

[NO.68 FALL 2005](#)
[BENE LEGERE](#)
[NEWSLETTER OF](#)
[THE](#)
[LIBRARY](#)
[ASSOCIATES](#)

- [Visionaries, Dreamers, Iconoclasts, And Rebels: Women of California](#)

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Visionaries, Dreamers, Iconoclasts, And Rebels: Women of California

Drawn from the recent Library exhibit, "Our Collective Voice: The Extraordinary Work of Women in California," Bene Legere highlights two hundred years of contributions by California women who left their mark on the state.

Curating this remarkable exhibit were eight women Library employees--Jessica Lemieux, Beth McGonagle, Tracy Mills, Lisa Rubens, Theresa Salazar, Mary Scott, Susan Snyder, and Lynette Stoudt--who found a wealth of material about women who have contributed their talents, skills and love to California life. Theresa Salazar, Bancroft Library's curator for its Western Americana collection, stated that the exhibitors "...focused on people and areas that represent the Bancroft's strengths, such as the Gold Rush, World War II and women's suffrage," knowing they couldn't possibly include everything in the limited exhibit space available.



In the files of the *San Francisco Chronicle* of August 25th, 1895, you will find an article detailing the trip from Yosemite into the Tuolumne Grand Canyon. Quoting from the *Chronicle*: "A party of jolly, athletic UC students have climbed heights and depths in the California Alps this summer vacation and are laden with well-earned honors." Led by Theodore S. Solomons, experienced mountaineer and guide, were the Misses Maybel I. Davis, Estelle Sweet, Bertha Sweet, '96, Mabel Sweet, '99, and Adolph D. Sweet, '98 (a

The voices of women in Bancroft's collections sent thoughtful, inspiring and unforgettable messages. Reminiscences of Californio women written during the 1800s joined the writings of pioneer women who helped build and develop the state in the 19th and 20th centuries. Recorded interviews with suffragist leaders such as Alice Paul partner with the WWII recollections of Japanese American women relocated to internment camps as well as the records of powerful women workers who have come to be known collectively as "Rosie the Riveter." Additional materials represented noted and anonymous women who contributed to such diverse fields as California's Gold Rush, Civil Rights efforts, politics, the environmental movement, literature, the arts and the physical sciences. We hope you will enjoy these special selections.

For hundreds of years, women have given shape to our culture, our homes, our workplaces, and our lives in California. Women from every walk of life have strengthened and served our state, though their contributions have often gone unrecognized. As basket weavers, land owners, homemakers,

big brother sent along as escort). entrepreneurs, entertainers, community After arriving at the top of Mount leaders, inventors, settlers, artists, teachers, Lyell, the bloomer girls slid activists, and scientists, women have made down the glacier "a mile a their mark on the California cultural, physical, minute." (Theodore S. Solomons and societal landscape. photograph.)

For centuries this land of opportunity has drawn both men and women to it. Its climate and scenic beauty, its richness and variety of resources have attracted people from throughout the world. Our state has also proved to be a fertile ground for visionaries, dreamers, iconoclasts, and rebels, and has been a place where women have thrived. Over the years, women have arrived at the borders of the Golden State with families and possessions or alone and penniless, but they have come with aspirations and ideas. Each has become a thread in the tapestry of what is California. Undaunted by discrimination and closed doors, these women have opened windows instead, raising their voices in their respective causes and pursuits. We celebrate their tenacity and fortitude, raising our own collective voice in honor of these women, whose memories live in the collections of the Bancroft Library-as well as in honor of the many other extraordinary women of California, both past and present, whose stories remain to be told.

Helen Hunt Jackson

The author of California's most enduring historical romance novel Ramona, she advocated for Native American rights and justice, concentrating much of her effort on the dispossessed Indians in Southern California. In this excerpt from a letter written on March 19, 1882, she addresses Mrs. Quinton, a friend and fellow advocate for Native American rights.

The San Pasquale Indians were living only sixteen years ago in this beautiful valley. 800 or 600 of them in adobe houses-raising corn, wheat, barley; having vineyards and peach orchards. Today, there is not an Indian who owns a foot of land in that valley. They have been driven out year by year, by white settlers, who in some instances have not only taken their farms, but walked straight into their homes and are living in



Several Generation of Indian Women-Of many languages and origins, Native Californians inhabited the hills, valley, coasts, and deserts of the state. Women were often the purveyors and keepers of their cultures' rich traditions, arts, and customs.

them today! A young farmer there with whom I talked for an hour about it, told me he himself saw forty driven off by the sheriff in one day!! They made no resistance. "They know better" he said. He thought it was unfair, but the U.S.Govt had entered the lands as open to settlement, and the White men certainly had a right to enter claims, and take them up. There are now a few Indians living in the valley on sufferance, without a rod of land to cultivate-

supporting themselves by hiring out as day laborers to the men who have robbed them of their farms. The rest of them are in the mountains. They have gone up into the canyons wherever they can find a bit of ground to build a hut on, and raise a few handfuls of grain and keep their horses. They are found to be good laborers-and are ready to work whenever there is work to be done. One Wheat raiser told me that he had had a force of 100 Indians at one time twelve years ago. They all struck and left in a body in the middle of a Wheat harvest because they could not be sworn at!! His partner was a very profane man-and habitually swore at them. When my informant went out to see what it meant, they said they had good wages, plenty to eat and no fault to find, but they would not work for the man who swore at them. On the withdrawal of this man, they went back to work, and the harvest was saved.

Teresa de la Guerra Hartnell

The daughter of the powerful de la Guerra and Carrillo families, she married American merchant William Hartnell in 1830. They lived near Monterey and eventually had 25 children, founding a school for their own and others' offspring. The following is taken from the dictation that she gave in Spanish for Hubert Howe Bancroft's Library in 1875, and translated in 2005 by Rose Marie Beebe



Encarnación Galindo y Peralta.

In 1841, the French writer Señor Duflot de Mofras appeared at Rancho del Alisal while my husband was away in San Diego. When Señor de Mofras arrived at Rancho del Alisal, he dismounted at the entrance of the house without seeking the customary permission. Even though travelers knew that all Californio ranch owners freely offered hospitality to whomever happened to appear at our doorsteps, we appreciated it when people sought permission to stay at our homes. It seems that Señor de Mofras was aware of our proverbial hospitality. After tying up his horse, he opened the parlor door and headed straight to the library. With a brazen boldness that is shocking to think about, he began to scrutinize all the books

and papers he could find. When it was time for dinner, I followed the promptings of my heart and sent one of my servants to ask Señor de Mofras if there was anything we could get for him. With much arrogance and impudence, he ordered the servant to unsaddle his horse and put it in the stable. After being informed of this very strange behavior, I decided to go myself and question this person who dared give orders to my servants in my own home. I went to the library and found him busily inspecting as many papers as he could get his hands on. Even though I caught him in the act, inspecting somebody else's papers is not a crime punishable by law. It is, however, an act condemned by society, which holds meddlesome and unscrupulous people in contempt. I greeted him rather coldly.

My greeting, however, was reciprocated with certain gestures that only people who know one another very well or have very close family ties are allowed to use. I was filled

with indignation for being treated with such little decorum in my own home. I told him, "Mind you, Señor, I am the wife of Señor Hartnell and this is my home. You desecrate the rules and sanctity of this domestic sanctuary as well as the respect that women deserve from all well-mannered gentlemen." He was somewhat frightened after hearing such serious language expressed with such a decisive attitude by a person who "lived in the woods." But after a short while, his cold bloodedness returned and he responded, "Your husband gave me permission to come to his home, therefore, I expect you to provide me with anything I might need. I will be staying here for a few days and I want a room where I can sleep." Since I could not find a way out of such an obligation and believing that this man was telling me the truth, I could do nothing more than have the room that he requested made ready for him. I did, however, harbor some doubts as to the veracity of his words. When it was time to eat, the Frenchman appeared in the dining room and seated himself at the head of the table. The best food available was served, but every time de Mofras was served something, he would make gestures of disapproval and say that he did not care for such and such a dish. I reprimanded him, saying, "Señor, what is eaten at my table is what my family's ranch provides. If this is not pleasing to you, do what suits you best." That broad hint, coupled with my gesture indicating where the door was located, would have been enough for a man endowed with some honor to understand and he would have left. Señor de Mofras, however, was very brazen and he remained in my home.

Elsie McCormick

In 1916, UC Berkeley Biology student Josephine Miller inadvertently swallowed typhoid bacilli in one of the labs on campus. The incident was widely publicized and appeared in an article in the "Daily Californian" which suggested that women should be recognized for adopting children and not for entering the field of scientific research. Student Elsie McCormick responded to this attack on women with the following article.

Etiquette For Coeds

We have compiled rules after a careful study of the statements in recent college papers. Coeds who follow them are guaranteed bids to all the dances of the semester.

Rule 1. Do not swallow typhoid germs. It is unladylike.

Rule 2. Do not be foolish enough to plan on raising a family of your own. Adopt



Maria Josefa Carrillo Dana—Accompanying the Spanish and Mexican missionaries and soldiers who advanced north into Alta California, women built families, homes, and communities, adapting the traditions of the south to the climate and resources of the north. As Americans began to arrive by land and sea, they frequently married into the resident families, creating alliances and giving new meaning to the term California.

foundlings. You'll be sure to get your picture in the paper.

Rule 3. Do not study hygiene. It is not polite to be interested in the health of your family or the community.

Rule 4. Be a man's comrade but do not compete with him. He knows that he will never hold his position if you do.

Rule 5. Do not request men to swear in your presence. Only suffragettes do that.

Rule 6. Always glare at a man in the streetcar until he gives you his seat. If you show any willingness to stand, it proves that you are a feminist and hence ineligible for an M.R.S. degree.

Rule 7. Do not be the only woman in the College of Mechanics. To know anything about the anatomy of an automobile is immodest.

Rule 8. Pay your ASUC dues promptly, but do not be so bold as to ask for a place on the Executive Committee...

Rule 9. If a man speaks to you, always preface your answer by "Tee-hee." If you make any other remarks, you will be considered unmaidenly.

Rule 10. Never pass sentiments in Senior Singing until a week after the men have discussed the subject and made up their minds for you. Otherwise you might disagree with them and spoil the class harmony.

Rule 11. Do not study anything useful. Coeds should specialize in English and a diluted form of art history.

Rule 12. Always look and act as silly as possible. If you can't think of anything else to do, giggle.

Coeds who live up to these rules will reach the man's ideal of a perfect college woman...

Sara Bard Field

She was a Bay Area poet and a leader in the women's suffrage movement. In the following excerpt from her oral history, she describes her extraordinary cross-country trip to bring President Woodrow Wilson a petition signed by a half million people supporting a women's suffrage amendment. The trip was organized by Alice Paul, and began in San Francisco in 1915.

Miss Kindberg was a gentle and rather self-effacing soul who knew a good deal about driving because she had had a car in Providence. Miss Kindstedt claimed that she knew all about the mechanics of a machine so that she could take care of the car on our long and what was to be rugged journey. They neither of them could speak very plain English. Therefore Alice Paul had said to me before we left that it would be my duty to undertake all the speeches and the meeting of prominent people who sat on the platforms along the way.



Sara Bard Field-The campaign for civil equality began in 1849, when women petitioned California's Constitutional Convention for the right to control their own property. In 1869, the California Women's Suffrage Association was formed. The right to vote was narrowly defeated in 1896, but in 1911 California became the sixth state in which women's suffrage was achieved. Sara Bard Field and Charlotte Anita Whitney, among other California women, played prominent roles in securing the 19th Amendment in 1920.

way again later that morning, warmed and comforted that we really knew the direct way.

Frances Mary Albrier

A civil rights activist and the first woman elected to the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee in 1938, she was also the first woman elected to the Berkeley City Council in 1939, and took action to hire Berkeley's first African-American teacher. This reading is from her oral history.

I formed the East Bay Women's Welfare Club of mothers. But we weren't organized; it was just a little Mothers Club to get together. Then I found out that we needed an organization to express ourselves and our grievances in the community. This Mothers Club did some research into how many taxpayers were in Berkeley; how many black people were taxpayers. We found out then that there was discrimination. Most black people lived below Grove Street, between University and Alcatraz.

In Sacramento I remember Mabel Vernon being there and assuring me that she would always go ahead by train, the fastest conveyance then known, to the next place at which I was to arrive, so that the meeting would be organized and the town ready to receive me. I think sometimes she had by far the hardest job, because it all had to be done so rapidly and so efficiently.

Well, when we left Reno, it was in September, and that is the time when it begins to get cold in that part of the country. We lost our way. We traveled all night long without any sleep searching for signs or guidance on our way to Salt Lake City. In the early morning when the light was just breaking, we came upon a ranch that was called Ibpaw Ranch.

It stands out as really keeping us from being too ill to get to Salt Lake City, because the bitter cold of the night and the utter desolation of the whole country and the fear that we would not have enough gasoline to get to the next filling station was so great that we were agitated all the time and in a good deal of physical distress. They didn't have car heaters in that early day. That became a later luxury. But we arrived at Ibpaw Ranch and there they saw that we were in need of a good deal of protection for awhile and they were kindness itself. They built up a huge fire in their kitchen stove and gave us hot coffee. I haven't a doubt that it was abominable stuff, but it seemed to me the most wonderful drink I have ever had in my life, and they gave us a very excellent breakfast, and what was best of all, they gave us a map. It hadn't occurred to Alice Paul to start us out with a map of how to get across the country.

Of course we always took the wrong fork in the road. This ranch proved a real boon and sent us on our



So we sent out a committee to do some research, and we found out that in this area in the city of Berkeley, there were 5,000 taxpayers. Then we came to the information that we had no representation-those taxpayers had no representation in the city government. We had no teachers in the schools; we didn't even have a janitor or a clerk. We didn't have a recreation leader in the parks. We didn't have anything.

Frances Mary Albrier receiving proclamation from Mayor Shelley.

Then I involved my pastor and an attorney and some others. They said, "Why don't you run for the city council? If you want to do

these things, why not run for city council so that you can tell everybody that we are paying these taxes without representation?"

So I ran-I filed and ran for city council, which was very unusual for a woman to do.

We women hadn't become very active in politics. We knew something about it, but we weren't active in running for offices. I didn't think I would be elected, because I didn't think that people were broadminded enough to elect a black woman. But I was in for a surprise. I received a great many votes. My idea of running was to meet the people. I knew that if I ran for city council, I would be invited to the clubs and organizations to give my views on the city government. I wanted to tell them that we had 5,000 taxpayers without any representation in the city government or the schools or Berkeley. That was the message I wanted to get over to them.

Effie Walling

Mrs. Walling worked as a welder at the Mare Island Shipyards during World War II. After the war, she spent thirty years working for the phone company, and continued living in the Bay Area. This reading is excerpted from an oral history interview she gave in 1979 to Nancy Ledeboer, a student in UC Berkeley's History 103D class.

Welders were the best paid women. We got about fifty cents an hour more than the other women. But it was a lot more dangerous work. We would go up the side of a barge and we would weld what they call a vertical weld or an overhead weld. You'd have that hood on your face and you didn't know whether you were stepping out into space. Or we were welding off the staging and we'd weld right out into the rain, which we found out later was not supposed to be. But they would say "We have to have this," so we worked in the rain.

Many a time I've laid right down in puddles of water and welded. They'd just use a blower to blow the water away from the weld and just keep right on going because they needed whatever.

We were supposed to have six weeks training. The men were leaving at such a rate in the welding and the welding was one of the most important jobs on Mare

Island. You see, they welded the ships. The ships were welded all over instead of being riveted. That's where we got the name of "Rosie the Riveter." We were welders, which is considerably different.

I was in welding training four weeks when two gentlemen came in. They asked the instructor if he thought I could go out and do the tacking. I'll tell you I was never so scared in all my life. I told them "No way!" I said "I've got six weeks of training and I've had four. I want my other two weeks." But they explained to me that they absolutely had to have somebody.



So I said to them "I'll go out and try, but if I can't just bring me back." Well, I went out to try and I didn't go back into training.

Oh, I'll tell you a good one too. I was the first woman welder that got to weld on the big ship valves, which was quite an honor. You're in a big shop and the valves are quite large. If you break your weld or you even get a pinhole in your weld, that has to all be chipped out and redone. It doesn't make any difference whether it's the best welder or it's the worst welder. It still is the same thing because it's very dangerous not to have it letter perfect.

Well, I was welding along there and in my welding hood I could see somebody behind me. Consequently I couldn't see my weld because they were breaking it. So I put my welding hood up, turned around and I looked up and I saw about six navy officers and our big shop boss.

I turned around and I said to them, "Gentlemen, if you don't have anything better to do I wish you'd go some place else because you're wrecking my work." In no uncertain terms I told them what I thought. Instead of me being flabbergasted I was mad because they were wrecking it. I told them, "All this has to be chipped out just because you were standing there bothering." Well, I found out the next day who they were. Come to find out it was the commander and all the big shots from Washington D.C. watching a woman weld. All this gold braid-I was almost scared to go to work the next day.

[\[top\]](#) [\[prev\]](#)

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