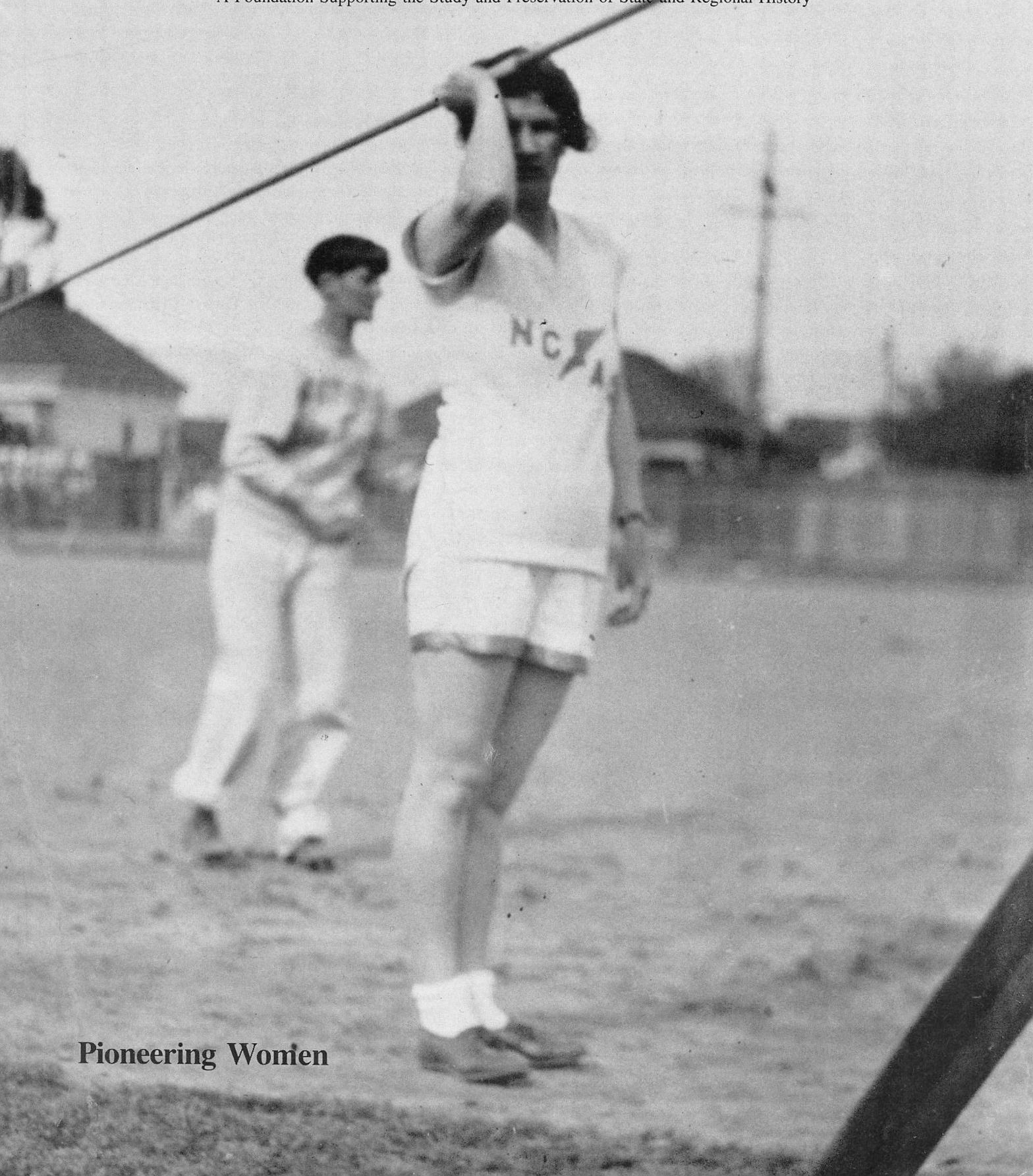


Volume 8, Number 2

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# CALIFORNIA THE FORNIAN

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



**Pioneering Women**

# EXHIBITS

## On the Horizon

It is always tempting after working many months on a major project, such as our present 75th Anniversary "California Woman Suffrage" exhibit, to stop and catch one's breath. Yet, although the staff at the history center may have paused briefly this Fall, we already are hard at work on new projects and activities.

On the horizon a special lecture, "Susan B. Anthony's Message to Californians," by Dr. Joan Jensen, historian from New Mexico State University, plus other activities continue to highlight attainment of suffrage by California women. A marvelous illustrated book chronicling the development of the famous San Francisco Bay scow schooner should be out this winter, and an exhibit of model ships accompanied by another look at our region's maritime history is planned for the Spring. Even further ahead, we are beginning work on a major 1988 exhibit.

Over the past century, workers in Santa Clara Valley sought a better life for themselves and their families. Like workers all across America, they joined together in labor unions to pursue better working conditions and improve wages. Carpenters, painters, brewers and bakers; printers, stonecutters, cigarmakers and teamsters; mechanics, teachers, clerks and cannery workers — all found that through unity they could improve their lives. While much is known about the labor movement in large cities, in the east and in the nation at large, we know little about the story of workers in our own backyard.

To redress this situation, the history center has agreed to work with the Santa Clara County Labor Centennial History Project. During the next several months we will document the story of our valley's labor movement through oral history and traditional research, and in January 1988 present a major exhibit coinciding with the centennial of the formation of the Santa Clara County Federation of Trades in January 1888.

We would like to invite you to participate in this important work. Already local unions have provided over \$4,000 in start up funding for the project, and George Gastil, a graduate student intern from the Public History Program at the University of California at Santa Barbara is finishing work on grant proposals to seek further funding. Your individual donations, however, are always important in funding CHC projects, and we would welcome them.

But funding is not all we need. Most of the history of labor in our valley is held in family photo albums and trunks or boxes of old papers and letters stored in closets, attics and basements. If you have any such materials which might relate to work and labor unions in our valley, please share them with us, either by donating them to the California History Center or permitting us to make copies of them. It is, after all, the story of individuals in Santa Clara Valley which makes up the story of labor in the valley.

**James Williams**  
Director



**COVER:**

*Margaret Jenkins was the first woman from Santa Clara County to participate in the Olympics: 1928 in Amsterdam and 1932 in Los Angeles. Nineteen twenty-eight was the first year women's track and field events were held, and even though Margaret's specialty was the javelin she competed in the discus throw because they didn't have the javelin event that year. Photo courtesy Margaret Jenkins.*

*Over 150 people attended the opening of the "California Woman Suffrage" exhibit on October 11. Cupertino Mayor Barbara Rogers performed the ribbon cutting honors and State Senator Rebecca Morgan made brief remarks about the influence of women in politics. The exhibit is on display through March 13, 1987. Photo by Eileen Snider.*

# CALENDAR

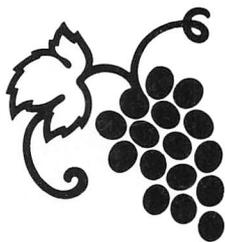
The history center will be closed to the public from December 20 through January 4. Have a happy holiday season.

1/5 *De Anza College classes begin.*

1/9 *Volunteer orientation*

1/23 *"Potpourri": An Evening With Clyde Arbuckle*  
7:30-9:30 p.m. Spend an evening at the Trianon with noted historian Clyde Arbuckle as he recounts stories of the early days of Santa Clara Valley. Refreshments will be served. Cost to members \$5, non-members \$7.50.

1/31-2/1 *Napa Valley Weekend*



Bus departs from De Anza at 8 a.m. Saturday and returns Sunday at 7:30 p.m. Naturalist Lee Van Fossen leads an enjoyable tour of the Napa Valley region with stops at two wineries, a restored grist mill, Calistoga's Old Faithful geyser, and the Petrified Forest, and dinner at the Depot Hotel. Cost to

members \$130 and non-members \$145 includes transportation, double-occupancy lodging, dinner, honorarium, and tour fees.

2/13, 2/14, *Presidents' birthdays observed; CHC closed; no classes.*

2/22 *Susan B. Anthony's Birthday Celebration*

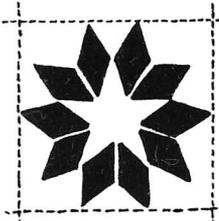
1:00-3:00. Nationally known historian Dr. Joan Jensen will speak on the life of suffragette Susan B. Anthony. A choral group will perform, and refreshments will be served. The event takes place at the Trianon Building; there is no charge, but please let us know if you plan to attend.

2/27 *"Ain't I A Woman?": Charmaine Crowell Presents A One-Woman Show*

7:30-9:30 p.m., CHC. Renowned actress and playwright Charmaine Crowell performs her original monologue based on the life of American abolitionist and suffragette Sojourner Truth. An informal reception follows. Funded in part by De Anza College EOPS. Admission before 2/20 is \$5.00; \$7.00 after and at the door if tickets remain.

During winter quarter the history center will be open 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturdays, beginning January 10 and running through March 14, with the exception of February 14.

3/6 *A Patchwork of History: California's Women*  
10:00-2:30, CHC. Author and U.C.



Santa Cruz professor Bettina Aptheker presents an illustrated discussion of the lives of some of California's women, focusing on the heritage that has been preserved through quilting.

Following lunch (on your own or order a box lunch), visit the Euphrat Gallery exhibit on women's political expression through quilts. Funded in part by the Euphrat Gallery. Cost to members \$4.00 and non-members \$7.00; box lunches \$5.00.

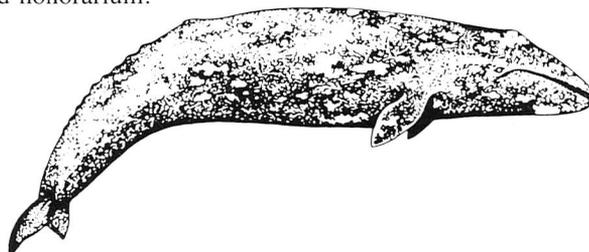
3/8-14 *Women's History Week*

A noontime brown-bag lunch series held at the Trianon Building presents distinguished speakers who will address this year's national women's history week theme "Honoring Generations of Courage, Compassion, and Conviction." No fee, but reservations are requested.

3/13 *Last day to view the suffrage exhibit.*

3/21 *Point Reyes National Seashore*

7 a.m.-6 p.m. Lee Van Fossen conducts a tour of this national preserve, including visits to the Point Reyes Lighthouse, the Miwok Village, and a hike on the Earthquake Trail. Cost to members \$30 and non-members \$40 includes transportation and honorarium.



## Of Interest To Members

The Art of Anthony Quartuccio, Forbes Mill Regional Museum, 75 Church St., Los Gatos, through January, 1987, 395-7375.

Sovereigns of the Sea - A Century of Battleship History, Treasure Island Museum, indefinitely, (415) 765-6182.

Northern California Indian Art, Vacaville Museum, Vacaville, through April 10, 1987.

Silver in the Golden State, Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak St., Oakland, through January 4, 1987, (415) 273-3401.

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# EDUCATION

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## State and Regional History

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*The following classes are being offered by the history center during Winter Quarter, 1987. For complete details and registration information please see the De Anza College Schedule of Classes.*

**The Machine in America:** *Jim Williams*

The Machine in America studies America's romance with technology and the role of the machine and engineering in American life with a special focus in California's unique contributions to the national experience. Technology is not just machines, from stone tools to automobiles, that have shaped our culture. It is all methods of achieving a practical purpose. Technology is a tool in the miner's skilled hand and the astronaut's first step on the moon. It is the computer and the quick retrieval of information as well as the speed by which distances have been shortened and people tied together in spite of terrain. Technology is technique, the means we use for evolving purposes of being. Further emphasis in the course will be placed on the interrelationship of technology and social values.

**Wine In California:** *Charles Sullivan*

Wine in California and the Pacific Northwest 1769-1987 is a survey course on the history of the California wine industry from the Mission days to the present. New to this course this year is the sizeable examination of the history of wines of the Pacific Northwest, a recent phenomenon, so far as high quality is concerned. Students will be introduced to the sources available for the study of wine history and weekly are presented with a collection of periodicals, government publications, books and primary sources. Two Saturday field trips take students to historical wine areas of California. There will be several evaluation tastings.

**Oral Histories of Women in Politics:** *Judy Adams*

An exploration of the roles of women in politics, local and state elective and appointive office, as well as volunteer political action/education groups, through lectures, guest lectures, class discussion and individual oral history interview projects with women in "the public eye". Instructor Adams will provide students with first-hand historical research methods and interview skills which will include audio and video taping techniques.

**Banking in California:** *Brian Smith*

Banking in California 1929-1987 explores the history of banking from the stock market crash and resulting depression in 1929 to the present day of "plastic" money. As the growth of the industry exploded on 20th century America, banking needed to make changes in old established guidelines. No longer could profits be made by successful methods of decades past. The advent of the automobile created a need for credit. As the depression ended, new industry required start-up capital. Two world wars and several police actions expanded the opportunities for California banks. With the advent of equal rights, plastics and the computer, a new age of multi-level banking emerged. This class will note the growth and changes in California's banking industry. Three field trips included.

**Los Gatos and the Roads to Santa Cruz:** *Chatham Forbes*

Los Gatos and the Roads to Santa Cruz focuses on this south bay town which is celebrating its centennial year. When it was incorporated a century ago, Los Gatos already displayed the characteristics of a complete town: transportation, industry, agriculture, banking, retail business, schools and churches. Of these, the touchstone to development was transportation, notably the railroad. Guest lectures, field trips and class discussion will reveal the process by which Los Gatos grew and prospered.

**Point Lobos:** *Lee Van Fossen*

Point Lobos examines the historical and ecological development of Point Lobos State Preserve. Lectures will cover the ancient uses of the park, cattle grazing, whaling, abalone preparation and shipping and continue into current uses of the park by all of us. Two field trips will be conducted in order to view the uses by man and to study natural history. Tidepool life, rocks, birds and marine mammals will be viewed and discussed. Slides and videos will be used to illustrate the lectures.

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**San Francisco's Grand Hotels:** *Betty Hirsch*

San Francisco's Grand Hotels traces the history of four significant landmarks in San Francisco's history: the Palace, the Mark Hopkins, the Fairmont and the St. Francis. This course will examine the dreamers who were responsible for creating and developing these edifices and how they have figured prominently in the city's rich history.

**North Beach:** *Betty Hirsch*

North Beach, one of San Francisco's most colorful areas, is not a beach at all (although it was before the Bayfront was filled); rather it is a narrow valley between the slopes of Telegraph and Russian Hills with restaurants, cafes, shops and Victorian houses. Still known as "Little Italy", it contains a blending of many cultures. The region has a rich literary history with its creative spirit, not just something of the past, but a constant and living presence. This course will examine the groups, individuals and events that have made North Beach what it is today.

**Pioneers and Petticoats:** *Lisa Rubens*

Pioneers and Petticoats presents an historical overview of the role women have played in the development of the West: from the ladies who crossed the plains in covered wagons to settle Oregon's Willamette, to the women who created Silicon Valley's post-industrial labor force. Class sessions will focus on the historical conditions that shaped women's lives — whether in Indian tribes, the Mormon colony or Hollywood — as well as the life stories and contributions of specific women from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life, including Jane Stanford, Dolores Huerta, Annie Bidwell and Faith Leong. There will be a special emphasis on California women who continue to pioneer in the arts, in science and in public life. With an M.A. in History from the University of Michigan, instructor Rubens teaches history, including women's history, at Peralta Community College. She is an historical consultant for California Historical Society as well as numerous other local historical societies and groups, and has published many articles, most having women as their primary focus.



*Historic Benicia was just one of the Foundation Heritage Tours offered last spring. CHC members thoroughly enjoyed their tour to this East Bay community. Photo by Jane Herold.*

# Pioneering Women

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*By definition a pioneer is an innovator, one who ventures into unknown territory, an explorer. Presented here are the stories of two pioneering women. One, Sarah Wallis, was a pioneer of the 19th century best known for her local efforts in the areas of suffrage and equal rights for women. It was due to the efforts of women like Sarah Wallis that women like our 20th century pioneer Margaret Jenkins could make strides in their own spheres of interest. In Margaret's case, this was in the field of competitive sports.*

## Portraits of Sarah

by Dorothy Regnery

The 75th anniversary of woman's right to vote in California arouses interest concerning the motivators of the process. Sarah Wallis was its leading advocate. What stimulated a woman, living with her family on a farm in Santa Clara Valley, to participate untiringly in the movement? Since there are no identified photos, no diaries or letters written by her, the image of Sarah Armstrong Montgomery Green Wallis must be reconstructed from fragments of terse comments. She was diminutive and beautiful. She had a pleasing personality; few objected to her persuasiveness, because she was considerate, conscientious and helpful. Eagerness to learn helped Sarah to rise above the lack of a formal education. Survival nurtured responsibility, dominance and ambition. It took courage and conviction to lead the California suffrage movement.

### **Sarah Armstrong**

Her childhood is retrievable from memories of her brother. Their Wesleyan Methodist parents, born in New York, were consumed by the Westward movement. Sarah was born in southern Ohio in August 1825, and within two years her family migrated to Indiana. By 1834 they were in western Indiana. In 1839 they crossed the Mississippi River to farm in Buchanan County in western Missouri on the fringe of Indian Territory. When her father died in 1842, sixteen-year-old Sarah became a "hired girl" in the St. Joseph home of Dr. John B. Townsend; her eight-year-old brother worked for a blacksmith.

### **Sarah Montgomery**

Journals and reminiscences reveal Sarah Montgomery as a friendly, fearless frontierswoman. Prior to the spring 1844 departure for California of the Elisha Stephens' party, Sarah married a gunsmith, Allen Montgomery, who was ten years older than she. It is conjecture if the marriage was the culmination of

romance or a means to move westward, or if their employer encouraged it for his own economic benefit. In contrast to other women in the party Sarah enjoyed the overland trek and recalled the crossing was "very pleasant until we came into the mountains." When snow began to fall, the party divided at the eastern foot of the Sierra Nevada. Sarah accompanied Mrs. Townsend and a girl her age, Ellen Murphy, and four men crossing the summit via the American River on horseback.

While Montgomery was employed by Capt. John Sutter cutting lumber on the south fork of the American River, Sarah, seemingly without fear, made her way alone occasionally to the fort. Their isolated cabin was the setting in January 1846 of a quilting bee, a rare social event in California.

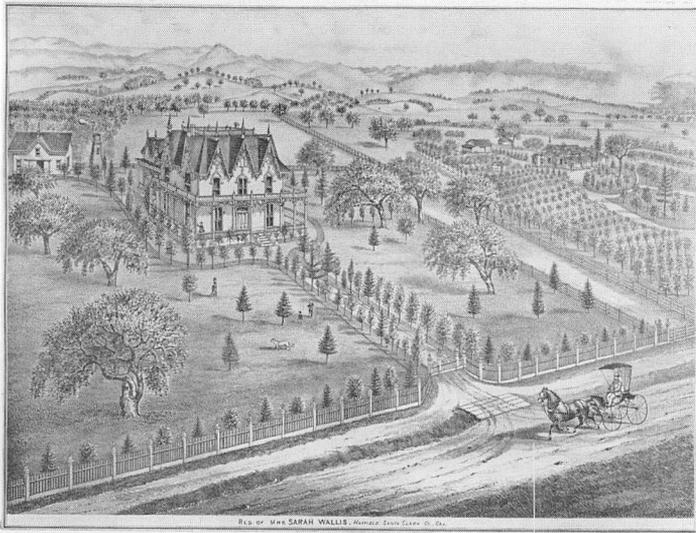
Unlike most Yankee immigrant women, Sarah learned to speak Spanish. Her husband joined the American 1846 revolutionists and was one of the "motley array of drunkards in the cuidad of wine and aguardiente" stationed in Los Angeles. Alcoholism held much significance in each of Sarah's marriages and probably accounts for why she readily accepted the alliance of the suffrage and temperance movements. Sarah over-wintered 1846-47 at Sutter's Fort, and by listening while another woman taught a five-year-old girl, Sarah learned to read and write.

After the conquest of California the Montgomerys moved to San Francisco where Sarah supplemented her husband's income by taking in boarders. Six months later Montgomery abandoned Sarah. As a respectable "widow" Sarah pursued almost every acceptable means of livelihood: fed boarders, rented rooms, took in washing and did sewing. When news of gold discovery reached Honolulu, Montgomery returned to California, but Sarah was unaware of his whereabouts.

### **Sarah Green**

Letters written by Sarah's next husband provide insight into her second marriage. Talbot H. Green had an excellent reputation in Monterey as Thomas O. Larkin's associate. Fifteen months after Montgomery's desertion, Green became a partner of William D. M. Howard in San Francisco. Upon receiving "word of his insane wife's death" Green proposed to Sarah, who was fifteen years younger than he. They repeated vows twice in October 1849: once in a quiet ceremony at Sarah's home and again at a gala affair in San Jose. For a year and a half the couple were happily ensconced in a cottage in Happy Valley away from rowdy, city life.

Green was not recognized as Paul Geddes, a Presbyterian from Pennsylvania, until April 13, 1851. In the midst of his campaign for Mayor of San Francisco, a sensational newspaper charged



No known photographs exist of Sarah Wallis even though she was a well-known suffrage and women's rights activist who lived in the Santa Clara Valley for many years. Her most famous residence was Mayfield Farm, built in 1857 and located in what is now the Barron Park area of Palo Alto. Illustration, *Historical Atlas of Santa Clara Co.*, 1876.

Green with bank fraud and abandoning a family. Immediately Green departed "to secure proof" of his innocence. Although he arranged that Sarah would receive \$450 monthly, he showed little concern about the tragedy into which his escape catapulted Sarah, who was six and one-half months pregnant. On April 15 his male associates assembled at the Eagle Saloon to make speeches of admiration before marching to the dock to watch Green board a steamship.

Sarah again took in boarders. Quite by accident Sarah was reunited with her seventeen-year-old brother, now a cripple. After studying law, he was admitted to the bar in 1855. He would assert legal rights denied his sister as a woman and would become a strong advocate of woman's rights.

While living in Tennessee under another alias, Green learned of Larkin's need for his power of attorney to secure payments due them by the U.S. Government. Being in need of funds he contacted Larkin, though Green refused to reveal his whereabouts until signing an affidavit in April 1854.

A meeting with Sam Brannan in New York in March 1855 induced payments of money long due Green, and Green agreed to "deal liberally" with Sarah. Those unaware of the circumstances concluded her new wealth status resulted from holding title to the gold rich American River cabin site.

### Sarah Wallis

Sarah's life as wife, mother and suffragist can be determined from her efforts on behalf of women. Sarah began divorce procedures in January 1854, and Larkin forwarded the application to Green. For the first time Green responded with a note to Sarah. On July 25, 1854, "Miss Sarah Green" married Joseph Sawyer Wallis. A contemporary of Sarah, Wallis had been lured to California by gold and found employment as a clerk in San Francisco. Encouraged by Sarah he studied law. He accepted



While Mayfield was a rural area during the years Sarah Wallis lived there, she entertained many well-known people at Mayfield Farm including Ulysses S. Grant and Susan B. Anthony. This is Main Street in 1886, with Grimley's Hotel and Livery on the right at Grant Street. Photo courtesy Palo Alto Historical Association.

Green's son as his own, and acting on a unique petition the 1855 State Legislature changed the child's surname.

Sarah's brother brought suit for judgment of \$10,036 owed her by Elisha O. Crosby. In 1856 title to Crosby's 250 acre Mayfield Farm, now known as Barron Park in South Palo Alto, was conveyed to Sarah Wallis. A caption under an 1876 lithograph in the *Atlas of Santa Clara County* reads: Res. of Mrs. Sarah Wallis. The property was hers, but as an example of property rights, the U.S. Census assigned it to Joseph B. Wallace (sic.).

The Wallises built a stylish Victorian mansion at Mayfield Farm. Neither haughty nor demanding, Sarah enjoyed the congeniality of the area. Regardless of its rural setting, they entertained lavishly, and their ultimate party was in 1877 with President Ulysses S. Grant as guest of honor.

An investor in the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad, Sarah helped to secure local right-of-ways. In 1867 when a community was platted, Wallis urged the subdivider to apply the name Mayfield, and Sarah persuaded officials to move the railroad station from the present Churchill Avenue crossing to the town. A ball in Sarah's honor marked the memorable occasion. All five of the Wallis children attended the Mayfield public school.

Interest in Susan B. Anthony's 1860 struggle, which resulted in granting property rights to married women in New York, caused Sarah Wallis to become devotee of the "radical" publication *The Revolution*. She was very cognizant of the national 1869 origin of the Woman's Suffrage Association. While in her early forties Sarah began to devote her life to promote equality.

The first widespread consideration in California of woman's rights arose from a series of lectures given by Anna E. Dickinson, which Judge and Mrs. Wallis attended. In response, several suffrage societies were organized, and the one Sarah Wallis started in Mayfield was the most active of all. The societies held a joint



Although snow is not seen very often in the Santa Clara Valley, the snowstorm of February 1887 provided a “Winter Wonderland” setting for the Wallis home at the N.W. corner of Grant and Ash Streets in Mayfield. Sarah moved to this smaller home when she had to sell Mayfield Farm in 1878. Photo courtesy Palo Alto Historical Association.

meeting in January 1870 at Dashaway Hall in San Francisco. At their first evening session Sarah’s name was presented for its President. Reporters visualized her as “a lady of imposing presence and very earnest in the movement.”

After his 1857 election as Justice of the Peace, Wallis was thenceforth addressed as “Judge Wallis.” Often neglected are reports which printed Sarah’s name as “Mrs. Judge Wallace” and are mistakenly associated with the wife of Justice of the California Supreme Court. In 1862 Wallis was elected a State Senator. Traveling across the continent on the new railroad Sarah accompanied Wallis to Washington when he was admitted to the Bar of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1870. At the time they witnessed the oath of office being administered to the first black U.S. Senator. They looked forward to when a woman would be likewise honored. Both Wallis and Sarah were sensitive to the rights of blacks. Parallels were often drawn between the rights of slaves and the rights of women.

The summer of 1871 Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton, traveling on passes provided by Leland Stanford, came West, not only on behalf of woman suffrage but to arouse women against legal bondage under “man marriage” and to encourage women to face facts about sex, prostitution and double standards. Sarah Wallis generously gave them financial support. Stanton had a rendezvous with concerned women at Mayfield Farm. Later when Anthony was a guest there she held an enthusiastic meeting in

Mayfield to which “an omnibus load of supporters” drove from San Jose! With Sarah’s usual flare there was musical entertainment, a ball and midnight supper.

Articles of Incorporation for *The California State Woman Suffrage Educational Association*, filed on July 10, 1873, were signed by Sarah Wallis, its President. As implied, the organization hoped to educate women to comprehend government while procuring the franchise. Sarah led its lobby in the 1877 State Legislature for passage of the bill allowing women to practice in the California courts. The next year her committee was not allowed to introduce a suffrage clause at the constitutional convention, but it was able to incorporate the provision that no person could be denied admission to any state college on account of sex.

Sarah’s wealth was devoured by the 1875 Depression, and she was forced to sell Mayfield Farm. Her financial reversal seems to be the basis for subsequent lack of acknowledgement of Sarah’s efforts. The Wallises built an attractive town house, and Sarah continued to work locally. In the 1880s, the woman’s movement began to display an evangelical zest — prayers, hymns and liturgies, cutting across all creeds. Presently local historians often misconstrue Sarah’s Mayfield meetings as “religious services.”

The Wallises lived on borrowed money, but not until after Wallis’ death in 1898 did the local money lender evict Sarah from her home. Her health was failing, so her son (by Green) provided a house in Los Gatos. Sarah died there on January 11, 1905. She



On October 11, 1986 the site of Sarah Wallis's Mayfield Farm was officially dedicated as a state historic landmark, even though the home is no longer standing. Photo by Ward Winslow.

was buried beside Wallis, their son and son-in-law in the Union Cemetery, Redwood City. Today their plot is a place where refuse is piled — a rude thanks for Sarah's perseverance on behalf of all women.

*Regnery, born and raised in Billings, Montana has been a resident of Portola Valley since 1950. Although she has a degree in Physical Chemistry, Regnery has had a life-long interest in history and has taught local history classes in the area. She has written two books, "An Enduring Heritage: Historic Buildings of the San Francisco Peninsula" in 1976 and "The Battle of Santa Clara" in 1978. Regnery has been studying the life of Sarah Wallis for many years and is preparing a manuscript for publication.*

## Margaret Jenkins: Living The Competitive Spirit

by Yvonne Jacobson

Margaret Jenkins, the first woman from Santa Clara County to participate in Olympic games (1928 and 1932) said at an alma mater luncheon at San Jose State in the Olympic year 1984, "How different now that women are accepted in the world of sports and competition. In days long gone by, you were frowned on if you took part in sports anything heavier than croquet. Now fortunately it is not only highly accepted, but praised."

Jenkins, in her eighties and living in Campbell, can look back at the period when entering competitive sports placed a woman in the category of "oddball," a curiosity or worse.

America in the 19th century expected women to appear fragile and non-competitive. Woman's sphere was the home. Rigid separation of sex roles required her to wear clothes which draped and constructed the female body. She became the "peacock" of the species, intended for the visual gratification of the viewer, not physical activity. The battle to free women from cultural constraints coincided with the battle to change women's dress.

How is a pioneer created? In Margaret's case, she had a powerful role model in her non-conforming mother who fancied the bicycle as a favored pastime, complete with the much ridiculed bloomer outfit.

The bicycle, introduced in the 1870s helped to change women's roles in general. It was considered sinful that a girl should ride one; only the committed braved criticism of impropriety and lewdness. Despite this, some women quickly responded to the mobility suddenly at their disposal. By 1896 Margaret's mother, then, Mala Etta Helms, 17, not only belonged to a popular San Jose bicycle club, the Garden City Cyclers, but thought nothing of riding to San Francisco to do a little shopping. On one occasion in San Francisco's Kezar stadium, wearing a modified man's racing outfit, Mala easily outpaced a woman dressed in a more elegant outfit in a demonstration race, staged to promote women's use of the bicycle by a manufacturer.

Margaret, born in 1903, first showed signs of sports ability at Saratoga Grammar School. Since she could throw a baseball an unheard of distance for a girl, she was pressed into service on the boys' baseball team.



*Some of the members of the 1928 women's track and field team pose in their official Olympic parade dress warm-ups on the ship to Amsterdam. Margaret, far left, has lent four pieces of her Olympic clothing to the history center's woman's suffrage exhibit. Photo courtesy Margaret Jenkins.*

Margaret attended Santa Clara High School in 1917 and joined the girls' baseball team which competed in the Girls Athletic League. Teams from San Jose, Campbell, and Los Gatos high schools were included, among others. Her father, Frank Jenkins, a fruit buyer and farmer in Saratoga, offered her one dollar for each home run she could hit. He later regretted his generosity as she slammed homers two and three times a game!

Margaret attended San Jose Teachers College, now San Jose State University. When it first began as San Jose Normal School in 1862, physical training for girls consisted of calisthenics and gymnastics. As attitudes toward women changed, more activities were added. By the time Margaret arrived in 1921, a physical education degree was available (the first three were granted in 1921) and the P.E. program for women included baseball, tennis, volleyball, swimming, archery, hockey, speedball, and basketball.

Margaret quickly established herself in most of these sports as an exceptional talent. She was an all-around athlete, the best that Santa Clara County had seen. But women competing was still taboo in most quarters. Marion Conover, a P.E. instructor, objected strongly to women in competitive sports and actually

gave Margaret a low grade in one class. Margaret felt it reflected Conover's bias and successfully appealed the grade.

Fortunately, the Director of the Women's Physical Education Department felt differently. In 1924 Laura Herron, later coach to the women's field and track team in the 1928 Olympics, approached Margaret on the field and suggested she enter the National Telegraphic Track Meet in which colleges from across the United States telegraphed their scores to a central location. Margaret entered in the baseball throw, the basketball throw, both competitive events in that era, and the javelin, which she had never thrown before.

She came in second in the javelin. Then Herron discovered that she had brought Margaret the heavier men's javelin! San Jose Teachers College won second place in the national event. The next Director of Physical Education, Maud Lombard, who followed Herron in 1925 reflected widespread community and national sentiment by establishing a policy which said, in effect, any girl who competes in sports will not be recommended for jobs.

While intra-mural meets were acceptable at this time, women's competition in individual sports and between colleges was still

frowned upon. This put San Jose Teachers College back at square one, where it stayed for decades.

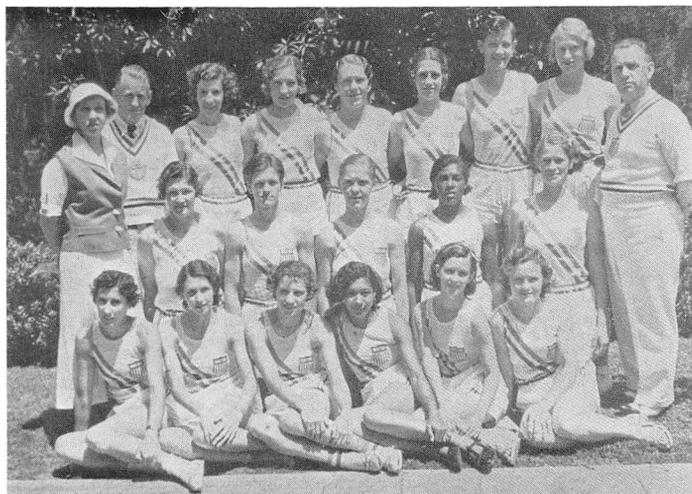
In looking back at the curious notion that women should hold back female talent, Margaret believes this attitude reflected a fear of change on the part of teachers who had been trained to accept traditional roles for women. Winning requires aggressiveness and a healthy dose of ego, expected in men, but unacceptable at that time in a woman. One swimmer was severely criticized by Conover for bringing her first place trophy to school. Margaret was not intimidated.

Tennis, introduced into the United States by New Yorker Mary Outerbridge in 1874, proved to be an acceptable sport for society women. Margaret's ability made her a natural to join the San Jose Tennis Club which met on the courts at the elegant Vendome Hotel. She held the Santa Clara County singles, doubles and mixed doubles title between 1924 and 1926. Appropriate attire for women included long white stockings and a loose fitting white, mid-calf dress.

Margaret graduated in 1925 with a degree in General Education as well as Physical Education and she began teaching sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in Santa Clara, a job she held for thirty years. After school, she practiced long hours with the javelin, the shot put, basketball throw and other events, for local and national meets organized by the Northern California Athletic Club and the Pacific Association. Without sponsors, this was the period of the true amateur athlete. But that was not her real problem. She realized she was handicapped because there were few if any outstanding coaches for women.

Soon, Margaret broke the world's record in javelin by throwing it beyond 100 feet. Her top rival, Lillian Copeland, then broke Margaret's record with a throw of 116 feet. In May 1927 Margaret regained the record at 121'-3/4". But she still did not have a coach.

In spring of 1927, with "nothing but my courage," she arrived one afternoon at Stanford University's Angel Field. The man she approached, at the height of his career, was probably one of the best track and field coaches Stanford ever produced, having won three NCAA national championships. R. L. "Dink" Templeton, himself a maverick who upset traditions, listened to her proposal and said, "I've never coached a girl, but it's something of a challenge. Bring your gear tomorrow and I'll take a look at what you can do." In this period, Margaret gave up the bloomer costume worn by women track and field athletes for the more practical shorts, causing many raised eyebrows. The novelty quickly wore off and shorts were accepted.



1932 American Olympic Women's Track and Field Team—Front row—Simone Schaller, Ethel Harrington, Mrs. Evelyn Hall, Tidy Pickett, Evelyn Furtch, Mary Carew. Second row—Margaret Jenkins, Mildred Didrikson, Gloria Russell, Louise Stokes, Nan Gindele. Back row—Mrs. Aileen Allen, Chaperone; Fred L. Steers, Manager; Annette Rogers, Jean Shiley, Lillian Copeland, Elizabeth Wilde, Ruth Osburn, Wilhelmina Von Bremen, George H. Vreeland, Coach. Margaret's main competition was Mildred "Babe" Didrickson, considered to be the best female athlete of her time. Photo courtesy Margaret Jenkins.

Meanwhile at Stanford, "The men gathered around to see this 'dumb girl' do her stuff," says Margaret. She threw the javelin for Templeton; she now had a coach. He taught her how to "loft" the javelin, to turn and lift it as it left her hand and, more than once, told her how to add distance by "throwing your ass" behind the heave. To the amusement of the male athletes, he used the same language with Margaret as he did with them. Working with a male coach and with male athletes caused further distress in certain quarters.

By this time San Francisco sports writers who were promoting women's sports through their articles, had heard about Templeton's protege and brought Jonni Myyra with them to watch Margaret work out. From Finland, he had won the gold at the 1920 and 1924 Olympics in the javelin and had been made an honorary member of San Francisco's Olympic Club. Impressed with her skill, he offered to make her a javelin, just like those he had made to use in the Olympics.

This gift proved to be a major bone of contention in the national meet in Eureka, September 3, 1927, for it did not have an official stamp burned into the wood. Lillian Copeland, later to earn a gold medal in the 1932 Olympics discus throw, was Margaret's main competition. Copeland's coach, Ailene Allen, objected to



*Shown here in 1984, with just a few of her many awards, Margaret still remembers what it was like for a young woman forging her way into competitive sports in the 1920s. Photo by Yvonne Jacobson.*

Margaret's javelin and a heated dispute arose. It was finally settled by the judges who insisted that all the javelins, excluding Margaret's, be available for use by all the girls.

By the time the fracas was over, Margaret was angry. She lifted Copeland's javelin and threw it to another world record, 129'-1/2", a record which held until broken by the famed Mildred "Babe" Didrikson in the 1932 Olympics. The Eureka meet received national press coverage.

While women had competed in the Olympics as early as 1908 in ice skating and 1912 in swimming, their first track and field events were in 1928. There was no javelin event. Margaret went back to Templeton and said, "Why can't I throw the discus?"

He replied, "You're not a discus thrower. You've got the world record in javelin, be content with that." Margaret insisted that she could throw the discus. He replied, "Where did you get that from, that you can do it?"

Much to his surprise, she answered, "From you. You are always telling us we can do it. Keep trying, you can do it." With that he ordered a woman's discus and Margaret began practicing two months before the trials.

She came in second, thereby qualifying for a position on the Olympic team of 1928. "I never got the hang of it, though," she says, describing the discus. In Amsterdam, she came in ninth. Four years later, in 1932, a reporter found her practicing the discus in a back alley in Santa Clara and wrote in his article she was too old and should forget it. "Four years is a long time," he said.

Nothing spurred her on more than to be told she couldn't. Margaret qualified again for the 1932 Olympics. The Mercury Herald apologized in print and ran her photo on page one. Margaret came in eighth at Los Angeles.

While many people disapproved of women in competitive sports, portions of her community were supportive. When Margaret needed \$300 to go to the Olympic trials in Newark, New Jersey in 1928, a friend and newspaper writer, Theron Fox, led the effort to raise money from the Santa Clara community. Ironically, one contribution came from Walter L. Bachrodt who asked that his \$50 donation remain anonymous. As Superintendent of Schools for San Jose, he did not want to oppose publicly his director of Girls' Physical Education, Cecelia O'Neil, at San Jose High School who opposed women in competitive sports!

Margaret and the other female sports pioneers proved that women possessed skill, guts, courage and the drive to win. They proved women's competitive urge. Lillian Copeland wrote on a photograph of herself that she gave to Margaret, "Competition is the spice of life." If only given the chance and encouragement, what might women attain? As Margaret said to the sports luncheon in 1984, "Let us hope we can keep this good attitude and be able to compete with the best and be admired rather than criticized."

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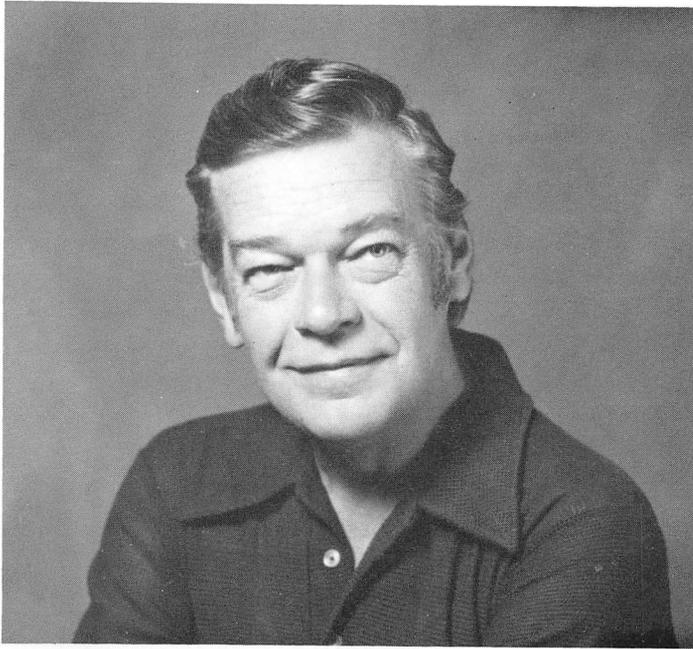
*Jacobson has had an active interest in history and women's studies for many years. She has a bachelors and masters degree in English. Born and raised in the Santa Clara Valley, she is the author of the acclaimed CHC publication "Passing Farms - Enduring Values," a look at the agricultural past of this "Valley of Heart's Delight." Jacobson is a personal friend of Margaret Jenkins.*

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# FOUNDATION NOTES

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## CHC Welcomes New Trustee



Kenneth Manning joined the CHC Foundation Board of Trustees this fall and brings with him many years of community activity and involvement. A native Californian raised in Palo Alto, Ken worked in newspaper advertising and promotion at the Palo Alto Times, San Mateo Times, and retired from Meredith Newspapers in 1982 after 22 years. He is a member of the Palo Alto and Cupertino Chambers of Commerce, a 25-year member of the Cupertino Kiwanis and an active volunteer with Cupertino Community Services. Ken received the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Cupertino Chamber and has been involved on the Board of Directors and chamber committees for over 22 years.

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## Out Into The Community

Two mini-exhibits put together by the history center have been out in the community this fall. One, a photo exhibit about Women in Agriculture, was on display at the Santa Clara County Harvest Faire October 24, 25 and 26. A thank you to the volunteers who helped set the exhibit up and staffed the exhibit during the three days. History 10 students Matthew J. Greer and Douglas Kent Tumacder produced a videotape on women's role in agriculture for the fair and as a class project.

Volunteer Helen Windham pulled together photos and artifacts to fill the six display cases at the county offices on Hedding Street in San Jose for the month of October. The cases featured four of the center's publications, the suffrage exhibit and the history of the Trianon Building and history center activities.

The center's activities and publications were also featured at two conferences this fall. One was the American Association of State and Local History, held in Oakland in early October and the other was the mid-October meeting of the California Committee for the Promotion of History in Bakersfield.

*Many visitors enjoyed the center's Women in Agriculture exhibit, on display at the Santa Clara County Harvest Faire in October. Photo by Belinda M. Van Sickle.*



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## Planned Giving

The California History Center Foundation is in the process of organizing a planned giving program. An important component of estate planning, planned giving provides the means for individuals to leave a special legacy to valued non-profit organizations.

### Project Immortality

Tile donations were made to honor the following individuals and businesses through placement of an imprinted tile in the Project Immortality courtyard adjacent to the Trianon Building.

Harold L. Thomas - Composite Artts  
Manzini Fine Jewelry

## Business and Foundation Donors

Bull's Glass and Screen Center  
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Pacific Bell  
Pacific Gas and Electric  
Paul Masson  
Plumbers and Steamfitters Union, Local 393  
South Bay Teamsters, Local 296  
United Labor Community Services for U.F.C.W. 428

## Historian to Speak



In celebration of Susan B. Anthony's birthday, on February 22, the history center is pleased to present a talk on "Susan B. Anthony's Message to Californians" given by Joan M. Jensen, head of the history department at New Mexico State University. Jensen, with a Ph.D. from UCLA, has done extensive research and writing on women's role and influence in the United States. Among her numerous books are "California Women: A History" co-authored with Gloria Ricci Lothrop and "Decades of Discontent: The Woman's Movement 1920-1940," co-edited with Lois Scharf. Women in agriculture and in the labor movement have been a primary focus for many of the papers Jensen has written.

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## New Members

### Family

Raymond and Thelma Epstein, Bruce and Lisa Kaduk, Dorothy and Donald Kienitz, T.G. and Virginia Roland, Ann and David Sebastian, William and Kreena Smyth, Orlene and Don Tschantz, George and Betsy Young.

### Individual

Jean Austin, Fritz Bauman, Irene Bradley, John Crawford, Kathryn Donahue, Judith Espinola, Bill Helfman, Linda Holland, Nancy Jones, Nancy Mason, Andy Nordquist, Jason Otoshi, Joan Pearl, Nancy Phillips, Betty Rogaway, Barbara Schmidt, Howard Sklar, Leta Weiss, Jenny Wright.

## Renewing Members

### Sponsor

Allan Brown, Ken Bruce, Bud and Marion Card, James and Pat Compton, Anthony and Alice Lopina, Roy and Catherine Roberts, James Williams, Clinton and Betsy Williams.

### Supporter

Robert and Audrey Butcher, Charles and Karen Catania, Leanna and Robert Gaskins, Doris and Marty Grushkin, Mae Regnart.

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### Individual

Ann Anger, May Blaisdell, Eleanor Cameron, Cornelia Cespedes, Dorothy Dall, Marlene Duffin, Donald Fitzgerald, Donna Mae Flynn, Virginia Frazier, Carmelita Geraci, Audrey Gilbeau, Richard Grialou, Geneva Guidotti, Jane Herold, Nancy Hertert, Harold House, Margaret Landry, Lee and Eva Lester, Minnie Linsk, Elizabeth Martin, Mary Oakley, Melita Oden, Jeanne Ottinger, Carol Rakich, Nicholas and Camilla Rokitiensky, Joseph Rosenbaum, Lee Scoville, Claire Simmonds, Eileen Snider, Margaret Trefren, Ronald Vandenberg, Sharon Vick, Barbara Wood.

*We extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our new and renewing members for helping make our program possible.*



*Volunteer Coordinator Helen Riisberg was just one of the many workers who helped out on the Trianon work day held September 13. Sprucing up the building by spackling and painting, washing windows, raking leaves, cleaning the columns, hosing down the building, moving books and just plain cleaning in general were: Roy and Cecelia Anderson, Ward Winslow, Helen Windham, Henrietta Marcotte, Paul Trimble, Betty Petersen, Nell Ward, Mary Sylvain, and Christine and Darby Hailes. Zee Tieger and Jewel Altman prepared a wonderful lunch for the weary workers.*

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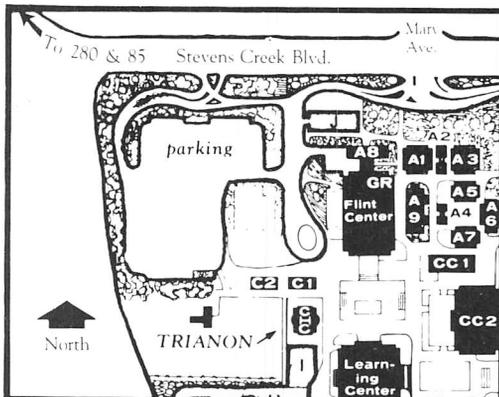
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### Trianon Bldg. Hours:

Monday–Friday:  
8:00 am–noon, 1:00–4:30 pm

### Exhibit Hours:

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



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