

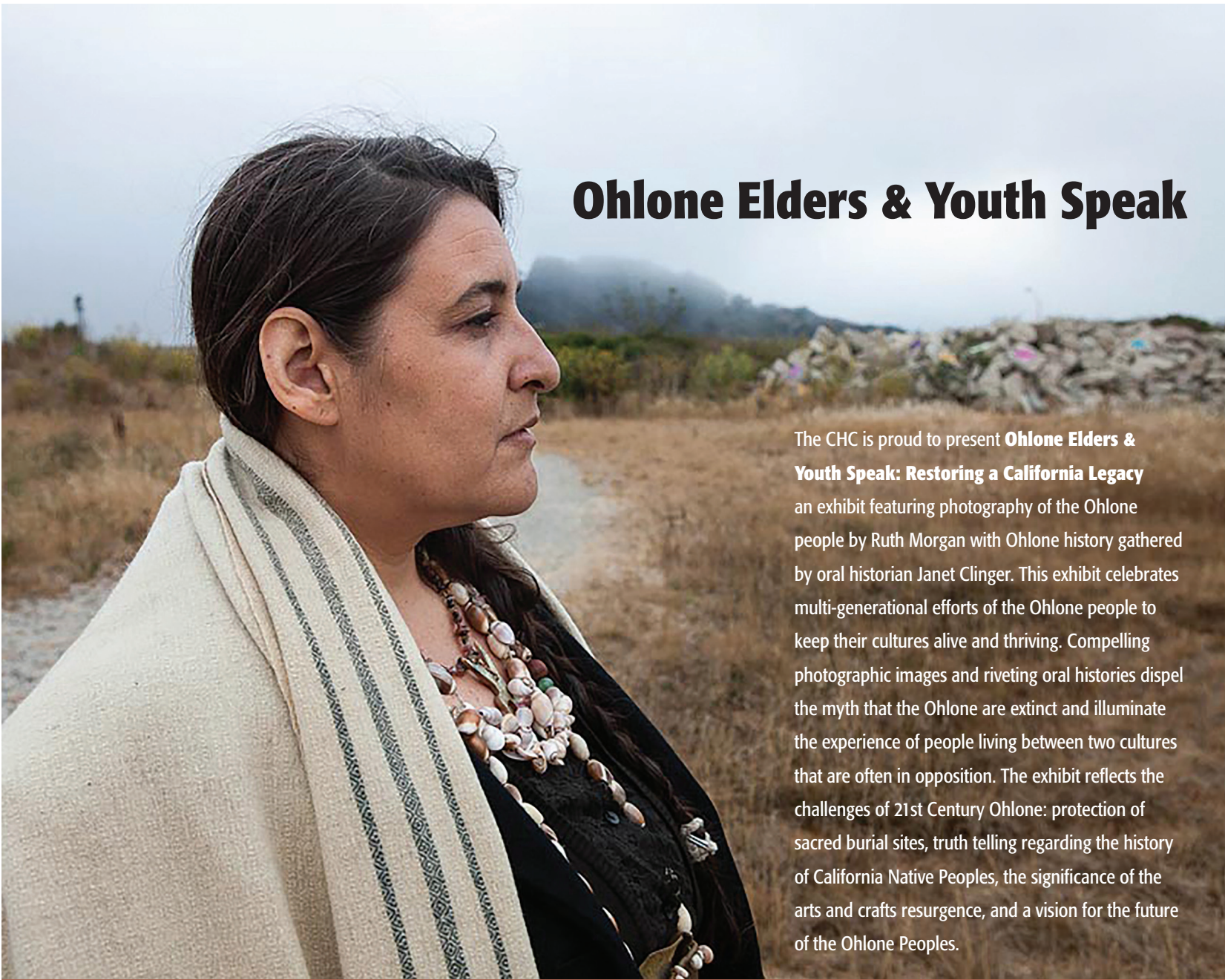
CALIFORNIAN

*California History Center
& Foundation*

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

United States Court of Appeals
for the Ninth District





Ohlone Elders & Youth Speak

The CHC is proud to present **Ohlone Elders & Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy** an exhibit featuring photography of the Ohlone people by Ruth Morgan with Ohlone history gathered by oral historian Janet Clinger. This exhibit celebrates multi-generational efforts of the Ohlone people to keep their cultures alive and thriving. Compelling photographic images and riveting oral histories dispel the myth that the Ohlone are extinct and illuminate the experience of people living between two cultures that are often in opposition. The exhibit reflects the challenges of 21st Century Ohlone: protection of sacred burial sites, truth telling regarding the history of California Native Peoples, the significance of the arts and crafts resurgence, and a vision for the future of the Ohlone Peoples.

EXHIBIT EXTENDED THROUGH WINTER QUARTER 2018!

Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 Calendar

SEPTEMBER

25 First day of classes

OCTOBER

23 Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak exhibit opens

NOVEMBER

2 Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak panel discussion. Hinson Campus Center Conf. Rms. A and B

Cold War lecture, 6:30 – 10:20 pm CHC

4 Cold War field study 9 am – 5:30 pm

9 Cold War lecture, 6:30 – 10:20 pm, CHC

10 Veterans' Day (observed)

11 Cold War field study 9 am – 5:30 pm

18 Taste of History, VPAC, 3 – 6 pm

23 – 24 Thanksgiving holiday

29 Social justice lecture 6:30 – 10:20 pm, CHC

DECEMBER

2 Social justice field study, 9 am – 5 pm

6 Social justice lecture, 6:30 – 10:20 CHC

7 CHC winter solstice open house

9 Social justice field study, 9 am – 5 pm

15 Last day of finals

18 Winter break begins

JANUARY

6 Winter break ends

8 First day of classes Winter Quarter 2018

FEBRUARY

20 Day of Remembrance, 1:30 – 3 pm, Hinson Campus Center Conf. Rms. A & B

22 Dolores Huerta lecture, 6:30 – 10:20 pm CHC

24 Dolores Huerta field study, 9am – 5:30 pm

MARCH

1 Dolores Huerta lecture, 6:30 – 10:20 pm. CHC

3 Dolores Huerta field study, 9 am – 5:30 pm



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

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

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

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FOOTHILL-DE ANZA
**HUMANITIES
MELLON
SCHOLARS**

Funded by a 2.1 million dollar grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Humanities Mellon Scholars Program is a joint effort by the Foothill De Anza Community College District and the University of San Francisco. While at Foothill or De Anza College, Mellon Scholars earn a Certificate of Achievement in Humanities, are part of a learning community, work with faculty mentors and complete two quarters of a paid internship funded by the grant. Upon completion of their transfer requirements, Mellon Scholars are guaranteed admissions to selected majors in the Humanities at the University of San Francisco.

Mellon Scholars are selected based on their intellectual curiosity, commitment to humanities-based education, and academic promise. They

are highly focused individuals who are eager to become engaged and contribute to efforts centered on cultural production and social justice. Starting in January 2018, the California History Center will be partnering with the Humanities Mellon Scholars Internship Program.

The purpose of the Humanities Mellon Scholars (HMS) Internship Program is to provide students with a first-hand look at the many possibilities open to graduates in Humanities-related majors. These work-study programs could provide students with the opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at the day-to-day operations at a local museum, participate in a community art project, or assist in the implementation of Humanities-related events.

Director's Report



Tom Izu

When history is no longer something that happens to other people

Yale Historian Timothy Snyder ends his booklet, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons From the Twentieth Century*, with the hope that the next generation of our country will become a “historical generation” capable of repairing our collective sense of history which is currently dangerously out-of-whack. He feels that this is essential if our country wishes to renew its commitment to liberty. As a scholar who has studied the Holocaust and how people allowed their seemingly advanced and democratic societies to become fascistic and totalitarian

and themselves participants in unthinkable atrocities, his observations are not purely academic but also a plea for us to do something and to act before it is too late.

Snyder states, “History allows us to see patterns and make judgments. It sketches for us the structures within which we can seek freedom. It reveals moments, each one of them different, none entirely unique. To understand

one moment is to see the possibility of being the co-creator of another. History permits us to be responsible: not for everything, but for something.”

It is this “something” that is at once hopeful and powerful; we can study history, make connections, see problems to solve and see potential rather than only inevitability or doom. We can also use history to find commonalities and join with others rather than isolate ourselves and fall into denial, ignorance, hate, and ultimately, self-destructive despair.

Here at the California History Center our “something” can be to take up this challenge and make our Center a place engaged in the nurturing of the next generation as a “historical generation.” Utilizing the Center’s Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative, we will be joining forces this year with local community organizations to provide an opportunity for our students to capture compelling civil liberties lessons from local history. These students will be a part of bringing together Japanese, Mexican, Chinese, and Muslim American communities to share, learn, and act together to protect civil liberties (see page 5).

“History gives us the company of those who have done and suffered more than we have.”

— Timothy Snyder

If you are seeking those already engaged in teaching lessons from history that can help inspire and activate us, you need look no further than to our own region’s past to find people who have suffered a level of unimaginable social and cultural disruption and destruction but have managed to survive and against all odds, keep their language, culture, and stories alive. I am speaking of the Ohlone or indigenous people of the Greater Bay Area.

“Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy” is the title of the exhibit currently on display at the Center. The exhibit provides a window into this struggle. A series of large-size portraits — beautifully done by photographer Ruth Morgan with quotes gathered by oral historian Janet Clinger and organized by Ann Marie Sayers of Indian Canyon — conveys personal stories of Bay Area Ohlone youth and elders and their efforts to preserve and transmit their culture, heritage, and knowledge. Quilts by Charlene Sul accompany the exhibit.

We have extended the CHC exhibit through winter quarter, so I do hope you have a chance to see it!

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Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative

California Assembly approves \$3 million in grants to further education about the WW II incarceration of Japanese Americans

“Because equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air: we all have it, or none of us has it. That is the truth of it.”

—Maya Angelou

Rarely does learning history seem urgent. These days, it seems more so than usual. There is a saying that U.S. foreign wars are needed so Americans can learn geography. It could also be said that the recent and current spate of exclusionary policies and proposals emanating from (being disgorged by) the Trump administration may end up teaching Americans some civil liberties history. Targeting Muslims, international adoptees, immigrants, both documented and not – and trying to justify this on the basis of the WWII U.S. concentration camp experience of Japanese Americans forces us to examine and weigh historical policies if we want to move forward with perspective. We are likewise forced to reacquaint ourselves with the civil liberties we sometimes take for granted – if we want to move forward with justice.

Historians examine history all the time. What we often overlook is the fact that ordinary people love and are fascinated by history, too. People pursue the story behind their great-grandparents’ unlikely union. Local communities search yellowed newspapers for significant words by their founders. Preservationists trace the ownership of local landmarks.

Also notable are the decades long grassroots efforts of Japanese Americans to make visible their forced exclusion from the West Coast and subsequent incarceration at the hands of their own government. Many formerly imprisoned told their stories to generations of high school history students, spoke to civic groups, and wrote letters to the editor.

Partially in recognition of these efforts, the **California Civil Liberties Public Education Act**, introduced by Assemblymember Mike Honda and signed into law by Governor Pete Wilson in September 1998, authorized \$1 million in state funding to support the development of **educational** resources about WWII incarceration and the importance of protecting **civil liberties**.

What did the bill accomplish? According to *Densho*, the Japanese American encyclopedia online:

In total, CCLPEP gave out 366 awards during its twelve-year run. Those awards helped to stage plays, produce children’s books, capture oral histories, build memorials,

commission pieces of art, film documentaries, and create curriculum guides. Educators in California and across the U.S.—with a quick Google search or a visit to a local library—can now easily access scores of materials to teach about the incarceration, and about Japanese Americans’ contributions to state history more broadly.

The program received an energizing boost in October 2017 when Gov. Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 491, which will provide \$3 million over the next three years in education grants on the incarceration of almost 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) introduced the legislation, which updates the original California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) by expanding its scope to include content linking the Japanese American mass incarceration with current civil liberties challenges, including President Trump’s Muslim travel ban as well as his calls for a national Muslim registry.

Local projects are already underway. The Japanese American Museum of San Jose, in partnership with the California History Center’s Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative, is currently conducting planning and research for oral history interviews as well as public programs and community discussions among Japanese Americans, Mexican Americans, Chinese Americans, and Muslim Americans on the intersections between their immigrant histories and denials of civil liberties and parallels with the decades of scapegoating and hostility that preceded eventual open political attacks culminating in imprisonment, exclusion, deportations, and travel bans.

This project is unique since it will employ student researchers and documentarians to capture individual and community stories to help in efforts to educate and activate the public.

Stay tuned for future developments!

The Hindoo-German Conspiracy:

In the United States District Court, Northern District of California

The second in a series of articles by Suruchi Mohan



John White Preston.
Courtesy of the
Supreme Court of
California.

The term “theater of war” acquired a more literal meaning during World War I when players from around the globe descended on San Francisco at the commencement of the Hindu-German Conspiracy Trial in 1917. For months, United States District Court Judge William Cary Van Fleet presided over an international cast of characters. At the same time, John Preston, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California, driven by aggressive prompting from the British government hiding in the wings, endeavored to create order out of chaos.

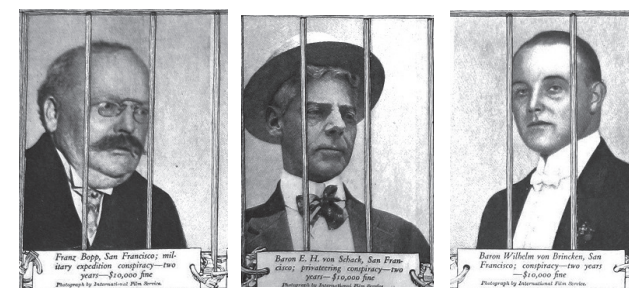
Events had been leading to this eventuality for years. [See “Gadar,” “Shipping Conspiracies,” “Bomb Plot Trial” in “The Hindoo-German Conspiracy” *Californian*, June 2017.] But priorities changed overnight when the U.S. entered the war on April 6, 1917 on the side of Britain and France.

The next day, April 7, the U.S. government arrested five Indians (not Hindoos, a pejorative term for South Asians) who had been under British surveillance. Chief among these was Ram Chandra, editor of the *Hindustan Gadar* which had split into two periodicals a few months earlier due to disagreements among staff members. The government charged the Indians with “setting on foot” a military enterprise designed

to overthrow British rule in India. With that goal in mind, they had sent arms, ammunition, and men on the schooner *Annie Larsen* and the steamship *Maverick*, which were under the stewardship of Germans. Their plans, however, had come to naught.

Over the next few months, the U.S. Department of Justice continued to investigate violations of the neutrality laws of the country. In July, the DOJ brought indictments against 105 Indians, Americans, and Germans. The U.S. government accused the Germans of making plans to wage war on England a year before the outbreak of the war. It charged 98 defendants with starting a military enterprise with the aim of distracting the British from the War. Toward this end, Kaiser Wilhelm II had set up a war fund which was handled by the German consulate in San Francisco. The U.S. government averred that the plot had been hatched in the San Francisco office and submitted to the German Foreign Office in Berlin, where the latter worked hand in hand with the Indian committee that existed to topple the British in India.

Ram Chandra, then, was in exalted company. At the



Franz Bopp, Wilhelm von Brincken, and Eckhardt H. von Schack.
Butterick's *Delineator*, July 1918.

EDITOR'S NOTE—In our June *Californian*, in the first of two installments by Suruchi Mohan, the world was the stage for a drama originating in the dire circumstances of war, imperialism, and colonialism. In this issue, Mohan brings her research on the infamous Hindoo-German Conspiracy Trial - the focus now on a San Francisco courtroom - to its startling conclusion. Versions of these articles appear online at <http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php> United States World War I Centennial Commission Find Suruchi Mohan's blog at <https://suruchimohan.com/>.



William Cary Van Fleet. *San Francisco Call*, April 4, 1907, California Digital Newspaper Collection.

same time that the DOJ arrested him, it also arrested Franz Bopp, former German consul general, Eckhardt von Schack, former German vice consul, and Wilhelm von Brincken, former attaché of the German consulate. Among Ram Chandra's compatriots were Bhagwan Singh, Santokh Singh, and Ram Singh. The latter three ran a competing publication, also titled *Gadar*, after fissures appeared in their relationship with Ram Chandra.

At the arraignment in August, the indicted individuals entered a plea of not guilty. Representing the defendants were fifteen attorneys.

The trial

Jury selection for the trial began on November 20, 1917. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 42 defendants faced trial in San Francisco. Some of the charged had been tried and convicted in Chicago earlier in the year; some others, such as Arthur Zimmerman, German Secretary of State, and Franz von Papen, military attaché, enjoyed diplomatic immunity. The next day Preston announced that he was dropping charges against eight of the accused for insufficient evidence, but

would retain the right to call them as government witnesses. It appears that only 32, not 34, people stood trial.

The *Chronicle* reported that during jury selection, access to the courtroom was limited to talesmen (talesmen are members of a large pool of persons called for jury duty from which jurors are selected - *Merriam-Webster*), attorneys, court officials, and newspaper reporters. German consulate officials in court sat under military court, and marshals guarded doors to the court.

That day in court, Judge Van Fleet made an address to the talesmen, telling them about the case at a high level. “These defendants,” he said, “are charged by the government with conspiring to bring about a revolt in India against the authority of the British crown, a country with which the United States was at peace, and to give aid, comfort, and assistance to the German empire, with which England was at war.”¹

In his opening argument, U.S. Attorney Preston laid out the complex case for the jurors. Going back to Har Dayal (see *Gadar* article), he traced the origins of the revolutionary movement on the Pacific Coast and the support it received from Germany. Ram Chandra followed in Har Dayal's footsteps and, after the latter fled the country, Ram Chandra rallied the Indians on the West Coast to return to India to start a revolution. Four hundred of them did, sixty on the S.S. *Korea*.

Preston spoke about the *Annie Larsen* and the *Maverick* and that the Germans used these vessels to transport arms and ammunition to India (see “Shipping Conspiracies.”) Preston painted a wide canvas — the misappropriation of funds by three Indians, including Ram Chandra; the setting up of a

¹ *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 21, 1917.



Arthur Zimmerman, circa 1917. Wikipedia.



Franz von Papen, circa 1915. Wikimedia Commons.



Annette Abott Adams, 1910. Library of Congress

secret printing press in Calcutta, India, to disseminate German propaganda against the British; the role of the German Foreign Office in Berlin in orchestrating the movement of Indian men and arms across the oceans by spending tens of thousands of dollars.

Note: Preston's opening arguments are not in the boxes at the archives that I used for my research. I've relied on secondary sources, mainly the *San Francisco Chronicle* from those years.

The first witness to testify for the government was an Indian, Sukumar Chatterji, who detailed stages of the conspiracy and his conversations with Ram Chandra. He spoke of kidnappings

by the revolutionaries of Indians loyal to the British with the aim of holding them for ransom to raise money for their cause. As the U.S. government trotted out its witnesses, the courtroom saw a fair bit of drama as when one witness refused to testify until he was given immunity.

Another, Jodh Singh, who had been brought in from India to testify against his countrymen, balked when called to the stand. Earlier, and it was not clear to me whether this happened in India or Chicago or in both places, his testimony had sent nine people to their death. Many others were condemned to life in prison. But now Jodh Singh wanted no part of it. He would be undeterred in the face of the British threat of death by firing squad into betraying his countrymen yet again. He now wanted to be tried with his fellow citizens and pleaded guilty. Almost immediately, he sought to change his plea to not guilty, which the judge didn't allow. He was sent to the Alameda county jail where, alone in a jail in a foreign country, he went insane.

Not all who came in to testify provided riveting drama, nor was it for dearth of witnesses. The British shipped in many from around the world with the sole aim of rooting out any ideas of independence that Indians may have developed from living in the West. In fact, the British considered the case important enough to send their big guns to San Francisco: The head of the British Secret Service and an appointee of the British Parliament with the mandate to oversee British interests in India were sent to this trial. And a number of people from Scotland Yard and spies and Indian agents sailed into the City that for months offered a daily installment of international intrigue.

The U.S. government did its best to accommodate the men coming to its shores. For instance, on December 24, 1917 Preston wrote a letter to the collector of customs in San Francisco:

Sir: The bearer of this letter is Mr. Kothavale of the Indian Police who came to California in connection with the Hindu plot case. He is carrying with him certain papers which he brought here in connection with this case. I shall be grateful if you would have him passed through. U.S. Attorney.²

The British government brought in a sub inspector, Harcharan Das, from the Indian state of Punjab to testify against Ram Chandra. "Ram Chandra is a grafter; he is a king," said Harcharan Das. "I heard once that he had \$40,000 as his pocket fund in March 1915."³ Another detective made a similar statement.

Some of the direct examination of witnesses was conducted by Annette Adams, the first woman Assistant U.S. Attorney in the country, appointed to her post in 1914.

Government wraps up its case

As the government continued to make its case, a new year dawned. The Indians asserted that the whole trial was an attempt by the British government to punish them for daring to speak out against the atrocities of British rule in India. U.S. Attorney Preston said that Germans had dropped leaflets on no-man's land on the Indian subcontinent where British and Indian soldiers were stationed. Some of these leaflets were found in Ram Chandra's house.⁴ But why was the U.S. bringing evidence that didn't break any laws of this country or have anything at all to do with it? Judge Van Fleet said that the charge was not that they fomented revolt in India but that they broke the neutrality laws of the United States by organizing a military enterprise against Britain, with whom the U.S. was at peace.

And so it continued, as desultory as the war that engulfed the world. After forty-four days the government rested its case.

The defense argues

Now it was the defense's turn. George McGowan, attorney for Ram Chandra, made an impassioned argument for the

² Record Group 118, Office of the US Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 1, folder 1 a. National Archives at San Francisco.
³ Testimony of the Witnesses at the Indian Republican Trial, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.
⁴ San Francisco Chronicle, February 20, 1918.

defense. In essence he said that British actions in India, such as arresting editors, banning newspapers, sending Indians into exile, show that long before Ram Chandra began his activities and published his paper, Indians were protesting against the British.



George McGowan. History of the Bench and Bar in California, 1912.

McGowan said, "We will show you that the action of those men in going back to India to protest against the injustice and indignity that had been heaped upon them was not a military enterprise. We will show you, gentlemen of the jury, that it is precisely and that it is exactly the same thing that has been done in this city by the subjects of Great Britain, the subjects of France, by the subjects of Italy, who have gone

to their respective consulates and reported there, who have gone across the water and to have taken part in the hostilities in Europe.⁵

"We will prove to you, gentlemen of the jury, that a large number of men have left this country under those conditions, exactly the same as these Indians did here. We will show you that there were no arms, that there was no ammunition, that the party leaving this country going to India was purely one in which the individuals embraced in that party went upon their own initiative, they were not organized, they were not combined, and they were not coerced to go, there was no military leadership, there were none of the elements which we contend go to make up a military enterprise."

In his rather long opening statement, often interrupted by the judge, McGowan took up *Gadar*, saying it was not seditious; rather, it listed the wrongs that Indians were suffering under the British. "That may be seditious to the British crown, but it is not seditious to publish that paper in this country, and it is not seditious against the laws of the United States to send that paper, a paper of general circulation, all over the world through the mails of the United States."⁶

McGowan raised the specter of the Americans in their fight against the British, saying that they, too, had put out the printed word to disseminate their message. Further, he said, the 300 million people of India did not have one voice in the British House of Commons, as opposed to the Irish who had a hundred votes.

"I am going to show you something further, gentlemen

⁵ Record Group 118, Box 10, folder 5b., Records of the Office of the U.S. Attorney, Northern District of California, Neutrality Case files, 1913-1920.
⁶ Ibid.

of the jury, and that is to be shown by the public records of this government, that the very foundation of this case, from the very beginning of it to the very end of it has been at the instigation of the British government. I am going to show with respect to Har Dayal that the movement to deport him from the United States was at the instigation of the British government. I am going to show you, while Mr. Preston has said that this man jumped his bail, I am going to show you, gentlemen of the jury, that he never jumped his bail, that the thousand dollars presented for his bond was returned to the man who put it up, and while as a concession to the British government a warrant of deportation might have been issued, it is illegal and false upon its face.

"...I intend to show you that this defendant Ram Chandra almost from the very day that he entered the United States has been hounded by these minions of the British government."

McGowan brought witnesses to testify for Ram Chandra. C.F. Kunze, special writer on the History of the War for the *Daily Call-Post* of San Francisco, said, "I visited Mr. Chandra's home that was only one room. The surroundings impressed me as being very humble."⁷

Other witnesses for the defense testified that the house on 5 Wood Street was in disrepair. Even government witnesses had conceded on cross examination that Ram Chandra was an honest man, who eked out an extremely humble living.

We have Ram Chandra's own words, although what follows doesn't appear to have been spoken on the witness stand. Clearly dissatisfied with the way the judge was handling the case, Ram Chandra said, "We could have brought two immigration officers who would testify that the British Government had requested them to deport Mr. Har Dayal and myself from this country and the U.S. Government refused to do it. But the court refused to allow the evidence to be presented on the grounds that it was immaterial."⁸

"Who did testify against me? They were all well trained professional witnesses and British paid agents. The purpose of the spreading of such stories about is to discredit the Hindustan Gadar Movement and defeat the purpose of our paper in its efforts to better the conditions and liberate India. The



Wood Street, San Francisco, Headquarters Hindustan Gadar Party. FoundSF, Chris Carlsson.

⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Testimony of the Witnesses at the Indian Republican Trial, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

British Government has been coaching the witnesses to cast gratuitous and utterly false aspersions at us, so that the American public may withhold the sympathy which an American naturally and rightly feels for those who are struggling for human rights and liberty and vindicating their innocence against tremendous odds.”⁹

Jurors and trial watchers always want to hear from the defendant, but weigh his words with a great deal of skepticism. Here, I don’t know what the jury heard; the evidence is imprinted on a sheaf of papers on which I rely. I have to admit, however, that my familiarity with the ways of colonial rulers makes me believe that Ram Chandra’s testimony contains at least a kernel of truth.

As if to support my belief, an investigation report made in February 1917 by Don S. Rathbun, special agent-in-charge for the Bureau of Investigation, noted that Rathbun had some doubt as to whether Ram Chandra really was embezzling money or Bhagwan Singh had made it up. A rift had occurred between the two friends based on jealousy.¹⁰

As the case wound down, Preston made his closing arguments. “The international importance of this case and the effect of your verdict will be of tremendous weight. It is your duty to uphold the neutrality laws of this nation, laws which have been outraged by these defendants. We have reached the stage in our history where we must stamp out anarchists and revolutionary sects that are fanning themselves into flames of hate and disregard for our laws, or the day will come when we will have no country to defend. The Hindoo defendants before you brazenly admit they are revolutionists; they have trampled on the neutrality laws of this nation, spurred on and encouraged by Germany. You should be particularly jealous of the German government using these Hindoos as willing tools on our soil.”¹¹

Going down his list of defendants, Preston addressed the charges against each. Ram Chandra, he said, was a leech, who took all he could from the 8,000 Indians on the West Coast and spread German propaganda.

Timothy Healy defended among others, Bhagwan Singh, Santokh Singh, and Ram Singh – all of whom had broken away from Ram Chandra’s *Gadar* and started their own newspaper. In his closing statements, Healy said that if his clients were convicted they would be sent to the gallows by the British in India.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Record Group 118, case # 6133, Hindu Conspiracy 1917, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

¹¹ Report from the San Francisco Chronicle, April 22, 1918, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

Chaos in the courtroom

In a binder at the San Francisco courthouse of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, I found a sheaf of papers detailing the events of April 23, 1918¹², similar to the packet above with a snippet of Preston’s closing arguments. Unlike the latter, it did not say if it was from the *Chronicle*, although the format and type were similar. But when I saw a description of the events of the day in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of April 24, 1918, I figured the pages were a reporter’s notes, again, similar to the ones above. The language used to describe the occurrences of the day was almost identical and it seemed to me that the reporter had taken copious notes that he edited to fit the newshole. This, then, is what I chose to use as my source.

The day began like any other over the past several months, except now the end of the ordeal was in sight. Ram Singh and Bhagwan Singh had been in conference for half an hour before court convened. As always, all defendants and witnesses were searched by the marshals before entering the courtroom. About midmorning, the judge declared a short break and the courtroom emptied out into the corridors. When the crowd went back in, they were not searched.

Around noon, Preston finished his closing argument and Judge Van Fleet ordered a recess until 2 o’clock. The jury filed out, the judge left his bench, but many defendants, attorneys, and spectators kept their places.

Preston was gathering his papers at the prosecution’s table and Adams collected hers. Ram Chandra got up from his chair at the end of the defense table to go to where his attorney, McGowan, was seated. Almost immediately, Ram Singh left his table and walked to the front of the courtroom.

“Without saying a word Ram Singh pressed an automatic pistol into Ram Chandra’s side. A sharp report was heard in the courtroom. Standing at the Judge’s bench facing the door of the courtroom, Mrs. Adams’s attention was attracted by the first shot.... A bullet tore through Chandra’s left side, a little to the back. Shuddering, Chandra turned away, staggered back and jerked crazily toward the witness stand.”¹³

“Singh went right after Chandra, continuing to shoot into Chandra’s body. Ram Chandra struggled off in the direction of the judge’s bench...Singh turned slightly and crouched to follow Chandra. Head lowered, Ram Singh pulled the trigger two more times. Ram Chandra fell at the foot of the witness stand...George McGowan straightened up Ram Chandra’s head.”¹⁴

¹² April 23, 1918, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 1918

WHERE MURDER CAPPED CLIMAX OF HINDOO ROMANCE

The first murder in a Federal courtroom on the Pacific Coast came as a climax to the German-Hindoo revolt trial yesterday noon after United States District Attorney John W. Preston had concluded his closing argument to the jury. The upper left photograph is that of Ram Singh, who shot and killed Ram Chandra (upper right photograph), and was in turn killed by United States Marshal James B. Holohan. The diagram shows the scene as Holohan shot Chandra’s murderer, and the Federal courtroom where the double tragedy was enacted is shown below.

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San Francisco Chronicle, April 24, 1918.

Aspirations in the Time of World War I

By Suruchi Mohan

A century ago, the West Coast had a population of fewer than 10,000 Indians of different religious beliefs, not 'Hindoos,' as they were called with derogation in the press. These Indians, struggling to find a footing as immigrants in America, were also imbued with a revolutionary spirit that goaded them into fighting British rule in India.

A few months before President Woodrow Wilson vetoed the Immigration Act of 1917, the editor of a small Indian newspaper in San Francisco wrote to the editor of the *New York Times*. In this letter, Ram Chandra, an Indian subject of the colonial British government, made a case for self-determination for India.

“Congress is planning to pass a new Oriental exclusion law in which the Hindus are included. The Japanese Ambassador protested vigorously against the terms of the act...and secured important changes....There is no hope that the British ambassador will make any protest on behalf of the Hindus, because the British Government itself does not wish the Hindus to come here. ...Therefore the only course left to us is to make our appeal through the public press,” wrote Chandra (August 13, 1916). Chandra was editor of the *Gadar*, or *revolt*, a paper published in many languages.

Both houses of Congress overrode the president’s veto and the legislation passed in February 1917. The strong support for the law among lawmakers showed not only that many Americans inherently distrusted immigrants during World War I, but also highlighted the many years of government action on immigrants.

With an obvious predilection for sending missives, Chandra wrote to Wilson on February 26, 1918, asking for the president’s help in freeing India from the clutches of the British. He drew parallels between the American war of independence against Britain and the Indian yearning for self-rule. Despite British complaints to the U.S. about Indian nationalists disrupting peaceful rule in India, the truth lay in the brutality and immorality of the British. “More than thirty million people have died there from plague and famine...According to the testimony of British authorities themselves, millions of men and women there can get with difficulty but one coarse meal once a day.”

Clearly, some among the people of subject nations took to heart the American and British call to arms in the fight for democracy and freedom against the Central Powers of World War I. While America stood as a beacon of liberty, Britain represented the worst of colonial rule to a mind like Chandra’s. At the same time that Britain articulated the notion of freedom, it threw the people of its sub-

ject nations, sometimes without adequate training, on to the frontlines of the war.

Britain held under its sway not just India but many other nations. In fact, the two great wars of the twentieth century loosened the stranglehold of imperialistic powers, such as Britain, on their colonies throughout the world. Those that did not succeed in throwing off the yoke of foreign domination in the first war kept up the fight and succeeded in the second. Ireland became independent from Britain in 1917. Egypt declared independence in 1922, but Britain maintained control by declaring it a protectorate. In Northern Europe, Finland freed itself from Russia, which had been forced into the war at its outset, but withdrew after the October Revolution of 1917. But India, which kept up the pressure on the British for more and more power, finally won freedom in 1947, soon after the end of World War II. And Egypt finally emerged free in 1954.

Ironically, the two great wars embodied the aspirations of oppressed peoples even as they did the thirst for hegemony by the great European powers.

How did this translate into a series of court cases?

With the outbreak of World War I, despite the avowed neutrality of the United States, Germans came under suspicion. Almost from the first days of the war, Germans and Americans were at cross purposes, with the Germans single-mindedly seeking victory at all costs by subverting U.S. law, and the U.S. determined to stop them. Along with shipping arms and coal and provisions from U.S. ports to destinations throughout the world, the Germans also played a role in inciting violence against the British by helping those countries, such as Ireland and India, that were fighting to gain a toehold in a totalitarian regime. The U.S. government alleged that the Germans violated neutrality laws.

It was this collaboration between the Germans and Indians that pulled the latter into the cases that the U.S. Department of Justice was pursuing in different cities throughout the country. While the DOJ tried cases elsewhere, Chandra and his cohorts were tried in San Francisco. This was so not only because the paper was published in



Gadar di Gunj (various spellings in English) publication, 1913. Title in Gurmukhi language translated to English approximates “Echoes of Revolution.” Thank you to Ravjeet Singh and Purba Fernandez of De Anza College for their assistance.

the city but also the government charged the German Consulate in the city with being the center of the conspiracy. Chandra had found the time to pen his appeal to President Wilson even as he was going to court for trial every day.

Collectively, these cases are called the Hindoo-German Conspiracy Cases or the Neutrality Cases. At the time, they provided San Franciscans with lively reading. As I researched and marveled, I wondered if this could happen today. The written word that has come down to us over the many centuries doesn’t give us reason to believe that human nature has changed over the millennia.

Over time, the view of the cases has changed, according to the Historical Reporter, a copy of which I found in the archives of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. When the cases were first brought, Americans had little sympathy for the dreams of the Indians for self-rule and believed what their government told them about Indian conspiracy with the Germans. In the 1950s, the Indian protests assumed the color of freedom and by the 1970s, scholars began to question if the facts of the cases could support the application of the neutrality laws.

A note on my research. Not everything I have found in the archives can be referenced: It is just there. In a binder, without a title. I searched and found. Where available, I have tried to provide a reference for every document I’ve used.

A scuffle followed between the defense attorneys and Ram Singh. The latter tried to shoot, but his gun jammed. From his table, above the heads of others in the bar, Marshal James Holohan shot Ram Singh.

Hearing the shots, Judge Van Fleet came rushing from his chambers into the courtroom. Instructing Holohan to take the defendants into custody, he ordered a rigid investigation of the shooting.

When the court reconvened at 2 p.m., with the Indians now under the guard of the United States Marshal, the judge called this “one of the most dastardly affairs which had ever taken place in a United States Court.”¹⁵ For the next four hours, the judge gave instructions to the jury. Among other directions, the judge said that the verdict forms had been made before the killings; he asked the jurors to ignore the names of Ram Chandra and Ram Singh, as their names had been withdrawn from the case.

At midnight, the jury returned to the courtroom and rendered a verdict of guilty to all but one of the thirty defendants who remained from the sweep the government had made a year ago.

The role of the British

As time has distanced the case from the events of the era, some writers have written about the role of the British in twisting the arm of the American government to bring this case. Little did the activities of the Indians – preliminary attempts at raising awareness about British rule -- merit the full force of U.S. law enforcement. Correspondence from the time, both between U.S. law enforcement and between the British and American governments, shows that the British were instrumental in foisting this case upon their former colony. Many of the comments compiled by the reporter of the *Chronicle* plainly show the guiding hand of the British.

Preston’s statements. Preston said, the *Chronicle* reporter noted, that the success of the prosecution was due to the work of the United States and the British Secret Service. Preston also “freely admitted that the British had given this government every assistance in securing evidence.”¹⁶

Correspondence. In a letter dated May 13, 1916 to Preston, United States Assistant Attorney General Charles Warren wrote that the British provided evidence that the neutrality laws of the United States had been violated but the evidence presented was inconclusive. Warren then instructed Preston on how to conduct an investigation to produce the desired

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Report from the San Francisco Chronicle, April 22, 1918, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

results. “It is therefore quite probable that an investigation with a view to showing sentiments of ‘a character tending to incite arson, murder or assassination’ would lead to productive results.”¹⁷

Warren quoted from the British ambassador, “...further information has come to hand which shows that a world wide organization exists, the centre of which is Berlin (where Har Dial (sic) is now living) and that the object of this organization is the destruction of the British in India....America is one of the spheres of activity of this organization and money appears to be provided through German Consuls for the purpose of sending parties to India and arming them.”¹⁸ The letter ends with a request to conduct a thorough investigation.

Continuing to put pressure on the different agencies of the United States government, the British notified the Secretary of State that indemnity would be demanded of the U.S. for permitting military action against Britain, when the U.S. was on friendly terms with Britain.

Clearly it worked. The attitude of the British rubbed off on Preston; even so, he did not believe that Indians were a danger to the U.S. In a letter to the City Attorney of Oakland, Calif., Preston wrote, “The Hindus are a very crafty and cunning people, but so far they have not become embittered against the United States. All they have done is to recklessly disregard our law, but they have not become...in such a state that they are willing to commit murder of American officials, although murdering English officials seems to be an easy thing for them to do.”¹⁹

Orders. And it appears that the British had their way with American customs and immigration officials when they demanded restriction on Indians entering and leaving the United States. The *San Francisco Call and Post* reported on Nov. 12, 1915, “As a result of revolutionary efforts directed from San Francisco and other American cities, all East Indians leaving the United States must submit to an examination by British government authorities. Return to India will be denied for lack of satisfactory reasons for leaving America.”²⁰

Instructions to this effect were received by British consuls on the Pacific Coast from the British Embassy in Washington. Further, photographs and fingerprints of departing East Indians were to be taken for the record in the U.S. and at the port of arrival in India.

¹⁷ Record Group 118, box 4, folder 7a, National Archives at San Francisco.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Letter dated May 3, 1918. United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

²⁰ Record Group 118, Case #6133, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

The cost of the case

A trial with an international cast of characters that ground on in a courtroom in San Francisco was bound to be costly.

In the notes from April 22, 1918, the *Chronicle* estimated that more than 200 members of the British Secret Service were in San Francisco for two years. “Placing the expense of each at the low figure of \$5 a day, the cost to the British Government must have been close to \$1,000,000. The real expense probably is twice that amount.”²¹

Further, a conservative estimate of the cost to both the U.S. and British governments was put at \$3,000,000. A fine of \$10,000 per convicted felon would yield the government about \$300,000, but the cost of boarding them would exceed that.

In a letter dated June 12, 1918, the Attorney General wrote to the State Department asking that the convicted Indians be deported to Japan, as that was the port of departure, not India. On July 8, 1918, the State Department denied the request.

I did not find a document showing what happened to them, which is not to say that one does not exist. Judging from what came before, if these men were sent back to India, they were probably hanged or transported to Kala Pani, a prison mostly for political prisoners, on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, for life.

Final words

So ended a long trial with more than the usual elements of conspiracy, fraud, betrayal, and death. The Germans, a powerful nation with expansionist designs, would probably have run into legal trouble with the U.S., particularly after the latter entered the war. There was enough – the illegal provisioning of ships, the bomb plots, the blowing up of ships on the oceans – to get a nervous government to flex its muscles when the world seemed to be going up in smoke.

The story, however, was different for Indians, a bunch of poor immigrants, most without an adequate knowledge of English, trying to carve out a life in a foreign country. Without British interference, it is doubtful that Indians would have been charged by the U.S. government. But the British were skittish: any sign of independence drew out their bloodiest instincts. It became a vicious circle – the more ruthlessly they put down Indians, the greater the vigor with which voices exposed their crimes against those they ruled, until even casual observers began to see the brutality of their regime and sympathized with the right of the ruled to overthrow them.

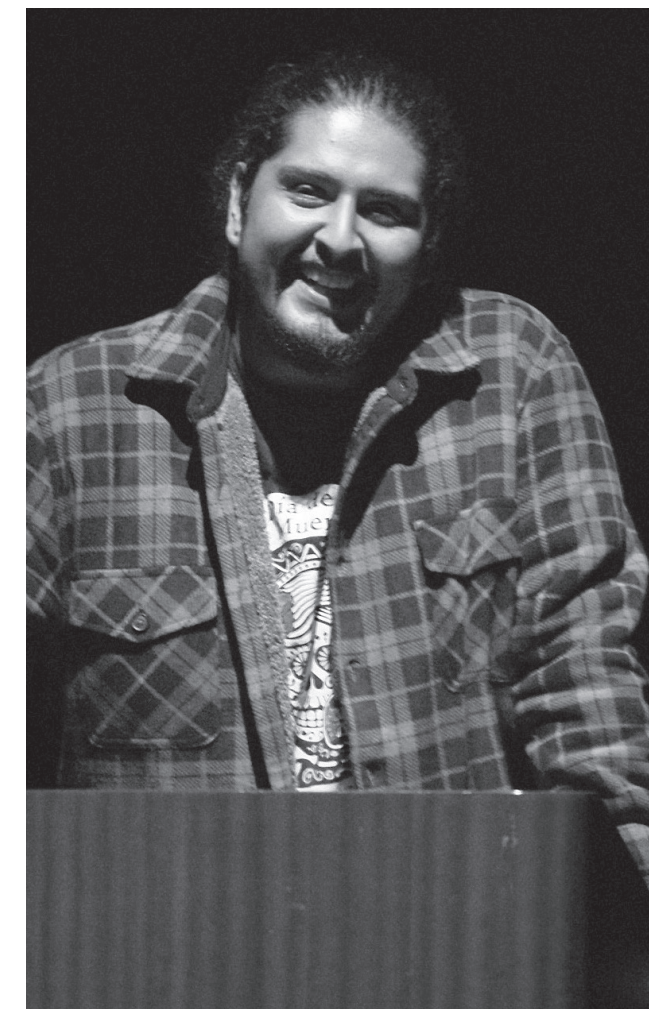
²¹ Report from the San Francisco Chronicle, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, San Francisco.

At the Center



Taste of History special guest, immediate past U.S. poet laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, accompanied by ensemble Poetry All Day, engaged the audience as De Anza College celebrates its 50th year. Shown left to right: Francis Wong, Jimmy Biala, Juan Felipe Herrera, John-Carlos Perea, and Melody Takata.

Poetry is also presented by Diego Gómez, former De Anza student and commencement speaker in June, 2017.



Jen Myhre, Purba Fernandez and Mark Healy grace the lobby of VPAC at Taste of History, November 18, 2017.

At the Center



Art, poetry, music, food, and wine were celebrated at the November 18 California History Center and Euphrat Museum of Art collaborative event, "Taste of History. The Euphrat exhibit for fall quarter: Kindness as Resistance."



Dining at Taste of History, with musical accompaniment by the Abe Arellano Jazz Quartet, left to right are Phong Lam, Shawnie White, and Azha Simmons.

At the Center

Willys and Betty Peck hope you will join them for a moment on "The Blessing Bench" in Saratoga, unveiled November 18, 2017. Principal sculptor, the late Jerry Smith of that city, created the figures of Betty Peck and the late Willys Peck, beloved Saratoga denizens and benefactors. Willys was a long-time board member of CHC. Betty and Willys participated in CHC exhibit programming and provided support for the Center in many ways over many decades.



Ann Marie Sayers and Canyon Sayers-Roods bid welcome to visitors at the opening of CHC exhibit, *Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy*, October 28, 2017.

Note to our readers: Because of the lateness of the fall *Californian* we are posting the winter quarter class.

WINTER 2018 CLASS

California History Center State and Regional History Academic Program

The following course will be offered Winter quarter 2018 through the California History Center. Please see the History class listing section of the Schedule of Classes for additional information www.deanza.fhda.edu/schedule or call the center at (408) 864-8986.

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



La Ofrenda – The Offering. Mural painted by Yreina Cervántez. Located in Los Angeles, California at the First Avenue Bridge. The mural depicts the first female Mexican American union leader, Dolores Huerta. Wikimedia Commons, T. Murphy, author.

The Ballad of Dolores Huerta: A Civil Rights Icon

Course: HIST-054X-95

Units: 2

Instructor: Nannette Regua

reguanannette@fhda.edu

Referred to as the "Dragon Lady," Dolores Huerta is a co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union (UFW). Alongside local hero and humanitarian, Cesar E. Chavez, Huerta fought to win rights for farm workers. She was involved in crucial aspects of the UFW, such as organizing, negotiating, and political lobbying. Simultaneously, she balanced raising a family as a single mother. At the age of 87 and with the recent release of a documentary on her life, Huerta continues to be committed to labor rights, women's rights, educational rights, and social justice.

LECTURES: Thursdays, 2/22 and 3/1, 6:30 – 10:20pm

FIELD STUDIES: Saturdays, 2/24 and 3/3, 9am – 5:30pm



San Francisco federal courtroom in which Hindu-German conspiracy trial and shooting took place.
Bottom photo shows damage to mosaic tiles visible today. Photograph by Bruce Factor.