Guides.

# The Myth of the California Dream

by Janelle E. Smith Ozeran

The California Dream, shared today by many people in many places throughout the world, is not very different from the California Dream that resulted in the first Spanish contact with the Pacific coast of the ‘new world’, or from the California Dream of the Americans that followed them and claimed the Golden State for their own. Even across culture barriers the dream is little modified: it is a dream of a climate to cure physical illness, scenery to soothe emotional stress, and the resources and opportunities to build a rich new life.

The climate and beauty and resources of California have been a dream-come-true for countless people — both residents and outsiders who have benefited from California productivity. For others, the confusion of fact and fantasy about California proved that the California Dream is really a dream about a way of life that might or might not be achieved on any frontier.

The first Spanish explorers ventured into Alta California to explore what they believed was an island, like that described in Montalvo’s *Las Sergas de Esplandian*. Inspired by fabled cities of gold, they searched for the riches of California, for the wealthy native cities like those already conquered in Mexico and the lower Americas. They also searched for the (mythical) Strait of Anian, the Northwest Passage that would provide a direct route to Asia and through which Spanish ships would bring more wealth to the new world.

Possible ports were explored and established, along with overland trails into the north, and, very gradually, California became an occupied Spanish possession. The pioneers never found cities of gold, however, and the native people they encountered were not what the first explorers anticipated by any stretch of the imagination. The agreeable climate and unexploited resources allowed the development of the complex system of missions, presidios, pueblos, ranchos and maritime trade that characterize Spanish and Mexican California prior to significant foreign infiltration, but the former dreams of Califia the Amazon Queen, and of the precious streets of El Dorado had been replaced by the more commonplace dreams of the life a man might make of hard work as a missionary or a soldier, a ranchero or a tradesman.

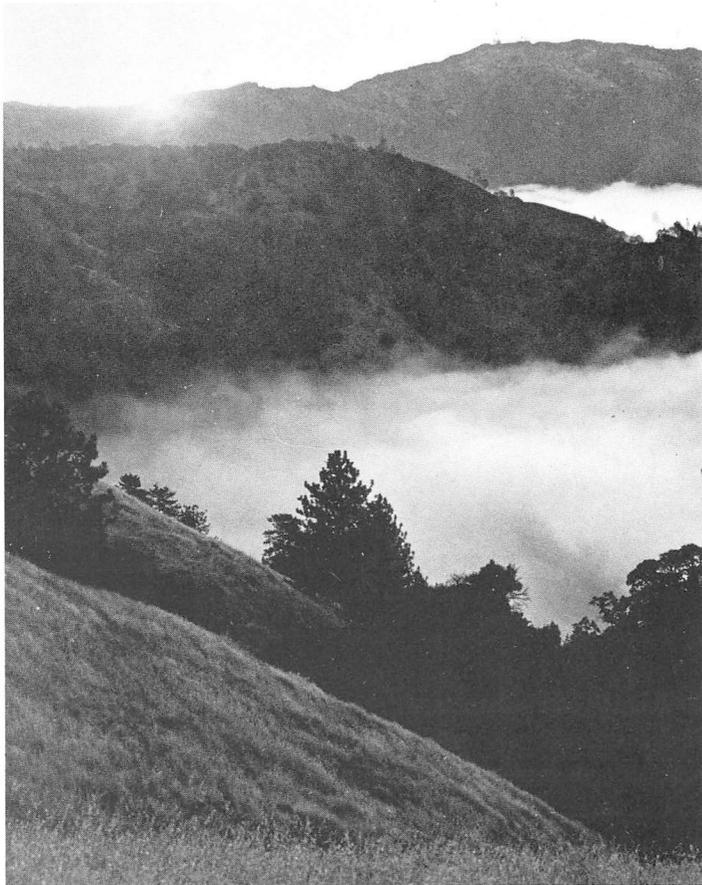
Ironically, the lives of the native-born Californios — the descendants of the first Spanish colonists — have also been mythologized in retrospect. While admitting that the disillusioned Spanish never kicked precious metals about in the streets, the



*The Yokuts, just one of the many tribes of Native Californians, never had a California dream because they had no need for, and probably no conception of, a way of life other than their own. Photo, California History Center Collection.*

modern storyteller (and, consequently, the modern student) still maintains a false belief in an exaggerated romantic and festive Californio lifestyle. Several decades of social and economic development are reduced to an ongoing succession of fiestas and cattle drives, attended by dashing vacqueros, brave caballeros, kind and hard-working padres, beautiful señoritas, and the occasional riff-raff of uncontrollable Indians. Some of these elements are certainly drawn from actual characters and events, around which stereotypes were built, but they really suggest another version of the California Dream — not a dream of the future, but, this time, a dream of an alternate past.

The fantasy surrounding the lives of the Californios obscures many interesting and significant facts about the history of California. It ignores, for instance, the complex economic relationships of the Spanish institutions, the physical difficulty of the frontier life, the neglect of colonists and the military by the Spanish government, the social nature of the Mexican revolution, and the plight of the Native Americans enslaved at the Spanish missions and on the Mexican ranchos. It ignores the similar plight of the Californios after the infiltration of significant numbers of Americans onto their lands, ultimately resulting in second-class



*From the seashore to the Sierra Nevada, the beauty and fertility of the land drew many people to the Golden State. Photo, California History Center Collection.*

citizenship and the destruction of whatever dreams they had had about life in California.

As if history did repeat itself, Americans sought California for the same reasons the Spanish had 300 years earlier. The United States (and European nations including France, Prussia, Russia, and England) had strong economic interests in the acquisition of California, and inspiring news from trappers, missionaries and adventurers who had reached California (or claimed to have been there) was quickly circulated throughout the States. Eventually, hundreds of thousands of Americans responded to innocent rumors and to deliberate propaganda. Willing, as the early Spanish had

been, to accept fantasy for fact, they left their homes and sometimes their families and set out to seek their fortunes and a better life in California.

Both the United States, as an entity, and individual American citizens hoped to gain from the acquisition of California, though the national interests (primarily economic) have been overshadowed by the dramatization of individual exploits. Participants in events such as the Bear Flag Revolt (a mob action involving fewer than fifty poorly organized men and lasting about nineteen



*Fertile land and the right climate for year-round crop cultivation provided a living for many families, and still does today. Photo, California History Center Collection.*

days) and the gold rush of 1849 (in which few found gold, but many became wealthy manufacturing mining equipment or selling goods to the miners) are glorified, while the crucial details of the United States' participation in the international race to claim California are not easily romanticized and, therefore, left out or considered to be incidental in this version of what we might call the 'Heritage Dream'.

The Gold Rush, treated very much like the rancho era, is one of the most distorted chapters of California history, and is one of the prominent events in the 'Heritage Dream'. In retrospect we have exaggerated the life of the lone miner, emphasizing his role as pioneer and forbearer, neglecting, for instance, the fascinating



*California has always had an abundance of recreational opportunities, as well as an excellent climate, for people's pursuit of leisure. Photo, California History Center Collection.*

development of innovative technology in the mines, the rapid and unique economic development of the state, and the social and cultural conflicts between Americans and people they considered culturally inferior Mexicans (including third and fourth generation Californios), as well as the intolerance of the Americans for Native Americans and later for Asian immigrants. Furthermore, it denies the privation and disillusionment of the miners in the fields — men, some with their wives and children and some separated from their families by distance and poverty, who managed to earn enough in the mines to sustain themselves or to make the long journey back to the eastern states. Like the Spanish explorers, their dreams of gold were quickly replaced by more common wants.

The California Dream has been shared by many people who, not finding what they dreamt of, stayed to pursue a more reasonable dream of life in California, or, disillusioned, returned to their former lives. Fueled by the distorted, romantic dream of the history and heritage of California, as well as by the truths about the natural environment and the innovative character of Californians, many people still pursue the California Dream.

Clearly, the California Dream is a dream of a way of life that has come true for countless people. Many outsiders (and many Californians) perceive the California lifestyle as a unique way of life that has come about by the direct influence of the environment and the opportunities it offers for daily activity. There is an unusual combination of industriousness and innovation, inspired by the abundant resources, and casualness and easiness, inspired by the climate and scenery.



*Inventors such as the Varian Brothers, opposite page, or father of flight John J. Montgomery, center above, saw their dreams through to completion in this state of opportunity. Photo, California History Center Collection.*

This paper has only alluded to the Native Californians who, isolated and protected by the natural geography of the region did, indeed, live on an island of sorts until the Spanish settled among them. Isolated as they were by the western ocean, the eastern mountains and the southern deserts, the Native Californians never had a California Dream, because they had no need for (and probably no conception of) a way of life other than their own. Not until they saw their place in the natural environment erased, their lands taken away, their social structures destroyed, and their families

enslaved, murdered, or lost in epidemics of imported diseases, must they have dreamt of something better. For the descendants of the Native Californians that survived, the California Dream must be particularly ironic. Their ancestors were, for the most part, casual hunter-gatherers, had no concept of war, and were remarkably aware of their place in natural environmental systems. The closest thing to the utopia sought by the early Spanish and Americans, and by many people today, may have existed all along in the Native Californian societies.



*Oakland Museum's California Dream exhibit showcases the best and the worst of what has been a myth for some and a reality for others. Photo courtesy Oakland Museum, Steve Rahn, photographer.*

*This essay was written by Smith Ozeran as a midterm essay exam for a Spring Quarter, 1987 History of California class.*

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# CULTURAL PRESERVATION

## Passing Farms Exhibit Mounted in San Jose

by Yvonne Jacobson

*Passing Farms, Enduring Values*, probably the most successful of the California History Center's original exhibits, opened at its permanent home, the San Jose Historical Museum, on Sunday, October 16. Many CHC members had the opportunity to see the exhibit during its run at the history center in 1981, but we hope you will take the time to revisit this marvelous photo exhibit. For those members who have never seen the exhibit, you are in for a wonderful experience.

The following article, written by CHC Foundation Board of Trustees President and Passing Farms exhibit director Yvonne Jacobson, tells the story of the Passing Farms project, from the beginning seed of an idea to permanent installation in San Jose.

This project began in 1979 when I realized that I should quit teaching at De Anza College to focus attention on my aging father and his memories of being a farmer in Santa Clara County. He did not have long to live. Once involved I realized that the story of our farm, the Ruel and Rose Olson cherry, prune and apricot orchard in Sunnyvale, had significance beyond our individual family.

I approached the California History Center, then under the direction of Seonaid McArthur. She saw the project as an important addition to local history studies and encouraged me to apply for a grant from the California Council for the Humanities in San Francisco, a division of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

With their initial support we were able to raise funds from other groups to finance the photo exhibit, first shown at Syntex and then opening at the history center in the fall of 1981.

Through the combined efforts of the CHC staff, CETA workers, and photographer Yolanda Wuth we were able to reproduce and mount over 200 black and white photographs, write and mount photo and artifact labels and collect a myriad of wonderful artifacts reminiscent of farm life in the Santa Clara Valley. The positive response to the exhibit prompted it to circulate to 14 other locations, including the Governor's office in Sacramento.



*Women packing apples at the Butcher family farm, Santa Clara, in the early 1900s; Mrs. Arthur Butcher is at far right. Photo courtesy Robert Butcher.*

By 1982 I began work on a book, based on the exhibit but more detailed. Through the history center and again the California Council for the Humanities, and with matching grants from over 35 sources, "*Passing Farms: Enduring Values*" was published by William Kaufmann in 1984.

In 1983 the center donated the exhibit to the San Jose Historical Museum since the Stevens Ranch fruit barn was available as an exhibit space. After much thought and debate, agreement was reached on how to transform the aging structure into an appropriate space for a photo exhibit. The desire to maintain the original feel of the old barn with its cracks and holes conflicted with the need to maintain the integrity of the photographs and artifacts. To insure some authenticity in renovation, original batten was found from a former hop barn in Windsor and original siding from a barn about to be razed in Santa Clara.



*Santa Clara Valley prune farmer, plowing his orchard, circa 1910. Photo courtesy California Historical Society.*

The Stevens Ranch Fruit Barn, typical of simple, one story, barn construction in our local area, was built of virgin redwood before the turn of the century. Orvis Stevens purchased land in the Coyote area, 12 miles south of San Jose in 1867. By 1892 Stevens had planted one of the first fruit farms in his area, including pears, peaches, apples, grapes and walnuts. The fruit barn was used for sorting fresh fruit and the storage of dried fruit and walnuts.

The U.S. Highway 101 bypass required the movement of the barn by CalTrans to the San Jose Historical Museum in 1978. San Jose City regulations required additional ceiling support and side buttresses. Temperature control keeps the photographs from deteriorating.

In addition to the black and white photos and farming artifacts, the exhibit contains panels with text that trace the history of the valley, large, beautiful 4 × 5 foot color photo boards, a gooseneck wagon laden with local families' prune boxes and a label collection from Ralph Rambo containing very rare canning labels which date back to the mid-19th century.

I personally want to thank the San Jose Historical Museum for their cooperation in making this project a reality. My thanks extend to all those who have supported this project since it began in 1979, especially the California History Center. The many volunteers and donations, the goodwill of numerous farm families speaks of the "enduring values," celebrated by this exhibit. My thanks to one and all.

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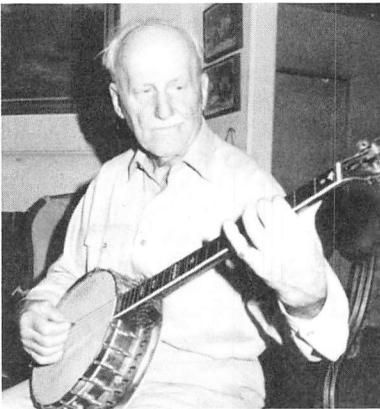
# PIONEER PROFILE

## Clyde Arbuckle: Dean of San Jose History

by Leonard McKay

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*The following biographical sketch appeared in Clyde Arbuckle's History of San Jose published by Smith & McKay Printing, Co. in 1985. It is reprinted with permission from Leonard McKay. This comprehensive history is available through Memorabilia of San Jose.*



Anyone who has ever met Clyde Arbuckle has been impressed by his encyclopedic knowledge of San Jose, Santa Clara County, and the West. Thus, this book has been eagerly awaited and a bit of Clyde's vast historic information has been preserved.

The author was born in 1903, the grandson of one

of the earliest pioneer parties to cross the great plains, the formidable Rockies, the vast deserts, and finally the high and rugged Sierra Nevada, before making their way to the "Llanos de los Robles," the Santa Clara Valley. So his knowledge of the West was born into his blood, and has flowed lively for more than eighty years.

He can remember the great earthquake of '06 when his bed went sailing across the room shortly after 5:00 a.m. He attended grammar and high schools in Santa Clara and San Jose (and, later, San Jose State College), supplementing the meager family income by delivering newspapers on his bicycle every day. Arising at 4:30 a.m., he would ride to San Jose to pick up his newspapers, load the papers into his "Anderson bags," and strike out on his route through the Cottage Grove, Hillside, and southern Willow Glen areas, delivering papers on the way, all done in time to put in a full day at school.

This proved to be an excellent conditioning for his later prowess as a championship bike racer with the Garden City Wheelmen. Somewhere in here, he managed to find time to become a professional banjo plucker appearing with local musical groups.

Clyde frequently speaks of the time "when he earned his living honestly." He's referring to the fact that he worked for years with the Railway Express, first driving a horse team and later a truck. He learned the location of every business house and private dwelling, and is still able to recall stories about those residents.

In 1945 he was named San Jose City Historian and Museum Director, and began teaching for the San Jose Adult Center in 1949. Forty years later he is still City Historian, and is still teaching for the Metropolitan Adult Education Program.

Earlier literary efforts include a collaboration with Ralph Rambo on "Ranchos of Santa Clara County," major contributions to the Mercury Centennial Edition of 1952, a weekly column for years in the Mercury entitled "Nostalgia," and many feature articles in historical publications.

In 1982 Helen and Clyde celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary and have two children. Helen, too, is a frequent contributor to magazines, and her themes are usually historical, particularly emphasizing woman's role in the western saga.

Arbuckle has received many honors, an honorary degree from San Jose State College, and has held office in nearly every historical society in the area. He was third President of the Conference of California Historical Societies, a statewide organization. He is a frequent and sought-after speaker who always delivers an entertaining lecture.

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# FOUNDATION NOTES

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## Board News



A new trustee joined the CHCF Board in October, Santa Clara Valley native Audrey Butcher. Audrey's roots run deep in this area. Both sets of grandparents, who were all farmers, came to the area before 1873. Her parents farmed in the Campbell area and Pala District.

Since 1948 Audrey, who has a degree in education from San Jose State, has lived and farmed with her husband Robert at Butcher's Corner, where Robert's family has lived since 1881.

Community involvement has always been at the forefront of Audrey's life. She has worked extensively with the Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Fremont Union High School Districts, served with the Camp Fire Girls of Santa Clara County and been president of the Cupertino de Oro Club.

The Butcher's affiliation with the California History Center goes back to the beginning, they have been members for 20 years. Not surprisingly, they also belong to numerous other historical organizations.

During her membership in the center Audrey has enjoyed the many books published, exhibits, classes, field trips, parties and other functions. The center, however, will be the real beneficiary of a trustee with such a history in the valley and with the California History Center.

The center was sorry to receive the resignation in September of board member Sy Syvertson. Sy, who is retired director of NASA-Ames, came on the board in the Spring of 1985. His affiliation with the center began when former director Seonaid McArthur started a project of recording oral histories with local women and men in the field of technology.

The germ of an idea for an exhibit about the history of NASA-Ames grew out of the meeting. This popular exhibit opened in March of 1985 and Sy became a member of the board shortly thereafter. We will miss his thoughtful ideas and wonderful contributions to the center.

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## Volunteer Reception Planned



A volunteer recruitment reception is planned at the center for 1:30 p.m., Friday, January 13. This is a wonderful time for current and potential volunteers to get together, talk about the activities of the center and share some refreshments. If you have some spare time and would like to spend it in a very rewarding and fun way, why not drop by and see what we are all about.

In June, the volunteers and Board of Trustees (who also volunteer their time) gathered for a social afternoon of talk and refreshments (photo above). It provided both the board and volunteers the opportunity to meet and get to know one another. Photo by Ward Winslow.

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## Video Tape in the Works

An informational video tape promoting the programs and activities of the California History Center has been started in cooperation with De Anza's television center. The tape will showcase our exhibits, library, publications, heritage tours, classes and the Trianon Building itself.

This tape will be used by people asked to speak to groups and organizations about the center, in classes and hopefully will be broadcast by the local community access cable channels. We are anticipating a mid-February completion date.

If any CHC members belong to organizations that utilize guest speakers, why not contact the center for a copy of our speakers bureau brochure. We are currently very busy scheduling a myriad of speakers and topics for local service groups.

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## Volunteer Profile

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Volunteer Jenny Wright admits she has a soft spot in her heart for history which, in turn, led her to take classes through the California History Center numerous years ago. Due to her own teaching duties at Woodside High School, she didn't begin her volunteer career at the center until 1986, after retirement.

Jenny was born in Kensington, Connecticut, living there until graduating from college. She taught school in New Orleans and Richmond, California until after World War II when she and her husband moved to Chicago. Both of her sons were born in Illinois and the family moved back to California in 1953.

A daughter was born in Palo Alto and Jenny returned to school, receiving her masters from Stanford. She began teaching English at Woodside and remained there until her retirement in 1985. During this time she held a six-year appointment as an Advanced Placement English Examination reader for the College Entrance Examination Board of Princeton, New Jersey.

Work kept Jenny busy until 1985, but she wasted no time in becoming involved after retirement. Not only does she volunteer as a docent at the history center, but she is also a docent at the Palo Alto Cultural Center. Her English background serves her well as a member of the CHC publications committee.

"I learn so much through the exhibits here. They are so stimulating and it is like a continuation of my teaching when I take groups through." The center is lucky to have such an interested, committed volunteer giving her time and expertise to our program.

*Everyone enjoyed themselves at the October 16 booksigning and author's reception for "Pomo Dawn of Song." Approximately 60 people came to the Trianon to receive their books and have them signed by authors Lois Stevens, seated left, and Jewell Newburn, seated right. Members who were unable to pick up their books at the signing, should have received their copies in the mail. This book of poetry, which accompanies paintings of the Pomo Indians by Grace Carpenter Hudson, is the latest edition of the center's Local History Studies series. Additional books can be bought at the center for; hardbound: \$21.13 (members), \$23.49 (non-members); softbound: \$15.35 (members), \$17.07 (non-members). Prices listed include sales tax, however please add \$2.00 shipping and handling. Photo by Jim Cochrane.*

## Exciting Times Await CHCF Volunteers

This year, under the leadership of Mary Jane Givens, volunteers are revitalizing and reorganizing their own group. Beginning this year monthly volunteer meetings include a variety of stimulating social activities designed to educate participants in local history as well as to provide volunteers with the opportunity to become better acquainted with each other. In November, following a brown-bag lunch at the Trianon, Jenny Wright, who shares her volunteer time between the CHCF and the Palo Alto Cultural Center, provided CHCF volunteers with a special tour of the cultural center's exhibit "The Art Quilt." In December, CHCF volunteers continued a long-standing tradition of sharing homemade holiday goodies while trimming the magnificent 12-foot Christmas tree that adorns the Grand Salon of the Trianon. Future plans include a trip to San Jose Historical Museum, where "Passing Farms: Enduring Values", a 1981 CHCF exhibit created by Yvonne Jacobson, was recently installed for permanent display. Guest speakers and film presentations will also be a part of future volunteer offerings.

It is clear that without volunteer efforts the CHCF would not be the quality organization that it is. In return, volunteers find gratification in their accomplishments and receive our appreciation for their efforts. In addition, by reorganizing and tailoring the volunteer program to their needs, participants are adding an extra measure of fulfillment to the task.



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## New Members

### Supporter

Herbert and Norma Lee Grench, Gerald Nieto

### Family

Helen and Edward Colby, William and Audrey Gould, Sanford and Kathryn Gum, Thomas Lamp, Elaine Lyne, Colman and Anne McDonough, Majorie and Dana Nowak, Martin and Rita Seldon, Joseph and Helen Soderstrom, Carl and Eva Swanson, Lisa and Pat Torres, John Wesley

### Individual

Jean Bass-Bradman, Laurie Boetcher, Maria De La Roza, Merry Edwardson, Van Freidin, Eleanor Garrissere, Pauline Gordon, Sylvia Graft, Jane Harrett, Leah Inwalle, Madelyn Isaacs, Sandra Kirkpatrick, Gary Kruger, Billie Markim, Nancy Mason, Jeanne Payer, Jean Salmon, Judy Sapper, Mildred Sapper, Doris Seney, Gerry Sipes, John Slenter, Marie Smith-Amacker, Sylvia Sugerman, Eugene Winslow

## Wishing . . .

We have been told by the man who services the history center's three computers that it will not be long before major problems begin to crop up due to age and usage (we recently had to replace a disk drive in one). The computers we are presently using have become obsolete and repairing them will be, if not impossible, at least expensive.

We are appealing to any CHC member who might be interested in becoming our computer benefactor, to help upgrade and improve our computer system. Another possibility would be if you are affiliated with, or know someone who is, a company that might be willing to donate computer equipment to the center. Call the history center with any of your ideas or information.

## Renewing Members

### Colleague

Gladys Stockmeir

### Sponsor

Fran Bennion, Bud and Marion Card, Charles and Karen Catania, Mrs. Morris Doyle, Burrel Leonard, Will and Hazel Lester, Anthony and Alice Lopina, Linda Quinterno, Eugene Ravizza, Sy and Joann Syvertson, Robert and Juanita Waid, Clinton and Betsy Williams, James Williams

### Contributor

Millie Chuck

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### Individual

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Miriam Bettie Tuttle

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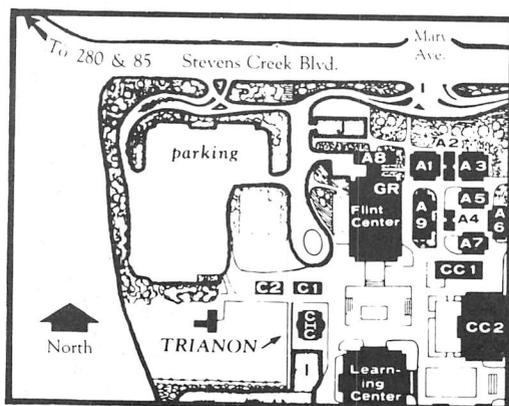
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**Trianon Bldg. Hours:**

Monday–Friday:  
8:00 am–noon, 1:00–4:30 pm  
Closed July and August

**Exhibit Hours:**

Monday–Friday:  
9:00 am–noon, 1:00–4:00 pm  
Docent Tours may be scheduled  
by calling 996-4712.  
Call for Saturday hours.



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