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**Elizabeth Lowe Watson:
Suffragist and Spiritualist**

A New Year, A New Beginning

Nineteen ninety-four rings in the California History Center Foundation's Silver Anniversary Year, and it's difficult for me to believe that I have been affiliated with the center for a good portion of that time!

This is my first director's report for the *Californian* since taking over the helm of the center on July 1, and my first opportunity to write to you about some exciting things coming up — all in preparation and anticipation of our Silver Anniversary gala next fall.

You should have recently received a letter from CHCF Treasurer Bill Lester talking about some of the ideas and plans for this year, and about our theme "*What does it take to be a Californian?*" The theme has really given us some focus, and the board and staff are excited about the activities we have planned around it. We are already getting responses to the quiz questions, and there seems to be a renewed sense of enthusiasm and commitment being generated.

Members will be receiving information regularly throughout the year about upcoming activities and I can't begin to tell you how much we look forward to having our members become more involved. I also hope that you will think about introducing a friend or two to the center. The more the merrier!

Our volunteers have some exciting things planned for this year too. They are focusing their monthly meetings around the theme "A taste of . . ." Friday, October 5th was their first meeting and thanks to Volunteer Coordinator Dee Liotta they had a wonderful tea and scone tasting.

A November visit to the Mt. View Senior Center to see volunteer Mary Strong's water colors provided a "Taste of Art" and they will be joining with other CHCF members around the tree on December 3 for a "Taste of Dessert."

All history center members are invited to January's volunteer gathering as author and CHCF Board member Ward Winslow gives us a "Taste of Palo Alto" by talking about and signing his recently completed book *Palo Alto: A Centennial History*.

The center will continue pursuing its "*What does it take to be a Californian?*" theme on February 9th with an educationally entertaining evening with the ever-popular Ken Bruce. And

while our "Spring Surprise" is not fully fleshed out, we are looking at having some sort of "Trivial Pursuit," "Jeopardy," "College Bowl," activity for a day/evening of matching wits and wisdom!

Of course the center piece of all of our activities will be the gala costume ball, to be held at the Trianon in October of 1994.

As you can see, this year promises to be not only busy and fun, but educational as well; a year of renewal, reacquaintance, and recommitment. I hope all of you will participate in at least some, if not all, of the planned activities.

Kathleen Peregrin

P.S. Keep an eye out — *The Californian* will be running photos throughout the next year showcasing 25 years with the California History Center



In the late 1960s, Le Petit Trianon was painstakingly moved from its original location where today's Flint Center stands to be placed on its permanent foundation at its present site. Courtesy California History Center Foundation, Stockmeir Library Archive.

Cover:

Portrait of Elizabeth Lowe Watson (1843-1927), a vocal advocate for women's suffrage in the early twentieth century. Watson lived on her farm called "Sunny Brae" in Cupertino from 1880 until her death in 1927. Courtesy California Historical Society, San Francisco, FN-28940.

CALENDAR

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

1/4 **CHC opens to the public.** History Center hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; closed from noon to 1 p.m.

1/14 **Lecture/booksigning by Ward Winslow on Palo Alto's history.** 2:00 p.m. at the History Center. Fee. Seating is limited; please call 408/864-8712 for reservations.

1/17 **Martin Luther King Birthday observed.** CHC is closed; De Anza classes do not meet.

2/9 **Lecture by De Anza instructor Ken Bruce.** 7:00 p.m. at the History Center. Free. Seating is limited; please call 408/864-8712 for reservations.

2/18 **Lincoln's birthday observed.** CHC is closed; De Anza classes do not meet.

2/21 **Washington's birthday observed.** CHC is closed; De Anza classes do not meet.

3/25 **Winter quarter ends.**

Meet the Author:

Palo Alto: A Centennial History

The California History Center Foundation is pleased to feature author Ward Winslow talking about the recently published *Palo Alto: A Centennial History*. As Palo Alto kicks off a year of celebration, this book is the culmination of several years of research and writing for both Winslow and the Palo Alto Historical Association. It is the only book that covers all of Palo Alto's history, from the beginnings right up to the dynamic town we know today.

Winslow, California native and longtime Palo Alto resident, is the former editor of the *Peninsula Times Tribune*, which ceased publication in March, 1993. Since retiring from the paper in 1984, he has pursued freelance writing and serves on the boards of several local historical organizations, including the California History Center Foundation.

The talk is free and the book *Palo Alto: A Centennial History* will be available for purchase and signing by the author.

Friday, January 14, 1994, 2 P.M.

Limited seating, please RSVP by January 12, 1994 to 864-8712.

Light refreshments.



Ward Winslow, member of the Board of Trustees of the California History Center Foundation, minds the store at De Anza Day book sale, 1993.

State and Regional History

As a benefit of membership in the California History Center Foundation, the center provides registration assistance to members who are taking only history center classes. All other students wishing to take history center classes — or members taking classes in other departments — must register through the De Anza College Admissions and Records Office. CHCF members who would like registration assistance must come to the center to register. Members may register 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m., Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning November 16.

For complete course details, including times, dates and fees, please see the De Anza College winter schedule of classes.

PLEASE NOTE

In addition to the courses listed below, the history center will be offering three sections of the four-unit, general survey, History of California class during winter quarter. The two day sections meet at 8:30-9:20 and 10:30-11:20 M-Th and the evening section meets 6:20-10 p.m. Mondays.



Hitching post and watering trough in San Juan Bautista, where visitors can capture a feeling of early California. Courtesy California History Center Foundation, Stockmeir Library Archive.

Historic San Juan Bautista: Betty Hirsch

Life in San Juan Bautista, a town which refused the railroad and was bypassed by the Industrial Age, doesn't look much different for today's 1,600 residents than it did when the town decided to let the railroad pass it by. Only 90 miles from San Francisco, it

stands stuck in the stagecoach era. Once a main stage stop, many of the main street buildings still have the posts where riders once tied their horses. The town has survived because its Mission, the 15th in the chain of California Missions, has survived 181 years and continues to draw worshippers from all parts of the country. Students will delve into the town's colorful past, its founders and pioneers, through an evening lecture and a one-day field trip to tour the Mission and original town buildings.

The Legacy of Golden Gate Park: Betty Hirsch

One of the largest man-made parks in the world, Golden Gate Park was developed in 1870 on a 1,017 acre site consisting of sand dunes. As laid out by William Hammond Hall, its first superintendent, and as nurtured by the superintendency of John McLaren (lasting 56 years) Golden Gate Park was to mature from an unpromising beginning into one of the world's premier urban green spaces. Students will study the history of the park and its founders, as the Centennial of the 1894 Midwinter International Exposition is celebrated. Field trips will take students on tours of the park itself as well as several world-renowned exhibits currently on display at the deYoung Museum.

Historical Development of the Oakland Area: Chatham Forbes

The Oakland area's evolution from a pastoral, agricultural and port community to the present culturally comprehensive industrial metropolis and transportation center, is a story of growth and change parallel to the movement of industry and economic power westward. In particular, the area has been favored by geographic advantage for surface transportation. Through evening lectures and field trips students will be provided an insight into the dynamism of this "city across the bay."

History of the Santa Cruz Coast: Chatham Forbes

From Native American times, the Hispanic Mission and rancho era, and down through the American periods of agriculture, light industry, tourism and residential development, the Santa Cruz region has been identified with its accessible, relatively benign coastline. Yet its mountain forest and fertile coastal plain have been vital to its economic growth and well-being. Through lectures and field trips students will have the opportunity to take a closer look at both the history and current picture of the Santa Cruz coast.



One of many wineries in the Santa Cruz Mountains, Ridge Vineyards' workers prepare shipment of wine, the final step in the long process of wine making. Courtesy California History Center Foundation, Stockmeir Library Archive.

California and the Wine World: Charles Sullivan*

This course introduces the student to the major wine styles and types of Europe and traces their historical development in the Old World. It also identifies their counterparts in California, with glances at the Pacific Northwest and the rest of the world. Six major categories will be studied and the thrust of the course is historical, with special emphasis on the evolution of California varietal and generic wines. After each major unit, there will be a comparative evaluation of the wines studied. Field trips to San Francisco are included.

**Charles Sullivan has authored Napa Wine, a history of winegrowing in that region from the Mission period to the present. It is soon to be published by the Napa Valley Wine Library Association.*

History for Kids – A Teacher’s Workshop: Bruce MacGregor

Using two workshop evenings and a field trip, this class will offer elementary school teachers tools to convert field experiences into relevant, state-curriculum approved classroom history lessons. Teachers will begin by looking at the state curriculum in terms of theme and content, and quickly examine ways that field experiences — visits to local historic sites, parks and interpretive activities can be mainstreamed into lessons to enliven and inform a class with “living” history experiences. After developing the approach, teachers will visit Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont for a practical example of an interpretive historic site, letting the class use Ardenwood to develop proposals for their own classroom activities.

Champion of Suffrage: Elizabeth Lowe Watson, 1843-1927

by Yvonne Jacobson



In 1911, when women won the vote in California, Elizabeth Lowe Watson, triumphant president of the state's largest suffrage organization, made a sweeping tour of eastern cities to encourage women to press on in the struggle. In a letter to a friend about what would be expected of California women voters she said, "Now more than ever before will the eyes of the world be upon us, and woe unto us if

we are not 'Wise as serpents and harmless as doves.'"

This image of a woman as someone who appears to be a harmless dove but is in reality as smart and cunning as a snake applies well to the character of Watson. Throughout the campaign she urged her co-workers to act with restraint and decorum. At the same time, she left nothing to chance. When men stepped forward to help, it pleased her, but she refused to rely solely on them.

For all her grace and her kind, dove-like nature, Watson was a passionate reformer. When she died at age eighty-four in 1927, her obituary acclaimed her as a "champion of woman's suffrage, temperance, peace and liberal religion." This paper will trace Watson's remarkable life, with emphasis on her work in California for woman's suffrage.

"Liberal religion" was a phrase used to describe Unitarians and other Christian groups whose requirement for membership did not include a strict adherence to doctrine. Watson and her activist daughter, Lucretia Watson Taylor, were both Unitarian. But Watson was also a widely respected Spiritualist preacher. Unitarians and Spiritualists openly supported women preachers, like Watson, and on the whole advocated women's rights. It is not surprising that among Californian suffrage leaders other women, like Laura De Force Gordon, Georgiana Bruce Kirby and Eliza Farnham, were Spiritualists.

Watson, driven by an unyielding perception of the world as morally corrupt, devoted her life to the major issues that confronted nineteenth-century women reformers. In 1911, not long after she took over as president of the California Equal Suffrage Association, she wrote to a friend: "I am well, happy and hopeful but my heart aches over the things that need mending! The cause that lacks assistance. The wrongs that need resistance. And can only rest when I am doing my utmost."

Watson wrote these words at the age of sixty-seven, when she already had a life full of accomplishments behind her. She lived long enough to see the Progressive movement succeed in California, when the party gained the governorship in 1910. A major force from 1900 to 1914, Progressive reform philosophy matched her own life-long concerns. The surge for honesty in government was underlined by a belief that the wrongs of society could be made right. Specifics included restricting the number of hours women could work and efforts to eliminate child labor; shifting the balance of power from the monied interests of big business and giving it to the people by way of the initiative, referendum, and recall; gaining civil rights for women including voting rights and greater participation in the governmental process; reducing or eliminating sale of alcoholic beverages; and eradicating prostitution as well as curtailing the circumstances which forced women to become prostitutes.

Watson had a familial connection to the Progressive movement as well. Her son-in-law, Benjamin Grant Taylor, was voted into office as the clerk of the California Supreme Court on the coattails of Progressive Hiram Johnson, who became governor. Taylor held the job until his retirement in 1934. Her daughter, Lucretia, a Berkeley graduate (sorority sister Julia Morgan designed her home in Saratoga), worked on behalf of the Civic League of San Francisco, whose purpose was to clean up municipal government. Taylor, a preacher in her own right, also served for a time as secretary to the California Suffrage Association, under her mother. Watson referred to her daughter, son-in-law, and herself as a trio; indeed, their sympathy of thought made them a team.

Watson was born in Ohio in 1843. She and her family moved to Leon, a small town in western New York state. Perhaps in this farming community, she and her family heard about the Fox sisters, children who first gained public attention in 1848 in Rochester, New York, for their ability to "rap" with the dead through a series of knocks, usually "yes" or "no" answers to questions put to the "deceased." Under the guidance of an older sister, Kate and Maggie Fox earned considerable money through their public appearances. Their popularity, public recognition, and earning power were accomplishments shared by few women of the age. In addition, historians credit the Fox sisters with beginning the Spiritualist movement in this country.

The Fox sisters repudiated their ability to communicate with the dead in 1888, stating that the sounds were made by cracking their big toe knuckles. This admission did little to deter Spiritualist

followers or practitioners. Among the nineteenth-century rappers were poor women who earned a living touring the country. All her life Watson had “psychic” experiences of clairvoyance, “mechanical indications of the other world,” as she called them. She saw them as only the beginning of a journey toward the spiritual, non-material world. She died before completing her autobiography detailing these psychic occurrences; the work has not been found.

Watson’s career as a Spiritualist began in 1850, when at the age of seven she stunned her teacher and classmates by entering a trance, while rapping sounds seemingly emanated from nowhere. Watson, the tenth of thirteen children, was first “entranced” at her home, where she began to speak from scriptures in a semi-conscious state. As the Spiritualist community grew in numbers and maturity, the ability to communicate with the dead was seen as the new dispensation from God, the beginning of a new spiritual era when goodness would reign. Watson saw her ability as God-given. Local people began to fear and revere her; many assembled to witness her entrance into a trance and listen to her alleged communications. Watson had other gifts that she cultivated throughout her life. She had a natural ability to speak and a charisma that drew large audiences who came to listen to her illuminate the new spiritual vision.

Despite Watson’s individual success, the avenues open to women outside the home were few in the mid-nineteenth century. While the abolitionist cause gave some women the opportunity to speak in public, it was still not a widely accepted practice in the 1850s. Women preachers were even rarer. Among the religious groups, only the Quakers, Unitarians, Spiritualists, and later, Methodists, openly encouraged women to speak to a mixed congregation as authorities on spiritual matters. The tradition established by the Biblical Paul that a woman should not preach was not overtly challenged until 1848, when the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments named religion as one of the areas of life where the rights of women were unjustly restricted.

Seneca Falls

The Seneca Falls Convention that signalled the beginning of the woman’s movement took place only four months after the Fox sisters burst on the scene, and within two hundred miles. Watson was at the epicenter of both the Spiritualist movement and the newly-arrived woman’s movement. The Spiritualist movement represented a discontent with restrictive religious forms, and was

related to the numerous religious revivals of the nineteenth century. The woman’s movement, on the other hand, indicated that pioneer, frontier women who helped settle the country and establish new communities in the wilderness were now challenging their narrow domestic roles and limited social and legal rights. Both movements grew out of protests against outmoded social forms. They shared a new spiritual vision which included expanding the rights of women whose moral goodness was necessary to bring a new dispensation to full reality.

The 1848 Seneca Falls women’s convention had outlined the scope of women’s disadvantage in society. Like Susan B. Anthony whom she met and knew, Watson fought for women’s rights on all levels: economic, political and social. She herself helped to widen women’s sphere by entering the public arena of men. Once a public figure, she never relinquished her role outside the home.

Watson did not set out to be a preacher. Her dream was to teach, and she cried bitterly when told she had to leave school to preach. It was her mother, Lucretia Daniels Watson, who said, “My child, you will be a teacher of gray-haired men and women if you will only consent to be guided by the angels”. As a result, her own education was cut short to cultivate and exploit her spiritual talents. When she was fourteen, her father left his farm, took her out of school, and put her on tour. For four years she demonstrated her ability as a clairvoyant and medium, and gave inspirational talks, often on subjects chosen by a committee and given to her on stage to answer impromptu. As an “inspirational speaker,” her answers, she claimed, came directly from God. Some who disbelieved her said her talks sounded like sermons from A. J. Davis, a famous male spiritualist, whom she claimed never to have heard speak.

Recalling the years from 1857 to 1861 when she travelled with her father, Watson later said, “Through summer heat and the most terrible winter storms we drove long distances and always found large audiences awaiting us, although it required a goodly degree of courage at that period to attend a spiritualistic lecture.” Since her father quit farming to take her on tour, it is likely that she was the main breadwinner for the family. Perhaps this experience, in which she had little choice in what she did and kept little of her own earnings, molded her thoughts about the rights of females. While she spoke with regret of not going to school, her experience in front of large audiences perhaps instilled a growing confidence in her own abilities, and gave her a sense of her own “selfhood,” a term that she would use over and over in reference to women’s rights.



Women advocates for the right to vote first gathered in small groups to organize and strategize. As their numbers increased, larger meetings became the norm. These women are from Palo Alto. Courtesy Palo Alto Historical Association.

Recalling herself at eighteen, Watson said that she had developed from a skinny, sickly girl into a woman with a near-perfect physique and a wealth of naturally curly hair. It was 1861 and the Civil War had just begun. She took a summer teaching job in Titusville, Pennsylvania, a town where the first oil well in the world had been drilled shortly before by "Colonel" Edwin L. Drake in 1859. As teacher, she handed a bouquet of flowers to a soldier who was leaving for the war. He was the son of a leading citizen, Jonathan Watson. The elder Watson had seen the oil strike and quickly leased oil-rich land. It was he, not Drake, who became the first oil millionaire.

One story says that Jonathan Watson, a widower with five

children, elicited the help of a psychic to locate a new oil well and paid the young woman the equivalent of one day's oil production, about \$2,000. Apparently he contracted with another young medium to strike oil for him as well. This young woman was "Libby," as Elizabeth was called. In 1861, Elizabeth was married to Jonathan, twenty-four years her senior. She took on the responsibility of caring for his five children, with the guidance, she claimed, of the departed "spirit mother." Jonathan and Elizabeth had four children of their own, two of whom died from childhood diphtheria.

Her husband's temporary retirement brought her into direct contact with the leaders of the woman's movement, including

Susan B. Anthony. In 1864, with nearly \$3,000,000 in gold in the bank, the Watsons moved to Rochester, New York. Installed in an elaborate mansion which he bought for \$35,000, complete with French furnishings and stately grounds, Libby Watson met other women seeking to expand woman's participation in public life. Rochester was, after all, not only the home of Susan B. Anthony but the birthplace of many women's benevolent activities, anti-slavery agitation, peace activism, temperance clubs, and women's rights meetings. Anthony belonged to the same Unitarian church as Watson. After a devastating fire, Watson gave \$4,000 to rebuild the structure. In December of 1866, Watson attended the Equal Rights Association meeting held in Rochester, headed by Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. At the young age of twenty-three, Watson was in the center of the woman's movement.

When Watson's husband decided to return to Titusville in 1866, he began to wildcat oil wells. He also jeopardized his fortune by gambling on the daily horse races that he organized down the main street of Titusville. It also was said of him that he relied on untrustworthy people, signing notes which, more often than not, turned bad, leaving him with the debt. Elizabeth, according to the biographers of Jonathan Watson, failed him also. When his gambling on the horses and oil wells nearly depleted their fortune, "Elizabeth gained control of what remained and moved to California where she obtained a separation from her husband." He died in June, 1894.

A man who had lived next door to Watson in Cupertino, John Vai, told this writer that he understood Elizabeth had left her husband because of his gambling, particularly his betting on the horses. While chronicles of Jonathan Watson's life paint Elizabeth as a deserter of her husband in his hour of need, Vai believed, as does this author, that she left with what money she could salvage before her remaining two children and she faced bankruptcy.

Elizabeth Watson arrived by railroad in California in 1880, one of the many who responded to promotional materials and cheap fares to start a new life in the West. Located at the southern tip of San Francisco Bay, agricultural Santa Clara County was in transition from an economy based on grain-growing to one based on fruit trees. Many eastern and midwestern settlers had arrived after the gold rush to lay stake to former Mexican lands. Three decades of confusion over land boundaries were coming to an end when Watson arrived and purchased a small wheat farm in

Cupertino. A charming spot with Regnart Creek running through the property, the farm was called Sunny Brae by Watson. With her son, she planted the prune and apricot trees which would form the basis of her income until she died. She managed her own property, finding it interesting work. She shipped her fruit under her own Sunny Brae label. The comfortable two-story home she built had shuttered windows; a balcony on the upper level ran around one end of the house. There was a veranda as well, which opened to the garden. She laid out a garden with border flowers, shrubs, roses, and lawns. Perhaps it was a version of the two estates she had lived on in Rochester and Titusville, without the trappings of great wealth. With her scale of economics reduced, she now did much of the gardening herself. Her letters reveal that lack of cash was often a problem, especially when she drew on her funds to support causes such as suffrage.

Temple Oak

At the center of her garden was an oak whose spread reached one hundred feet. Consistent with her belief that the divine resides in nature, the magnificent tree was dubbed Temple Oak. It became the focus of outdoor worship where as many as fifteen hundred people attended an annual memorial service to celebrate the assurance of immortality. Family games such as croquet were played there with friends. Gatherings for family funerals were held there as well. Her son died in 1896, leaving Lucretia as Elizabeth's only surviving child. Lucretia died seventeen years later, in 1913, and Elizabeth herself was one of the speakers over her coffin. Watson was eulogized under the oak's spreading branches when she died in 1927. The tree, now reduced in size, still stands, sandwiched between a garage and a fence of a suburban tract home. While Lucretia's Saratoga home still stands, Watson's own house burned down in the 1930s. Only the diminished oak remains.

In California, one of Watson's first acts on behalf of temperance and women's rights was to join the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in San Jose. She quickly became an officer. Needing immediate income, she then took the position of regular Sunday preacher for the First Spiritualist Union in San Francisco, a position she held when it reorganized in 1885 as the Golden Gate Religious and Philosophical Society. This group disbanded in 1891. Up to two thousand people came regularly to hear her preach. She went on tour to Australia and to the eastern United



Elizabeth Lowe Watson at 80 years of age, in her garden at Sunny Brae farm in Cupertino, 1923. Courtesy John Vai.



Women cast votes at a polling place in San Francisco. Note the poll monitors are men. Courtesy California State Library Photograph Collection, M. H. Dobbins, "Album of San Francisco."

States. Billed as the "Silver Tongued Orator of the Golden West," she spoke to overflow audiences and critical acclaim.

Watson gave up preaching on a regular basis, but she continued to give public addresses. She also attended women's conferences and suffrage meetings in San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland. When the Political Equality clubs organized in 1895 in Oakland, Watson began holding monthly meetings at her home in anticipation of the first proposed California suffrage amendment in 1896.

That same year, Susan B. Anthony came west to support the state-wide effort which ultimately failed, and Watson held an open-air rally under Temple Oak for her and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw. When Lucretia died in 1913 at the age of forty, Dr. Shaw, recalling their association, wrote to the grieving mother, "How Aunt Susan loved the bright haired girl and rejoiced in her."

In 1910 Watson became president of the California Equal Suffrage Association, winning over a more conservative candidate, Mrs. Elizabeth Gherbeding. Watson's speaking ability, her dedication to the cause of woman's suffrage, and the reverence in which she was held made her a likely choice for leader of the new suffrage effort. That her Spiritualism did not discredit her indicates how widely accepted Spiritualists were in this era.

Even though the first California suffrage campaign failed, in 1911 Watson used techniques established in 1896. They included the use of precinct organizations, the practice of enlisting women across class lines, and the use of established women's clubs as an organizing network.

Watson supplied ideas and energy to the campaign. In a typical address to the Methodist Men's Club of Santa Clara, her arguments ranged from "simple justice" to woman's superior moral fiber to women as municipal housekeepers who could look after the welfare of the city just as they looked after the welfare of their children and their homes. She saw women as underpaid workers, noting that seven million of them were in the United States labor force, struggling without political rights to support their families.

Suffrage Squeaks By

The vote for women was not the central issue in the 1911 election. While the Progressive movement's recall, referendum and initiative amendments passed with landslide margins of three to one, suffrage barely squeaked by.

Watson had organized events where Progressive party men appeared on behalf of the suffrage effort. Watson was in close contact with one of the most effective male supporters, John Braly of Los Angeles, whom she called the "Moses of the South." He warned her of the anti-suffrage organizers who had come to Los Angeles from the East. His response was to organize the Man's Equal Suffrage League and to donate up to \$1,000,000 to the cause. He also donated the Blue Liner automobile for touring the state. Women spoke to public gatherings from the car.

The California Equal Suffrage Association made what amounted to racist appeals. Because Asian and black men could vote and white women could not, it was argued that if all women had the vote, the increasing Asian population would have proportionately less power since there were few Asian females compared to Asian males. Furthermore, Progressives tended to see the women's vote as giving white males added power through the votes of their wives and daughters who, it was assumed, would vote the way the men did.

Watson's letter of January 14, 1911, to the Political Equality League, outlined her plan to organize the state-wide election effort. She relied heavily on the network of women's clubs which had grown up in California after the establishment in 1888 of The Century Club in San Francisco.

Some leaders thought that the WCTU had been a major cause of the lost campaign in 1896. A strong liquor lobby in San Francisco and Alameda County, where the vote was lost, organized against suffrage in the first effort and did so again in 1911. But Watson believed that the WCTU could be a vital force in winning in 1911. In April, she met with the members of the

State Board of the WCTU in San Jose to plot how best to make use of their numbers. She relied on the WCTU and the connections among women's groups to influence and organize women in non-WCTU clubs. She held another conference shortly after, also in San Jose, with all the sympathetic women's clubs represented.

Examples of how these inner connections worked in Santa Clara County include Sarah Severance and Sophia Durst. Severance ran her own school in Gilroy and was a mainstay of the WCTU, as well as an honorary president of the Equal Suffrage Association. She spoke to women's clubs in many towns including Gilroy, San Jose, and Palo Alto. She helped organize teas, social gatherings, and outdoor speaking events. Sophia Durst of Sunnyvale belonged to a book club, church club, and a women's club besides the WCTU. She spoke to many audiences through her network of women's associations. Durst appeared on platforms with Watson and was praised for her contribution to winning the vote for women in Santa Clara County through her campaign efforts with her son and daughter.

In retrospect, Watson credited the WCTU with being the key to the suffrage win. Some historians, like George Mowry, claim that suffrage nearly lost because of the Catholic strength in San Francisco. But San Francisco also had more immigrants than the southern part of the state. Enormous effort was put into winning San Francisco. Lucretia Watson herself helped organize a mass meeting at the Dreamland Rink and sent out 9,500 mailers to the assembly district where she and her husband had a home.

And Watson's own skills were crucial. She knew the need to keep fresh material before the eyes of the press and to post appropriate speakers to special groups. Her daughter was put in charge of making slides to be used in nickelodeons. Watson was pleased that "They will reach a class of voters no other propaganda can." These slides were made available to public gatherings and club meetings by rental at two dollars a week.

Watson wrote to the presidents of women's clubs again on July 1, 1911, to urge them to make use of July 4th as a way to introduce suffrage to the public. Coffee and tea gatherings were organized to begin new suffrage clubs. For example, Stanford University faculty and students began a College Women's Suffrage League. More than one hundred men and women of the league marched in the local Labor Day parade. They held open air meetings at Mayfield and Menlo Park and on the University Circle in Palo Alto. Similar clubs appeared at the University of California, Berkeley, and other institutions.

Not all clubwomen jumped on the bandwagon. The "antis" supported their own newspaper, *The Remonstrance*. They received support from traditional religious leaders and donations of money from the Southern Pacific and liquor interests. The main reason women should not have the vote, they said, was that women should stay at home to care for their families while being supported by their husbands. Watson's experience had taught her a different reality for women's lives.

Until her death in October, 1927, Watson remained active in both local and international peace circles. But as she aged, her participation was restricted to letters and memberships. She retired from active work in her eighties. Alice Paul, who had helped during the suffrage campaign and worked with Watson on the woman's display at the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915, remained her friend through their mutual peace work. For her last Christmas, Watson sent out 125 greeting cards. She maintained her ties with two local women's groups: the Cupertino De Oro Club, a social and educational organization, and King's Daughters, a Christian service club. She continued to invite the Union Church of Cupertino to worship in June under Temple Oak.

For Watson, getting the vote for women was a means to the end by which women, "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," would reform the world. In one of her last letters, a few months before her death, she wrote, "I think the Woman's Conference of 'Cause and Cure of War' significant and if the world is saved it will be *Woman*."

Yvonne Jacobson, a native of Santa Clara County, California, was educated at Stanford University and Columbia University. She has taught at San Jose State University and De Anza College, and has published poetry, fiction, historical articles and books, most notably Passing Farms, Enduring Values (1984), which describes the elimination of agriculture in Santa Clara County. Jacobson is a member of the Board of Trustees of the California History Center Foundation.

The above article was previously published in San Jose Studies Volume XIX, Number 2, Spring 1993. Reprinted with permission.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

A Resource Center for Women's History: The National Women's History Project

The National Women's History Project is a non-profit organization established in 1980 to help educators learn about and communicate multi-cultural women's history to elementary and secondary school students. The project evolved from a 1977 task force of the Sonoma County, California Commission on the Status of Women. The directive put to that task force was to organize the Women's History Week celebrations for county schools. Their efforts were so successful that word spread, and requests came in from other areas of California and throughout the country for resource material and information on women's history. Thus was born what has become a national clearinghouse for research papers, photographs and curriculum supplies for women's history. Today the project supports eleven full-time employees, many seasonal workers, and numerous volunteers.

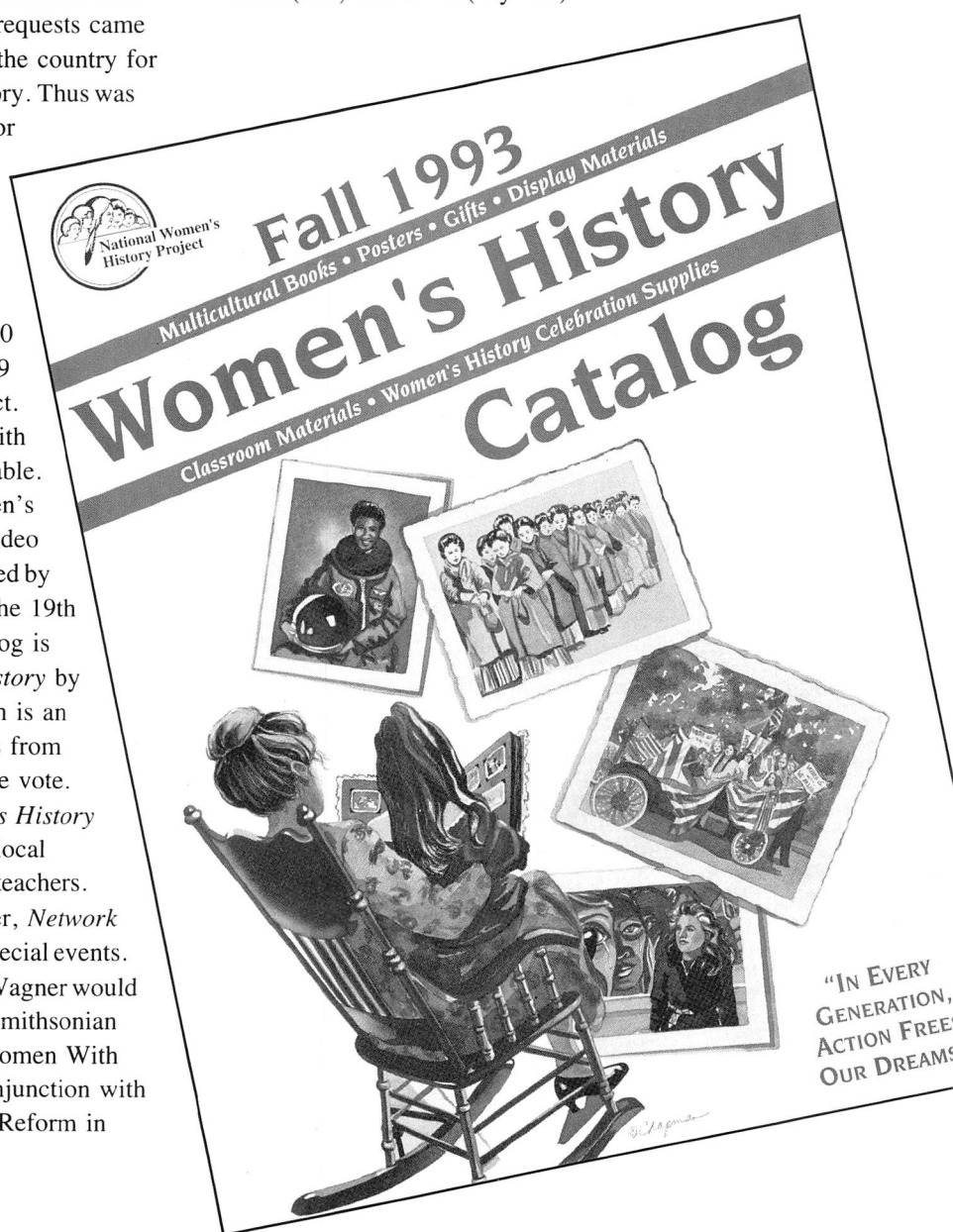
The National Women's History Project publishes *Women's History Catalog* which offers almost 400 books, videos, display supplies and teaching aids, 99 of which were developed and produced by the project. In addition, all sorts of postcards, mugs, tee shirts with innumerable women's history themes are also available.

Several catalog items revolve around the women's suffrage theme: "How We Got the Vote" is a 1986 video aimed at an audience of 8th grade to adult and narrated by Jean Stapleton which recounts the effort to pass the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. New to the catalog is *Women's Suffrage in America: An Eyewitness History* by Elizabeth Frost and Kathryn Cullen-DuPont which is an invaluable reference containing firsthand accounts from letters, diaries and speeches of the struggle for the vote. One of the project's own publications is *Women's History Resources* which contains a state-by-state list of local women's history organizations and resources for teachers.

The project also publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Network News*, which informs readers of new research and special events. The September 1993 issue noted that Sally Roesch Wagner would be portraying Elizabeth Cady Stanton in part of the Smithsonian Institution's dramatic series "Those Dangerous Women With Their Daring Ideas." The series was staged in conjunction with the exhibit "From Parlor to Politics: Women and Reform in America, 1890-1925."

For more information or to request *Women's History Catalog*, call, write, or FAX:

National Women's History Project
7738 Bell Road
Windsor, CA 95492-8518
(707) 838-6000 (weekdays, 8 A.M.-5 P.M. Pacific time)
FAX (707) 838-0478 (anytime)



FOUNDATION NOTES

CHC Thanks Nancy Bratman For Continued Service

The Californian recognizes and gratefully acknowledges Nancy Bratman who has volunteered at the Stockmeir Library for over four years. Most Wednesdays will find Nancy hunched over a slide viewer, attempting to identify, categorize and catalog any number of the over 6,000 slides in the CHCF collection. Her efforts have made the slide collection far more accessible for research than ever before.

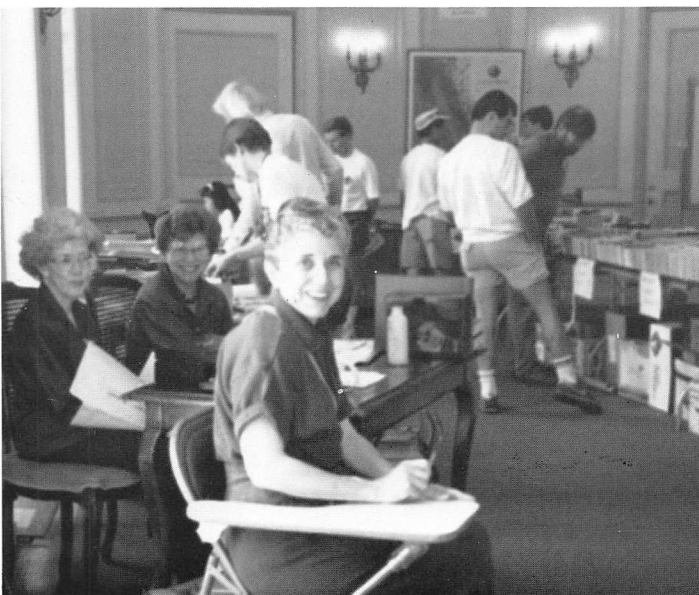
Nancy was introduced to the California History Center by a friend who brought her to see the Suffrage Exhibit. She was so impressed by the kindness of the volunteer who greeted her, that she decided to get involved in the library. Nancy began her work at CHC sorting slides, and is presently identifying slides specifically related to Santa Clara County. She expects this task to take another two years.

Nancy counts as one of her most satisfying projects, however, her inventory of the collection of notes and clippings that has become known as the Whipple Collection. At that time, Librarian Lisa Christiansen handed Nancy a box asking her to make an inventory and evaluate the contents. No one knew where the box had come from, how long it had been at CHC, nor to whom it had belonged. Nancy's preliminary sorting told her that there were two separate collections, with no possible connection. One was a group of news clippings about Naval aviation, the other was

social memorabilia from the 1920s. Gradually, and several sortings later, it became apparent (although its provenance is still a mystery) that the box was related to Laura Thane Whipple, a 1920s real estate agent, and her role in the establishment of Moffett Field Naval Air Station. Without the time and effort Nancy gave sifting through the Whipple Collection, the box may still be an unidentified jumble of papers.

Ever since growing up in her native Cedar Rapids, Michigan, she has considered herself a "frustrated librarian," and she notes with great irony that one of her four sons became a librarian. She lives near the History Center and she raised her sons in Los Altos Hills and Los Altos. In 1991, Nancy's second son died after a long battle with cancer.

Although Nancy has lived in Santa Clara County since 1959, she still does not feel an "inner connection" with its history. She feels like a Midwesterner, which one of her sons laughingly refers to as "the old country." Her motivation in volunteering at CHC is primarily the library, not necessarily history. Nancy also credits Lisa Christiansen with being a primary reason for her participation at CHC.



Nancy Bratman, a volunteer at Stockmeir Library for over four years, at work on De Anza Day book sale in 1992.

Membership Survey Results

In spring of 1993, the Board of Trustees and staff of CHCF circulated a survey to all 350 members to learn opinions, generate new ideas, encourage more active participation, and guide planning for future projects. Each member was asked to rank eleven programs of the CHCF in order of importance. The categories were: credit classes, exhibits, tours, lectures, library/archive, cultural programs, *Californian* Magazine, volunteer opportunities, book publishing, social events and workshops.

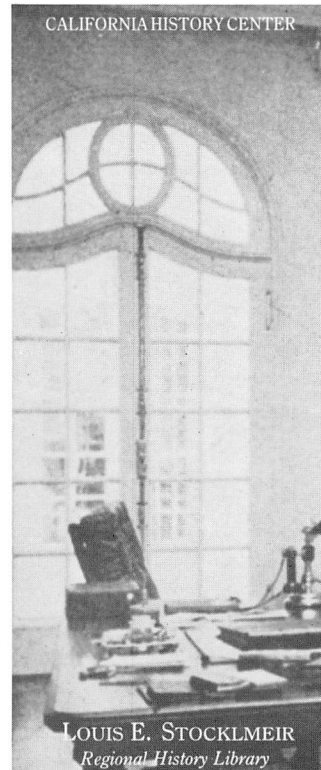
Eighty-five members responded, and their comments offer valuable insight and creative suggestions. It was immediately obvious from the survey results that the highest value and priority of a majority of respondents is the Stockmeir Library/Archive. Other programs with high interest were exhibits, book publishing and credit classes. Among those projects ranked at a low level of priority were social events and workshops.

Stocklmeir Library Publishes Descriptive Brochure

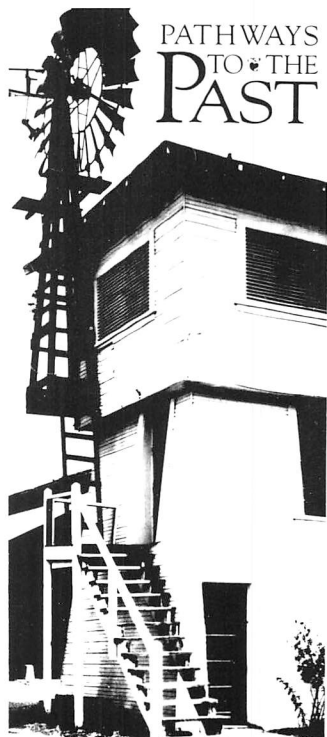
Many creative suggestions were offered for future projects, such as coordinating tours or events with other historical groups, production of a CHCF publications catalogue with order form, and a books and authors social. Fundraising, of course, is a perennial concern and members hope the Foundation continues to apply for grants or corporate matching funds.

Thank you to all the respondents. The results of this survey have provided valuable guidelines for planning future programs and has opened a line of communication between the general membership and the Board of Trustees. Additional comments or suggestions are always welcome.

A special word of thanks to volunteer Trudy Frank who compiled the results of the survey, and made notes on all the comments and suggestions.



Under the direction of Librarian Lisa Christiansen, the Louis E. Stocklmeir Regional History Library has produced a brochure entitled "A Doorway to Local History," which details the holdings and collections of the library. The sepia-toned brochure reminds History Center members and patrons of the vast array of oral histories, research papers, photographs, along with maps, ephemera, and periodicals that are available to the researcher. Policies regarding the use of the facility and hours also are included on the brochure. They are available at the Stocklmeir Library.



Museum Sites Brochure Available

The Heritage Council of Santa Clara County accomplished one of its goals for the past year with the production of its historical museum sites brochure, "Pathways to the Past, Insight to the Future." Sixteen historical museums located throughout Santa Clara County are pictured, briefly described, and identified on a locator map.

The front cover of the attractive pamphlet depicts the 1912 John Krohn tank house in San Martin, a visual reminder of the agricultural heritage of the

county. The historic tour detailed by the brochure begins with the southern-most museum, Gilroy Historical Museum. It wends its way roughly north, with a stopping point at each of the other fifteen museums, most of which are housed in historic buildings.

The "Pathways" brochure was produced "to encourage visitors to seek out the historic and architectural treasures nestled in the towns and cities of Santa Clara County." Each member museum of the Heritage Council was given a number of brochures. They are available at the museums or through any of the executive officers of the Heritage Council.

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A look back at past activities at the California History Center: class field trip to Bodie, California in 1975 where students could see firsthand the remains of the abandoned mining town that they had heard about in the classroom.

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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 tri-annual issues of "The Californian" magazine and members who contribute at the \$45 level and above also receive a yearly Local History Studies publication.

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