

NUMBER 42 | MAY 2016

# CALIFORNIAN

*California History Center  
& Foundation*

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

**Reflections on water  
and the Santa Clara  
Valley's bounty**

Smith Creek above La Rinconada Park, Los Gatos



Orchards in bloom, Central Valley on the way to Yosemite. February 2016. Photo by Kerry Smith.

# Spring Calendar

## APRIL

- 4** First day of classes
- 21** Billy Ralston lecture, 6:30pm, CHC
- 23** Billy Ralston field study
- 27** Mark Jacobson talk, 1:30pm, Kirsch Center 115
- 28** Billy Ralston lecture, 6:30pm, CHC
- 30** Billy Ralston field study

## MAY

- 5** Chatham Forbes tribute  
6:30pm, CHC
- 9** *War Comes Home* exhibit opens,  
CHC
- 19** Prideful City lecture  
6:30pm, CHC
- 21** Prideful City field study
- 22** *Digging to Chinatown* premiere  
11am, Japanese American Museum of San José
- 30** Memorial Day

## JUNE

- 2** Prideful City lecture, 6:30pm CHC
- 4** Prideful City field study
- 24** *War Comes Home* exhibit closes  
Last day of finals



*California History Center & Foundation*  
A Center for the Study of State and Regional History  
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### Correction and notice:

In our last *Californian* issue, Winter 2016, the article *Oil!* by John Ahouse and Lauren Coodley appeared without reference to its date. The article was received for consideration by the California History Center in 1995. We thank the authors. The subject matter holds continuing interest—one of the authors, John Ahouse, has called our attention to an exhibit on the subject of oil “next door” by the Historical Society of Long Beach:

**BLACK GOLD—Oil in the neighborhood • April 1 – October 27, 2016**

<http://hslb.org/visit/exhibits/black-gold/>

*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.

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# Director's Report



Tom Izu

## Our history is in the details

One of the important assets our center offers our communities is the Stockmeir Library and Archives. Cultivated and nurtured as if it were a rare botanical garden for 28 years by our librarian/archivist Lisa Christiansen, and by Shirley Clements, Russ Nicholas, and others who came before, it is a unique and intriguing resource.

The Stockmeir archives serves as archival collections do: as a repository of rare or one-of-a-kind documents, images, and other materials that need to be preserved and protected. These “old” materials may be interpreted and synthesized into “new” knowledge for our society. But, unlike many collections of its kind, it also has another mission: to be deliberately and assertively accessible to everyone from elementary school children to college students, to researchers and local explorers of all kinds, regardless of institutional affiliation, training, or specific or ultimate purposes.

In this way our archives is extremely special. Situated on a community college campus dedicated to providing access to higher education regardless of background or income, it fills an important role in helping to provide the skills and awareness needed to engage meaningfully in deeper learning. It gives students and community a way to connect themselves, their families, and their immediate communities to the social and historical fabric of our region and nation in ways that few other operations can. It *teaches* people, no matter who they are, that they can find and learn new things of tremendous importance to them, both personally and communally, from the history around them. And, it acts as a *portal* into a new world by introducing a style of research and discovery available to everyone - with a little help.

This openness championed by Lisa Christiansen (or our *Archiviste Engagé – archivist engaged in a cause*) is not just a one-way mission of giving, it also helps the campus and the CHC grow: it creates an avenue for our institutions to keep on learning new things, to uncover documents overlooked by predecessors, and to benefit from the work of many minds when discovery is shared, whether by university professor, novelist or journalist, by De Anza or Foothill College student, or by local fourth grader and parents completing an assignment on California history. Every instance helps us expand our capacity to add to a greater understanding for all.

To make this wonderful resource operate requires special support, especially since it is not what most people think

of when they want something exciting to invest in: it is not flashy, and certainly not new and might involve dust, oddities of all sorts, and faded things. And, it requires something of a rarity in Silicon Valley – low cost “housing” or storage for things. Many tend to think that storage is a mundane, boring, concept, best ignored, but without storage, archives cannot be archives and much would be lost. While it is true that as denizens of a high tech world, we know we can digitize to increase accessibility, the original documents still need to reside somewhere with enough extra space to determine the *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* of the documents’ digital futures.

Additionally, I would argue that original documents, books, articles, memorabilia and ephemera in non-digital form or “hands-on format” allow for a serendipitous and transformational learning situation that will lead people to discover other resources to investigate. Indeed, I believe they provide a *reason* and inspiration for further exploration of such resources whether they are in the digital world, other institutions, or perhaps in stories shared by an existing family member or neighbor.

We think we know what is important in history, not because we have investigated it ourselves, but because we have passively taken in the big stories, those marking milestones with particular beginnings and endings. However, the most important information and stories may lie in the transitions between these big events, lost or forgotten, either by mistake or on purpose (they often involve conflict and struggle, and many times are extremely *local* in nature.) Think of our region’s farmland and the orchards in this valley. We know what happened to most of it when Silicon Valley was built, but what about the process of its disappearance and how this transition was carried out? What about the First People who lived here – we know something of what happened to their ancient communities, but what is their story in the in-between times and how did they survive to remain among us, right here and right now?

Something thought to be forgotten forever, be it a past way of life, or perhaps evidence of some wrongdoing that needs to be righted, may just be obscured by its fall from the accepted narrative and into one of these gaps. We feel the thing’s absence but it remains elusive. Years may pass, but

*continued on page 18*

# Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative

## Recapping winter quarter events

“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

Full and winter quarters have been very productive for CHC’s Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative. Director Tom Izu and intern Pedro Enriquez spent time making connections with community organizations and participating in educational events. The current concern over the profiling and endangerment of Muslim Americans in violation of their civil liberties served as an overarching topic for much of the Initiative’s focus, with the parallels between it and the experience of Japanese Americans during World War II creating a powerful educational message.

### Here are winter quarter’s highlights:

**January 12, 2016** – In a packed church auditorium in San Jose’s Japantown, CHC Director Tom Izu participates in an educational program entitled “Stand up Against Scapegoating and Fear Mongering.” The event brought together community representatives from three local chapters of the Japanese American Citizens League, the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the ACLU, the Asian Law Alliance, Nihonmachi Outreach Committee, two representatives from the Muslim American community and two former World War II Japanese American internees. Speakers encouraged the community to take the lessons learned from the Internment to heart and support the Muslim American community and others against the scapegoating they are currently facing.



AEBCLEI Intern  
Pedro Enriquez

**January 20, 2016** – CHC Civil Liberties Intern Pedro Enriquez speaks at the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union’s annual general meeting. Pedro explained to the audience that he became a part of the CHC’s Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative because he saw how disempowered members of his own community were, including his peers in high school, due to their lack of information regarding their rights as members of this society.

**February 10, 2016** – CHC Director Tom Izu participates in a panel at Homestead High School in Cupertino on Japanese American history focusing on the need to use the lessons learned from this community’s experience to stand up against attacks on Muslim Americans. Two of the panelists



Tom Izu returns to his alma mater, Homestead High School in Sunnyvale.

are Homestead alumni, Athar Siddiquee, South Bay Islamic Association, and Izu.

**February 18, 2016** – CHC’s annual Day of Remembrance program, commemorating the World War II Internment of Japanese Americans: the lessons learned for today. This year’s program focused on the dangers of Islamophobia featuring guest speakers from Stanford University Law School, Council on American-Islamic Relations, and De Anza College’s Muslim Student Association.

**March 4, 2016** – Izu, makes a panel presentation at the California Association of Museums 2016 Conference in Riverside on the civil liberties initiative and the CHC. The workshop session was entitled, “Social Justice in Public Museums: Case Studies in Telling Difficult Stories” and featured, besides Izu, presentations from the History Department of UC Riverside, Riverside Community College District’s Center of Social Justice and Civil Liberties, and the Riverside Metropolitan Museum.



Panel presentation at Wesley United Methodist Church, San José Japantown



# Reflections on & the Valley's

by Lauren Smith Keenan

Lauren Smith's Santa Clara Valley childhood took place in a time of economic, political, social, and environmental transition. In this essay, Lauren bundles together the threads of her family's stories as local 20th century fruit ranchers, a livelihood that would not survive mid-century demands for water and land.

## About the author

Our author was born March 14, 1949 at O'Connor Hospital in San José while almond trees were in bloom. The oldest of 4 full-siblings and 3 half-siblings, she attended Franklin-McKinley and Hillsdale grammar schools, then Franklin-McKinley Middle School and Andrew P. Hill High School. Lauren graduated from University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1971 with a degree in European Intellectual History and a minor in American Intellectual History. After earning a teaching credential from UCSC she taught primary grades in Soledad, California for 37 years, as well as worked with fellow teachers on ways to invigorate their mathematics curricula through the Monterey County Office of Education and the UCSC Math Project. She and her family took 2 sabbatical leaves to allow for extensive travel within Mexico and Guatemala. Lauren is married to a fellow teacher. They have two children and two grandchildren and have lived in Monterey County for 45 years.



*Author standing next to her dad's tractor in the family prune orchard, surrounded by cover crop, circa 1952.*

# water bounty

## Yosemite Beginnings 1906–1921

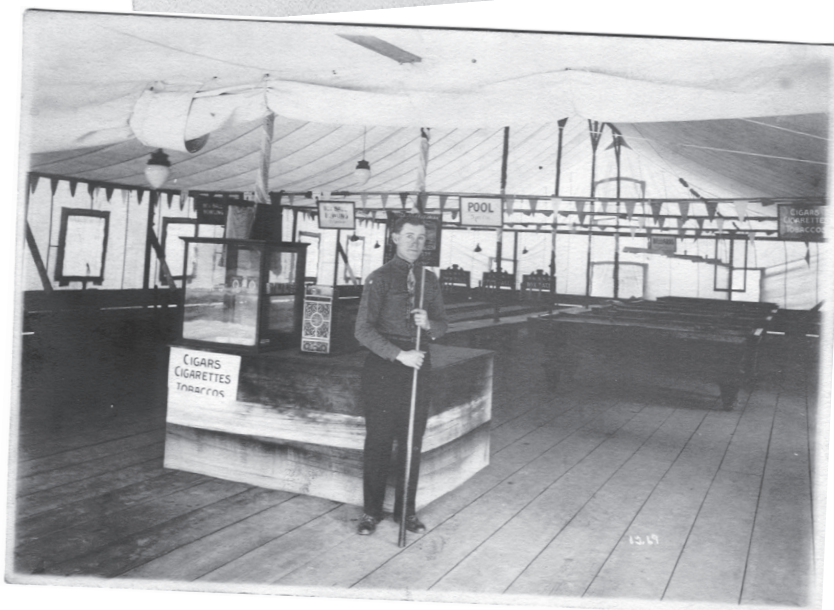
The morning of the earthquake, April 18, 1906, found my grandfather, Fred H. Smith, in Scotts Valley on a skittish and frightened horse as he worked his way back over the Santa Cruz Mountains to his home base in the Santa Clara Valley, to the Willows, a once marshy region now known as Willow Glen.

Grandpa was the fifth of ten children and he seems to have been the adventurous one. He was first in his family to come to California from Missouri and eventually the majority of his family members, including his father, Elam Johnson Smith, and mother, Mary Icelona Biggs, followed him here.

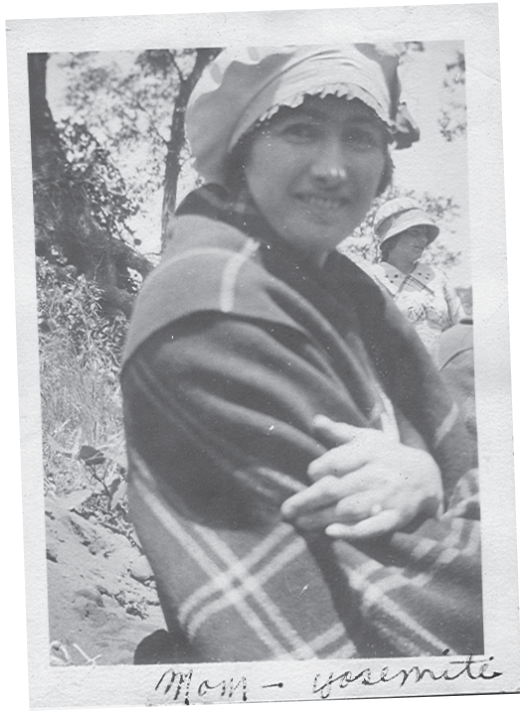
Grandpa worked at a wide variety of jobs as a young man, including: work with the Wells Fargo vessels that carried products up and down the coast of California (which is possibly why he was in Scotts Valley when the 1906 earthquake struck); as a stage coach driver to and from the Yosemite Valley; as an entrepreneur in Yosemite with a barber shop and a shoe shop and the firewood concession for the hotels and tourists visiting Yosemite.

It was in Yosemite that our grandmother, Maude Ruth Davis, met Grandpa.

Grandma was born in 1896 on a farm in Dixon, California. Her grandfather had come from Wales to seek his fortune in the California gold fields, and to escape the life of a coal miner. He did not strike it rich and in fact died of heat stroke in the sweltering Sierra foothills. Her father left the Sierra for the fertile Central Valley. When Grandma was only eleven her mother died and a year later her five-year old sister died. It must have been a somber time for the young girl. Despite that, Grandma was an excellent student and ended high school as



The Yosemite photo album shows Fred H. Smith attending to his firewood concession, at the pool hall, and standing (far left) on the platform ready for travel.



"Mom" is Grandma Maude.

both the class president and editor of the yearbook; she was also the class salutatorian.

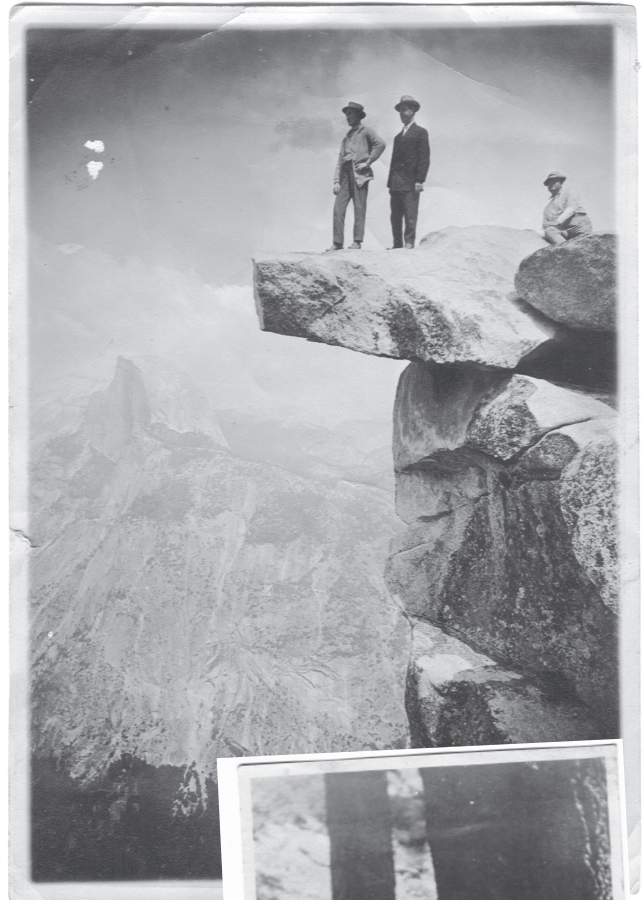
Upon graduation Grandma did what many young women did—she became a teacher in a local one-room school. And so it was that she was free to spend the summer visiting an aunt and some male cousins who were working in Yosemite Valley when she was in her early twenties.

Her cousins introduced her to an enterprising young man who also worked in Yosemite. Maude may have been attracted to the older Fred by his energy, his red hair, even possibly the story

(which all my aunts and uncles swear is true) that when William Taft came to visit Yosemite Grandpa was driving the stage coach. Taft, a large man, was having difficulty entering the coach. Grandpa is said to have grabbed the handles on either side of the door and pushed Taft from behind with his boot! I've always wondered how he exited the coach.

No church wedding for them...the couple was married in the summer of 1921 in Grandma's home in Dixon because Grandpa was not Catholic. Once married they returned to Yosemite for a "working honeymoon." That fall they went to live in Campbell where Grandpa and his family had been living.

Grandpa Fred Smith (left) and friends at Glacier Point.



Grandma Maude Ruth Davis Smith in the Yosemite sunshine.



**President William Howard Taft visited Yosemite and Hetch Hetchy with environmental preservationist John Muir as his tour guide, October 7-9, 1909. San Francisco was, at that moment, campaigning for the flooding of the valley of Hetch Hetchy to become a reservoir for The City. City boosters feared a setback if Muir had Taft's ear on the subject for the entirety of the trip.**





Happy times at Yosemite.



Fred and Maude perched over the Valley.

### The Smiths of Campbell 1921-1970

Their first house was a kit bought from Montgomery Ward that Grandpa put together himself. It did not have an indoor bathroom though Grandpa eventually added one. Two of their five children were born in that house.

Our dad, John Phillip, was born on Halloween, 1922, a year after the marriage. The following November 18, Francis William was born. Grandpa continued to work seasonally in Yosemite. Mary Dolores was born February 3, 1928, Regina Cecilia, October 7, 1930, and Estella Margaret, August 21, 1934.

During the many years of itinerant work in Yosemite and elsewhere Grandpa was saving money, and was slowly purchasing land in the Santa Clara Valley. This was fertile land transitioning from dry ranching, cattle, and grain crops to irrigated farming, supporting millions of newly-planted fruit trees throughout the Valley. He worked diligently and eventually had several large productive fruit orchards.

Grandma was a strong, competent woman even under difficult circumstances. An illustration of this can be seen in the following story. The price of dried prunes in 1927 was just 5 cents a pound. Grandpa and Grandma gambled that a higher price for the prunes could be found in the middle of the country where the fruit wasn't so common. That fall a train car was filled with dried prunes, headed for Kansas City, Missouri. Grandma was selected to accompany the prunes and arrange for their sale once in Kansas City. She was six months pregnant at the time and brought our dad, who had just turned five, and Uncle Francis, just turned four, with her on this "adventure." They were on the train two full days; they didn't have the means for a sleeping compartment and had had to pack their food for the long journey. What a handful those two young boys must have been! Grandma always said she was grateful for the kindness of an unknown gentleman who took it upon himself to help occupy the boys through those long hours of travel. Once in Kansas City Grandma and the boys stayed with a niece, Nota Mae (Smith) Sherman and her husband Norman. Being with family helped to revive the travelers. Negotiations over the sale of the prunes didn't move quickly, or smoothly, however. As time passed Grandma became increasingly concerned about the upcoming birth so ultimately returned to California, disappointed and without finalizing a deal. There were other financial mishaps during their long marriage but none of them brought rancor to their relationship.

In 1938, when the youngest of the children, Margaret, was



Allan - Prune Dry Shed



Dolores and Regina - our dryyard '45



Dolores - Spring 1945 - 5 acres



Dolores, taking off cots in July, 1942



Edwin Silva, Regina, Jackie Alvada, Francis, and Dolores - 1945 summer



The Smith house on San Tomas Aquino Road at Campbell, purchased from Dr. Creta Crockett.

two, my grandparents purchased a big house from Dr. Creta Crockett. It was situated on San Tomas Aquino Road. What is now known as Smith Creek, named after our family, ran through the back, separating some of the working buildings from the house and big barn. There were both prunes and apricots on that twenty-acre parcel. Later they also owned 84 acres on Cox Road and 76 acres on Quito Road.

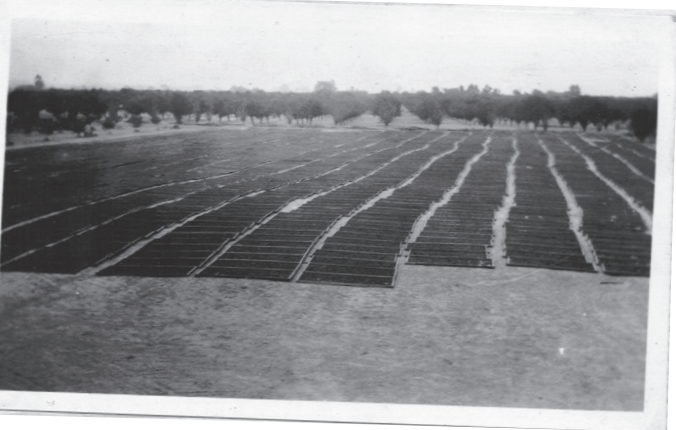
Our grandfather's home ranch eventually had a cutting shed for apricots, a dehydrator and storage area for the dried prunes, a large general purpose barn, corrals for a horse and a cow, and chicken coops. The volunteer fire department was even housed there! My aunts and I remember climbing on the huge, sticky piles of dried prunes kept in stall-like spaces. I'm not sure that would be allowed in today's world of worry about sanitation and germs, but we had a great time! My aunts also recall having to rake the dried prunes in order to turn them which aided the drying process and kept the prunes

from rotting. During WWII, my aunts did the work their two older brothers, including my father, would have done on the ranch if they hadn't been in the military. They repaired the wooden fruit lug boxes, painted the ends with identifying labels, delivered a Jeep load of fruit boxes to an outlying orchard at age fourteen (!) cut 'cots in season. They doubled-down on work to help the family business survive.

We all remember our grandmother as a welcoming, tolerant, gracious, forgiving woman who loved to garden and loved her family. She was always very active at her church, St. Lucy's, as well as other civic organizations in the local area. She was an excellent correspondent with everyone she ever met and never forgot anyone's birthday. She was even voted Campbell Mother of the Year! She was also a life-long Democrat despite the fact that her husband, like many farmers, was not. Grandma outlived Grandpa by twenty years and was active and independent throughout that time. She was the unifying force in the family and all holidays or other celebrations took place at her house. She was very much loved by her family; we still hold a family reunion on her birthday every year.



Scenes from the Campbell fruit property.





From left to right are my Aunt Dolores, Aunt Margaret, our Dad John, Uncle Francis, & Aunt Regina. Our Dad is maybe 20, Francis 19, Dolores 15, Regina 13 & Margaret 9. Dr. Crockett house/place on San Tomas.

### El Roble at Evergreen 1950–1965

Nurture, cultivate, nourish... those were the words that kept coming to mind as I reflected on my childhood: the place and the people who shaped me, who helped me clarify my values. My childhood recollections are intertwined with the visual tapestry of enormous walnut trees and delicately scented prune trees that enveloped our 100-year-old ranch house in the fertile Santa Clara Valley.

Early spring brought with it acres of cloud-like blossoms and a heady scent that to this day reminds me of fresh corn tortillas! Summer brought sounds of the sprinklers—CHK, chk, chk, CHK, chk, chk, chk...that

was the lullaby that eased us to sleep during childhood. The taste and aroma of really ripe fruit fresh from the trees—cherries by the bucketful, peaches and nectarines by the lug

box, prunes by the ton, dripping with sweet juiciness—filled our kitchen every season and linger with me still.

Water was essential to that world.

My grandfather was an orchardist, and so was my dad. Growing things was in my dad's blood. Though he graduated from San Jose State after WWII with a degree in business it would have killed his spirit to work in an office.

Both of my grandmothers and my mom were closely connected to the soil, cultivating both vegetables and flowers. Thus it is natural that my siblings and I all HAVE to grow things, to have a garden to feel fulfilled, whole. We love the harvest: a bouquet of iris, a basket of tomatoes. We thrill to the buzzing of bees and the sight of plump red worms busily aerating the soil.

I remember the newly planted prune trees; just twigs at first. It would take years for them to reach maturity. Initially Dad even planted string beans and strawberries to sell. At that time our well was 100 ft. deep.

Beside our old ranch house was the “tank house.” It consisted of a laundry room on the ground level and above that was a 10,000-gallon wooden water tank. From an early age my siblings and I were aware of the level of the water in that tank. It fascinated us. It was mysterious. Where did the water come from, how did it get there? Why was the float that marked the water's level high on the tank when there was little

Strawberries were the cash crop as the young orchard grew to maturity. Walnut orchard in the distance, circa 1953.



Author with her mother, younger siblings, in front of the water tank, circa 1954.

Our mom was born Dorothy Harnish in Rochester, New York, 1924. Her parents were Thelma O'Dell Harnish and Ezra Harnish. She was of English, French and German descent though later in life many people mistook her for other ethnicities. She came to live in California when she was 13 with her mom, a younger sister, Edna, a step-father, Gus, and a step-sister, Therese, of similar age.



Author with mother (Dorothy Smith), father (John Smith) and younger sister Leslie, circa 1952.

They arrived in Campbell a year later, after leaving the Central Valley where they initially lived with relatives. My grandfather, Gus Robillard, worked as a skilled tool and dye maker at Moffett Field throughout WWII until his retirement many years later.

In Campbell they lived directly across the street from Campbell High School. Mom was an excellent student, was always curious and eager to learn new things throughout her life. She volunteered as a Navy WAC and was in boot camp when President Roosevelt died.

She was stationed in Washington, D.C. during the war, as was dad, though they didn't meet there. After the war they met at a veterans' event in Campbell.

While in Washington D.C. each had developed a special concern for social justice issues, a concern that brought them together after the war. Mom would walk picket lines while pushing a stroller to support voting rights and the integration of schools and to boycott grapes. Social justice was always paramount in the way she lived her life.

Mom and Dad both attended San Jose State on the G.I. Bill, Mom taking quite a number of years to get her degree because she had 4 children during that time. She graduated in English Literature with high honors and a teaching degree, though she never formally taught in a school. Instead she taught us in the real world, about gardening, sewing, cooking, architecture, issues of social justice, other cultures. To this day names of trees and plants pop into my head, unbidden, because she was always naming plants we saw as we walked in the forest, along the beach, or worked in the garden. She instilled in us, from an early age, a sense of adventure and interest in travel throughout the world, always predicted we would really see the locations on exotic posters or talked about in novels. She did travel a great deal, and we have all done our share, thanks to her example.

She was a terrific mom, a fantastic friend to many, and a supportive wife out on the farm for some years. Ultimately though, that isolation and lack of intellectual stimulation made her restless so our parents' marriage ended in divorce.



water in the tank? And conversely, why was the float low when the tank was full? That tank held our precious water; we knew viscerally, instinctively that all life on our ranch depended on that water. (family photo w/tank house)

The years I am describing are from 1950, when my dad and mom bravely moved out to the rural Eastside of San José, through 1970, when San José was no longer rural.

Over those years the twiggy whips of prune trees grew and grew. They were wisely and thoughtfully cared for. The young walnut trees also took root and flourished. It is a spiritual experience to walk in a grove of mature walnut trees; they are a refuge on a hot summer day. The dense canopy

high overhead creates a dark stillness that cools the earth beneath their protective cover. It is as if one had stepped into an ancient natural cathedral, the trees eternally protecting those who care for them and believe in their magical power to produce food from mere sunlight, soil and water.

The manner in which the trees were watered evolved from the simple process of creating earthen dikes and then flooding the orchards, a section at a time, to the use of modern sprinklers, which saved time and, more importantly, water. But there was still plenty of mud to be played in...saturated, chocolate-colored earth held tight to our boots as we ran to keep up with Dad, striding ahead to move the pipes from one

Author swimming  
in Coyote Creek  
circa 1958.



row to the next. Often a boot came off—then the cold, heavy, muddy wetness oozed between our toes, and we shrieked with delight as Dad returned to rescue us.

As the trees matured they became more productive, yielding literally hundreds of tons of fruit each season. (I picked a ton of prunes once – it took me ALL SUMMER! And I was paid \$11!). I’m not sure what my dad was paid for our prunes and walnuts, or the cherries, peaches and nectarines he farmed for other folks, but we had enough to feel secure.

We had seasonal workers who picked prunes, as well as men who came through the Bracero Program and lived in a little bungalow attached to our barn, located across the driveway from our house. There were, maybe, 6 men; they taught us how to count in Spanish and say short phrases; they made us tortillas.

Later there was a family that lived in the bungalow and the husband worked for my dad, the kids were our friends and went to school with us. (After awhile, my siblings and I lived in the bungalow while my dad was building us a new house.)

Our immediate neighbors had a labor camp that their seasonal workers lived in that was only 50 yards from our house (and a half a mile from their house). The children in those families also became our friends and played with us in



our yard and on our playground equipment. Our dad built us a big jungle gym, a really large swing set, a tree house in a walnut tree, and he put together an 8 foot-tall slide...we had a terrific setup for lots of kids!

Over the years our well had to be re-dug several times, each time deeper than the last and costing a great deal of money. Eventually the well was 300 ft. deep.

The city and environs of San José grew during that time, also. The people who came were hungry for land. And they were very thirsty. The land-grabbing, water-guzzling subdivisions were moving closer and closer. Many farmers were unable to keep up with the costs of digging ever-deeper wells so that each of the thousands of new houses could enjoy a bright green lawn and wash their cars every week, water wasted, lost to the crops that had made the Valley great.

After nurturing hundreds of trees, nourishing thousands of folks across the country with his fruits, “managing” nature to result in a successful crop more often than not, my dad, too, had to succumb to the steady “march of progress”. With no more accessible, affordable water to provide the lifeblood of all that grew on our cherished ground he sold our orchard to a developer. I will never forget the sadness, the look of defeat he exuded as we all watched the bulldozers destroy—in just a matter of days—what had taken him a lifetime to build. That destruction was partly the result of post-World War II “boomtown” policies and politics. Water was thought to be an endless resource. But we know it is not.



Scenes of modern day near Tully and McLaughlin, San José: a tankhouse/watchtower and a place for San José’s Finest...horses.



## Stages of Valley Growth—1970 onward

Both our grandfather and our dad worked with fruit trees in the Santa Clara Valley. Both were proud of the produce they grew and worked hard at their craft. Both were respected orchardists. But it seems they had profoundly different relationships with the land.

Grandpa worked the land until such time as he could develop it, build a needed shopping center or houses for the people coming to the area. The fruit trees were a means to an end; they sustained the family until there was a more profitable use for the land.

I think our dad had a closer connection, a deeper relationship with his land and his trees. He planted each young prune sapling then hand-grafted the most desirable fruiting stock to the strong rootstock. In so doing he was giving birth to an entire orchard. He nurtured the young trees throughout their infancy and juvenile years, brought them successfully into their productive years by studying the soil, their water needs, learning how and when to prune the trees for maximum harvest, when to fertilize or spray against damaging insects or diseases. The trees, the fruit, the land itself, was the end our dad worked for.

When Grandpa arrived in the Santa Clara Valley there was a great deal of open land, ripe for development by someone with imagination, with vision, and who worked hard. His feelings for the land were born of that experience. The feelings our dad had for the land were the result of his growing up in the Santa Clara Valley at a very different time. Maybe because Dad had seen so many orchards slowly, then more rapidly, paved over, had watched his father convert incredibly fertile land into shopping centers and parking lots, he cherished his land, knew it was precious.

Soon after the trees were cleared from our land, my dad took a desk job. I don't think his heart, his spirit was ever the same again.

Perhaps the legacy of Grandpa, Fred H. Smith, is that of providing the convenience of shopping close to home, something that didn't exist in the 1920s-1950s. He saw a





Smith Creek in Campbell, Spring 2016.



world made more convenient for the growing families in the Campbell area.

And perhaps the legacy of our dad, John P. Smith, exists in his four children, all of whom are avid gardeners of both beauty and bounty; who grieve the loss of an entire horizon of almonds, prunes, apricots, cherries in bloom once spring arrives; who champion the wiser use of land and water at this time in our history; who work joyfully to instill appreciation for the natural world in our own children and grandchildren.

The loss of our land due to the declining water table is always on my mind as our Monterey County supervisors approve more and more development. The amazingly fertile Santa Clara Valley is no longer the fruit basket of the country. Now we need to plan—and to fight—to preserve the fertile Salinas Valley.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The very early projects of the California History Center (now nearly fifty years old) were devoted to capturing the stories of the Santa Clara Valley in its transition from agricultural powerhouse to technological engine. Our Stockmeir Library/Archives contain photograph, oral history, and manuscript collections documenting many of those changes. Research materials from Yvonne Olson Jacobson's award-winning family and regional history, *Passing Farms, Enduring Values: California's Santa Clara Valley*, reside here as The Michelle Ann Jacobson Memorial Collection.

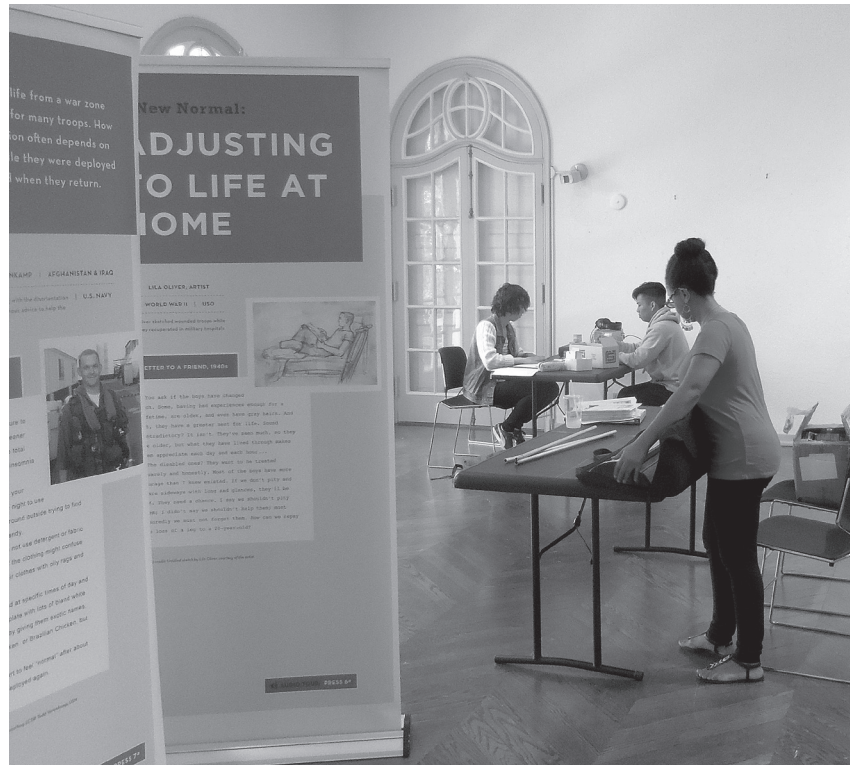
# At the Center

## Director's Report *continued from page 4*

in the end, the need to make things whole exerts tremendous force, pushing us to uncover the complete story.

And this process requires bits and pieces of history from our everyday lives to be saved somehow and documented, to the best of our ability, against indifference, ignorance, or even opposition. The most thoughtful action does not sacrifice the needs of future learning, knowledge, and illumination to expediency and economy. Archives are about collecting local “minutiae” so we can have the ability to “remember”, to fill the gaps and bridge the transitions. They give us what is needed to exercise our communal memory and ultimately to be part of creating the bigger history of the whole society so we can move forward -- if democracy is to be maintained. To borrow from an old slogan: “think globally, archive locally!”

We appreciate your continued support for our library/archives. In this next period we are looking for ideas of how to find more storage and work space. While we believe we can do some better organizing in our *Trionon* building, we will be searching for other places in the community since we do not have any more space on campus at this time. If you have ideas for us, please let us know.



Azha Simmons reads our new exhibit—*War Comes Home*—for public view. In background, students work on a slide collection.

## MEMBERSHIP

*New and renewing members*

### Special Donations

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# JOIN

Support the preservation of local history  
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Membership categories: \$30 Individual; \$40 Family;  
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## Chatham Forbes, Sr.



CHC has lost one of its foremost instructors this year. Chatham Forbes, Sr., passed away at the age of 95 on February 12, 2016. He was still teaching courses for the Center at the time of his passing. Chatham served as a faculty member of the college and center for over 40 years, teaching many of CHC's local history courses.

After serving in the Army Air Corps during World War II, Chatham graduated from Stanford University with a teaching credential and a degree in International Relations. He later served as a public information officer for Santa Clara County for 20 years. His calling however was in education, teaching at San Francisco City, San José City, Foothill, and De Anza colleges. He also taught local history courses at community centers and retirement communities throughout the Valley.

“Chatham, in his sonorous radio-announcer voice, almost crooned history. His wide range of knowledge and

great passion for learning was a gift that he bestowed on all his students and colleagues,” recalls fellow instructor Mary Jo Ignoffo.

“It is not an exaggeration to say that Chatham's passing truly is the ending of an entire period of the Center's history. He, along with the late Betty Hirsch, helped keep our local history courses going through many rough times. Chatham has clearly left a legacy that will not be forgotten,” stated Center Director Tom Izu.

The Center held a remembrance for Chatham on May 5, 2016. We encourage former students and CHC instructors to share their own stories about Chatham and the CHC courses he taught. We will share some of these in the next issue of *Californian*.



Ralston Hall at Belmont, the campus of the College of Notre Dame de Namur.

## SPRING CLASSES

### California History Center State and Regional History Academic Program

*The following courses will be offered SPRING 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](http://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.*

#### **Billy Ralston: The Man Who Built San Francisco**

**Course: HIST – 54X**

**Units: 2**

**Instructor: Nannette Regua**

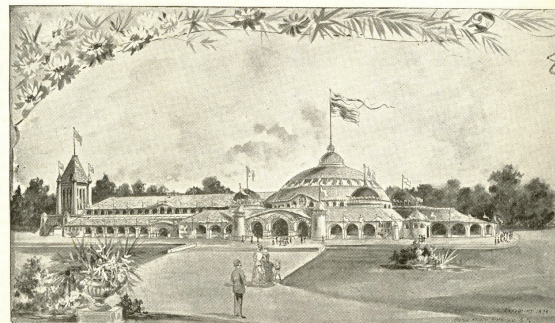
**[reguanannette@fhda.edu](mailto:reguanannette@fhda.edu)**

Born in Ohio, William Chapman Ralston became the ultimate Californian; even more, the quintessential San Franciscan. As head of “Ralston’s Ring” of investors, his aggressive initiatives were pivotal in funding the development of his beloved City and State.

**LECTURES:** Thursdays, 4/21 and 4/28,  
6:30–10:20pm, CHC

**FIELD STUDIES:** Saturdays, 4/23 Belmont and 4/30  
San Francisco, 9am–5:30pm

A brochure from the 1894 Mid-Winter Exposition at San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park shows an illustration of the Agricultural and Horticultural Hall.



AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL HALL

#### **The Pridelful City: San Francisco’s Three World’s Fairs**

**Course: HIST - 53X**

**Units: 2**

**Instructor: Nannette Regua**

**[reguanannette@fhda.edu](mailto:reguanannette@fhda.edu)**

By reason of geography, climate, and the great mineral wealth of the Mother Lode, San Francisco rose to prominence early as the “Instant City,” indeed

the *only* city in the entire West. In 1894, 1915, and 1939-40, the City put on three ambitious world’s fairs to celebrate its increasing importance, recovery from devastation, and completion of its two famous bridges.

**LECTURES:** Thursdays, 5/19 and 6/2,  
6:30–10:20pm, CHC

**FIELD STUDIES:** Saturdays, 5/21 Golden Gate Park,  
S.F. and 6/4 Marina District, S.F., 9am–5:30pm