

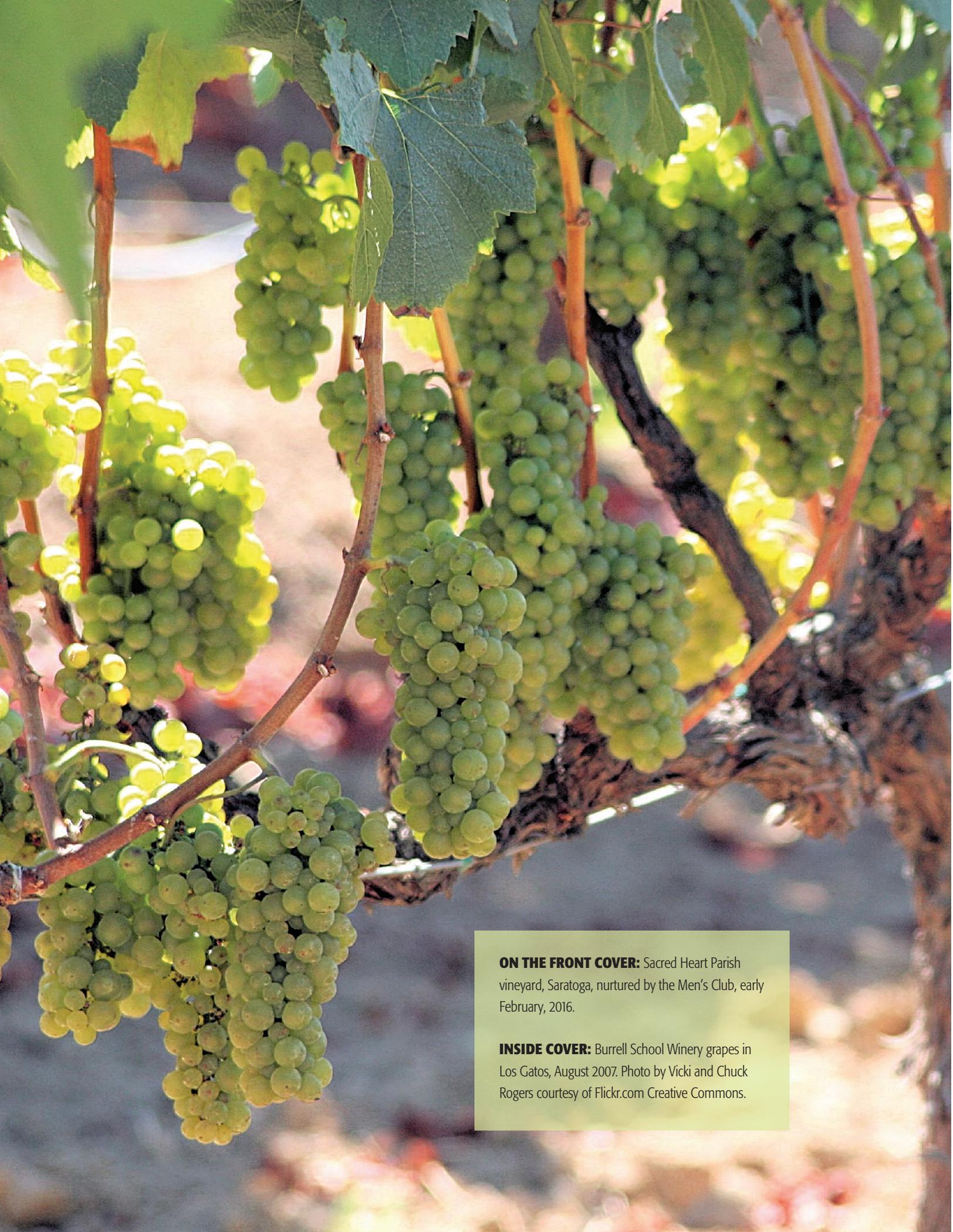
NUMBER 41 MARCH 2016

CALIFORNIAN

*California History Center
& Foundation*

A Center at De Anza College
for the Study and Preservation
of State and Regional History

**History
through the
grapevine**



ON THE FRONT COVER: Sacred Heart Parish vineyard, Saratoga, nurtured by the Men's Club, early February, 2016.

INSIDE COVER: Burrell School Winery grapes in Los Gatos, August 2007. Photo by Vicki and Chuck Rogers courtesy of Flickr.com Creative Commons.

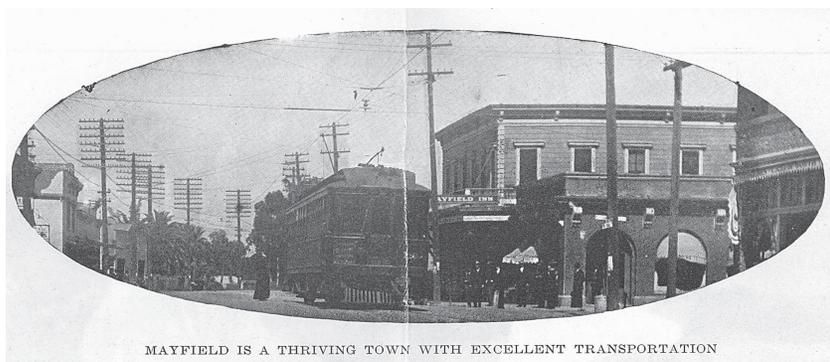
Winter Calendar

JANUARY

- 4 Classes begin
- 18 Martin Luther King, Jr., birthday observance
- 22 Voice of Witness workshop CHC 9
- 28 Living Legends lecture CHC 6:30
- 30 Living Legends field study

FEBRUARY

- 12 Abraham Lincoln birthday observance
- 13-14 Presidents' Day Weekend
- 15 George Washington birthday observance
- 18 Day of Remembrance Conf. Rms. A&B 1:30
- 18 Living Legends lecture CHC 6:30
- 20 Living Legends field study



MAYFIELD IS A THRIVING TOWN WITH EXCELLENT TRANSPORTATION

MARCH

- 10 Stanford Communities lecture CHC 6:30
- 12 Stanford Communities field study
- 14 AAUW Mary Jo Ignoffo on Women Writing History Conf. Rms. A&B 3:30
- 24 Stanford Communities lecture CHC 6:30
- 25 Last day of Winter Quarter
- 26 Stanford Communities field study



California History Center & Foundation
A Center for the Study of State and Regional History
De Anza College

21250 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA (408) 864-8712
Fax: (408) 864-5486 Web: www.DeAnza.edu/CalifHistory

Trianon Building Hours:
Tuesday through Thursday 9:30am to noon and 1-4pm
or call for an appointment.

Foundation Board

President

Ulysses Pichon

Founding President

Louis Stockmeir

Founding Executive Director

Walter Warren

Trustees

Alicia Cortez, Purba Fernandez,
Cozetta Guinn, David Howard-
Pitney, William Lester III, Ron
Muriera, Cecilie Vaughters-
Johnson, Noemi Teppang

Ex-officio

Carolyn Wilkins-Greene

CHC Staff

Director

Tom Izu

Staff Assistant

Azha Simmons

Librarian

Lisa Christiansen

Californian

Editor

Lisa Christiansen

Contributing Authors

John Ahouse
Angelica Aldana
Lauren Coodley
Suruchi Mohan

In this Issue

Director's Report	4
Civil Liberties	5
Enduring wineries	8
Oil: A social history of Southern California	18

At the Center

At the Center Highlights	21
Membership	21
Winter Classes	24

Californian is published by the California History Center & Foundation. The magazine is mailed to members as a benefit of annual membership in the CHC Foundation. Membership categories: \$30 Individual; \$40 Family; \$50 Supporter; \$100 Sponsor; \$500 Patron; \$1,000 Colleague.

Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The value of goods received as a benefit of membership must be deducted from the amount of all contributions claimed as a deduction. CHCF members receive issues of *Californian* magazine and members who contribute at the \$50 level and above also receive a yearly Local History Studies publication, when available.

© 2016, California History Center Foundation ISSN: 0742-5465

Director's Report



Tom Izu

All the history that fits

A popular online satire magazine recently published an article about historians alarmed by the growing amount of history and how there seems to be no end to it in sight; where will it all fit, they urgently ask.

This quarter we are using our exhibit hall to start sorting out some of the center's own history and to figure out where it will all fit. By this I do mean the books, papers, exhibit remains, and sundry items collected over the past 45 years or so of our center's existence.

My conclusion is that the local history business is a messy business filled with clutter *and* one without reasonable end. It is clearly not "tidy" and gets us pretty mixed up at times. While I do dislike housecleaning and the feeling of dread that it instills when order does not reveal itself magically, I have found a message of comfort to me hidden in all of this: the clutter, I have come to realize, is the order and the reality of things. I say this because the style of local or popular history we subscribe to is largely based on people's stories, and these stories tend to be pretty messy by nature, filled with contradictions and odds and ends that don't always fit neatly into everyone one's sense of order or ultimate purpose.

Such is the case with many of the things we do here. It might look jumbled some times, but out of a wide range of topics and stories about our region we offer involving culture, politics, geography, from the mundane to the profound (and sometimes just *weird*), can come deep understanding — one that requires you to do the putting into place and ordering about so it fits in your own mind, neatly or otherwise. It really is up to you.

This issue of *Californian* is no exception: What does the history of local wineries, Proposition 187, and Upton Sinclair's oil windfall have to do with each other? Is it proper that such stories occupy the same space, intellectually? See what you can make of it... And if you think I am just being lazy, you might be right. I don't do housecleaning well at all but I do try to make everything fit!

Californian was in production when we learned of the passing of Chatham Forbes, Sr., on February 12. A tribute to Chatham and his decades of service to the California History Center, De Anza College, and the local history community will appear in the next *Californian*.

AAUW Event at De Anza College

Women Writing History

Talk by Mary Jo Ignoffo, historian and author

Monday, March 14, 2016 3:30 PM

Conference Rooms A & B

Mary Jo Ignoffo invites you to hear about some women authors, of both fiction and non-fiction, whose work has illuminated specific periods of American history. She will recommend making your own list of favorite historical writers. Such a list often reveals at least as much about the reader as the writer. It can be an excursion into the heart and soul, leading one to explore ever widening horizons. Which images and characters linger in the imagination and bring greater insight and understanding of a specific time and place?

Women writers: Zora Neale Hurston, Harper Lee, Barbara Tuchman, Lisa See, Barbara Kingsolver, Kathryn Stockett, and Jhumpa Lahiri

Mary Jo Ignoffo's passion for history and story-telling has led her to author six books that provide in-depth and original looks at fascinating moments in history. Her latest, *La Verdad: A Witness to the Salvadoran Martyrs* (2014), fuses oral history interviews with historical commentary. Ignoffo's biography of the rifle heiress, Sarah Winchester, in the words of Gary Kurutz of the California State Library, "finally sets the record straight on one of the most fascinating and misunderstood women in California history." Ignoffo's articles or book reviews have appeared in the *San Jose Mercury News*, *Santa Clara Magazine*, *The Californian*, and *California History*. She teaches history at De Anza College in Cupertino, California.



Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative

The irony of passing Proposition 187

By Angelica Aldana

“Because equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air:

we all have it, or none of us has it. That is the truth of it.”

—Maya Angelou

One of the most controversial initiatives in California history has been Proposition 187. This proposition was passed by California voters in spite of mass demonstrations against it. In hard economic times, the proposition was designed to save California large expenses by denying foreigners living in the state illegally important public services. On Election Day in 1994, Proposition 187 was overwhelmingly passed and some voters hoped that not only would California improve financially, but also that the undocumented immigrants would leave after losing healthcare and education services. Therefore, even if Californians were legitimately concerned with the recession, a sector of society sought more than economic relief through Proposition 187—it also sought to curb the state’s changing demographics, which in turn united the Latino community.

Before Proposition 187, California’s economy had been steadily failing as was the case in the rest of the United States. “In the early 1990s, the nation once again experienced a major recession. California, hit hard by the downturn in the aerospace industry, took longer than the rest of the country to recover economically” (Chavez, 21). During this time, California had the slowest economic growth in the country. The lack of prosperity made many California voters turn their attention to the long-time growth of undocumented immigrants. As often happens in times of recession, marginalized groups of people can become scapegoats. In the strained 1990s, hostility was directed at undocumented immigrants, especially Mexicans,



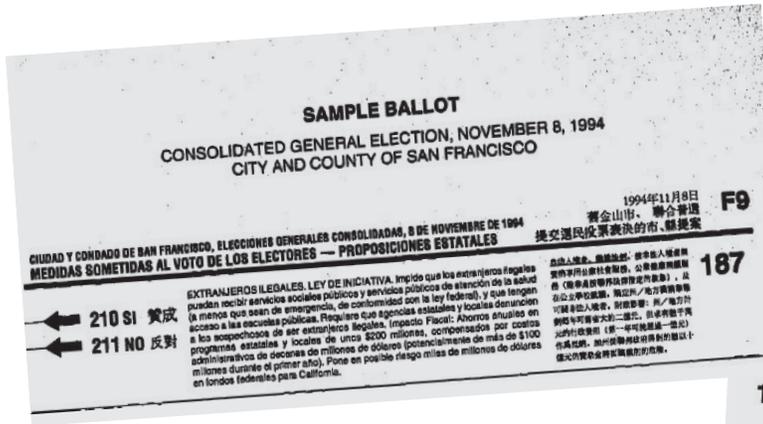
Korean Resource Center

and this group was the scapegoat of the time. Voters mobilize against those they perceived to be parasites of the state. And so, what was considered to be a measure to save California from economic ruin could also be seen as a way to blame immigrants, undocumented or not, for the state’s problems.

For years the Mexican-American population had been growing in California. The presence of these widely diverse people can be traced far into California’s past. In the twentieth century, Mexicans continued crossing the border to fill jobs during World Wars I and II, and during the Bracero Program. Likewise, with Mexico’s own economic problems, workers kept coming throughout the decades. Increasing numbers stayed to lay down roots, visibly changing California’s demographics. According to Debra A. Miller’s *Illegal Immigration*, “the most frequently cited statistic [of undocumented immigrants] is the Pew Hispanic Center’s estimate of 12 million” (11-12). Miller goes on to say that more than half of that number, around 6.2 million, are Mexican. This dispersion is certainly not unique to Mexican people. At different points in California’s history other immigrants have come to work and stay. Miller states that the other 5.8 million undocumented immigrants come from “Asia (9 percent), Europe and Canada (6 percent), and Africa and other countries (4 percent)” (12). So it is clear that not all undocumented immigrants are from Mexico. Yet, when the public thinks “illegal aliens in California,” the first image that comes to mind is “Mexican.” This image might be based on the fact that most



Angie Aldana is a full-time student at Skyline College. She has returned to school after a twelve year absence to raise a family, and wrote this essay for Professor Michael Messner’s California History class. Though majoring in engineering, Angie plans to minor in political science and has a great interest in California issues. Born and raised in San Diego, she has lived in the San Francisco Sunset District since 1992. Angie enjoys walks on Ocean Beach with her husband, Sherman, sons Edward and David, and the family dogs Honey and Luna.

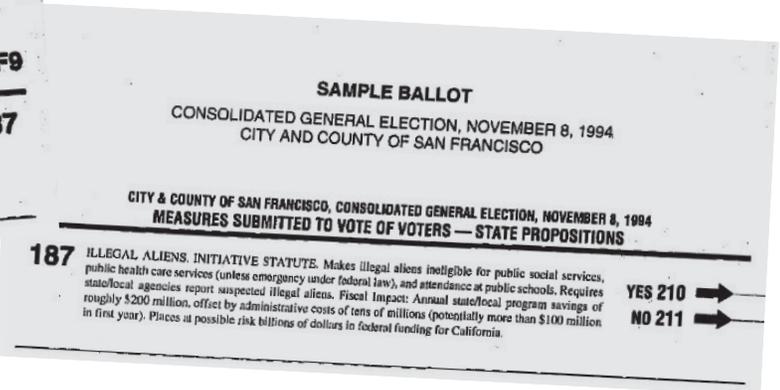


Sample Ballot Consolidated General Election, November 8, 1994, City and County of San Francisco. Courtesy San Francisco Public Library.

undocumented immigrants are Hispanic, but it goes beyond the fact by creating a stereotype for all Latinos. The result is described in *Shifting Borders*, where the authors say, "...because one cannot see the difference between a 'legal' or 'illegal' [Mexican], the media... helps create a situation in which all Mexican-descent peoples are under suspicion as 'other'" (37). This sets the tone for the scapegoating of Mexicans, or "Mexican-looking people"...as many perceive. The experience of seeing so many "Mexicans" coupled with the recession, made conditions ripe for tapping into xenophobic fears.

The first person to introduce Proposition 187 was Republican assemblyman Dick Mountjoy from Monrovia, California. He presented the draft to state legislature as the "Save Our State" (SOS) initiative. However, the true authors of this measure were people with "overt white supremacist ties and ideology" (Fernandes, 203). These groups included the California Coalition for Immigration Reform (CCIR), headed by Barbara Coe who refers to Mexicans as "savages" (Fernandes, 203). The second group was the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), together with Voices of Citizens Together (VCT). The CCC is "a white supremacist group that states on its website that it rejects 'all efforts to mix the races of mankind'" (Fernandes, 204). The team drafting the proposition presented its own research where they estimated that \$3 billion were being spent yearly on public services, such as education and healthcare, for undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, polls showing that voters would favor an initiative denying public services to undocumented people was a sign that Proposition 187 was now ready to come to the ballot.

There was another group of people strongly promoting Proposition 187. These were politicians, mostly Republican, who were up for re-election. These politicians were running in an atmosphere where their constituents were unhappy over the economy, and they were therefore unpopular. Incumbent governor Pete Wilson was the most prominent of these politi-



cians. Wilson had helped write the initiative and his strategy for re-election was to make it central to his campaign. He thereby would exploit voters' concerns over the economy to his advantage. During his campaign, television ads ran that ominously warned of how the aliens "keep coming" [https://youtu.be/ILlzzs2HHgY]. By promising to enforce the initiative, Pete Wilson was re-elected and Proposition 187 was easily passed.

The harsh rhetoric that led up to the passage of Proposition 187 did not go unnoticed by Latinos. The definition of "illegal aliens" had become so blurred that Latinos of all backgrounds and legal status felt they were being demonized. The attacks were taken to be so personal, that Latinos who had been apathetic about politics found reason to join activists that had long been mobilizing the community. Latino citizens registered to vote and legal residents began the process of becoming citizens so they could eventually vote. Second-generations and beyond of Mexican-Americans who might have little in common with undocumented immigrants, joined in demonstrations. The headline of the October 17, 1994 issue of the *Los Angeles Times* reads, "L.A. March Against Prop. 187 Draws 70,000: Immigration Protesters condemn Wilson for backing initiative that they say promotes 'racism, scapegoating.'" Latinos were not necessarily protesting because they were in favor of illegal immigration, rather, it was the tone, rhetoric, and the generalizations being made against people of Hispanic ancestry. Ironically, the lumping of Latinos into the category "Mexican" with all its connotations, and equating it with "illegal" had a unifying effect. Proposition 187 successfully passed on November 8, 1994 despite demonstrations and efforts to defeat it. However, the very group it meant to target—undocumented immigrants, found new support in the larger Latino community.

NOJ

Support the preservation of local history
by becoming a member of the
California History Center Foundation

Membership categories: \$50 Individual; \$40 Family;
\$50 Supporter; \$100 Sponsor; \$500 Patron;
\$1,000 Colleague.

Mail your check to CHC Foundation,
21250 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA 95014.
Call (408) 864-8986 for more information,
or visit us on the web at www.deanza.edu/califhistory

tino voters as a result of Proposition 187 has ensured that the state will stay solidly blue for years to come. Today, in 2016's presidential campaigns, the candidates must remember that blaming minorities, be they Mexicans or Muslims, for the nation's problems is not only unfair, but can bring about backlash such as Proposition 187 did in California.

Works Cited

Chavez, Leo R. *Shadows of Living: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013. Print.

Fernandes, Deepa. *Targeted*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007. Print.

Miller, Debra A. *Illegal Immigration*. San Diego: Reference Point Press, 2007. Print.

Ono, Kent A. and Sloop, John M. *Shifting Borders*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.

Pete Wilson 1994 campaign ad on illegal immigration. <https://youtube.com/watch?v=Ltzzz2HtHgY>

L.A. March Against Prop. 187 Draws 70,000 : Immigration: Protesters condemn Wilson for backing initiative that they say promotes racism, scapegoating. October 17, 1994. Patrick J. McDonnell and Robert J. Lopez | Times staff writers http://articles.latimes.com/1994-10-17/news/mn-51359_1_illegal-immigrants

On immigration, Trump evokes Wilson era Political notebook: Chavez (again). Brown says Trump should put a sock in it by Michael Smolens Aug. 21, 2015 <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/aug/21/on-immigration-pete-wilson-was-here-before-trump/>

We're All Mexican - Official Music Video Estefan Channel. <http://youtube.com/watch?v=9So7iSDgxiQ>

https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_187,_Illegal_Aliens_Ineligible_for_Public_Benefit

The measure obviously passed with 5,063,537 "yes" votes, or a 58.93% majority, versus 3,529,432 "no" votes, for a minority result of 41.97%. However, the effect of passing Proposition 187 was to galvanize Latinos. Even in the months before it passed, community leaders had been raising awareness of how the initiative would especially affect children. The day after Election Day, groups like the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed lawsuits in state court (Ono, 122). They claimed the initiative was discriminatory and unconstitutional. This action brought about a temporary hold against Proposition 187. Finally, in December 1994, most provisions were blocked from ever being enforced. The answer to whether or not Proposition 187 was successful is "yes" and "no." The measure obviously passed; however, the unintended effect on the Latino community was that a political bloc formed that would be long lasting. Excluding Californians with legitimate economic concerns, the plan against "Mexicans" backfired on white supremacists behind Proposition 187.

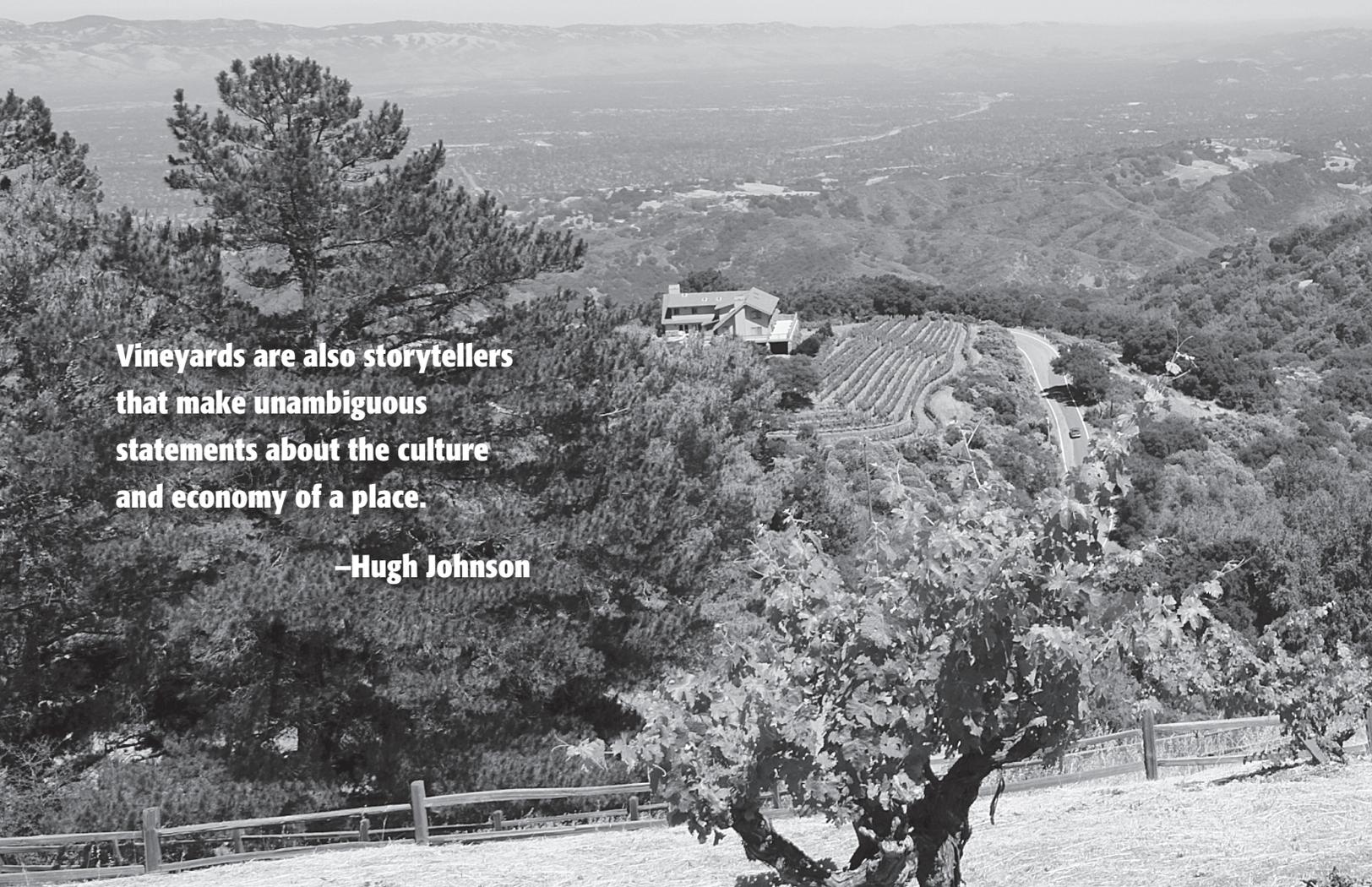
Today, twenty years after Proposition 187, the galvanizing effect is still felt. The *San Diego Union Tribune* states, "...1994 was a watershed election that more than a few Republicans have come to, if not regret, rue the lasting damage it did to the GOP, certainly in California" (August 21, 2015). This passage suggests that as a voting bloc, Latinos have grown in numbers and it can be traced to Proposition 187. Another result is raised awareness of candidates like Donald Trump, who has used similar vitriol to that used in 1994 by Pete Wilson. Again, many Latinos have taken a stand, not because they are monolithic or in favor of illegal immigration and open borders. Instead, it is because disparaging language against Mexicans has become an attack on all Hispanics. This unity is illustrated in the video by Gloria Estefan put out shortly after Donald Trump announced his candidacy. In Estefan's video, "We Are All Mexican," Kathy Griffin, Whoopi Goldberg, singer Pitbull, and several other celebrities who are not Mexican, say in solidarity, "We are all Mexican" [<http://youtube.com/watch?v=9So7iSDgxiQ>]. Of course, prominent Mexicans and Mexican-Americans from many fields, such as NASA astronaut Jose Hernandez, are also featured. The rally cry seems to be that regardless of their differences, Latinos recognize racialist intents when they see them and will unite against them. In appealing to xenophobic tendencies through ballot measures and campaigns, politicians run the risk of alienating ethnic voting blocs. In California, the number of new registered La-

Enduring wineries

By Suruchi Mohan

If you drive south on Highway 101 from San Mateo you will see hundreds of signs of companies whose names don't always offer a clue to their business. They do, however, have one thing in common: Almost all are producers — or ultra-sophisticated users — of high technology. As you switch freeways to go toward the ocean, the landscape changes — the bland three-story office buildings along the flat floor of the valley give way to winding Highway 17 which cuts through the mountains with their towering redwoods before taking you to agricultural Watsonville. Unlike Napa to the north of the San Francisco Bay, this region does not scream viticulture with rows of grapevines rising from the road to the hills beyond. Rather, you will be hard pressed to see any vineyards along the length of the Santa Cruz Mountains, arguably one of the finest wine growing regions in the country.

A few miles west of US 101 runs Highway 280, more pastoral in its meanderings between the Santa Cruz Mountains, visible to the west, and the foothills that house the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center to the east. Here you will see quaint



Vineyards are also storytellers that make unambiguous statements about the culture and economy of a place.

—Hugh Johnson

houses serving a whimsy or just plain old houses atop a hill for people who enjoy the splendor of solitude. To the west, under the shadow of the hills is a rift valley formed by movements in the San Andreas Fault, which runs along the ridge of the Santa Cruz Mountains and commands a high degree of fearful reverence for its ability to throw the Bay Area into the turmoil of an earthquake. Driving along the highway, you would never guess the technological innovation that has emanated from this valley and touches all parts of the world. Nor are wineries visible from here. But having existed in the same area for several decades, wine and tech are now intertwined. At the same time, both industries tell a story of determination and survival.

The Santa Cruz Mountains start north of Half Moon Bay and run south to Watsonville, where the Pajaro River, which empties itself into the Monterey Bay, marks their southern boundary. Part of the Pacific Coast Range, they separate the Peninsula from the Pacific Ocean. At their highest elevations, they measure almost 3,800 feet. Recognized as an American Viticultural Area in 1981, the Santa Cruz Mountains span the

three counties of San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz. Estimates of size of this AVA range between 480,000 acres and 322,000 acres. Of these, roughly 1,500 are under grape cultivation, the same acreage as at the turn of the twentieth century.

Contrary to popular belief, says wine historian Charles Sullivan, the Spanish missionaries did not come to Alta California armed with vine cuttings that yielded grapes prolifically to make wine. In fact, for many years after the missionaries set themselves up here, wine was brought up from Baja California, as the few cuttings they brought with them did not survive. A small amount was made successfully at Mission Santa Clara in the early nineteenth century; there is no record of successful winemaking at Mission Santa Cruz as late as the first quarter of the century. Wine, however, was produced in some missions, starting in the late 1700s.

But by the middle of the nineteenth century, these mountains had begun to be recognized for their potential to grow good grapes. In 1853 Lyman J. Burrell, a native of Massachusetts, had moved to this area and begun shortly after the



The secret behind the flavors lay in the geography of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

cultivation of fruit, including grapes. In 1859, his grapes won a premium at the county fair. A few years later, the brothers John and George Jarvis bought land on the mountains and planted their own grapes. Soon they began to produce wine and were followed by others. The wine produced here had intense flavors, as much due to the talents of the winemakers as to the terroir, that combination of soil, weather, available tools, and skill that gives wine its distinctive flavor. So good was the wine produced by these individuals and those who followed that by the turn of the century the ridge of these mountains had earned the nomenclature *Chaine d'Or* or chain of gold for the fineness of the grapes they yielded.

The secret behind the flavors lay in the geography of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The soil was poor and the hillsides could hold no water. Cold winters followed warm summers in which fog rolled in from the ocean, before the sun burnt it off in the morning. This cooling effect resulted in a longer growing period, imbuing the fruit with flavor that is lost if it ripens too quickly in hot weather. The steep hillsides would have made ploughing difficult, if not impossible. In truth, apart from fruit, these mountains would have supported little agriculture.

Along with geography come the events of history and their profound outcomes. Here, some groups gained at the expense of others. The setting up of the missions and the disease and violence that accompanied later incursions decimated the populations of First Nations people, such as the Ohlone, who had lived and thrived on these lands for eons. The discovery of gold in 1848 followed by statehood in 1850 opened a floodgate through which rushed all manner of people seeking better lives. Many came from Europe, in political and social turmoil during these decades — Italians, Germans, French — bringing with them their own traditions and ways of life.

At the same time France, a half a world away, was once again in the throes of political change. In February 1848, a revolt among the people led to the dethronement of Emperor Louis Philippe and the formation of a republic. In June, after workers' riots shook Paris, Louis Napoleon, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte I, was elected to the National Constituent Assembly. He returned from exile in England and in December he became president of the Second Republic. Three years later, in December 1851, he staged a coup d'état and in 1852, he proclaimed himself Emperor Napoleon III.

Meanwhile, the turmoil in other parts of Europe also opened the floodgates of emigration. In 1848, several European states tried to embrace liberal reforms. Although success

was limited, these attempts did lead to changes in the form of government. Italy completed its unification in 1861, adopted a more progressive constitution, and accepted the king of Sardinia as the king of Italy.

Germany followed a similar pattern of liberalism and unification. From 1840 to 1880, Germans were the largest group of immigrants to the U.S.

All of this political activity in Europe led to upheaval in the lives of those who found themselves on the wrong side of the events. Fortunately for them, North America beckoned; many saw the signals and set sail. Some did not stay at the first port of call on the eastern seaboard, but continued westward. The newly announced state of California offered gold and vast lands. Toward that desired destination they pointed their feet.

Jean Narcisse Aubry was one of those who fled France and made his way via the gold mines of Alaska to the Santa Cruz Mountains near Saratoga. By 1859, he had begun to settle down. It was easy to acquire land: The federal and state governments granted acreage to new immigrants to promote development, asking for little in return. The homesteaders cleared the land of trees, such as oak and redwood, and built a home for themselves and their families with the wood from these trees, using or selling the excess as firewood. They removed the chaparral undergrowth to grow fruit -- prunes, apples, and apricots, and raised livestock. It was grueling work but it paid off. Those, like Aubry, who had winemaking in their background established vineyards and imprinted the landscape and economy of the state with their skills.

Wine was a part of their lives – to be drunk at meal times. They had come from temperate lands into a climate that matched what they had left behind. To that extent their new homes suited them. But the loss of community in the land of their birth and the many challenges that the frontier state necessarily presented must have taken a greater force of will to create a rhythm of life.

In *The Saratoga Story* (1962), author R.V. Garrod writes about the families that made their lives in the Congress Springs area of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Covering the period before Prohibition, it is a chronicle of births, deaths, and marriages, of crops planted and harvested, of new entrants into the area. One person sailed from Western Europe and made this place home doing what all immigrants do to survive in their new environs – building a neighborhood. He sent for his family – siblings, parents, uncles, and aunts. Garrod narrates simple events, giving a sense of a community not threatened by external factors, but settling down.

Post Prohibition, the children continued to work in the family business or went to war for the country, showing once again a population growing roots. The rhythms of life were punctuated by tragedies. In 1942, Robert Pourroy, while working in his father's business, fell into a vat two-thirds full of crushed grapes after being overcome by fumes from the fermenting wine. He was the son of Eloi and nephew of Pierre, the two brothers who built a winery on these mountains in Saratoga. And in 1945, Pfc. Virgil Picchetti, grandson of the founder of Picchetti Winery on Montebello Road, died in Germany as the Second World War ended.

Similar to Napa Valley, many who came here had made their fortunes elsewhere. Alfred Tubbs of Chateau Montelena and Gustave Niebaum of Inglenook in the Napa Valley had achieved financial success in cordage and trading respectively. In addition to drawing those who risked their all for a better life, the mountains of Santa Cruz drew physicians and later, because of proximity to Stanford, scientists who, too, had proved themselves in their professions before the challenges of winemaking attracted them.

Although the Bay Area had seen technical creations as early as the mid-nineteenth century, it was in the mid-1950s that the semiconductor industry made its home here. The earliest creators of the transistor nicknamed this area Silicon Valley. But the inventions in technology were not confined to engineering. Over time electronics found its use in defense, communications, and medicine, leading to remarkable discoveries and treatments. Most important for the wine industry, these developments generated an enormous amount of wealth that allowed the innovators to try their hands at other things. And what better aspiration than to press wine, at once an artistic endeavor that brings people together and a business that can outlive the founder, as in Europe.

And there lies the rub. At the conclusion of his work *Like Modern Edens: Winegrowing in Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains 1798-1981*, Sullivan says that the growth of the wine industry has been different in the North Bay because the pioneers in the Santa Cruz Mountains were too individualistic to care about the development of a wine personality.

Looking at the two wine regions of Napa and the Santa Cruz Mountains, I wonder if the difference is that Napa vintners preserved the rural nature of their region. In doing so, they were able to build a brand, whereas the people of science who came to Silicon Valley after World War II were soloists, professionals who couldn't stop the march of urbanization that technological achievement unleashed and figured that

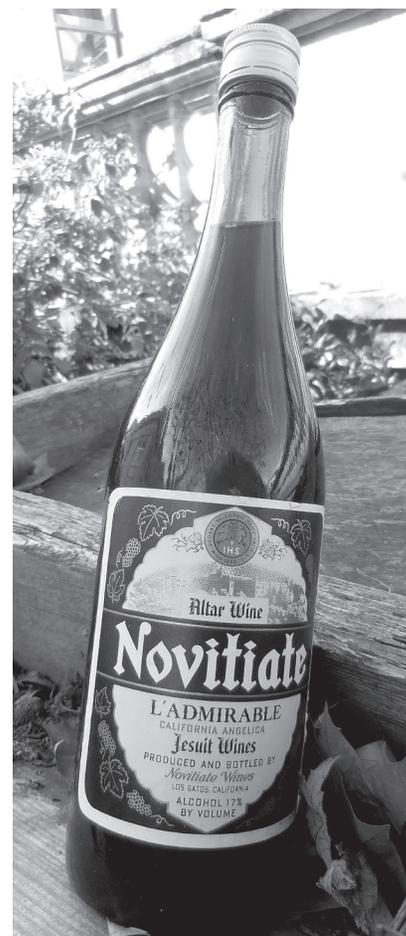
the only way to survive was by distinguishing their product from that of the competition. Succeeding in the tech industry, they made their wines as they made their integrated chips or built their medical practices. By intellectual vigor.

Regardless, the innovative mentality, the resilience, and hard work allowed the vigneron to overcome the many challenges that nature and governments threw at them. Phylloxera in the 1890s, a fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1899 that destroyed many wineries, the earthquake of 1906, World War I followed by Prohibition in 1920. Then, by the end of Prohibition in 1933, the country was already in the grip of the Great Depression. With barely time to recover, the U.S. found itself in World War II. At the end of it all, few wineries survived. Meanwhile, the 1960s saw a rebirth of the wine industry, helped in no small measure by a change in the drinking habits of Americans who developed a palate (and pocketbook) for wine. Four wineries in the Santa Cruz Mountains have endured. They have gone through disruption, but the land, the structures first built in the late 1800s, and, in some cases, the vines in the vineyards remain. These four wineries, namely, Novitiate/ Testarossa, Picchetti, Ridge, and Savannah-Chanelle, are a testament to human ingenuity, resilience, and the belief that anything is possible.

The Novitiate Winery

"When I was a novice here in the early 1960s, the rhythm of life was very monastic," said Brother Dan Peterson, archivist at Santa Clara University Library. "The bell would ring at 5 in the morning and we would get up and have morning prayer, private meditation for an hour, and then Mass. We were learning different forms of mental prayer. After breakfast, we would have our class time, work periods. Each novice brother was assigned jobs – kitchen jobs, housekeeping chores, mopping floors, cleaning bathrooms. My job was assisting in the library.

"In picking season, novices didn't have class and around 9 o'clock they would head out to the fields and then come back in the afternoon and have afternoon prayer and then recreation in





Brothers of the Novitiate of the Sacred Heart, Los Gatos, California. Back row: James Murphy, John Brazel, Edward Brazel, Thomas O'Shaughnessy. Middle row: John Olivier, Cornelius Manning, John Bondielli, Francis Xavier Carvalho. Front row: Joseph Pereira, Anthony Pereira. Of this group Brothers Olivier and O'Shaughnessy worked full time in the winery, the first succeeded by the second. Photo circa 1898.

the afternoon and before meals. Bedtime was 9 o'clock."

The rigor of a monastic life was hardly surprising given that Mission Santa Clara was established in 1777 by the Franciscans, an extremely austere sect of Catholics that takes a vow of poverty. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Spanish governors in the territory began to secularize the missions and by 1851, Mission Santa Clara had only one Franciscan left, and he was preparing to leave the mission for the Gold Country. The mission property fell into disrepair and squatters took over chunks of land and portions of the building. Bishop Joseph Alemany of Monterey gave the Mission Santa Clara to Father Giovanni Nobili, a Jesuit priest. The Jesuits had escaped to this part of California after being expelled from the Spanish territories in Mexico in 1767, following a similar banishment from the Spanish Empire and from the pope. Handed Mission Santa Clara in 1851, the Jesuits were told to start a college. They established Santa Clara College the same year and became educators.

Almost from the very beginning, winemaking was part of Santa Clara College, similar to the tradition of Catholic seminaries, where wine was used by the priests both for meals and for mass. The university was home to vineyards. Additionally, in 1871, the Jesuits at the college bought 160 acres of land in Cupertino on which they planted grapes for wine production. In 1875 the brothers established Villa Maria, a winery and retreat. Later, Vincenzo Picchetti, an Italian immigrant who established an eponymous winery on the Montebello Ridge,



Brother Francis Xavier Carvalho (on the wagon), lay worker Joaquin Speciale, driver. On the ground, William J. Deeney, John Brazel, Thomas O'Shaughnessy, and an unidentified lay worker.

would work in the orchards here.

Soon after founding, Santa Clara University started receiving novices for the order, so they instituted a program for their formation and training. The novices shared living space at the college with faculty members, and soon it became obvious that the two groups needed separation. The University searched for land. In 1886, it bought a lot on a hill in Los Gatos and established an entity distinct from the University, namely the Sacred Heart Novitiate. With the completion of a new building in 1888, the novitiate program started there in July of that year.

At this time, Brother Constantine Valducci, the Novitiate's first vintner who had learned his craft in his homeland of Italy, built a small wooden winery in which he began pressing grapes, producing the first vintage the same year. The following year, 1889, the Novitiate earned \$80.50 from selling 322 gallons of wine to St. Ignatius College in San Francisco. Three years later, the vineyards yielded 9,800 gallons of wine. As output increased, in no small part fuelled by free labor from the seminarians, the Novitiate sold to establishments outside the State. It made sweet wines, which were labeled differently for use at the table and at the altar. Now the brothers replaced the old wooden winery with a concrete structure — a three-story, gravity-flow winery — which, although altered, survives.

Over the years, the Jesuits bought parcels of land that lay adjacent to the original property and named it St. Joseph's

Hill, all part of the Santa Cruz Mountain range. As production grew, Novitiate took out trees and planted vineyards. Because much of the wine made was sacramental, Prohibition did not hurt the winery.

But winds of change blew in the 1960s that led to the eventual closure of Novitiate. The Second Vatican Council of 1962 to 1965 revised wine usage for Mass. By dropping the ritual that required wine to be poured in the chalice for cleansing after consecration, the church cut by half the amount of wine used at Mass. Further, the Church did away with the obligation to label sacramental wines. Consequently, diverse wines could be used at the altar. And the last blow — tastes in wine evolved and consumers moved away from the sugary toward the dry.

If these changes left Novitiate reeling, a dramatic drop in the number of young men who pledged themselves to the cloth after the Second Vatican Council made matters worse. From 30 to 40 novices in the early 1960s the number dropped to between 10 and 12. The location of the vineyards on the slopes of mountains where no machinery could go meant that everything was done by hand. Novitiate had not the free labor to make the business work. In 1963, the Jesuits opened an additional seminary in Santa Barbara and over the next few years moved all operations to the new facility. In 1992 Culver City became home to a new seminary and remains so to this day.

The business continued with the use of farmworkers in offsite vineyards, but by 1985 the Novitiate management realized that running the operation was not feasible. In 1986 the Jesuits closed the winery and surrendered the bond to the

state. The Jesuits decided to lease the buildings. The years saw many leases signed and not renewed. In 1984, the Jesuits had sold 170 acres to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and had also granted a conservation easement to this district and the City of Los Gatos on 94 acres to prevent development. The Jesuits retain two parcels totaling 165 acres.

In 1997, Rob and Diana Jensen leased one cellar from the California Province of the Jesuits. Like so many who had come before them from triumphs in other fields, the Jensens left their high-tech careers and made wine in their garage in 1993, naming their endeavor Testarossa. As their success grew, they leased more and more, including the old three-story winery and the warehouse from the Jesuits. Currently they make 30,000 cases of wine in a year.

In reviving the property and building a new business, Testarossa has embraced the old and the new. Driving up the winding road from urbane downtown Los Gatos, I was surprised to see the wooded, winding pathway with California buckeye and oak leading up to the winery, so well hidden from the bustle of commerce below. I parked in the shadow of a high wall, reminiscent of an old Italian castle but built in the 1940s of stone quarried locally. Taking a long flight of steps, I went across an inviting patio, with tables and chairs under the shade of giant sycamores, an old cork tree, to a cave that leads to the tasting room. Here was a thriving business.

Picchetti Brothers Winery

In 1872, Vincenzo Picchetti came to California from Northern Italy and tended orchards as a farm hand before he went to work for the Jesuits at Villa Maria, the winery and retreat of Santa Clara College. It was a job he knew something about, as his parents had owned a winery in their village in Northern Piedmont. A couple of years later his brother, Secondo, set sail for the New World. In 1877, encouraged by the Jesuit brothers of Villa Maria, the Picchetti brothers bought 160 acres of land in the Santa Cruz Mountains on the ridge that soon bore the name Montebello or beautiful mountain.

The story of the Picchettis is similar to that of others who came here with aspirations and a determination to succeed. A year after they bought their piece of real estate, they built a small house that can still be seen on the grounds. They cleared the land and planted vineyards and fruit trees. In 1882, Vincenzo went back to Italy and came back with his bride, Teresa Cicoletti, a woman eleven years his junior. A couple of years later, Vincenzo bought out Secondo's interest in the property and in 1886 he built a large house, which subsequently board-

Like so many who had come before them from triumphs in other fields, the Jensens left their high-tech careers and made wine in their garage in 1993, naming their endeavor Testarossa.



Novices picked the grapes, and the crop had to be brought from some of the steep hillside fields on horse-drawn sleds. 1900. Tom Marshall, S.J. Collection.



Picchetti Brothers
Winery aerial view.



Picchetti family,
circa 1900.

ed four generations of Picchettis. In later years, as the family grew, the Picchettis added more living space. Perhaps the most fascinating feature of these additions is the presence of an upstairs bathroom. In 1893, they had an inside bathroom. Nor was the bathroom a sign of firsts for the Picchettis. They were the first to bring telephone lines up to the ridge. When Josephine, Vincenzo's daughter-in-law came to the U.S. in 1921, the lines were already up.

The original house remained a residence for workers, who had earlier shared the space with the owners. Over time as needs grew, new buildings popped up on the property. These included a fermenting house, a press house, a blacksmith room, which now is used as a bottling room, a stable, a garage, and a wash house. The latter contained an oven for

baking bread and a stove for processing fruit. Another area held sheds with drying racks for prunes and apricots. It was a hard life; the day started at dawn and ended around 9 o' clock. All the work, including making salami, was done by hand.

When the Picchetti children and the few others on the hill reached school age, the Montebello school was built in 1892. Vincenzo supplied wood for the schoolhouse, said Mary Picchetti, his great-granddaughter. Four generations of Picchettis went to school here.

But the most important building, for the purpose of this piece, was the winery that went up in 1896. With this, Vincenzo changed his status from grape grower to winemaker. So far, grapes had been one of several fruits growing on the lands, along with prunes, apricots, walnuts, pears. Now he hired Italian workers to pick the many varieties of grapes – zinfandel, petite sirah, mataro, carignane, and palomino.

If winemaking always has challenges, the Picchettis faced their fair share of them. These difficulties were not peculiar to the Picchettis; rather they were endemic to the industry. But phylloxera, World War I, and Prohibition did not make winemaking a smooth endeavor for the family. Indeed, said Josephine Picchetti, in an interview with Shirley Chappell and Lorraine Bress (1975) that the family never recovered from Prohibition.

They did continue to press wine after the end of the Prohibition and maintain orchards. But the economy was changing, affecting all their fruit. "It was really hard to make anything out of the ranch," said Hector Picchetti, a grandson of Vincenzo, who worked on the farm, in *Wine and Winemakers of the Santa Cruz Mountains: An Oral History* by Charles Sullivan. "Instead of making money we were going into the hole every year. So we decided that the best thing to do was to sell the ranch."

Although the winery was not officially closed until 1973, wine from Picchetti grapes had ceased to be made a decade earlier. In 1976, the Picchetti family sold 108 acres of the ranch to the Midpeninsula Regional Park District, which is the current owner. Using public funds, the park district has done major repairs and seismic retrofitting.

For 16 years, wine was produced there under the name Sunrise Winery. In 1998, Leslie Pantling leased the property from the park district, brought in new equipment, and restarted wine making, which had had a checkered history after the Picchettis gave up their land. The old brick winery is the new tasting room. An intricately carved cask dating back to 1904 sits in a corner of the room. Picchetti Winery

makes 9,000 cases of wine. As you stroll the grounds you will see the old aviary, still intact, which housed birds till the Picchetti sold the ranch. They introduced peacocks to the ranch and kept canaries as well. A newer birdhouse shelters golden pheasants, resplendent in their colorful plumage, reminding the visitor of the Picchetti love of birds and their attempts to settle in their new home.

Ridge Vineyards

The climb up Montebello Road is rapid, past the Stevens Creek Reservoir and the limestone quarry. Bends appear suddenly in the dappled afternoon light. I was tempted to note the varieties of trees along the sides, so dense in places that the darkness surprised me. Maybe the mountain to my left blocked the sun. A quick view through a small clearing of the expansive valley hundreds of feet below helped me focus my attention on the asphalt ahead. I was a first time traveler up this curvaceous drive and I was eager to reach my destination.

After the next hairpin bend a sign appeared suddenly. It was Jimsomare — the lowest of the estates on the mountain that Ridge farms for grapes — that Pierre Klein, a German immigrant, had bought in 1888, after years in the hospitality business in San Francisco. It went by so fast, I barely had time to recall the salient points of its history. Then up several hundred feet more and I pulled into the driveway of the ranch that maintains the tasting room.

Picnic tables amid fall flowers and a sign warning against rattlesnakes made me both chuckle and glance warily at the gravel under my feet. Once again, I felt the pull of the sprawling Silicon Valley below, this time without the fear of tumbling several hundred feet, but instead I entered the spacious wooden interior of the building that was built by John Torre, an Italian immigrant and cattle rancher, who bought one hundred acres on the Montebello Ridge in 1890 and completed this barn over a cellar two years later to make and store wine.

A few steps from this barn is the original Torre house, in which the family lived for several years and is now used as an information technology center.

The world-class wines apart, the history of Ridge Vineyards is unlike that of the other wineries on this mountain. It is not one piece of property that had its buyers and sellers making their way through the ups and downs of pests and war from the nineteenth, through the twentieth and into the present century. Rather, it is a tale of different families coming to a hill in search of a place to farm and live that happened upon an exceptional terroir to grow grapes for wines. Eventu-

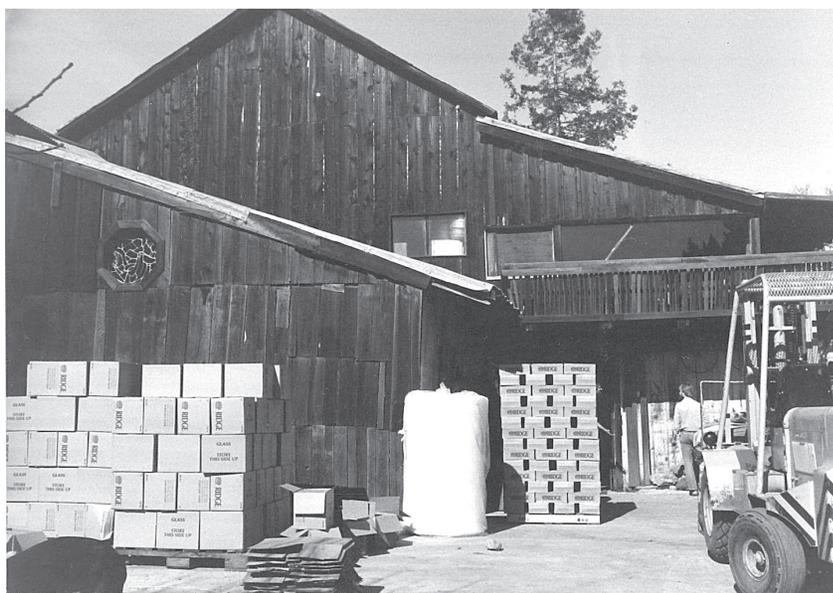
ally, through the management skills of a group of scientists in the mid-twentieth century, the defunct properties came together as a thriving business.

Chronologically, the settling of the ridge started at the top and I there headed with a guide from Ridge. Osea Perrone, a doctor from Northern Italy, bought the highest spot to terrace and plant grape vines in 1885. Perrone had a successful medical practice in San Francisco and decided to use his spare time to indulge a hobby. By 1892 his winery, using limestone from the hill, was complete. From here he sent the wine in wagons to San Francisco, where he had set up the Montebello Wine Company to bottle and distribute his wine. Only a dirt track at this time. During his commute one day, his carriage went off the road, causing him a leg injury that required an amputation. Refusing that line of treatment, he succumbed to gangrene in 1912. The business went to his nephew of the same name.

Perched on the hill, finding my bearings proved hard, but down one of those winding roads was a thoroughfare that led to another lot — seventy five acres that Charles Rousten bought in 1903. This parcel lies between the Torre and the



Dr. Osea Perrone
circa 1890.



Ridge Winery, early 1980s.

In the early years of ownership by the SRI group, there was no tasting room; wine was poured under the eaves on wet days and in the shade of a large walnut tree in the summer.

Klein/Jimsomare estates. Rousten had worked in the wine business in the Valley; on his own property, he planted wine grapes and constructed a winery. At his death, his property passed to his son, who survived Prohibition only to close the winery in the 1950s, when federal reporting rules overwhelmed him. He switched to orchards and cattle ranching.

The afflictions that ground the wine industry to a halt affected the owners of land on Montebello as well. Holding on as long as they could, they gave in to a series of assaults on winemaking by pests and humans. In 1920 the Torre Winery, where the current tasting room is located, closed. The property changed hands a few times until in the late 1940s a theologian, William Short, bought it and planted cabernet sauvignon. These vines are extant.

In 1959, a group of scientists at the Stanford Research Institute searched for a parcel of land to buy. Hewitt Crane, Charles Rosen, and David Bennion were close friends at the lab where they were building a magnetic logic computer. Howard Zeidler, who was the head of the lab, also became part of the group, though he later left. They acquired 80 acres of land for \$48,000. The seller was William Short, the man who owned the Torre ranch.

After the ranch became theirs, the SRI scientists worked only on weekends, as they still had their jobs at the lab. Even so, the task was laborious, as Foothill Expressway and Highway 280 had not yet been constructed. That year they made their first vintage, entirely from hand-picked grapes. It took them two years to think of their property as a commercial winery; so far it had merely been an investment in land.

Meanwhile in another part of the world, Paul Draper, a Stanford graduate in philosophy with an emphasis on value theory, had been trying his hand at different things, among them wine making in Chile. He had known about Bennion's work on the mountain for awhile before the two met in 1968. A year later, Draper closed operations in Chile and started working for Ridge.

The partners had purchased the Perrone winery on the top of the hill the year before Draper joined them and were in the process of putting on a new roof. Draper had his work cut out for him, being tasked with moving operations from the Torre to the Perrone winery. In 1971, he became winemaker.

Before winemaking moved to the Perrone estate, wine was made in the Torre barn. In the early years of ownership by the SRI group, there was no tasting room; wine was poured under the eaves on wet days and in the shade of a large walnut tree in the summer. Unstructured, a true labor of love.

Over time, the winery added vineyards through long-term leases — Jimsomare followed by Rousten. The different heights of the original four properties and the microclimates make for a range of flavors.

The Savannah-Chanelle Winery

A windy road, a sharp turn, and a steep road through the towering redwoods takes you to the site of a winery established more than a century ago. It is the familiar immigrant story. Pierre Pourroy left his French homeland and landed in New York in 1887. After spending some time there, he arrived in California and after working at many odd jobs met Jean Nar-





Montmartre, (misspelled Monmartre on the building – for posterity)

cisse Aubry (see above), a fellow Frenchman who several decades ago had made the Santa Cruz Mountains around Saratoga his home. Pourroy worked for Aubry and fell in love with his daughter Marie, whom he married in 1891, an act that must have made him feel more grounded in his adopted country.

A couple of years later his brother, Eloi, joined him from France and soon found himself a wife. The two couples bought 80 acres of land from another Frenchman, Adrien Bonnet, whom life had also steered into San Francisco.

As often happens among family who share property, the two brothers split their holdings and went their separate ways, acquiring new lands and planting fruit trees and grapes. Both raised large families in homes they built on the property. Because they came from France, wine was part of the daily ritual of meal times.

In 1910, Pierre planted the first acre of zinfandel grapes, followed over the next few years by cabernet franc and carignane. The zinfandel vines from the time remain. But like others at the time, the Pourroys faced challenges posed by nature and government and their wine business suffered. Life didn't stop, however, and in the 1920s they built their house, Monmartre, which looks down on the valley below.

In the early 1970s, Victor Erickson, an engineer who had set up his own metal products company in San Jose, bought the house and adjoining vineyards directly from the family. Although he developed a good social relationship with the Pourroys, he raised vegetables, as he knew little about wine. One day, Dan and Robin Gehrs came by and inquired what he was doing in Monmartre. Neither party knew much about

the other: Erickson, that a neighbor was looking after the vineyards; the Gehrs, that Erickson was the new owner of the property.

A relationship developed that led to the renewal of wine operations and the bonding of the Congress Springs Winery. After the usual initial struggle, the winery thrived, turning a profit by the mid-1980s. Over time the two partners developed divergent visions and the property was sold to a business with interests in agriculture but not in wine. The business petered out and soon it was on the market again.

The current owners, Kellie and Michael Ballard bought this winery in 1996, after it had changed hands a few times, naming it after their daughters. They planted pinot vines with the goal to produce stellar pinot noir. The old Pierre Pourroy winery is now the tasting room.



Pierre and Mary Pourroy. Images from Sawyer's History of Santa Clara County, 1922.

Suruchi Mohan's work has appeared in Financial Times, Antioch Review, Bryant Literary Review, The American Gardener and numerous other publications. Her columns for Progressive Media have been distributed to newspapers throughout the country. In 2009, her first novel, Divine Music, was received with commendable reviews by Publishers Weekly and Booklist. An award-winning journalist who covered high-tech and business news for McGraw Hill and International Data Group publications through the nineties, she has also written for San Jose Mercury News, Reader's Digest, Business Journal, and many others.

Sources

- Garrod, R.V., *The Saratoga Story* (1962).
- Janet Schwind & The Skyline Historical Society, *The South Skyline Story* (2014).
- Sullivan, Charles L., *Like Modern Edens: Winegrowing in Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains 1798-1981* (1982).
- Sullivan, Charles L. *Wine and Winemakers of the Santa Cruz Mountains: An Oral History* (1994).

Interviews

- Brother Dan Peterson, Archivist at Santa Clara University.
- Josephine Pichetti, interviewers Shirley Chappell and Lorraine Bress (1975)

Oil!



A social history of Southern California

By John Ahouse and Lauren Coodley

Above: Long Beach from Signal Hill showing Catalina in distance, postcard 284 published by M. Kashower Co. Los Angeles, CA. Photo by Warren M. Sargent.

Driving at or above the speed limit on the long desert approach to Los Angeles, a father and son converse less with each other than with the increasingly frequent roadside signs. In this almost musical prelude to his sweeping California novel, *Oil!*, Upton Sinclair introduces the landscape to his readers through the wonder-struck eyes of the young Bunny Ross, for whom this trip with his oilman father is to be a great adventure in a new home. Their objective, at the end of the long ride into Southern California, is to be among the bosses and the “spudders” on hand for the opening up of one of the richest oil fields in history.

Sinclair himself had moved to the state during World War I, nine years before starting to write *Oil!*; in another nine he would, against all odds, emerge as the Democratic candidate for the California governor’s seat. Judson Grenier has examined Sinclair’s role in the history of Southern California. Based on personal interviews with Sinclair, he writes:

He told me in 1963, “My love affair with California, if you want to call it that, is really accidental... Since moving here in 1915, I’ve never been able to live anywhere else. Friends ask me, ‘how can you stand’ this or that—the reactionary politics, the anti-union atmosphere—and my answer is that people are much the same the world over, but here the climate makes it possible to be so much more active.”¹

This response is typical of Sinclair: forthright, practical, and, above all, committed to lifelong activism. In a recent evaluation of Sinclair’s work, Joel Silver has written,

“Although Sinclair’s literary style was often lacking in subtlety, he was always a perceptive reporter, and *Oil!* remains one of the great California novels.”²

Upton Sinclair came to understand Los Angeles from top to bottom, with all its scandals and skeletons, many of which found their way into the social critiques of *The Brass Check* (journalism), *The Profits of Religion* (organized religion), and *The Goose-Step* (higher education). Sinclair’s concern for social justice had led him into the San Pedro dockworkers’ strike in 1923 where his appearance amidst the Wobblies drew needed attention to labor issues and illuminated questionable police tactics.³

But a stunning event on the West Coast two years earlier would also open the way for Sinclair’s return to major fiction, and a summing-up of all that was new in his life since coming to Los Angeles. On June 25, 1921, in spectacular fashion, test wells had brought in a rich oil strike near the top of Signal Hill, adjacent to the resort town of Long Beach, thirty miles south of Sinclair’s home in Pasadena.

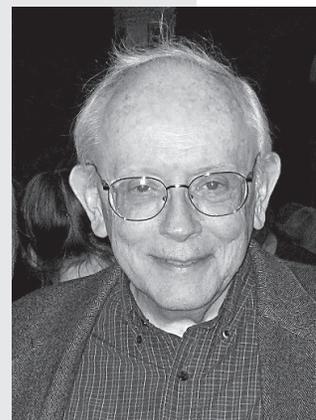
By chance, the Sinclairs owned property just to the northwest of this same Signal Hill, near where the 405 freeway sweeps past today. Almost overnight, what had been cottages and modest gardening plots turned into prime drilling sites as the potential of the Long Beach oil field became apparent; and the Sinclairs couldn’t refuse an offer to trade their holdings for some desirable beach property on nearby Alamitos Bay. But more: Sinclair was deeply impressed with the effect of such displacements on the other residents of the area: avaricious oilmen here; frantic home owners there, uncertain how to make the most of the windfall coming their way. This human aspect, no less than the technological upheaval, brought out his Dickensian streak and now helped to fill the notebooks of the writer who had once so tellingly investigated the Chicago meat packing plants. “Don’t you see what we’ve got here?” Sinclair exclaimed to his wife, “Human nature laid bare! Competition *in excelsis!* The whole oil industry – free, gratis, and for nothing! How could I pass it up?”⁴

What emerged was far more than the story of the oil strike. *Oil!*, according to historian Jules Tygiel, author of a foreword to a new edition just published by University of California Press, “captures the panorama of Southern California in the 1920s far better than any other contemporary or historical account. Sinclair, slashing away with deft satirical skill, conjured up a region of subdivisions and fruit stands, earthquakes and religious cults.”⁵ Sinclair’s protagonist even attends Southern Pacific University” (a thinly disguised USC).

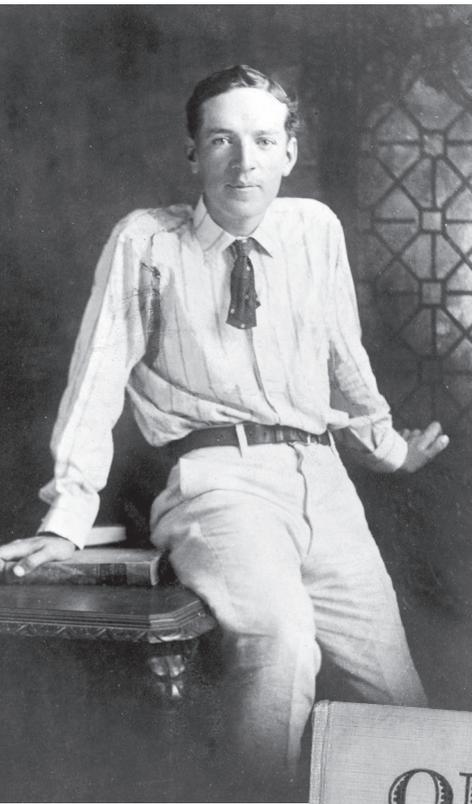
Lauren Coodley began her career tutoring students for the GED and teaching night school psychology at the local junior college. She invented and taught classes ranging from women’s history to overcoming math anxiety. She was the first tenured woman to teach history and the only woman to be elected three times as Division Chair of Social Sciences. Since her retirement in 2010, she is caring for her grandsons and continuing her writing career. Her books include: *Napa Valley Farming* (co-written with Paula Amen Judah); *The Land of Orange Groves and Jails: Upton Sinclair’s California*; *Napa: The Transformation of an American Town*; *If Not to History: Recovering the Stories of Women in Napa* (revised with Paula) *California: A Multicultural Documentary History* (co-written with Paula) and *Upton Sinclair: California Socialist Celebrity Intellectual*.



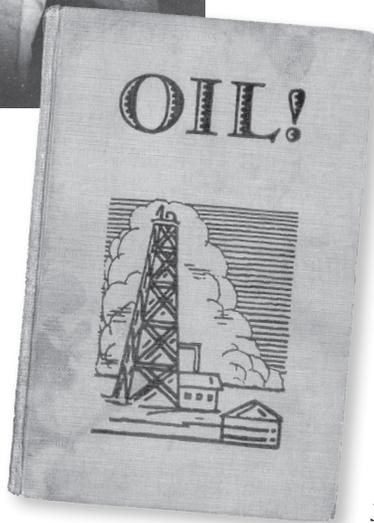
Born 1935 in New York City, **John Ahouse** attended Columbia University, with a major in German. The decade following was spent for the most part in Berlin, as a student, with the US military, and then as translator for a German pharmaceuticals firm. Masters degrees in linguistics (Univ. of Texas) and librarianship (Univ. of Southern California) brought him to California State University in Long Beach for a dozen years, where he served as archivist and developed his interest in Upton Sinclair. Subsequently, as co-head of Special Collections at Doheny Library (University of Southern California), he published his bibliography of Sinclair in 1993. Since retirement in 2005, Ahouse has been associated with the Wende Museum in Culver City, California. He has published not only on Sinclair but also on composer Hector Berlioz, novelist Hamlin Garland, and on the postwar division of Germany.



Note: Upton Sinclair’s *Oil!* was the inspiration for the 2007 motion picture *There Will Be Blood*.



Upton Sinclair, 1906, *New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper*. Right: Image on cover of Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* published by Grosset and Dunlap, Eighth Printing, November 1927.



Originally Sinclair wanted to title the novel *Flowing Gold*. All of the book is based on actual events; Sinclair writes in the preface: “The picture is the truth, and the great mass of detail actually exists. But the cards have been shuffled: names, places, dates—everything has been dealt over again.”⁶

Oil! was sold to Albert & Charles Boni, a prominent publisher of the time, and appeared in February 1927 to great acclaim. The editor of *The Nation*, Oswald Villard, described it as “One of the most remarkable books that I have ever perused, and one of the most readable. A historian of the days we have lived since the war cannot, I am sure, fail to take note of this volume as a true picture.”⁷ In a recent work on

Sinclair, R.G. Mookerjee agrees that Sinclair took “great care to give a true picture of the social, political, and economic conditions of the time, thereby acting as a kind of historian/novelist.”⁸

Oil! became an immediate bestseller and was chosen by the Literary Guild as one of its major selections. In Los Angeles on May 6, the Julian

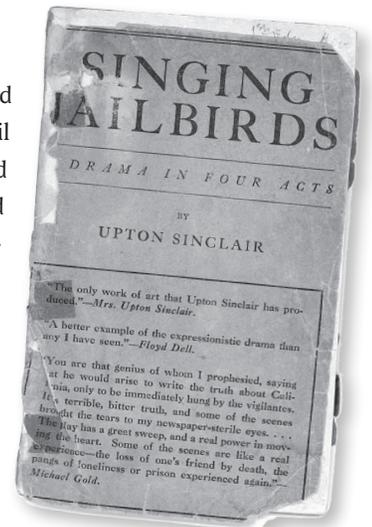
Petroleum Corporation collapsed after an over-issue of five million shares of stock. Tens of thousands lost money, while a handful of stockbrokers made large profits.⁹ This scandal vividly validated Sinclair’s portrayal, and further propelled sales.

Sinclair also turned his hand to a theatrical adaptation of *Oil!*, incorporating and intensifying some key scenes from his novel. This version was staged in Los Angeles in 1931 for eight performances. In 1980, it was produced in Pasadena by Theatre Americana, under Robert and Genevieve Hahn’s guidance. Sinclair’s son David and his wife Jean attended, and David photographed the performance. The Hahns projected large slides of old Los Angeles; they passed out hard

hats so the audience could feel the scenes in the oil fields: “People jumped on ladders and started yelling, warning everybody in the audience; it really got them excited and involved.”¹⁰

Despite the abundance of recognizable locales in and around Southern California where Sinclair’s story takes place, it is inevitably the description of Long Beach (“Beach City”) and “Prospect Hill” (Signal Hill) to which any discussion of the novel returns.

In the aftermath of the first strike, the Hill was transformed into a virtual forest of wooden derricks by the mid-1920s, replacing every last one of the homes which had scaled its ocean side. Today the derricks are long gone, though some working pumps remain and the community has never wholly regained its residential identity. Even “Alamitos No.1,” the so-called “discovery well,” is still producing oil and bears an appropriate historical marker; while to the northeast the area around Sinclair’s former property remains dotted with many “walking beam” pumps in homeowners’ back yards. That Upton Sinclair actually lived in Long Beach while writing the novel is known to very few. The two small houses he wisely acquired in trade are now wedged in by post-WWII growth on the Alamitos Bay peninsula. At the time, however, they provided him with just the isolation he required to spud in his own *Oil!*



Singing Jailbirds: Drama in Four Acts by Upton Sinclair, 1924, arose from Sinclair’s San Pedro dockworker strike incident.

¹ Judson Grenier, “Upton Sinclair: The Road to California,” *Southern California Quarterly* 16:4 (Winter 1974), 325.
² Joel Silver, “Upton Sinclair,” *Bookmans Weekly* 99:6 (February 10, 1997), 374.
³ Due to the efforts of Arthur Almeida, retired longshoreman and president of the Conference of California Historical Societies, the site of Sinclair’s arrest, Liberty Hill, was declared a State Historic Landmark in February 1997.
⁴ Mary Craig, *Southern Belle* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1957), 230.
⁵ Jules Tygiel, Foreword, *Oil!* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997).
⁶ Upton Sinclair, Preface to *Oil!* (New York: A & C. Boni, 1927).
⁷ Oswald Villard, “Open Letter to Subscribers,” *Nation* clipping, n.d.
⁸ R.K. Mookerjee, *Art for Social Justice: The Major Novels of Upton Sinclair* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1988), 2.
⁹ See Jules Tygiel, *The Great Los Angeles Swindle: Oil, Stocks, and Scandal During the Roaring Twenties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
¹⁰ John Ahouse, interview with Robert and Genevieve Hahn, *The Upton Sinclair Quarterly*, IV:1, 12-14, March 1980.

At the Center

Los Gatos Ballet staged the *Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky at Flint Center in early December. The Trianon's interior was transformed for the ballet company's receptions.



Rise Pichon with dancers from the Los Gatos Ballet *Nutcracker*, December 4, 2015.
Photo by Ulysses Pichon.

MEMBERSHIP *New and renewing members*

Special

Hugh Stuart Center
Charitable Trust
ABC Peace Foundation
Nan Geschke
Connie Y. Yu

Sponsor

Elizabeth & Paul
Archambeault
Walter Barnes
Robert Bettencourt
Richard Blaine
Margaret Butcher

Janet Fire
Yvonne & William
Jacobson
Cecilie V. Johnson
Alice Lopina
Shirley Oneal
Janet Rindfleisch
Hugh Voester
Beth Wyman
Connie Y. Yu
Caroline Zlotnick

Supporter

Donna Austin
Frances Bennion
Dolores Chasuk
Lawrence Coates
Beverly David
A.B. Faris
Donna Mae Flynn
Gertrude Frank
Mary Hanel
MaryAnne Ifft
Marsha Kelly
Elizabeth Messmer

Kathleen Peregrin
Keith Peterson
Martin Sorensen
Janet W. Smith
Darlene Thorne
Sharon Vick

Individual

Colin Busby
Frances Bush
Roslyn Davis
Richard Grialou
Linda Grodt

Cheree Hethershaw
Mary Jo Ignoffo
Charles Newman
Letizia Picchetti
Katherine Powers
Maryann Skitarelic
Margaret Swift

Family

Joseph Adamo
Norma Grench
Joseph & Susana
Moreau
Steven Ross

Faculty

Diana Argabrite
Karen Chow
Tracy Chung-Tabangcura
Marc Coronado
Purba Fernandez
Richard Hansen
David Howard-Pitney
Diane Pierce
George Robles
Kristin Skager
Rowena Tomaneng

At the Center

Scenes from *Taste of History*, October 24, 2015, featuring Dr. Stephen Sano, Dept. of Music, Stanford University, and the Euphrat Museum exhibit “Endangered” on endangered and evolving language.

Phil Lenihan and the Silicon Valley Ukulele Club jam and the audience sings along following the formal presentation.



At the Euphrat. l-r Edith Argabrite, Diana Argabrite, Enrique Andrade.



A wall feature in “Endangered.”



John Swensson and Stacy Kamehiro. Stacy won the drawing for an ukulele donated by Ukulele Source in San José's Japantown.



Stephen Sano demonstrates the slack-key guitar and ukulele adding history and humor to the presentation.



WINTER CLASSES

California History Center State and Regional History Academic Program

The following courses will be offered Winter quarter 2016 through the California History Center. Please see the History class listing section of the Schedule of Classes for additional information www.deanza.fhda.edu/schedule or call the center at (408) 864-8986.

Some classes may have started by the time you receive this issue. We apologize for the magazine's delay.

Living Legends: Restored Palaces of the Silver Screen

Course: HIST-53X-95

Contact Tom Izu 408.864.8986

Instructor: Chatham Forbes/Nannette Regua ■ reguanannette@fhda.edu

Movie theaters came to full glory in the 1920s and depression era 'thirties. They captured the hearts of American families everywhere, hence the prevalence of grand examples restored and still operating in many communities across the country, including the San Francisco Bay Area.

LECTURES: Thursdays, 1/28 and 2/18, 6:30-10:20 p.m. CHC

FIELD STUDIES: Saturdays, 1/30 and 2/20

History of the Stanford Area Communities

Course: HIST-51X-95

Instructor: Crystal Hupp ■ huppcrystal@fhda.edu

When Leland and Jane Stanford founded the university the neighboring towns were Mayfield and Menlo Park. Palo Alto was then established as University Park to be the university town. From the beginning, all four entities have built close social, economic, and political connections to create a distinctive interaction over time.

LECTURES: Thursdays, 3/10 and 3/24, 6:30-10:20 p.m. CHC

FIELD STUDIES: Saturdays, 3/12, and 3/26