



Upcoming Events

September 8, 2018: Santa Rosa Downtown Sesquicentennial Celebration and

HSSRs Fifth Annual Great History Hunt

Events commence at Santa Rosa's Courthouse Square

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Senator Geary and the Chinese Exclusion Act

by Denise Hill

California, Sonoma County, and Santa Rosa have all taken a stand against the current administration's hardline towards immigrants. Living in this city one has the feeling that we have always welcomed other groups into our community. There is a mindset that what is going on nationally could "never happen here". However, not only did it happen here against the Chinese community, many of our prominent citizens at the time were actively involved.

The beginning of the California Gold Rush in 1848, brought with it the promise of wealth, attracting Americans and immigrants alike. A large percentage of these immigrants was Chinese, who faced abject poverty back home owing to a civil war. The reserves of gold began thinning out just about the time the federal government approved funding to connect the East coast to California by railroad. In the 1860s, authorities from the Central Pacific Railroad began hiring laborers to work on the Transcontinental Railroad Project. Most American laborers were unwilling to work on it, but the Chinese excelled in such backbreaking work, and were a favorite of employers, especially because of their readiness to work for low wages. These immigrants sent money back home to feed their families and gladly accepted low wages, since they were more than they would earn in China.

When the Transcontinental railroad was completed, the Chinese workers were forced to seek other jobs. The nearby Vallejo-Sonoma railroad project that started in the early 1870's brought several hundred Chinese to the area, some who settled in Santa Rosa. Soon they had jobs working in the local quick silver mines, lumbering, and picking hops and planting and harvesting grapes, along with working in hotels or private homes as servants and cooks.

A "Chinatown" quickly grew south of the Plaza (now the Courthouse Square area) between Second Street and the Santa Rosa Creek. But as the Chinese settled in and started laundries, grocery stores, and other businesses, anti-Chinese leagues were forming across the country and in many California counties, with whites accusing Chinese of undercutting wages. (Asians were paid about \$30 per month, while white workers were paid

up to \$50 monthly). Others complained that the Chinese were unable or unwilling to assimilate into local culture.

In 1882, Congress sided with California politicians and voted in the Chinese Exclusion Act to bar Chinese workers from immigrating to the United States. This Act was based on the presumption that Chinese immigrants posed a threat to the law and order

in certain American localities. However, by 1886, dissatisfaction with

the Exclusion Act and its implementation was growing locally. Anti-Chinese leagues began forming across Sonoma County. Many prominent citizens belonged to these leagues.

Both Santa Rosa newspapers rallied support to boycott Chinese businesses in an effort to drive them out of town. An editorial in the Daily Democrat preached "it is high American privilege to boycott the Chinamen... the presence of the Chinese is a curse". A giant banner was stretched across what is now Mendocino Avenue reading: "THE CHINESE MUST GO. WE MEAN STRICTLY BUSINESS". Two "white laundry "cooperatives were organized to give customers an alternative to the Chinese washhouses. The Chinese employed by the narrow-gauge railroad were discharged and replaced with white workers. Stores proudly advertised that they employed no Chinese. Those still using Chinese servants or providing housing to the Chinese were

publicly shamed in the press.

Continued page 11



Headline from a poster celebrating passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act
Royal BC Museum



Thomas Geary died in 1929 and is buried in the Rural Cemetery
wikipedia.com

President's Message



I am saddened that this will be my final President's Message for the HSSR. My two-year term has concluded. I have valued both my time as president as well as the chance to play a part in the work the HSSR does. I have enjoyed each one of our events and appreciate the financial support our members provide. I know that the

I believe that organizations like the Historical Society of Santa Rosa provide a chance for all of us to celebrate the community in which we live, and to strengthen that bond of community through our shared interest in our history.

I think that you can not know where you are going without knowing where you have been.

Last month we were fortunate to have our 13th night at the Sonoma County Museum where our members got a chance to view the Lost Santa Rosa Exhibit. In addition, it was a night for us to come together and share a glass of wine or a cookie and to learn about the city of Santa Rosa and each other.

In celebration of all that has come before,

Staci Pastis, HSSR President

HSSR will continue to grow and change and I am looking forward to that.

The HSSR Acknowledges Our Donors:

Katherine & William Rinehart

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**Our events and programs are made
possible through the generosity of our
members and community partners.**

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Marcia Hoeft
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Potter's Field, The Chanate Historic Cemetery

by Jeremy Nichols

"I alwuz liked dead people, en done all I could for 'em." (Jim, in Huckleberry Finn)

The old county paupers graveyard, now called the Chanate Historic Cemetery, was part of a 100 acre farm purchased by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for \$5000 in 1874. The new "poor farm" provided a home for the county's elderly "indigents" who had neither family, friends, or funds to support them in their declining years. It also grew food for the prisoners in the county jail, the inmates of the poor farm, and the patients in the county hospital, which at that time was on Humboldt Street in the "northern suburbs" of Santa Rosa. Finally, some products of the county farm, especially hay and wine grapes, were sold to generate income. This reduced the county's cost of supporting their "guests."

The term "potter's field" comes from the Bible. In chapter 27 of the Book of Matthew, we read, "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, the field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." And that, boys and girls, is where my parents found the name "Jeremy," which I have carried to this day!

The farm buildings were at the east end of the farm, on the loop now called County Farm Road. At the western end were placed the pest house and cemetery. A "pest (pestilence) house" was an isolation hospital for people with contagious diseases such as cholera, typhoid, smallpox, and even measles. Because these diseases were often fatal, pest houses were placed next to cemeteries for speedy burial of the contagious bodies. During the years 1876-1944, over 1,500 burials occurred in this acre and a half site.

The county actually did a good job for the indigent dead. The burial contract was put out to bid each year, with specific tasks required. "One or another of the local mortuaries won the bid and, for a few dollars per burial, contracted to provide a casket made of 'first-class redwood lumber,' clothing for the deceased, transport to the cemetery in a "proper dead wagon," digging of the grave and the burial, and a wooden grave marker or headboard, "with two coats of white paint and the initials and hospital number of the deceased in black paint."

Local ministers took turns providing the burial service." (Potter's Field, xiii)

The cemetery was also used for burial of Sonoma County's Chinese residents. In the 1800s and early 1900s (not completely ended until China became our ally in World War II), prejudice against the Chinese meant that all private cemetery owners refused them burial. The county's cemetery was their only choice. About 100 Chinese are buried here. A memorial plaque has been provided by the members of the Redwood Empire Chinese Association.

Prejudice against the Chinese was not limited to burials: it was the stated policy of the state of California as written into the constitution. In Sonoma County, the following motion was passed by the supervisors on February 2, 1886: "Whereas the citizens of Sonoma County have met in several localities for the purpose of devising some means to enable them in a legal way to rid this county of Chinese; and whereas, the citizens of Santa Rosa have appointed a Committee to wait on the Board of Supervisors and respectfully request it to give its moral support to the movement now being inaugurated. Resolved, that this Board of Supervisors are [sic] in full sympathy with the people of Sonoma County and the whole State, and will cheerfully cooperate with citizens of this County and assist them in their efforts by giving to this movement their moral and undivided support."

When the cemetery became full in the 1940s, a new one was purchased next to Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery and the old one abandoned. The old cemetery was rediscovered in 1987 when the adjacent parking lot was constructed. County staff planned a restoration project but funding limitations prevented work until 2003, when the cleanup was begun by volunteers from the United Way's Day of Caring program. The memorial plaque was purchased with donations from the public while the

county provided the kiosk and bench. The cemetery is part of the land being sold to a developer for the new "Chanate Village" project.

In 2009, my book on the cemetery and those buried in it, Potter's Field, was published. "The people of the gold rush are here as are the immigrants who came looking for a new life or the chance to strike it rich in the land of the Golden Mountain. The men who farmed the land and the sea, built the Golden Gate Bridge, and worked on the railroad or fell off of it are here too. The terrors of earthquake and fire are here as well as the heartbreak of the Great Depression. The stories of failure, be they of crops or investments gone wrong, are here."

For the time being, Sonoma County Regional Parks manages the cemetery. Volunteers from the Sonoma County Historical Society have located and mapped the graves and researched the histories of those buried here. A monument listing all known names was created in 2012. Composed of four large cast-bronze plaques embedded into "Fountaingrove" boulders, the monument was created at zero cost to the taxpayers.



Local historian, Jeremy Nichols in the Rural Cemetery, 2016
The Press Democrat

HSSR Hosts Walking Tour of Historic West End Neighborhood

by Mary and Kathy Bertolini Dowdall

On May 26, 2018 HSSR members enjoyed a walking tour showcasing the unique historic neighborhood, Santa Rosa's West End. Mother and daughter, Mary and Kathy Bertolini Dowdall, guided attendees through the neighborhood, sharing history and stories along the way. Many of those stories and historical facts are chronicled herein as a supplement to the walking tour. Consider attending future historical neighborhood tours hosted by the HSSR. Members can watch their email in-box for announcements and invitations.

Once known as "Little Italy", or "Italian Town", many of Santa Rosa's historic Italian families have their roots in the neighborhood. For the first three decades of the 20th century those of Italian heritage made up most of the neighborhood's population; yet the neighborhood was also home to a diverse sprinkling of other families including those of Portuguese, Japanese, Filipino, and Pomo descent who also experienced ethnic prejudices and discrimination. The tour focused on the social history of the neighborhood and personal stories of what it was like to live and work there for three generations. Bob Bertolini (Western Farm Center) and Robert Bastoni (Franco American Bakery) were special guests who guided participants through two of the remaining family-run legacy businesses.



Little Italy map used on the historical walking tour
North Bay Italian Culture Foundation

Primarily from Tuscany, the largest wave of Italian immigrants to arrive in Santa Rosa came in very large numbers after 1920. Many of the new arrivals found work in the cannery which stretched from West 6th to West Third Streets. From April to October men, women, and older children could be found working 18-hour days cutting, cleaning, packing, and labelling canned fruits and vegetables and life centered around the cannery. Many immigrants received help getting their citizenship papers from the cannery supervisors; they carried credit with local businesses until the next cannery processing season; and quite often love stories started in the cannery, followed by marriage and the newlyweds settling into the neighborhood to start their families. Today, the 6th Street Playhouse is the only remaining building of the cannery complex.

At 509 Adams Street, Lena's Boarding House was the first home of many new Italian immigrants who arrived right off the

boat. Aristide Bertolini was one of these new arrivals. Sponsored by his cousin in Santa Rosa he emigrated from his home village of Fivizzano in Tuscany and arrived on December 20th, 1920 making his home at Lena's boarding house and working as a cook in Lena's restaurant. Eventually he would become one of the neighborhood truck gardeners. Today, Lena's Restaurant is Chop's Teen Center, named after Charles "Chop" DeMeo, Santa Rosa's first Italian mayor who left instructions in his estate to create a center for Santa Rosa's youth.

Of all the Italian-owned businesses that once lined the



Five of seven Bertolini children at the Bertolini Ranch,
Pictured: Ernie, Rita, Lou, Larry, and Delia, 1931
Bertolini Family Library

streets of the neighborhood, a few remain. Located at 202 West 7th Street, Franco American Bakery is still going strong. The bakery has been in Italian hands since 1900. Frank Bastoni first worked in the bakery starting in 1928, then purchased it with his brother Mario in 1938. Frank's son Robert is its current owner and was our tour guide. An unexpected treat was when Robert took us back into the oven area and taught us the bread making process then gave us each a loaf of French bread at the end of our tour! Virtually all of us who have roots in the neighborhood have fond memories of not just that wonderful bread, but of buying the dough and taking it home to fry it into frittellas (pancakes) and filones (loaves) in a skillet with oil. Robert's daughter, Kristin, will carry on the family business, so we can count on many more years of that fabulous bread and the smell of fresh baked bread wafting through the neighborhood.

Right behind Franco American Bakery, the L'Indipendenza (The Independence) clubhouse once stood. Forming in the 1920s and disbanding in 1927, L'Indipendenza was an Italian social club. Three Pisenti brothers, Joe, Walter, and

Alfred were members of the band and James Pisenti, grandfather to Don Pisenti Tarpley, was president of the club for several years. Don tells how the 40-piece, all-male band crossed that invisible line that separated the west side from downtown Santa



Cannery Workers at Calpak Plant Number 5, circa 1920
North Bay Italian Culture Foundation

Rosa by marching in the town's parades. Don and his cousin Bill carried on in the family's music tradition, performing opera together for 44 years. In 1997, Don wrote a musical review called "Tar Flats, Across the Tracks" relating the history and some of the music sung and performed by Italians who lived on the west side.

West End Tour... continued from previous page

DeMeo Park, on the corner of West 7th and Polk Streets, was built in the 1930s and named for Santa Rosa's city attorney, Nick DeMeo. Mary shared how she and her brother Bob played in the park and climbed the massive Luther Burbank Paradox Walnut Tree. She recalled how their dad, Aristide, would get them each a Nehi drink and a candy bar at Stefani's Market on the corner and then they would spend the day in the park while he went across the street to play bocce ball at the Callori family's bocce ball courts. The streets around the park were full of noises of women calling for their children, Nello the fish man selling fish out of his truck after returning from Bodega Bay, and the men in the neighborhood playing raucously intense bocce ball games!

As we continued to sit in DeMeo park, munching on our bread from the bakery, we talked about the importance of the truck gardens that once lined Santa Rosa Creek on the west end of Little

Italy. Owned by the Imwalle, Bertoli, Bassignani, and Bertolini families, they, and other local truck gardens, provided most of the fresh produce for the town before the advent of agribusiness and supermarkets. The Imwalle's were the first, founding their garden in 1886. At 685 West Third Street, and now owned by Joseph Imwalle III, theirs is the only remaining garden; but at one time, all four gardens were supplying restaurants and the many small corner stores with produce. Like all farms, the children had responsibilities based on age and abilities. The oldest boys usually made deliveries with their dads, other boys would be responsible for irrigating the gardens with water pumped from Santa Rosa Creek, the older girls cooked and washed clothes, and all the children helped with the animals; milking, making sausage, and cheese. Everyone picked vegetables in the garden and at certain times of year, Italian neighbor women would help with the harvest. As the one remaining garden, Imwalle's represents a legacy that is at the heart of Santa Rosa. Joseph's son Charles will inherit the garden so that this legacy business will continue to thrive.

Sometimes called "the farm in the city" in 1967, brothers Larry and Lou Bertolini opened Western Farm Center at 21 West 7th Street. Western's is a feed and pet store that serves the county's farmers, ranchers, and pet-lovers. Carrying on their family's agricultural tradition, the family has stayed very involved in Sonoma County agriculture including Shone Farm and the Future Farmers of America. Brother Bob was our guide taking us into the storage barn next to the railroad tracks. The barn was built in 1895 and was once the American Produce Company Warehouse. When Mary and Bob were children it was a feed store where their father and others would get feed and hay for their ranches. Mary and Bob would sit on the loading dock drinking their sodas while their father did business. Several Bertolinis have spent their careers at Westerns and

Lou's daughter Maria and her husband Trevor have inherited the business, ensuring that it is in good hands for years to come.

There are still several Italian families living in the neighborhood but as suburbanization throughout the Bay Area grew after World War II, many in subsequent generations sought independent housing of their own. More than a few would seek to make their homes on the coveted east side of the town. As we finished our tour walking back through the neighborhood, the remnant Italian streetscape showed itself here and there reminding us of those who came before us. Mature fig trees and

grape vines, parkways lined with nut and fruit trees, and basalt paving, terracing, and building elements, all spoke with a decidedly Italian accent.



Santa Rosa's L'Indipendenza Band
North Bay Italian Culture Foundation



Aristide and Stella wedding day, 1925
North Bay Italian Culture Foundation

The Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Santa Rosa expresses our gratitude to Mary and Kathy Bertolini Dowdall for sharing history and stories of Santa Rosa's West End Neighborhood with HSSR members during the walking tour and recording those memories to be shared herein with a broader audience.

Santa Rosa in the 1970s

by Barb Beatie

1970 Santa Rosa population is 48,000. Santa Rosa High has its first undefeated football team since 1946.

1971 Roy Mikalson becomes President of SRJC. Locals participate in "The Walk for Mankind" raising funds while walking 20 miles.

1972 The body of a young female victim is discovered in Northeast Santa Rosa. This is the first in a number of unsolved murders of young women that plagues Santa Rosa in the 1970's. The Candidate, starring Robert Redford is shot in Santa Rosa.

1973 Empire College School of Law enrolls its first class. Mrs. Ruth Finley passes away and ownership of The Press Democrat turns over to her son-in-law and her daughter, Evert and Ruth Person. Jerry Robertson and Curtis Byrd, of Cardinal Newman High, dominate the local track scene, setting records that would continue to be standouts for decades.

1974 The Guanella Brothers Men's Fastpitch Softball team wins the Amateur National Title. Montgomery High alum, Nancy Ling Perry, who was a member of the SLA, dies in Los Angeles shootout.

1976 Helen Rudee is the first female member of the Board of Supervisors. The cool kids hang out at the Star Vue Drive-in on Airway Drive. Gas is 61 cents a gallon, but the drive in is free, if you are in the know.

1977 A fire damages the McDonald Mansion. Dan Taylor opens The Omelette Express. Hewlett-Packard begins construction on their offices in northern Santa Rosa. As a terrible drought hits California, Santa Rosa learns about water conservation, with locals taking shorter showers and turning off the lawn sprinklers.



Santa Rosa Fire Department extinguishes a fire at the McDonald Avenue Mansion, "Mabelton", 1977
The Press Democrat

1978 Donna Born becomes the first female mayor of Santa Rosa. With over 8,000 acres of apple orchards around Santa Rosa, many students work picking apples during harvest. It might be 1978, but if you're out of line, the unofficial mayor, Pepper, will still give you a strict talking to.

1979 The American Nazis hold a 47 minute rally at Franklin Park. The Sonoma County Museum is moved to its current home and registered as a National Register of Historic Places.



Burkhart's Ballroom Dance class holds Winter Ball, 1979
Sonoma County Library Collection

Codding Associates file to stop urban renewal downtown.

1975 The movie, Smile, is filmed in Santa Rosa, and many local people are cast as extras. Santa Rosa purchases the land that will be come Galvin Park in Bennett Valley.



Sonoma County Post Office is ready for its move from its original Fifth Street location to current Seventh Street location, 1979
Sonoma County Library Collection

The World in the 1970s

by Barb Beatie

1970 The population for the United States is 203,302,031 — as reported by the U.S. Census. Federal minimum wage averages \$2.50 per hour, and gas is 60 cents a gallon. “Layla,” by Derek and the Dominos is the number one song.

1971 The Best Picture is The French Connection. The first email is sent by Raymond Samuel “Ray” Tomlinson. Southwest Airlines begins passenger flights. Singer Jim Morrison dies. The 26th Amendment is ratified, granting the vote to 18 year olds.

1972 The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) is signed by the US and the Soviets. Elvis hits the road for his arena tour and wows even Paul Simon with his cover of “Bridge Over Troubled Water.” Diane von Furstenberg’s wrap dress debuts.

1973 Vice President Spiro T. Agnew resigns in disgrace as part of a plea bargain. Representative Gerald R. Ford of Michigan becomes the first person to be appointed Vice President under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution. Jonathan Livingston Seagull topped the New York Times Bestseller List.

1975 Bill Gates founds Microsoft. President Ford survives two assassination attempts. The Vietnam War ends. Bruce Springsteen belts out, “Born to Run.”

1976 America celebrates its Bicentennial. Rocky scores a knock out and grabs the Best Picture Oscar. Christo’s Running Fence is completed. The first class of women is inducted into the U.S. Naval Academy.

1977 Elvis Presley dies at age 42. The Soundtrack from Saturday Night Fever has everyone doin’ the hustle. Snow falls in Miami, FL for the first time in history. Star Wars is released. Jimmy Carter is sworn in as President. Women are integrated into the Marine Corps.



Demonstrations erupt in San Francisco following the assassinations of the City’s Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, 1978
Getty Images

1978 George Moscone and Harvey Milk are assassinated. Peoples Temple leader Jim Jones leads his congregation in mass suicide by drinking poisoned punch. The mandatory retirement age is changed from 65 to 70. The Deer

Hunter wins best picture.

1979 The Stories of John Cheever by John Cheever wins the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Voyager’s photos reveal Jupiter’s rings. Michael Jackson releases Off the Wall album. The Iran Hostage Crisis begins. ESPN broadcasts its first live show.



American Sportsmen including Arnold Palmer visit with President Nixon in the Whitehouse, circa 1969
Getty Images

1974 Nixon resigns. Hank Aaron of the Atlanta Braves breaks Babe Ruth’s home run record by hitting his 715th career home run. Everyone was watching “The Rockford Files”.



Elvis Presley, circa 1970s
Portland Press Herald

HSSR Presented: Ethnic Neighborhoods, February 2015

by Kelly Carrillo Fernández

In February of 2015 the HSSR sponsored a moderated talk at the Sixth Street Playhouse. The topic was Ethnic Neighborhoods and was moderated by Gaye LeBaron. Following is a recap of the event taken from a partial recording of the event. Unfortunately, history has not been kind to the preservation of the recording and ironically, not all ethnic groups represented in the panel are represented fairly on the recording.

Gaye LeBaron introduced the topic and the panelists at the 2015 event. Commenting that Santa Rosa has long and continues to be a nice place to live. In the search for a better life and a better neighborhood, Gaye identified Santa Rosa as perhaps the proverbial better neighborhood.

The Italian community was represented on the panel by Jack DeMeo, who commented that the Italian ancestors "literally paved the way" for everyone to follow.

The Italian immigrants of the turn of the last century mined the basalt used to pave the early streets of Santa Rosa. The Italian stone masons are responsible for building the beautiful stone jewels, some of which still stand today. Like several of the panelists some ancestors arrived in Santa Rosa around the time of the Great Quake of 1906. His other grandparents came from the coast of Italy and were of the LaFranchi family who were Swiss-Italians.

He described the "glass wall" that existed between east and west Santa Rosa and how immigrants of all ethnic and national origins worked to penetrate that wall and assimilate into the larger Santa Rosa community. Anyone who looked or talked differently was assumed to be illiterate or of lesser intelligence. Still today, nothing could be further from the reality. The immigrants were, and are a hard-working, ambitious, and often entrepreneurial group. Sadly, many arriving in the US and Santa Rosa abandoned their native languages and customs in effort to blend in.

Louis Bertolini also represented the Italian community at the 2015 panel discussion. Lou's mother was born in Santa Rosa in the Rincon valley area at their home. His family lived in the

West End neighborhood until he was four. They then moved to the family ranch and recalled the sizable garden producing a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. many Italian families sold produce locally from the back of their trucks. When the Golden Gate Bridge was completed, farmers began trucking their goods to San Francisco and beyond. But this brought other challenges when the Italians had a curfew in the War.

He recalled a a fateful trip into the city which ended with his father being detained by the authorities for being out after curfew. While his father was held Lou and his brother Larry (ages 6 and 12) were left to run the farm with their mother. The event had great impact on his father and would come to impact the direction of their futures as well. His father returned disgusted with the incident and the treatment he had received. His drive and engagement in the farm operations eventually resulted in loss of the family farm.

The family found work picking prunes, hops, and apples. Years later Lou and his brother would purchase the store that evolved into today's Western Farm Center. It was originally a side-income, but when their single employee reported of all the goods customers requested, they expanded their offerings. His parents also worked at the store, where his mother was responsible for caring of all the farm animals and livestock. Larry of course ventured his career another direction and Lou still owns Western Farm Center today.

The Japanese community was represented on the panel by Marie Sugiyama. Marie's father came to the area in 1905 from Hawaii along with his brother. Her mother came in 1913 as an arranged bride. They were fortunate as they had known one another through familial relations. The family began in Healdsburg, moved to Sebastopol, and eventually Santa Rosa. They followed the crops. Many worked in the Fountaingrove area.

They couldn't become citizens or own land. Her parents lived in the country 50 years until they could become US citizens. Often, immigrant families would finally be able to own land when their children, natural born citizens, turned 18. Land was purchased and placed in the name of the adult children.

Continued next page



Stonemasons brought their craft and labor from Italy building the stone jewels of Santa Rosa. Shown: Carnegie Library, circa 1910
Sonoma County Library Collection



Japanese school children and teachers in front of a schoolhouse, circa 1920s
Sonoma County Library Collection

Continued from previous page

Many Japanese immigrants came when the Chinese Exclusion Act resulted in a diminished labor population. They truly came for the promise of a better life. Regrettably, their ambitions and ethnicity would incarcerate more than 20,000 Japanese Americans in internment camps during WWII.

Nancy Wong and Judy Chung represented the Chinese community on the panel. Nancy Wong commented being a newcomer, having arrived in Santa Rosa in the 1970s. Judy Chung is a native Santa Rosa and married into the Chinese community. She was born in Santa Rosa as Sebastopol did not have a maternity ward at the time.

The Chinese began arriving in the 1860s. They would build the railroads that propelled Santa Rosa and the US into the next century. Most of the early Chinese immigrants came from the southern most villages. That changed with time.

Inter-racial marriages were illegal. The Alien Land Act prohibited land ownership. During her life, Judy's mother would never admit her ethnicity — she was "white". As such, Judy felt she became part of the Chinese American community when she married into it. She reveled in today's joy after years passed to be able to proudly admit her Chinese ethnicity and heritage.

Jim Gray, representing the black ethnic population on the panel. The Gray family came from Texas and originally moved to Marin City. In Texas, when he was an infant, his mother walked out the back door to find a black man hung from a tree. They moved to California the next day.

Marin City was greatly integrated as a result of the ship-building industry there. It was the beginning of the end of WWII. They had an all black semi-pro baseball team and were very proud. Several black families relocated to Santa Rosa, however they dispersed when they arrived. Santa Rosa was .0000000001% black at the time in his opinion.

His parents bought five acres on Petaluma Hill Road in 1952 for \$10,000. He started school at Bellevue but soon thereafter Kiwanis Elementary School was built. There he recalls

writing "\$10,000 and thinking the family would never be able to pay for the land they had purchased. The family had tried to purchase in Sebastopol but was forbidden — no blacks allowed.

It was a large family with nine children. In the two-bedroom house bunkbeds were abound. The porch was quickly renovated into a third bedroom. Santa Rosa was "wide-open" and they would bike everywhere, however their primary "childhood habitat" was the South Park area. Bellevue connected their path, unbroken by the freeway what would eventually change all that.

He recalled the hot church days on the second floor, wearing the wool suit required by his mother. For that reason he won't wear a suit.

Jim Gray recalled the good fortune and timing of his Santa Rosa education wherein he attended newly built school after school. Kiwanis Elementary to Herbert Slater Junior High, to Montgomery High School — it seemed every time he graduated from one, a new school for him to attend had just been built.

George Ortiz represented the Latino population at the 2015 panel. He noted that in her lifetime, his mother never learned to speak English. Her children would translate for her. The Mexican immigrants seemed to honor and maintain their language and traditions in their new country.

The increase in Mexican immigrants occurred throughout the US when the August, 1942 Mexican Farm Labor Agreement was signed with Mexico. The 'Bracero Program' brought millions into the US as guest

workers. Translating to manual laborer or one who works with their arms in Spanish, the program was created by executive order because many growers argued that World War II would bring labor shortages to low-paying agricultural jobs.

George's experiences, education, and mid-1960 attendance at the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) convention propelled his passion to assist the immigrated latino population. Starting out as a social worker, Ortiz soon became a bridge between county social services and the growing Latino Spanish-speaking community. Upon arrival in the county he viewed himself as a Mexican or Mexican-American. "Actually, what I really call myself is an American of Mexican descent," said George Ortiz in 2015.



Chinese labor built much of the US railroad. Pictured, railway is built connecting Santa Rosa to Ukiah, 1896
Sonoma County Library Collection



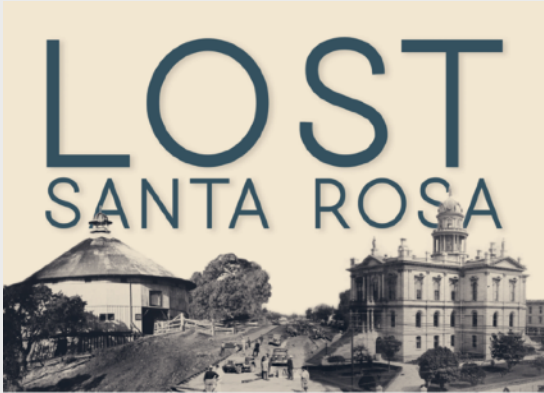
Immigrant labor has long supported the agriculture industry. A man sorts hops in Sonoma County, circa 1920
Sonoma County Library Collection

HSSR Hosts Night at the Museum

On June 26 Historical Society of Santa Rosa members enjoyed a free private evening viewing the History Museum of Sonoma County's latest exhibit: Lost Santa Rosa

Eric Stanley, Museum Curator, gave a short introduction. Afterward, members explored the exhibit with hosted beer, wine, and cookies.

About the exhibit: The Museums of Sonoma County exhibit, Lost Santa Rosa, explores the changing face of Santa Rosa during the year of the city's 150-year anniversary. Looking at moments of truly transformative change, Lost Santa Rosa will explore those elements of the



city that have been lost over the years. With disasters such as the 2017 firestorms and the 1906 earthquake, losses can be sudden and

brehtaking. The collapsed county courthouse in 1906 or the Fountaingrove Round Barn in flames become iconic images of natural disasters, ushering in unexpected changes. Other changes come about over time as the result of demographic shifts, conscious decisions or even neglect. From Santa Rosa's Chinatown, to the neighborhoods displaced by Highway 101, this exhibition explores the city of Santa Rosa of the past, invites the memories of the community and seeks lessons for the future.

The exhibit is open at the Sonoma County History Museum on Seventh Street through September 16.

The California Alien Land Laws

In 1913 California enacted The California Alien Land Law which limited the rights of non-US citizens regarding ownership and long-term leasing of land. The law limited land leases to three years. Included were "aliens ineligible for citizenship" piggybacking Federal citizenship requirements. While intended primarily for Japanese immigrants in agriculture and farming, it also affected Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean immigrant farmers. The explicit purpose was to discourage further immigration and make the state an inhospitable place for Asian immigrants to reside. The law passed overwhelmingly with 35 to two in the State Senate and 72 to three in the State Assembly. While co-authored by the State Attorney general, Ulysses S. Webb and attorney Francis J. Heney, it was known to be at the direction of Governor Hiram Johnson.

In 1920 the law was amended closing loopholes and further limiting rights. Land leasing of any term was then prohibited, as was ownership in any company which acquired agricultural land. Increasing anti-Japanese sentiment and the belief that the 1913 Act had not adequately discouraged Japanese immigrants propelled the bill to the ballot where the people of California overwhelmingly voted for it.

State Supreme Court cases in 1923 and 1946 affirmed The California Alien Land laws. The laws were finally invalidated in 1952 by the State Supreme Court while determining that the laws violated the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment of the US Constitution.

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Chinese Exclusion... continued from page 1

By June of 1886 Santa Rosa's Chinese population dropped from 600 to 100. The boycott had disastrous effects on those Chinese unable or unwilling to leave. Some of the few Chinese that remained were reduced to eating boiled roots and weeds to prevent starvation.

Then, as abruptly as it had started, the boycott began to lose steam. Not surprisingly, the Grape Growers and Winemakers Association denounced the boycott and declared it a failure. They were finding out - as did other businesses - that there were not enough interested white laborers to do the arduous work that had been done by the Chinese. But even after the boycott petered out, there was still strong public opinion against hiring Chinese workers and the Anti-Chinese leagues continued to exist, although their activities were more muted. Decades later, racial prejudice was still evident in our city when in 1937 resident Song Wong was not allowed to bury her mother here unless it was in a grave in the Potter's Field (used for burials of paupers) on Chanate Avenue.

As for the Chinese Exclusion Act, it was initially intended to last for 10 years, but was renewed in 1892 with the Geary

Act. Thomas Geary was a lawyer who moved to Santa Rosa in 1882. He served as district attorney of Sonoma County before being elected as a Democrat to the Fifty-first Congress. During his time in office, he wrote the Geary Act which extended the Chinese Exclusion Act and added a new onerous requirement: All Chinese residents were required to carry a "resident permit". Failure to carry the permit at all times was punishable by deportation or a year of hard labor. Even when possessed, the documents did not function to protect legal Chinese immigrants and residents from government harassment. This unprecedented level of inquiry was motivated by the prejudiced view that it was, as Senator Geary said, "impossible to identify [one] Chinaman [from another]".

Thomas Geary died in 1929 and is buried in the Rural Cemetery.

In all, over 15 laws restricting the Chinese were enacted by the federal government, as well as those passed at the state and local levels. It wasn't until the 1940's that they started to be repealed. And it wasn't until June 18, 2012, that the House of Representatives apologized for this Act, which ended up oppressing innocent immigrants for almost 80 years.

1882	1892	1902	1924	1943
Exclusion Act Prohibited Chinese laborers into U.S. and prevented naturalization.	Geary Act Extended Exclusion Act another 10 years.	Congressional Acts regulating Chinese immigration were extended indefinitely	Immigration Act excluded all Chinese women from residence in U.S.	Exclusion Acts repealed but annual quota of 105 Chinese immigrants established.

Join Santa Rosa's 150th Birthday Celebration — September 8



Santa Rosa is celebrating 150 years since its incorporation as a city – otherwise known as its Sesquicentennial. For the past year or so community members have come together to organize a birthday party for Santa Rosa.

Presented by the City of Santa Rosa and the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, on September 8th from 3pm to 10pm Courthouse Square will be the scene of a grand birthday party. Santa Rosa will be celebrating where we have been, where we are and where we are going.

There will be live entertainment from local groups, children's activities, food vendors, beer & wine, historical displays, information from community partners, burying of a new time capsule, birthday cake and a movie at the end of the day. The winning entries of the youth art and essay contests will also be displayed.

VIP tickets and Sponsorships are available. For more information refer to the website – SantaRosaCity150.com; Facebook - /SantaRosaCity150; and Instagram - @santarosacity150

HSSR Hosts Fifth History Hunt — at Santa Rosa's Sesquicentennial Birthday Celebration

Join Santa Rosa and the HSSR for a fun and interactive celebration of Santa Rosa history in HSSR's fifth Great Santa Rosa History Hunt. Appropriate for all ages, participants will be given a set of clues and the history sleuthing will ensue. The hunt clues will be available in Santa Rosa Courthouse Square during the Sesquicentennial birthday party, while they last. Hunt at your own pace. Answers will be made available on HSSR's website in time to check your knowledge. Come join the fun and hunt some history with the HSSR on September 8.

Got Santa Rosa centric photos in your attic or closet?

The History and Genealogy Annex of the Sonoma County Library can help. The online library collection can grow with your family collection. Perhaps you have what someone else is searching for.

**Contact the library staff at 545-0831
to arrange a photo scanning appointment**



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Historical Society of Santa Rosa

Membership Application

The Historical Society of Santa Rosa intends to build a strong and diverse organization of individuals, families and groups to investigate, record and relate the history of the City of Santa Rosa. Membership includes subscription to the newsletter and priority invitations to HSSR sponsored events.

Memberships make wonderful gifts! Share the benefits of membership with your family and friends. Dues are paid annually, and membership is valid for one year.

☐ \$25 Individual membership

☐ \$40 Household membership

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☐ Our quarterly newsletter is delivered to members electronically and via US mail. If you wish to only receive our newsletter electronically check the box

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Join online: www.HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org

Make your check payable to **Historical Society of Santa Rosa** and mail it to **PO Box 164, Santa Rosa, CA 95402**

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