

CHAPTER 6

WOMEN'S CLUBS OF CALIFORNIA

Woven into the fabric of American history is the extended influence of women's self-education literary groups, referred to as Women's Clubs. Originating after the Civil War, these clubs were established at a time when the nation's colleges and universities were not open to the enrollment of women. The establishing of the earliest women's literary groups was quickly followed by the formation of women's civic clubs whose efforts were directed toward social and charitable contributions.

During the fifty years spanning last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Christian values of the New England Protestant missionaries guided the social and civic ethics of central California's small coastal and near inland communities. Progressive reform efforts associated with these ethics soon arose from these communities that embraced the Protestant values of the day. These reform efforts, directed at the social ills of the urban life (poverty, alcoholism, gambling, and prostitution) were an attempt to alleviate the impoverished conditions of the city, and the moral lapse of its residents.²

It would be these social and civic values that motivated the Women's Clubs scattered throughout California to organize (as the California Federation of Women's Clubs) and campaign for progressive reforms including woman suffrage, temperance, civic rights and social welfare.

John Steinbeck, in his book *East of Eden*, with a bit of wry humor, mentions such efforts taken up by both the community church and the Salinas Women's Civic Club.

At intervals Salinas suffered from a mild eruption of morality. The process never varied much. One burst was like another. Sometimes it started in the pulpit and sometimes with a new ambitious president of the Women's Civic Club. Gambling was invariably the sin to be eradicated. There were certain advantages in attacking gambling. One could discuss it, which was not true of prostitution. It was an obvious evil and most of the games were operated by Chinese. There was little chance of treading on the toes of a relative.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, women's clubs throughout America served as the primary civic organizations responsible for establishing a community's first public library.¹ In fact, the first effort chosen by the Salinas Women's Civic Club was that of establishing the Salinas Public Library – and not such matter as the eradication of gambling.

In his own way, John Steinbeck became a replica of the Salinas Women's Civic Club as he challenged the reader to consider the moral and ethical values held by a society at large.

THE SALINAS FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Salinas Free Public Library was established December 18, 1905, with Mrs. C.J. Whisman acting as Secretary Library Trustee. At the time of its founding, a library building had not been built and the collection held not one single book.³

On August 25, 1906, the women of the community established the Salinas Civic Club.⁴ Before the close of the year, the club selected as their first civic effort the establishing of a public library. In early 1907, the Salinas Civic Club later named the Salinas Women's Club, wrote to Andrew Carnegie requesting \$10,000 to create a public library. In March of 1907, the Civic Club received a response from Carnegie stating that he'd granted their request for funds for a library building.⁵ Also during that year (1907), the Salinas Civic Club recruited Mrs. C. E. Striening for the librarian position at the Salinas public library, several years before construction of the facility had begun.⁶

Over the next two years the Salinas Civic Club raised an additional \$4,000, acquired a site on which to build the structure, and received as a gift, the complete collection of 3,500 books from the Salinas Odd Fellows Library.⁷ Additional contributions to the public library collection were provided by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Daughters of the American West libraries, and the Salinas Wanderers Study Club. In 1907, the periodical *News Notes of California Libraries* reported the Salinas Wanderers Study Club donated 48 books to the yet to be completed public library: "*They are on Italian life and history and a few are Italian novels.*"⁸

The Salinas Public Library, a Carnegie library, opened in 1909 at the corner of Main and East San Luis Street. In 1911, The Wanderers Club of Salinas extended their contribution to the library, donating a number of books about France.⁹

By the year 1914, the Salinas Free Public Library had amassed a collection of over 4,000 volumes.¹⁰

One can only imagine the collection of books available on the shelves of the Salinas Public Library to a young John Steinbeck a full decade prior to his departure to Stanford University in 1919. In 1959, a proposal was sent to the author for a John Steinbeck “browsing room” in the soon - to - be-constructed Salinas Library. He replied. *“I must say that in the old library where Mrs. (Carry) Striening, for so many years presided over the stacks, I've browsed the product practically to the roots.”*¹¹

With that comment, one is left to consider the influence on Steinbeck of his time spent browsing the stacks of the Salinas Public Library. In addition, one can also begin to ponder the influence of the Salinas Wanderers Study Club, of which Olive Steinbeck was a charter member, may have had on a young John Steinbeck.

In the book *A John Steinbeck Encyclopedia* Stephen K. George provided the following mention of Olive Hamilton Steinbeck *“Many critics, including Jay Parinin and Jackson J. Benson, attribute Steinbeck’s love of language, clear sense of right and wrong, and outrage at social injustice to his mother’s curious mix of artistic and religious values. Olive, though a devoted mother, was also involved in any number of charitable and society organizations—the Eastern Star and the Salinas Wanderers.”*¹²

SALINAS WANDERERS STUDY CLUB

The Salinas Wanderers Study Club was one of the hundreds of Progressive Women's Clubs established to solve the woes of society by organizing benevolent institutions, temperance unions, civic organizations and literary circles. The Salinas Wanderers Club was formed on August 2, 1905, at the home of Amelia Black. A little more than a year later, in September of 1906, the Wanderers Club became one of more than a hundred such organizations to join the California Federation of Women's Club.¹ As was the case with the Wanderers Study Club, the great majority of these organizations, were also members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. These two alliances, the State Federation of Women's Clubs and General Federation of Women's Clubs were strong forces that worked to catalyze the Progressive Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The Salinas Wanderers Study Club has often been described as a quaint Women's Club that gathered in a member's parlor with China tea cups and linens napkins to enjoy each other's company and discuss travel books.² The paragraphs that follow suggest the club went a bit further into subjects other than the discussion of travel books.

The Salinas Wanderers Study Club Diamond Jubilee program of 1980 states the aim of the Salinas Wanderers Study Club was to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the history, literature, and art of the United States and foreign countries. Limited to 40 members, the club held its meetings the first, third and fifth Wednesday evening of every month at the homes of the members. During each of these meetings, several members provided a talk on the subject of their choice related to the year's chosen topic.

During the period of Olive Steinbeck's participation, the Wanderer members were the educated women of the Salinas community. The women of the group included graduates of Stanford University, a good many Salinas public schools teachers, the first librarian of the Salinas public library, Mrs. Carrie Striening, and the first librarian of the Monterey County Free Libraries, Miss Anne Hadden.

For the first seven years of the Wanderers Club, Mrs. Richmond Wheeler was the guiding president of the organization. Alice Clara Wheeler graduated from high school in Portland, Maine, then The Boston School of Oratory in 1887 and Stanford University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1902. As a teacher of elocution she provided lessons for those interested in improving their own ways of speaking, reading aloud, giving oral presentations, or singing- first in Maine, then Oregon and finally in California.³ Beyond the Wanderers Club, Mrs. Wheeler was a member, and for a time served as president of the Salinas Civic Club.

Beyond an appreciation for Mrs. Wheeler and her advanced education, a broader understanding of the Wanderers Club can be gleaned from the news briefings that regularly appeared in the *San Jose Mercury Herald*. A review of these published briefing through the years 1908 – 1920 allow one to recognize those women whose names appear at the meetings on a regular basis: Mrs. J. H. Andresen, Miss Mabel Coulter, Miss Jennie Garrigus, Mrs. Ben Graves, Miss Anne Hadden, Mrs. J. B. Porter, Miss Beatrice Porter, Mrs. J. E. Steinbeck, Mrs. Carrie Striening, Mrs. R. Wheeler, and Mrs. C. J. Whisman.

A STUDY OF GERMANY

The earliest briefing to be located, appeared in the year 1908, during which time the Wanderers had chosen as a subject, the study of Germany. A second news briefing on this subject of study appeared the following year. Reports included Frederick II, King of Prussia from 1740 until 1786, the German Romantic composer Felix Mendelssohn.

*“The Wanderers Club held a meeting Wednesday evening at the residence of S. M. Black, on Pajaro street. The following interesting program was given “Reporter,” Mrs. J. B. Porter;-“Frederick the Great,” Miss A. Lemon; “Berlin,” Mrs. S. M. Black; “German Social Life,” Miss N. Black; “German Drama of Today,” Miss A. Zabala; “Mendelssohn,” Mrs. WJ Hamilton.”*³

A STUDY OF FRANCE

In the fall of 1909, the Wanderers Club had chosen France as their next subject of study. The following short mentions in the *San Jose Mercury Herald* presents the subject matter of a Wednesday gathering, which went well beyond the discussion of travel books.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Dec. 4. [1909] A meeting of the Wanderers Club was held Wednesday evening at the residence of Mrs. J. B. Porter. The first number on the program was a paper by Mrs. WJ Hamilton on “The Tuileries,” Mrs. R. L. Porter gave a talk on “Mme de Maintenon.” Mrs. C. Graves followed with the history of Latin quarter of Paris, the center of learning during earlier centuries. Mrs. Warnock read an interesting paper on the history of Claude Lorrain. Mrs. W. W. St. John, one of the delegates at the recent District Federation, read a paper in which she

*gave an account of all that had been accomplished at this meeting, from a business, intellectual and social standpoint.*⁴

The “*District Federation*” mentioned in the article referred to the San Francisco District of California Federation of Women’s Clubs which was comprised of the thirteen counties of San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Napa, Mendocino, Del Norte, San Benito, Lake, San Mateo, Marin, Sonoma and Humboldt. One or more women from Wanderers Study Club consistently attended the District Federation’s annual convention which allowed for the members of various women’s clubs) to gather and report their organization’s recent activities.

*Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Feb. 5. [1910] The Wanderers Club met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. J. E. Steinbeck. The results of the French revolution in France and in Europe were presented by Mrs. Rust and Mrs. Steinbeck. Mrs. Ben Graves gave a talk on the Palace of Luxembourg and Mrs. Harvey Abbott spoke about Mme du Deffand. There were character sketches of Mirabeau by Mrs. Bennett, Danton by Mrs. Outhier, Lafayette by Miss Porter and Robespierre by Mrs. Warnock.*⁵

GREAT BRITAIN

The following short mention in the *San Jose Mercury Herald* suggests the Wanderers had chosen Great Britain as the subject of study. The meeting was concluded with a roll call, which requested each member provide the name of an English River or Lake. As a side note, Miss Mabel Coulter, referenced in the article, was a graduate of Stanford who later became a librarian at the University of California, Berkeley.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Sept. 2. [1911] The Wanderers Club met Wednesday evening at the residence of Mrs. R. Wheeler. The resignation of the Vice President, Mrs. Rust, was accepted and Mrs. Steinbeck was elected to fill the vacancy. The following program was given: "Advantages and Disadvantages of England's Physical Characteristics," Mrs. C. Graves; "Romans in Britain," Mrs. Striening; "Romans and Normans," Miss Coulter; roll call, An English River or Lake.⁶

The next meeting mentioned in the San Jose Mercury Herald was held at the home of Mrs. Steinbeck. Papers presented at this meeting continued on the subject of Great Britain. The meeting was concluded with a roll call that requested each member recite a quote from a nineteenth-century poet of their choice.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Apr 20. [1912] The Wanderers Club met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. Steinbeck. The program as follows: Pre-Raphaelites, Poets and Painters," Mrs. George Lacey; "Browning as a Poet of England," Miss Thomas; "The Growth of Optimism in Century Literature," Miss Byxbee. The roll call consisted of quotations from nineteenth century poets.⁷

Another Stanford graduate to join the Wanderers Club was Miss Anne Hadden who was hired to establish the Monterey County Free Libraries. The following paragraphs by Denise Sallee provide a description of the Salinas that Miss Hadden found when she arrived on Labor Day 1913.

"Here I was, all ready to begin the great adventure of the next 16 years as first Monterey County Librarian but so far [had] no place to live or no place to report." Not

daunted by this situation, Hadden began exploring her new town, eventually finding a local teacher whom she had known at Stanford University. This led to her locating a 1 room in a boarding house where she discovered other friends from her Stanford days. When her first day drew to a close she felt, *"not altogether a stranger in a strange land."* Salinas, which was often nicknamed "Saloonas" in that era, proved a real frontier for Hadden to conquer. She found *"an almost tree-less town [with] white houses, glaring streets [and] so many saloons on east side of Main Street that women rarely walked on that side."* Her main allies against this more unruly element of the town were the Civic Club and a women's club with *"progressive influence"* known as the Wanderers Study Club.⁸

A STUDY OF IRELAND

Olive Steinbeck followed Mrs. Wheeler as president of the club, a position she held from August 1912 through June 1914. The Wanderers Club program, for August 1912 – May 1913, the subject of study was "A Study of Ireland." The short mention in the San Jose Mercury Herald recognizes one of several matters discussed – the subject of immigration; an interesting topic as several members were Irish immigrants or first generation Americans of Irish immigrants. The meeting was concluded with a roll call, which requested each member provide a quotation from an Irish poet.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, May 24. [1913] After an enjoyable series of winter meetings devoted to the study of Irish history and customs the Wanderers' Literary club brought its season to a close Wednesday evening at the residence of the club's president, Mrs. J. E. Steinbeck. Mrs. J. H. Andresen gave a talk on "Irish Poets

and Irish Poetry,” and Mrs. Carrie Striening spoke on “The Irish as an Immigrant.” On roll call the members recited quotations from the works of Irish poets.

In appreciation of her faithful service as president of the club Mrs. Steinbeck was the recipient of an elegant vase, the presentation being made by Mrs. J. H. Andresen on behalf of the members.⁹

A STUDY OF RUSSIA AND THE BALKAN STATES EASTERN EUROPE

The Wanderers Club program for August 1913 - June 1914 states the next subject of study during Mrs. Steinbeck’s tenure was “A Study of Russia and Southeastern Europe. Presenting the Problem of Their Emigrants to the Pacific Coast.” Appearing in the Sunday Mercury Herald was the following description of a meeting held on the subject of Russia during the fall of 1913.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Oct. 4. [1913] The Wanderers club at an interesting meeting held Wednesday evening resumed the study of Russia and the Balkan states. The program was: Paper, “The Renaissance of Russia,” Miss Itylene Lewis; paper “Siberia and Its Colonization as Compared With England and Its Systems,” Miss Ruth Abbott; paper “Political Exiles,” Miss Nellie Armstrong; paper “Mineral Wealth and Resources,” Miss Jennie Garrigus; paper, “Nationalism, Socialism and Nihilism,” Miss Ora Cupp.

Three – minute talks on Russian cities were made as follows: “Nizhny Novgorod,” Mrs. H. C. Murphy; “Kief,” Mrs. R. L. Porter; “Warsaw,” Mrs. Ben

Graves; "Odessa," Mrs. John Parker; "Pultava" Mrs. L. E. Kilkenny; "Omel," Mrs. G.F. Lacey; Vladivostok," Mrs. J. H. Andresen.

*Mrs. Striening, Mrs. Kilkenny and Mrs. Armstrong were appointed a committee to make plans for Peace-day exercises. Mrs. W. M. Vanderhurst was elected an active members and Mrs. E. T. Harris as an honorary member.*¹⁰

A STUDY OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

During Mrs. Steinbeck's final year as president, the Wanderers chose to study Southeastern Europe and discuss the issues associated with the expected immigration through the Panama Canal to the Pacific Coast.¹¹ This subject of study coincided with the growing worry for the anticipated wave of undesirable Southern European immigrants entering California.

In 1913, this proposed wave of unwanted settlers concerned then Progressive Governor of California Hiram Johnson to the point that he established a State Immigration Commission. The purpose of the commission was to consider the dangers of increased immigration of Jewish, Italian, Russian, and other Southern Europeans to California, which was to coincide with and a direct result of the opening of the Panama Canal.¹²

In March 1914, the Salinas Wanderers discussed the Panama Canal and the question of immigration as reported in the following article published in *The Grizzly Bear: Official Organ Of The Native Daughters Of The Golden West*.

“The Wanderers” of Salinas are still dealing with the Panama Canal, the latest phase of the question with them being its bearing on immigration. Their meeting last month was very large, opening with a talk on “Immigration,” by Miss Mabel Coulter. She spoke of the large influx of Europeans to the Pacific Coast, and of the opportunities awaiting them here. Mrs. J. H. Andresen, one of the bright lights of the club, spoke on “The New Immigration or Slavic Influx” and drawing a comparison between the immigrants of Northwestern Europe and those now coming from Southeastern Europe; her talk very much favored the old immigrants from the northwestern portions. Mrs. R. L. Porter spoke on “Our Present Immigration Laws from the Viewpoint of National Eugenics”; she told of the effects of these laws on those now arriving, as well as future immigrants, presenting some very intelligent and instructive views of this question. Miss B. Porter spoke on “General Slavic Characteristics” and Rev. A. E. Patch on “Immigration Problems in General.” As Mr. Patch has given much time to research of the immigration question, the Wanderers were especially grateful in securing his presence for the meeting. A rising vote of thanks was extended to Mr. Patch. During this month, Dr. Bertola, district chairman of Health, addressed the club, the latter having combined for the day for a large meeting to hear the doctor speak on “Hygiene of Home and City.” I have no notes at present of the meeting, but it is a foregone conclusion that it was a large and interesting one, Dr. Bertola's name being sufficient to always bring a large attendance of clubwomen to hear her. ¹³

In June 1914, the Salinas Wanderers continued their focus on the subject of immigration from Southeastern Europe as reported in the following article published in the monthly periodical, *Everywoman*.

The Salinas "Wanderers" are again taking up the consideration of the "Emigration of the Peasant from Southeastern Europe to the Pacific Coast." This subject was delved into very deeply last year by the members, but believing it a subject of much interest to our State, they have again taken it up, with the argument "Is Immigration Sufficiently Restricted." At the last meeting a debate was called for on this subject, with Mrs. Richmond Wheeler for the affirmative, who offered for her argument facts and figures which went a long way to prove the necessity for encouraging this class of immigrants. She spoke of their thrift and industry, and in this connection our need for just such people to develop our resources. Miss Evelyn for the negative was in favor of restricted immigration, classing some of these peasants with the "undesirable citizen." Other papers offered, dealing with the question, were "The Slavs in America"; "The Bohemian and Moravian Immigrants"; "Industrial and Agricultural Opportunities of Immigrants," all showing an extensive knowledge of the immigration question.¹⁴

And so it was that the first eight years as an organization, the Salinas Wanderers Club had spent studying the countries of Europe. In August of 1914, Mrs. J. H. Andresen became the President of the Wanderers Club (1914 - 1916).

A STUDY OF CALIFORNIA

Over the next two years, the club directed their attention to the study of America. According to The Wanderers Club program for August 1914 - June 1915, the subject of study was titled "A Study of California." The following short mention that appeared in the San Jose Mercury Herald presents the varied subjects discussed during the gathering.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas Oct. 24. [1914]. The Wanderers met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. Ben Graves. The program included some interesting papers on early California history. It was as follows: "The Birth, Growth and Tragedy of Capistrano," by Miss Emma Hawkins, "Literature of the Spanish and Mexican Eras," by Miss Louise Holbrook; "Industries of the Indians," Mrs. W. P. Austin; "Architecture of the Missions," Mrs. J. E. Steinbeck.

The club chose Mrs. J. H. Andresen, Mrs. C. J. Whisman and Dr. H. T. Crabtree as representatives to the State Federation's convention to be held in Pacific Grove.¹⁵

Another short mention appeared in the San Jose Mercury Herald the following month outlining the subjects related to California discussed during the Wednesday gathering.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas. Nov. 22. [1914] The Wanderers met at the home of Mrs. W. P. Austin Wednesday evening and were delightfully entertained. The program was as follows: "General Sherman in California," Mrs. C. J. Whisman; "Military Governors and Government," Miss Ruth Abbott; "The Donner Party," Mrs. R. L. Porter; "The First Constitutional Convention," Miss Ora Cupp; "El Camino Real," Miss Evelyn Mason; "The Discovery of San Francisco Bay and the Founding of the Mission, the Presidio and the Pueblo," Mrs. Jennie Garrigues.¹⁶

Several months later, the following paragraphs appeared in San Jose Mercury Herald describing multi-media program organized by the Wanderers related to the famous book *Picturesque California*. This book was inspired by a previous publication

Picturesque America, which compared and contrasted the wilderness of America with the manicured gardens of Northern Europe.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Jan. 16. [1915] The Wanderers and their friends gathered at the high school assembly hall Wednesday evening and enjoyed an excellent program, the subject being "Picturesque California." Nearly 150 slides were thrown on the screen by V. A. Porter, with a descriptive talk by Mrs. R. Wheeler.

The first of the program was devoted to California waterways, their use and abuse. For the sake of contrast a number of European views were shown. The second set of pictures was confined to California Occasional poems by California authors, applicable to the pictures, were read by Mrs. Wheeler.

A short musical program was given during intermission. Mrs. E. Sybrandt sang two songs composed of Berkeley, the words of Charles Keiler, a native son. The songs were "A Don from Acapulco," and "The Song of a Thrush." Mrs. Edith French, at the piano, interpreted a group of four compositions by Albert Elkus, a Californian. They were "March," "Baracolle," "Idyll" and "Sketch."

The high school orchestra, under the leadership of H. L. French, played several selections that were greatly enjoyed by all.¹⁷

Several months later, the following paragraphs appeared in San Jose Mercury Herald describing yet another Wanderers meeting with the subject of California. This particular gathering intertwined politics with biology and poetry. Beyond the subjects discussed, one recognizes that Anne Hadden, librarian for the Monterey County Free Libraries, had become an active member of the Wanderers Club.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, April 10. [1915] The Wanderers met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. J. A. Armstrong and resumed the study of California history, a subject that has been under consideration for several months. Instructive papers and selections from the works of California authors comprised the program, which was as follows" The Constitution of 1879," Mrs. H. C. Murphy; "Political events After the Adoption of the Constitution," Miss Itylene Lewis; "God of the Open Air," (Henry Van Dyke), Mrs. Richmond Wheeler; "Trees, Flora and Fauna," Miss Anne Hadden "Early Botanists of California," Mrs. Carrie Striening; "The Madrone," (Bret Hart), Miss Ora Cupp.¹⁸

A STUDY OF AMERICA

According to The Wanderers Club Program for August 1915 - June 1916, the subject of study was titled "A Study of America." A short mention in the San Jose Mercury Herald recognizes Olive Steinbeck's level of participation with the Wanderers Club. In addition, the article allows one to recognize the wide range of topics presented during club meetings.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Oct. 23 [1915] - A Varied Program: The Wanderers met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. Ashley Walker, Mrs. J. E. Steinbeck was appointed to represent the club on the executive board that had been organized in Pacific Grove for the purpose of preparing for the next state convention of the Federated Women's clubs. Mrs. C. J. Whisman was made an honorary member of the club.

The program for the evening was as follows, “Commerce of the United States, Foreign and Domestic, Chief Exports and Imports,” Mrs. L. E. Kilkenny; “The Great Mississippi Valley,” Mrs. G. T. Faulkner; “Important Inventions, Mrs. R. L. Porter; “Who Reads an American Book?” Mrs. C. J. Wheeler; “Early Art, Painting to 1828, Sculpture to 1876,” Mrs. O. Bardin; “Present Day France on the St. Lawrence River,” Miss Cupp.¹⁹

As reported in the San Jose Mercury Herald, during the winter of 1916 the Wanderers club discussed the nation’s southern states. As often was the case with the gathering, this meeting included the cultural aspects of music and poetry of the region under study. During this gathering on the subject of southern states, the cultural arts of the African-American community were explored.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Jan 8. [1916] The old south was the subject of the Wanderers at the regular meeting Wednesday evening. Miss Ora Cupp gave a personal account of a trip she had taken through the south.

“The Economic Reasons for the Failure of the Southern Confederacy” was the subject of a paper read by Mrs. J. A. Armstrong, in which she showed the many problems that confronted the south at the time of the war. Popular plantation melodies were given on the Victrola and some of the poems of the negro poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, were read by Miss Cupp, concluding the program.²⁰

Several months later the San Jose Mercury Herald published the following short mention of a Wanderers Club meeting. With their study of America winding toward

completion, the subject presented emphasized American art and beauty of the American West.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, March 18, [1916] American art was the subject taken up by the Wanderers at the home of Mrs. John Parker Wednesday evening. The paintings in America from 1878 to 1915 was taken up by Miss Julia Zemon, while Miss Anne Hadden told of the American painters, Chase, Whistler and Sargent. The American paintings in the Palace of Fine Arts at the exposition was the subject of a paper read by Miss Emma Hawkins. Mrs. Faulkner gave a description of the beauties of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado.²¹

Delegates Elected by Salinas Clubwomen Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, April 8, [1916]. Delegates to the state convention of Federated Women's clubs, which will be held at Del Monte, were elected Wednesday evening by the Wanderers. The delegates are Miss Beatrice Porter and Mrs. J. E. Steinbeck, with Mrs. J. A. Armstrong and Mrs. John Parker alternates. An Interesting Report Of The Recent District Convention At San Jose Was Given By Mrs. R. Wheeler. Mrs. G. Lacey Read A Paper On The "Education In The United States" "American Women In History" Was The Subject Of Mrs. Robert Warnock, And Mrs. Wheeler Spoke On "Women In Literature."

Miss M. A. Field of Monterey was elected to membership in the Wanderers. San Jose Mercury News, published as San Jose Mercury Herald (San Jose, California) • 04-09-1916

A STUDY OF SOUTH AMERICA

Miss Beatrice Porter (Mrs. D. B. Wylie) served as the next president of the Wanderers Club from 1916-1918. According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1916 – June 1917, the subject of study was titled “A Study of South America.”

The following short mention published in the Mercury Herald outlines the subjects discussed at a gathering in late October 1916.

*Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Oct. 20 [1916] - Last evening the Wanderers met at the home of Mrs. Richmond Wheeler. Ancient and modern Bolivia was studies. The papers were very interesting and instructive. The program was as follows: Bolivia, Historic Retrospect,” Miss Lewis; “La Paz, the Sunken City,” Miss Petersen; “The Ayamara Indian,” Mrs. Kalar; “Life in Bolivia today,” Miss Hadden.*²²

A month later the San Jose Mercury Herald printed the following mention of a Wanderers Club’s study of South America.

*Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Nov. 3 [1916] – The Wanderers met Wednesday night at the home of Miss Holbrook. The papers were: “Chile – Its History,” Mrs. Steinbeck; “Public Institutions and Education in South America,” Mrs. Wheeler. India will be the next country studied in the club.*²³

A STUDY OF INDIA

According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1917 - June 1918, the subject of study was the nation of "India." From the San Jose Mercury Herald, one is provided a glimpse of the some of the papers presented during the year.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Sept. 29. [1917] Wanderers Study India. The Wanderers met at the home of Mrs. John Parker Wednesday evening and began their study of India. The following papers were given: "Castes and Their Effect on the Hindu Social System," Mrs. J. F. Wiley; History of India From 1600 to Warren Hastings," Mrs. John Parker; "Sanskrit Literature," Mrs. J. H. Andresen.²⁴

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, Nov. 23. [1917] The Wanderers met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. J. E. Steinbeck and continued their study of India. Papers were read as follows "History Since Warren Hastings," Mrs. L. E. Kilkenny, "The Princes of India," Mrs. Victor Porter; "Agre and the Taj Majal," Mrs. J. D. Kalar.²⁵

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, April 20. [1918] The Wanderers met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. Victor Porter. The following program was given "Rangoon," Mrs. B. Miller; "Oriental Rugs," Miss Louise Holbrook; "King Thibaw and His Fantastic Palaces," Mrs. J. K. Garrigus, "The Natural Productions of India," Mrs. Ora Hayman.²⁶

The Salinas Women's Civic Club and the Wanderers Club were closely associated during first decades of the twentieth century. Such a claim is supported by the fact that a third of the Wanderers Club were also members of the Civic Club. In 1917, the Civic Club was assisted by the Wanderers hosting the president of the Francisco District of California Federation of Women's Clubs. During the meeting there was a discussion of the "legislation" the clubs were in favor of supporting.

Salinas, March 16. Club - Women Entertain the District President- Mrs. Frank Fredericks Guest of Salinas Civic Club and the Wanderers.

Special to the Mercury Herald. Salinas, March 16. [1917]. At 12:30 last Saturday the Civic club, assisted by the Wanderers, gave a luncheon in honor of Mrs. Frank Fredericks of San Francisco, district president of the California Federation of Women's clubs. Not only was Salinas largely presented at the delightful function, but Monterey, Pacific Grove, King City, Watsonville and Hollister sent delegations to the reception.

Mrs. R. Wheeler, as president of the Civic club, and on its behalf, made the address of welcome. She was followed by Mrs. Garrigus, speaking for the Wanderers, and Mrs. Andresen, chairman of the Landmarks Preservation society. Speeches were also made by Mrs. Gaines and Mrs. Palmer of Pacific Grove, Mrs. Parker of Monterey, Mrs Tyler of King City, Mrs. Litchfield of Watsonville, and Mrs Powell of Hollister. The guest of honor, Mrs. Fredericks, spoke on the legislation that the clubs are to endorse. The speaking was proceeded by a musical program. ²⁷

Next to serve as President was Mrs. JT Riley from 1918-1919.²⁸ According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1918 - June 1919, the subject of study was “America and the World War.”

The year 1919 saw the heartfelt passing of the Wanderers first and longtime president, Mrs. Richmond Wheeler. To show their respect, the Wanderers committee prepared the following resolution in her memory. *Salinas. - Resolutions of respect to the memory of the late Mrs. Richmond Wheeler have been adopted by the Wanderers, a local club, at the home of Mrs. L. H. Garrigues. The committee preparing the resolutions consisted of Anna Gell Andresen, Olive Steinbeck, Amanda Parker, Carrie Striening and Jennie K. Garrigus. Mrs. Wheeler had been the first president of the Wanderers and was also prominently known in State club circles.*²⁹

During August 1919 - June 1920, the chosen subject of study for the Wanderers Study Club was the country of Portugal.

*The Wanderers continued their study of Portuguese history art and literature at a meeting held Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. John Parker. Miss Armstrong discussed the alliance of Great Britain and Portugal. Mrs. John E Steinbeck read a paper on Portugal of the Future and Mrs. Parker gave an illuminating account of a trip through Oporto and other Portuguese cities.*³⁰

According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1920 - June 1921, the subject of study was “A Study of Mexico”” According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1921- June 1922, the subject of study was “A Study of Canada”;” According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1922 - June 1923, the subject of study was

“A Study of China.” According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1923 - June 1924, the subject of study was “A Study of Japan”; According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1924 - June 1925, the subject of study was “A Study of Norway and Sweden” According to The Wanderers Club Program, for August 1925 - June 1926, the subject of study was “A Study of Africa”

THE WANDERERS’ AND IMMIGRATION

The Salinas Wanderers Study Club provided the members with an appreciation for the history, art, and culture of each country chosen for study. Several of these countries represented the origin of many of the Wanderers families, such as the study of Germany, France, Great Britain and Ireland. Other countries represented the origin of other immigrants settling in Monterey County, not of Northern European descent; Southern Europe (Portugal, Italy), Mexico, China, Japan, and India.

Those immigrants to California not of Northern European decent were often met with scorn, intimidation, and the threat of deportation. The first immigrants subjected to prejudice were the Chinese, whom, from the time of their arrival during the Gold Rush, experienced discrimination, overt racism, and exclusion with the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Before the twentieth century, the majority of the field workers in the Salinas Valley were the Chinese. The Chinese Exclusion Act put an end to Chinese immigration, the Japanese (and, to a lesser degree, Korean, Filipino, and Hindu) laborers were next to arrive and working the fields.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century, several hundred thousand Japanese (and other Asians) immigrated to the U.S.,

settling primarily in California. Between 1900 and 1910, the Japanese were the dominant field workers of the Salinas Valley, many working Claus Spreckels' extensive sugar beet fields. Shortly after their arrival, in April of 1900, several newspaper articles appeared in the San Francisco Call inflating the threat of Japanese immigrants to America and describing their lack of admirable qualities.¹

Lobbyists from California quickly directed their attention toward drafting a bill for excluding these immigrants from entering the U.S. As early as 1903, members of U.S. Congress proposed a Japanese Exclusion Bill.² In May 1905, a large meeting was held in San Francisco, California to launch the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League.³ The Immigration Act of 1907 between the U. S. and Japan ended the immigration of Japanese, which swiftly diminished the numbers working the fields.

Between 1907 and 1920, approximately 6,400 Hindu's from India immigrated to the United States. The majority settled in California, finding work in the agricultural fields. The arrival of just a few of Hindu's resulted in anti-immigration hysteria, exacerbated with editorials and essays published in newspapers and popular periodicals of the day. An article that appeared in the April 1908 issue of *Overland Monthly* titled *The West and the Hindu Invasion*.⁴ An essay was published in 1910 in the journal, *The Forum*, titled "*A Tide of Turbans*" received national attention. An editorial that appeared in the February 1, 1910 issue of the San Francisco Call titled "*Turn Back The Hindu invasion*" further inflaming the anti-immigration sentiment.

In 1913 California enacted the Alien Land Law, which further discouraged Asian and other non-desirable immigrants from settling in the U.S. This law disproportionately

impacted the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian immigrant farmers in California by limiting their ability to own land or entering into leases longer than three years.

By 1916 U.S. Congress was proposing a Japanese Exclusion Act similar to that of the Chinese.⁶ There was eventually passed the Immigration Act of 1924 that included the Asian Exclusion Act.

During the Presidency of Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929), the Immigration Act of 1924 was enacted, which outright banned the immigration of both Arabs and Asians. Also referred to as the Johnson-Reed Act, this legislation restricted the number of immigrants from a given country to two percent of the number of residents from that same country already living in the United States. The percentage quotas enacted were strongly biased towards immigrants from North-Western Europe as opposed to those from South-Eastern Europe. As a result, 87% of immigration visa permits went to immigrants from Britain, Germany, Ireland, and Scandinavia. The law completely excluded immigrants from Asia.