

CALIFORNIAN

California History Center
& Foundation

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

Mystery of the "Golden Spur"



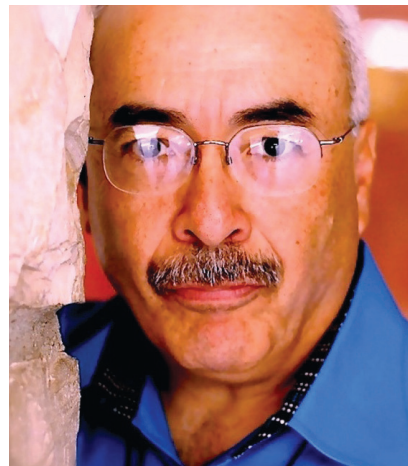
SAVE THE DATE!



Please mark your calendars for our annual “Taste of History” fundraising event to benefit the California History Center and the Euphrat Museum of Art.

Join us on Saturday, November 18, 2017 in the afternoon at the Visual and Performing Arts Center, De Anza College, to enjoy hors d’oeuvres, wine tasting, and a presentation by special guest, Juan Felipe Herrera, 21st Poet Laureate of the United States (2015-2017) as well as a Poet Laureate for California (2012 – 2014). Juan will help us celebrate De Anza College’s 50th anniversary!

Contact Tom Izu for more information – izutom@deanza.edu



Spring Calendar

APRIL

10 Classes begin

MAY

- 8** "Song of the Stubborn One Thousand" with Peter Shapiro, 10:30 – 11:45 am Hinson Campus Center, Conference Rooms A & B
- 10** Intricacies of Urban Planning, lecture, 6:30 pm, CHC (class did not meet all quarter)
- 13** Intricacies of Urban Planning, field study 9am – 5pm
- 17** Intricacies of Urban Planning, lecture, 6:30pm, CHC
- 20** Intricacies of Urban Planning field study, 9am – 5pm
- 27–29** Memorial Day Weekend



Presidential Medal of Freedom winner Sylvia Mendez. In 1946, Mendez's family brought legal proceedings leading to end of de jure public school segregation in California.

JUNE

- 1** "Femme Space: A Reclamation Project," exhibit opens, CHC
- Mendez vs. Westminster School District, lecture, 6:30pm, CHC
- 3** Mendez v. Westminster School District, field study 9 am – 5:30pm
- 8** Mendez vs. Westminster School District, lecture, 6:30pm, CHC
- 10** Mendez v. Westminster School District, field study, 9am – 5:30pm
- 30** Last day of finals
- "Femme Space" exhibit closes



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

21250 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA (408) 864-8712
 Web: www.DeAnza.edu/CalifHistory

Trianon Building Hours:
 Tuesday through Thursday 9:30am to noon and 1-4pm
 or call for an appointment.

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Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The value of goods received as a benefit of membership must be deducted from the amount of all contributions claimed as a deduction. CHCF members receive 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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Director's Report



Tom Izu

Unraveling history

I have never thought of myself as a deep and disciplined thinker of the academic variety. Instead I tend to be a scholar of the school of aphorisms, adages, and popular slogans, having learned much by hanging about and trying to make sense of things that sound pretty good.

For example, if you are in the business of promoting history, you have heard and perhaps used in some form or another the many popular dictums attesting to the importance of learning lessons from it, including one of the most famous attributed to philosopher George Santayana: “Those who cannot

remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” It has inspired many variations, including one that probably was written by a bitter and vengeful high school history teacher threatening an unruly class with summer school: “Those who do not read history are doomed to repeat it.”

But I have also noted that there have been many criticisms over the years regarding the essential quality of this aphorism as well as humorous quips aimed at it, including one from Tom Toro, a New Yorker cartoonist who wrote: “Those who don’t study history are doomed to repeat it. Yet those who do study history are doomed to stand by helplessly while everyone else repeats it.”

While I do think most people inspired by the concept of social progress through education agree with the spirit of this famous saying and its many

variants, there is still something misleading about it that doesn’t fit with the other aphorisms I have been schooled in. I am especially referring to the ones that deal with change such as, “You cannot step in the same river twice” (Heraclitus), or “the only thing that doesn’t change is change itself.” If these are true, then how can you repeat anything, regardless of whether you have or haven’t completed your history homework for tomorrow’s class when you cannot step into the same class twice? Perhaps the concept is a little more

complicated and not so easy to turn into a lesson after all?

Understanding this might help to explain why there seem to be many learned individuals who ostensibly have read and learned from history and done their homework, but still go right on repeating all of the same evident mistakes anyway. Perhaps, instead of thinking about conflicting aphorisms, we should look at the nature of history itself: what if the history we think is over, isn’t really over yet; that these individuals aren’t really repeating anything, they are just locked into a loop they can’t get out of regardless of how much knowledge to the contrary seems to be floating about? Perhaps history itself, isn’t really through with them (or us), and that’s the issue.

This brings me to another school I am not a graduate of due to privileges I have enjoyed throughout my earlier years, but one I have learned from many of its *summa cum laude* graduates, including relatives, mentors, and friends. I am speaking of the infamous “school of hard knocks,” “university of the streets,” or having wisdom due to the “still being alive” school. This could encompass its many extension and certificate programs including surviving the Great Depression, surviving World War II, surviving white supremacy while not being white, and various other ones too numerous to mention.

What I gather from these individuals and others like them, is that much of history we like to think of as being over with, and done and gone, is really not done or gone but is still alive in us, unresolved, working its way through our system, now and then erupting with emotions, or just seething inside waiting for some sort of resolution. Perhaps this explains why some of us strike out at things blindly, or at other times act with such seemingly transcendent compassion.

Here is a quote that is not yet an aphorism, but I believe it will spur the creation of many in the near future. It is attributed to the great writer and public intellectual, the late James Baldwin, by way of a recent documentary film, *I Am Not Your Negro*.

“History is not the past, it is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history. If we pretend otherwise we literally are criminals.”

History – real history of the most intimate type – is actually contained within each of us and continues to live through what we say, do, think, and act. We, as James Baldwin states,

continued on page 17

I’ve always darted about in the darkness of history intent on trying to shed some light. In my mind’s eye, I see it like a piece of woven fabric where one episode in history weaves in and out of others. I like to learn things from that woven fabric which aren’t written down in books. And that has all led to a fantastic result.

– Mr. Shigeaki Mori, amateur Japanese historian, survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, from the documentary film, *Paper Lanterns*

Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative

CHC collaborates on grant with Japanese American Museum of San José

“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

The Japanese American Museum of San José (JAMsj) has been awarded a \$15,000 grant by the California Civil Liberties Public Education program operated by the California State Library.

The funds will support a collaborative project joining California History Center with JAMsj to study lessons learned from the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans and apply them to both historical and contemporary incidents and issues affecting several San José area communities connected to the local Japantown area.

CHC Executive Director Tom Izu, who will serve as the program lead for the project, explained, “Basically, we want to help the public see similar patterns and consequences when scapegoating, fear and hate mongering are used against immigrant communities and the resulting impact on civil liberties and rights. We then want to apply this historical understanding to the current situation fac-

ing immigrants, including Muslim Americans now.”

Besides Japanese American history, the project will use the experience of San José area Chinese Americans (1882 “Chinese Exclusion Act” and the burning of San José Chinatown) and Mexican Americans (“Repatriation” of the 1930s and mass deportations) documented through video recorded interviews of historians and hosted public educational forums. In addition, the local Muslim American community and other immigrants groups facing current incidents of profiling and scapegoating will participate in discussions and a final public forum.

For more information about the project, “Applying Civil Liberties Lessons Learned from the World War II Incarceration of Japanese Americans: Making Connections through Community Conversations,” contact Tom Izu, izutom@deanza.edu or Steve Fugita, Japanese American Museum of San Jose, mail@jamsj.org

New Civil Liberties Scholarship for De Anza Students

The California History Center is delighted to announce the creation of a new scholarship opportunity for De Anza College students, the Johnson TriDom Foundation and CHC Civil Liberties Scholarship. Beginning Fall Quarter 2017, the

Johnson TriDom Foundation will collaborate with the California History Center Foundation Board of Trustees to select students demonstrating exemplary potential to pursue research and educational efforts in furthering the public’s understanding and appreciation of civil liberties as based upon the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Successful candidates will be De Anza students

in good standing, with a minimum 3.0 GPA, who have successfully completed a civil liberties education related project. The projects can be in various formats, including oral history interviews, research papers, and video or audio podcast style productions, focusing on the Santa Clara Valley. The scholarship will be administered through the College’s Financial Aid office.

“We wish to thank CHC Board of Trustees member Cecilie Vaughters-Johnson who made this scholarship possible through the Johnson TriDom Foundation, stated Tom Izu, Executive Director of CHC. It fits well with our Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative since one of its goals is to contribute new materials to our library/archives as well encouraging library/archives utilization in regard to civil liberties work. We look forward to finding students with the aptitude, interest, and creativity to help further our mission while also preparing themselves for future leadership work in this most important area,” added Izu.

For more information about the scholarship, contact Tom Izu at izutom@deanza.edu.



Pictured are Robert Johnson and Cecilie Vaughters-Johnson of The Johnson Tri-Dom Foundation.



MYSTERY OF THE “GOLDEN SPUR”

by Anwar Ali-Ahmad

The sun glimmers in your eyes as you hang your head out of the interurban car to get a breath of the chaparral winds. Your hometown of Palo Alto seems practically in another country by this point. You get off at your stop – the Cupertino station – and make your way inside the store to buy yourself a pop and let its crispness refresh you. The car rolls onward to the Tantau stop as you loiter, making note of its electrical humming. This is Santa Clara County in 1910, and yes, you were just on a railway heading down Stevens Creek Road.

A century passes and whatever remnants are left of the railway have been drowned years ago by swathes of asphalt. Smothered by the road, the railway can no longer speak for itself, but I can speak for it. Let’s honor it by telling its story, starting with its genesis in the general history of railways in the San Francisco Bay Area.

About the author: Anwar Ali-Ahmad is a student at De Anza College with the goal of transferring to a University of California this fall as a computer science and/or engineering major. Although an aspiring polymath, his two greatest passions in life are history and technology. He discovered the California History Center last spring and has been a fanatical fan of it since: the people behind it, the resource it is, and even the building it resides in. Here at the Center, we are constantly learning, unmasking new aspects of local history, and hopping between subjects. A couple of months ago, we made a discovery about an antiquated local railway, the Peninsular Railway: there was a stop in Cupertino seldom mentioned. It’s so obscure that only two sources for it could be found. Anwar, excited to do pretty much anything, and hungry for a solid project to do, is presented with this discovery, and to this day is still researching it. However, he has quite the story to tell about what he’s learned along the way, and about the process of researching in general.

Heralded with a 36-gun salute, the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad line to San José was completed in January 1864 (a good omen for war-anxious locals at the time) and acquired by Southern Pacific in 1868. Railways in the Bay Area continued to develop, progressing from cargo haulers to local interurbans. After a series of small, failed, or flat-out irrelevant railways lost in battles of ownership, the first electric overhead interurban railway was launched in 1889. An early twentieth century interurban transit system, nicknamed the Key System, served the East Bay but never realized plans to reach San José and the blossoming county to the south. There was a series of interurban railways in the South Bay built in the first five years of the 20th century, most notably the San Jose-Los Gatos Interurban Railway and the Santa Clara Interurban. On March 5, 1910, the Peninsular Railway, a charter project of the large Southern Pacific Company, was finally opened five years after beginning construction. The entire Peninsular Railway company itself was actually a merger of several Santa Clara County interurban systems following acquisitions by the monolithic Southern Pacific. The Peninsular would eventually stretch tracks from Alum Rock Park to San José, Los Gatos, Saratoga, Los Altos, Palo Alto, Stanford, and the southern edge of San Mateo County.

The first ride wasn't even on the official opening day, it actually occurred on February 26, 1910, when a party travelled from Los Altos to Palo Alto. The party was greeted by the Palo Altans with a luncheon, an excuse for indulging in sandwiches and cigars. The opening day, even more grandiose, offered reception celebrations at every stop between San José and Palo Alto. The hype people felt was real, rumors already had spread about extending the railway even further. In a matter of days after the railway was launched, local businesses around Palo Alto reported increased trade.

After 25 years of usage, the railway officially disintegrated on June 12, 1935, due to a mixture of financial troubles, from war and economic depression as well as pressure from the automobile and its beneficiaries.

I wouldn't even have known that there was an interurban

Palo Alto - 50c Round Trip - San Jose

30-Ride Commutation Books
Carry your Friends on this Ticket
Limited only to Number of
Coupons in Ticket

RATES PER RIDE
San Jose and Los Gatos - 16c
San Jose and Saratoga - 13c
San Jose and Campbell - 10c
Corresponding Reductions between all Points

MAP
OF THE LINES OF
PENINSULAR RAILWAY COMPANY
IN
SANTA CLARA VALLEY, CAL.
OPERATED BY SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY

SIGHT-SEEING TROLLEY TRIPS
BLOSSOM TROLLEY TRIP--65 miles, personally conducted, \$1.00. Seeing San Jose, Los Gatos, Saratoga and Stanford University
LOOP TRIP--28 miles, 50c. Seeing San Jose, Saratoga and Los Gatos.
ALUM ROCK CANYON TRIP--20c. Seeing Alum Rock Park and eastern foothills.
Information at Peninsular Railway Co., 143 South Market St., Phone San Jose 404.

railway in the South Bay had our librarian Lisa Christiansen not one day proposed a project about it. She presented me with a map in our own collection, then with one she found on the Cupertino Historical Museum website. On the maps lay a stop named "Golden", or the "Golden Spur." It appeared to lie between the Cupertino and Monta Vista stops on Stevens Creek Road, a remarkable detail considering De Anza College is now most of what lies in this small region. So, not only might there be a train stop of which few records exist, it's also quite literally in our neighborhood; I could walk to where the stop might have been in-between classes. I felt a sudden draft in the room, accompanied by a breeze of excitement – I've found a new project!

Luckily, per our name, the *California History Center*, Lisa and I already had a pool of resources to draw from regarding local history. While we couldn't seem to find anything more naming the Golden Spur, we found clues to guide us. We turned to as many maps we own as possible, a fun though la-

Route map for
November 10, 1917
schedule.



Views of Cupertino Store, with Peninsular Railway tracks in front, and, years later, with the remnant Peninsular Railway stop in foreground.

borious task. There's one problem though: the maps needed to be old enough, but not too old, and to show public transportation routes. The earliest maps of Cupertino drew lines between family lands. Not to mention there just wasn't that much *stuff* in 19th to early 20th century Cupertino—which wasn't even incorporated until 1955 in the first place. Regardless, the most probable location of the stop is so close to campus that it might even be confirmed by survey maps of the campus property itself, back (ca. 1910) when it was an orchard estate belonging to Harriett Pullman Carolan. The 1919 survey map of the property during this period of ownership simply named it “the Carolan Tract.” We scanned this map, and to our luck we found a clue amongst clues: in the top-left region of the estate there lay a cottage beside the road. Back in the day, it was not uncommon for wealthy estate owners to have an “intake room,” where guests would arrive and then be escorted onto the property. With this in mind, it wouldn't be out of the realm of possibility for the location of the intake to be in front of the

train stop. I felt so confident in this possible location that I made it my final research objective. After using our resources to their practical extent, I looked outwards to more sources.

First, I ventured out to the archives of Santa Clara University. This was my very first time actually going out into the world to visit an archive, and the first time I had a valid reason to do so. Before visiting an archive, it is important that you ask the archivists if the archives actually has what you're looking for, and then give them some time to prepare said resources for your research visit there. Prior to heading there, I shot off an email to the managing archivist, Sheila Conway, and was then contacted by graduate student Jonathan Homrighausen, who confirmed my appointment there. I arrived a solid hour late due to traffic, which really didn't help considering I scheduled the appointment in the last two hours of business. I surrendered my luggage for security reasons, and carefully looked into the box of material compiled for me. Unfortunately, I couldn't find anything about the railway, although I might've learned a little too much about the economy of 19th century Santa Clara Valley from the mass of advertisement brochures. As I learned that day, Sheila was not kidding when she said they don't have much on local history, but if you want to learn about quite literally anything to do with Catholicism, this is the local archive for you. So, I was forced to consider the next target for my research, and in so doing I became aware that the Santa Clara County Archives might have some useful material. I made a call, sent out an email about my project, and procured a date for visiting.

Standing near San José's Japantown is a great building – a monolith of authority, of might, and some might say of excess bureaucracy – towering above the region: the Santa Clara County government building. Deep in this contemporary citadel lies a very important, yet rather obscure, resource: the county archives. Naturally, every county has an extensive archive, so it's a very sound option to utilize if your research project is scoped within the county. I called in, seeking any material related to my research project. The very kind, helpful lady on the other end of the call referred me to the Office of the Surveyor for their archives as it seems that I really just needed to see some old maps.

One day after school, I made my campaign to county, the bitter air of Californian autumn following me as I nervously approached the building. I had never been there before and the authoritative atmosphere was a tad intimidating with watchful government eyes everywhere. It didn't help that county jail was next door. After some confusion as to where the office of

The Hindoo-German Conspiracy:

Aspiration vs. Hegemony

A series of articles by Suruchi Mohan

THE GADAR NEWSPAPER

As regards the work of The Hindustan Gadar, there has never been any secret. It is published by the Hindu residents of the United States, and is an uncompromising advocate of complete political independence and liberty for India.

—Ram Chandra, Editor *The Hindustan Gadar*,
Letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, July 8, 1915.

On April 7, 1917, the morning after the United States declared war on Germany, federal agents arrested five Hindoos in San Francisco. These men had been under surveillance by detectives on the payroll of the British government. Now they were charged with conspiring with Germans to overthrow British rule in India. Three months later, they were five among the 105 Hindoos, Germans, and Americans indicted by a federal grand jury in San Francisco. Then, in November, the trial started in federal court, lasting five months.

The events leading up to the trial had been building up for a few years. In making the case against the defendants, the U.S. government argued that Hindoos and Germans in the United States had conspired to bring about a revolt in an attempt to overthrow the British colonial government in India.



San Francisco Chronicle, March 27, 1914

EDITOR'S NOTE—Frequent readers of Californian will be familiar with the work of this month's author, Suruchi Mohan. In the articles presented here, the State of California, the West Coast of the Americas, and lands beyond the Pacific Ocean, provide the stage for an international intrigue. The time is the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century. World War I is raging and the consequences of centuries of imperialism, colonialism, and feudalism, and their attendant oppressions, are blatantly apparent. Mohan's story focuses on the use, by immigrants to the United States from India, of an opportune moment to attempt to undermine British control of their home country.

In California, the Indian immigrant population represents several faiths, primarily Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim.

Suruchi Mohan's two-part article begins with discussions of the pro-revolution newspaper published in San Francisco, conspiracies to run guns across the Pacific Ocean, and one of many court cases resulting from the anti-British campaign. "Hindoo-German Conspiracy..." will conclude in our Fall 2017 issue.

Mohan, a native of India, encountered this story incidentally during a docent-led tour of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco after which she jumped into a deep sea of research. These articles are the result.

Please read Suruchi Mohan's contributions to this website: United States World War I Centennial Commission, Vande Mataram, <http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/vande-mataram-home.html>

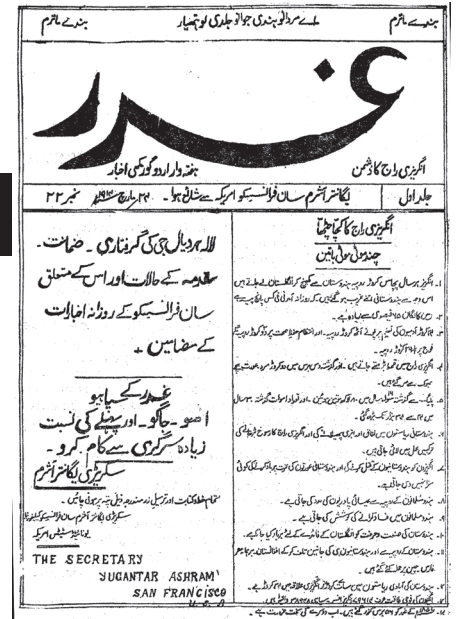
It mattered since the U.S. and British governments enjoyed good relations with one another. Secondly, prosecutors pointed to a gun running operation that was intended to supply arms to Indian rebels who wanted to come out from under the yoke of the British. In this segment, I will write about how Indians tried to foment revolution from thousands of miles away.

The Paper

The movement in the West to overthrow the British began in 1911, when Har Dayal came to the United States. An Indian scholar at Oxford University, he gave up his scholarship to protest British rule and returned to India only to get into trouble with the British government in India on an unrelated issue. He left India for the United States and secured a job at Stanford University teaching Indian philosophy. But Har Dayal's revolutionary zeal got him into trouble with the university when he openly expressed anarchist views and overplayed his connection with the university. Active politically, Har Dayal organized Indians on the West Coast into the Hindoo Pacific Coast Association, also known as the Gadar Revolutionary Party.

A note on the use of the word *Hindoo*: it was a term of derogation used to refer to South Asians, but was also a misnomer as the people who participated in the freedom struggle for India subscribed to many different religious beliefs, not just Hinduism. Although in the press from the time the case is known as the Hindoo-German Conspiracy Trial, I will use the term *Indian*, which reflects more accurately the makeup of the members of the Gadar party.

Starting on November 1, 1913, the Gadar party put out a weekly paper called *Gadar*, meaning revolt, using a small hand press. The paper first came out in Urdu, then Gurmukhi, a language spoken in part of the northwest in India. Later, the paper was sometimes also published in Gujarati, Hindi, Pashto, Bengali, English, German, French and others. "No single society in India or even ten of them, published so many newspapers in various dialects, for in India or abroad no publishing house has, within the last four years, published



Hindustan Gadar article detailing arrest of Lala Har Dayal, late March 1914.

so many and such excellent books which pierce the mind of masses and give them both enlightenment and enthusiasm, and which remain up to this day unanswered by the English Government,”¹ wrote Ram Chandra.

The office of the paper was known as the Yugantar Ashram, after Buddhist rest houses that provided shelter to the weary. In addition to the printing press, it also housed workers who worked at the Ashram and Indian visitors to San Francisco.

But the course of the paper had not run smoothly since its inception. In March 1914, the U.S. government arrested Har Dayal for his activities and held him for deportation. If deported, the British government in India would have charged him with sedition, punishable by death. Later, after his friends posted bail for him, the U.S. government released him. The following month, however, he jumped bail and fled the U.S., seeking shelter in Switzerland. From there he went on to Berlin to work with the Germans for India’s independence.

Before he’d left, Har Dayal had anointed Ram Chandra as the editor of the newspaper that he had started.

Ram Chandra continued his mentor’s work with the help of two other Indians, Bhagwan Singh and Maulvi Barkatullah, who tried to recruit revolutionaries on the West Coast by giving readers information on the harshness of British rule in India. Other Indians also helped out with the press that printed not just the newspaper but books at their office on Valencia Street in San Francisco.

Since the British government maintained an iron grip on the press in India, revolutionary papers were the only way to disseminate information that contradicted the government’s take on events. For example, the *Gadar* issue of August 14, 1914 says, “News has reached that the British intend sending Indian troops to fight the Germans in order to save their white soldiers...When we will be told that Indian Sepoys are fighting the Germans in order to keep India in slavery. Look and understand, beloved brethren; even in Europe the British save themselves and get the Indians slain.”²

And from the same issue, “Oh Indians, help the Germans. How and in what manner? In this way. Start mutiny in India...”

Infighting

In January 1917, a split occurred in the party, according to the government’s notes.³ Three men, who were involved at the Ashram – Bhagwan Singh, Santokh Singh, and Ram Singh



Bhai Bhagwan Singh
photographed
circa 1916.

– led a revolt against Ram Chandra, the editor, leading to his ouster.

According to Bhagwan Singh’s diary, translated from a non-Latin language into English, the Council of the Yugantar Ashram asked Ram Chandra to resign from the *Gadar* party because of a lack of transparency in his accounting. They alleged that he had used Ashram money to acquire personal influence.⁴ A new editor was named and Ram Chandra’s name was removed from all accounts. Bhagwan Singh became the head of the new party that came into existence to oppose Ram Chandra.

Ram Chandra now moved from Valencia Street to 5 Wood St. in San Francisco and published a dueling paper of the same name. The many testimonies in the case leave doubt that the charges made by Ram Chandra’s former friends had any merit. They seemed to have been based on jealousy, as the paper was published in Ram Chandra’s name. Bhagwan Singh was a poet and writer himself and may well have resented the recognition that comes from publishing.

A supplement to the *Gadar* issue of April 15, 1917 says, “Bhagwan Singh was a bad character and paid no attention to the Ashram council and the brethren. In the end, driven to desperation we expelled Bhagwan Singh, Santokh Singh, and Ram Singh from the Ashram.”⁵ It is signed by the ‘Public Servants of the Ashram’ and dated March 28, 1917.

In 1917-18, these men played an important role in taking the trial to its unexpected climax.

¹ Hindustan *Gadar*, A Brief History of the *Gadar* Movement, by Ram Chandra, April 10, 1918. Record Group 118, Office of the US Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 10, folder 1a. National Archives at San Francisco.

² Hindustan *Gadar*, August 18, 1914. Record Group 118, Office of the U.S. Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 1, folder 4a. National Archives at San Francisco.

³ Ram Chandra, Record Group 118, Office of the U.S. Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 4, folder 6. National Archives at San Francisco

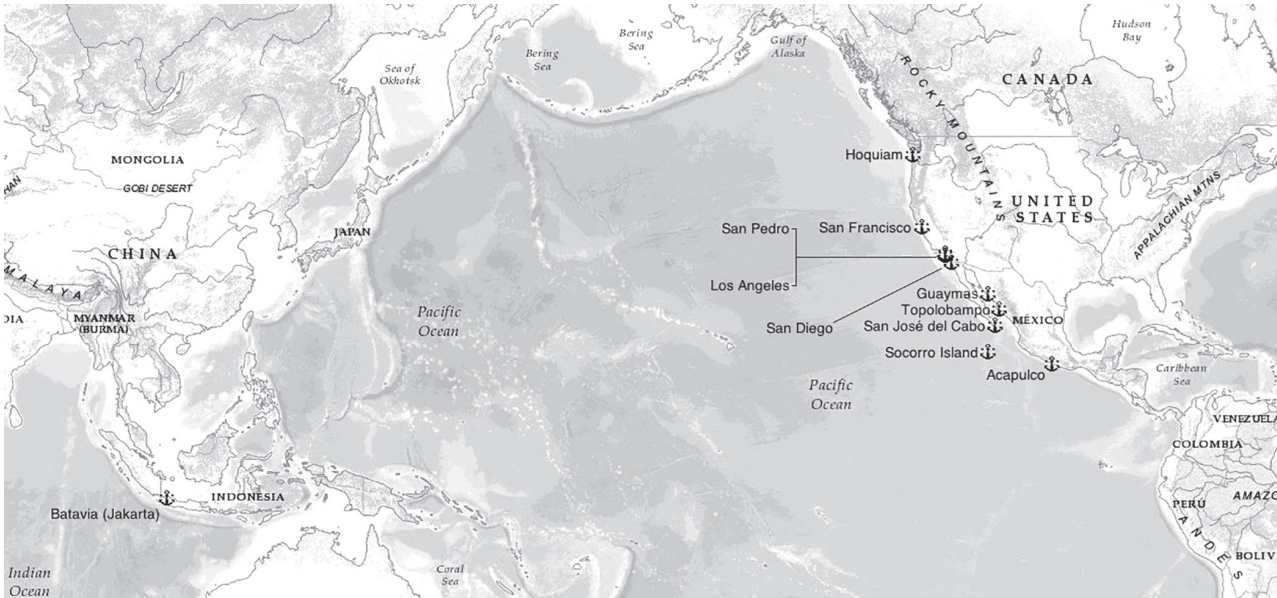
⁴ Bhagwan Singh’s diary, Record Group 118, Office of the U.S. Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 13, folder 5. National Archives at San Francisco.

⁵ *Gadar* extracts, Record Group 21. US District Court, Northern District of California, San Francisco, Criminal case #6133, box 475, folder 2.



Ram Chandra

THE SHIPPING CONSPIRACIES



Map generated by Anwar Ali-Ahmad on May 4, 2017 using Leaflet.js for rendering and map image sourcing provided by arcgisonline.com.

What is known famously as the Hindoo-German Conspiracy Trial is actually a series of cases. Not all of these are related to Indians, derogatively and inaccurately called “Hindoo.” Some cases were directed specifically at the Germans for violating the neutrality laws of the United States by engaging in activities that were designed to harm countries with whom the U.S. was at peace. In some of the cases, Indians were peripherally involved in the activities of the Germans.

In the years leading up to the outbreak of World War I, it was common for German ships to call on U.S. ports. With the declaration of the war, however, the nature of these stops changed. It seemed to the U.S. government that the ships coming into their ports had as their goal the transportation of coal and other provisions, as well as guns, to other ships or ports.

Additionally, the U.S. government charged that Germans were trying to blow up Allied ships on the sea or at different ports. Further, the government accused the Germans of attempting to bomb railway tracks and tunnels in Canada so as to prevent the shipment of goods to the Allied armies. These were the bomb plot cases.

The bulk of these cases were tried in San Francisco, but trials were held in Chicago, New York, and other cities, as well. Going through the newspapers and government documents from the time, it seemed to me as if from 1914 onward the U.S. government was engaged in one criminal lawsuit af-

ter another against the Germans. In bringing indictments in these cases, the government did not spare Americans. Indeed, the trials had quite an international cast of characters.

The Annie Larsen and the Maverick

On March 8, 1915 the *Annie Larsen*, a three-masted schooner, left the port of San Diego for Topolobampo, Mexico, carrying a large consignment of arms. The ship was chartered using a series of cash transactions that passed through several banks, ostensibly to leave a confusing trail.

The schooner carried a shipment, originating in New York, that consisted of 10,000 old-style Springfield rifles in use at the time of the Civil War, the same number of bayonets and cartridge belts, and 3,759 cases of 45-caliber cartridges, approximately 4,000,000 rounds.¹ After clearing customs, the *Annie Larsen* headed to Topolobampo.

But instead of going toward its declared destination, it sailed toward Socorro Island, which lay in the opposite direction from Topolobampo. The ship anchored in Braithwaite Bay and waited. To those on board it became clear that the captain was waiting for another vessel.

However, on April 10, after almost a month, the captain lifted anchor as provisions ran low. The *Annie Larsen* sailed to the Mexican port of Acapulco for supplies, reaching there two weeks later. Almost immediately, the ship turned around for

its return journey to Socorro Island. According to the memorandum, the supercargo, one Walter Henry Page, who seemed to be in command, was in touch with an attaché to the German Consulate in San Francisco.

Meanwhile, the oil tanker *Maverick* sailed from San Pedro, Calif., on April 23, after long delays due to U.S. Customs procedures. After clearing customs, it set sail for San José del Cabo, Mexico. From its stated destination, which it reached the next day, it sailed to Socorro Island arriving at Braithwaite Bay on April 29. Although it waited for three weeks for the *Annie Larsen* to arrive, the two ships did not establish contact. “It is probably true that arriving at Socorro Island a day or two after the “Maverick” had left, she [the *Annie Larsen*] remained there in ignorance of the latter’s movements, and waited for her, until her provisions again ran out.”³ The *Annie Larsen* ended up in Hoquiam, Washington, where its cargo was seized.

The *Maverick* now sailed to within a few miles of San Diego, taking care to avoid American waters. Not able to locate the *Annie Larsen*, the *Maverick* sailed toward the East Indies, ending in Batavia, modern-day Jakarta. The crew waited three months for orders, failing to receive which, they left the boat and began to make their way back to the United States.

In a statement dated November 29, 1915,⁴ J.B. Starr Hunt said he came on the *Maverick* as a purser. He never understood the purpose of the voyage, but did mention five men who called themselves Persian and were paid a dollar a month. He said that the officers believed that these men were not Persian.

No wrongdoing

Although the movements of the *Annie Larsen* – *Maverick* left authorities in the U.S. scratching their heads as to the purpose of the expedition, the memo to the Assistant Attorney General in Washington, D.C., indicated that officials thought the shipment of obsolete arms was meant for Mexican rebels. “In addition, Germans were employed in, and seemed to be in charge of the ships which were to carry them to Mexico, and the general skilfulness and adequacy of the plan and its details point to German rather than Mexican organization.”⁵

[Mexico’s government and people were in the midst of revolution and civil war through this decade, experiencing meddling by the U.S. and other interests, inside the country and outside. –Editor]

As to these operations constituting violations of the law – perjury for lying on the manifest and customs law – the memorandum states there was none. “It is possible to say that the ‘Maverick’ herself was intended to ‘commit hostilities’ under Section 11 by the establishment of a base, from which other vessels might commit hostilities against the commerce of the Entente, but it seems a little far-fetched, and there is no real proof that there was any intent to do this when she sailed from the United States anyway. It is all surmise and conjecture.”⁶

Or was there?

As war dragged on, the U.S. government came under increasing pressure from the British to prosecute the case of the *Annie Larsen* and the *Maverick*. The men on the *Maverick* posing as Persians were actually Indian revolutionaries sent by the Gadar Party to incite trouble in British India.

“It seems that the activities of the Indians connected with the “Ghadr” have given the British authorities grave concern and they are very anxious that the revolutionary movement in this country looking to the liberation of India should cease,” wrote the Assistant Attorney General, Charles Warren.⁷ “The statements here enclosed establish the first definite link between Ram Chandra and the Hindus on the “Maverick”... With this as a starting point, your investigation may enable you to embrace in an indictment for a violation of Section 13 a large number of the more active of these revolutionary Indians. I desire that as many as possible be brought to book.”

The U.S. government did pursue this case, which became part of a much broader case against Germans and the Indians who sought their help in overthrowing British rule in India.

Other ships

Nor were these the first ships for which the Germans got into trouble. Much before the *Annie Larsen* and *Maverick* missed each other at Socorro Island two ships, the *Leipzig* and the *Mazatlan*, which had flown different flags at different times, had been carrying coal in violation of the laws set down by the U.S.

Leipzig and Mazatlan

One day before Germany became a participant in the War on August 1, 1914, a cruiser named *Leipzig* appeared near the port of San Francisco bearing the German flag. It came in search of coal and the German Consulate procured 500 tons of the fuel. However, a dispute between the company that acquired the coal for the Germans and the one that was to

As war dragged on, the U.S. government came under increasing pressure from the British to prosecute the case of the *Annie Larsen* and the *Maverick*.

provide the tug to take the coal out to the *Leipzig* spoiled the deal. Accordingly, the cruiser came into San Francisco port on August 17, 1914 and “was permitted to take on board 567 tons of coal, 38 barrels of machine oil, 72 tons of fresh water, together with necessary provisions.”⁸ The next day, the *Leipzig* left port. “The amount of coal received by her was her full capacity.”⁹

Two days later, according to this letter, a Mexican steamer named *Mazatlan* was loaded with coal that had initially been bought for the *Leipzig* but had remained in San Francisco because of the dispute between the buyer and the transporter. Soon after, the Secretary of the Treasury instructed the Collector of Customs in San Francisco to investigate the matter.

The German Chancellor to the Consulate, H.A.C. Kauffmann, was called to testify about the coal. At first, he denied that the German Consulate had any interest in buying the coal. Later, after another witness testified, Kauffmann changed his testimony and admitted that the coal had been purchased to be loaded on the *Leipzig*.

As a result of this investigation, the German Consul agreed to give a written statement that would state that the coal the *Mazatlan* received had originally been intended for the *Leipzig* but had remained in San Francisco, the U.S. Attorney in San Francisco and the Collector wrote in a telegram to the Treasury Department. The coal would be sent to Guaymas, over which the United States had no jurisdiction. He did agree to give a bond for double the amount of the coal, guaranteeing its arrival in Guaymas, Mexico.

“In view of this assurance of the German Consul and the bond given by the steamship company, unless otherwise directed by the Department, the *Mazatlan* will be cleared...I have delayed the clearance of this vessel to conduct an investigation of this specific shipment of coal, the history of which furnishes much evidence that it was intended for belligerent purposes in violation of neutrality.”¹⁰

The next day, the Collector received the go-ahead. For his part, the acting Imperial German Consul, Eckhard H. von Schack, gave a written statement in which he assured the United States that the *Mazatlan* would deliver the coal to Guaymas. The coal would not be transferred for three months to any German warship that had received the fuel at a San Francisco port since the outbreak of the war. Finally, “if the said coal or any part thereof be delivered to any other German war vessel not having received coal as aforesaid such delivery shall prevent such war vessel from receiving coal in

any United States port within a period of three months after such delivery.”¹¹

Despite this assurance and the coal that the *Leipzig* had received earlier at San Francisco, Germans transferred coal from the *Mazatlan* to the *Leipzig* at Guaymas.

“It will be noted that the guarantee given by the Consulate was directly violated by the delivery of this coal to the cruiser *Leipsic*,”¹² wrote the U.S. Attorney.

Two other ships

The vessel *Sacramento*, or *Alexandria* in an earlier German incarnation, and the *Olson & Mahoney*, an American steamer owned by an eponymous corporation, had similar histories. Both were chartered by Germans after the outbreak of the War, not through straightforward transactions, but through a series of dubious money transactions using banks to create confusion as to the source and purpose of the transactions. Soon after the war broke out, the Germans tried to charter ships to carry supplies, using American ports, despite assurances to the contrary.

In summing up the case of the *Leipzig*, *Mazatlan*, *Sacramento*, and *Olson & Mahoney*, the U.S. Attorney in San Francisco wrote, “From the above report it is the opinion of this office that the German Consulate here has been active in attempting to evade our customs laws in supplying its fleet, and that no act on our part should be omitted to make this determination a success. No respect whatever has been shown any law or laws that stood in their way.”¹³

“...it is the opinion of this office that the German Consulate here has been active in attempting to evade our customs laws... No respect whatever has been shown any law or laws that stood in their way.”

– U.S. Attorney in San Francisco, Nov. 1915

¹ Memorandum for Mr. Warren, Department of Justice, Washington D.C., undated, signature illegible. Record Group 118, Office of the US Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 12, folder 2b.

² National Archives at San Francisco.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Statement of J.B. Starr Hunt, Record Group 118, Office of the US Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 12, folder 2b. National Archives at San Francisco.

⁵ Memorandum for Mr. Warren

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Letter to John W. Preston, United States Attorney, from Charles Warren, Assistant Attorney General, February 7, 1917, Record Group 118, Office of the US Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 4, folder 7a. National Archives at San Francisco.

⁸ Letter to the Attorney General, Washington, D.C., from the U.S. Attorney, dated November 15, 1915, Record Group 118, Office of the US Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 20, folder 4a. National Archives at San Francisco.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

THE BOMB PLOT TRIAL

When World War I broke out in 1914, the United States maintained neutrality. It could not, however, prevent being sucked into events that spilled across the Atlantic and landed on its shores. A prime example was San Francisco. Here it seemed that from the beginning of the war, federal prosecutors were continually bringing indictments against German consulate officials for serious violations of law. In the process, people of many nationalities found themselves on the wrong side of the U.S. government.

On February 10, 1916, a federal grand jury indicted Franz Bopp, the German consul general in San Francisco; Eckhardt von Schack, vice consul; and Wilhelm von Brincken, the military attaché, among many others, including Americans. The charges against them were twofold: 1. The bomb plot. This was a plot to ‘set on foot’ a military expedition against Canada, a friendly nation, by planning to blow up railway tunnels; and violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act – which prohibits anti-competitive practices – by planning to blow up plants that manufactured ammunition for allies in Europe. 2. Neutrality violations in using the ships *Sacramento* and *Olson & Mahoney* to take supplies and coal to Germany under false pretexts soon after war broke out.

The indictment may have been made public on the above date, as reported by the *San Francisco Chronicle* of February 10, 1916¹, but research into the archives revealed a grand jury indictment “on the first Monday of November, in the year of our Lord One thousand nine hundred and fifteen.”² I could not find evidence of a reason for the delay; however, it could be that the draft of the indictment was ready to go but was released to the public a few months later as the government tied together other pieces of evidence. Obviously, then, the government had been at work for a while on this case.

The document is not signed by the U.S.

attorney, but may have been at the time that it was made public in February of the following year. It charges that the defendants did “wilfully, knowingly, unlawfully, wickedly, corruptly, and feloniously conspire, combine, confederate and agree together, and with divers other persons whose names are to the Grand Jurors aforesaid, unknown, to commit certain offenses against the United States.”³

One of these offenses was setting on foot a military enterprise from within the United States against territories and dominions held by Great Britain.

Canada qualified as one such dominion, as it was a British colony. Here, the grand jurors alleged that the defendants planned to “blow up, injure, damage, obstruct and destroy at the Canadian end thereof, and at a point within the said Dominion of Canada, by force and arms, a certain railway tunnel belonging to the St. Clair Tunnel Company.”⁴

They planned to do the same to the tunnels owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the railroads in Canada, and goods trains.

Also, “to blow up, injure, damage, destroy and sink, by force and arms, with their cargoes and crews, any and all vessels belonging to Great Britain, France, Japan or Russia, found within the territorial limits of the said Dominion of Canada, which were transporting or engaged in the transportation in foreign commerce from any Canadian port to any port of any other nation, of horses, mules, ammunition and other munitions of war, or any other articles of commerce in course of transportation to, or consigned to, or intended for, Great Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, or Japan.”⁵

Case too big

The U.S. attorney in San Francisco, John Preston, who was personally involved in prosecuting the case, declared a few months later that

the bomb plot trial would be held in November of that year. Although earlier the government had stated that it would try the two cases together, it now announced the severance of the shipping conspiracy or “neutrality” case from the bomb plot case, which it would try first.

During the bomb plot case, the government presented evidence that a plan was hatched within the German consulate in San Francisco to blow up a Canadian tunnel so that trains carrying arms and ammunition would not be able to reach the ports for further transportation. Further, it showed plans to blow up Russian ships carrying supplies.

But even as this trial was going on, with the actors of the neutrality case waiting in the wings, Preston disclosed that a federal grand jury would look at charges against Bopp and von Schack, among others, that they had hatched a conspiracy to ship guns and munitions to India on the schooner *Annie Larsen* and the steamship *Maverick*. The plot now expanded to the Indian community in California and Ram Chandra and his cohorts (see *The Gadar Newspaper*) came into the crosshairs of the U.S. Attorney in San Francisco.

Near the middle of January 1917, the jury returned a guilty verdict against all defendants in the bomb plot trial. The very next day, Bopp and von Schack were relieved of their duties by the German ambassador in Washington. But clearly, their legal troubles did not end as the U.S. government readied ever more cases against them.

Additional source: *San Francisco Chronicle* newspapers.

¹ Indictments in hands of court today, page 5, *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 10, 1916.

² In the District Court of the United States, in and for the Northern District of California, First Division. Record Group 118, Office of the U.S. Attorney, San Francisco, Neutrality Case Files, 1913-1920, box 17, folder 3. National Archives at San Francisco

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

Director's Report *continued from page 4*

carry it with us everywhere. But I don't think he meant cute aphorisms or wise sayings from our ancestors, or inspiring stories meant to get lots of "likes" on social media. It can be filled with trauma, pain, and lots of unfinished business – things we don't know how to speak about, nor know how to make into lessons dictating what to repeat or not repeat for the best historical results later. Baldwin is speaking about the depth of racism in the U.S. and the unescapable, ever-present nature of its existence.

His quote to me explains that systemic racism that goes back before the creation of our nation is part of a history that will never become past history unless it can be confronted head-on in the present. But it will be a process that is painful, filled with many contradictions, nuances, and even immediate experiences of terror and fear. This history has created who we are right now and continues to reproduce itself in our daily ways of living and participating in society, so we carry it about like a burden waiting to be lifted off of us somehow, somewhere, and in sometime.

There is no way to escape this task if you wish to "learn from history." Otherwise it becomes, as Baldwin suggests, a sort of "criminal" activity; denying understanding and learning, erasing ourselves from a history that can't be "history" without all of us present. And because it is a story that includes such profound injustice and pain, it is all the more reason it would be criminal to try and place it on a dusty shelf and say we are done with it, and to stop bringing it up.

I started this report with a quote by a Japanese amateur historian, who as a young school child, witnessed the atomic bombing of his city and the suffering and death of many people he knew in Hiroshima near the end of World War II. In a film about him, his story is told, explaining how he doggedly, for 40 years after the war, tracked down the history of the U.S. prisoners of war who also died in the bombing along with his schoolmates and neighbors. His contemporaries in Japan thought he was foolish or even not very Japanese to do such a thing – why care about the people who attacked their nation anyway? But he felt it had to be done because it was part of the story and the history, that he and everyone else there was also a part of. Besides, wouldn't families of the POWs in the U.S. want to know what happened to their loved ones just as they did? It would seem "criminal" to ignore this, wouldn't it?

The filmmaker seems to suggest through his documentary film that past incidents, no matter how terrible, can be confronted by connecting on a human level. More specifically, to my way

of thinking, Mr. Mori shows us how local history and all of its details, nuances, local quirks, and even profound, outright stories of terror helped to set him on this path of reconciliation.

So I still believe in deriving lessons from history, just not the simple way. As Mr. Mori talks about history being a fabric, I think we shouldn't fear to unravel, and "dart about" in what some may think are the darker regions of our historical memory. Learning lessons from history means taking direct action in creating the lesson since it is not a formula or piece of homework to finish up, but a continuous activity to be devoted to. It involves unravelling the fabric of history and finding its many inter-connections, using your own eyes and fingers to feel your way through it to find how your own life is woven into it as well. In the end it might all come apart at the seams but could still lead to a "fantastic result" as Mr. Mori mentions – so might as well take a good look while you can before someone tries to put it up on a shelf or in box to be forgotten.

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At the Center



Our director, Tom, directing, during a class visit to the CHC and our winter quarter exhibit "A Woman's Fight – Womens' International League for Peace and Freedom – 100 years"

Elizabeth Archambeault and Trudy Frank, CHC volunteers, celebrating Trudy's February birthday as Jane Addams looks on.

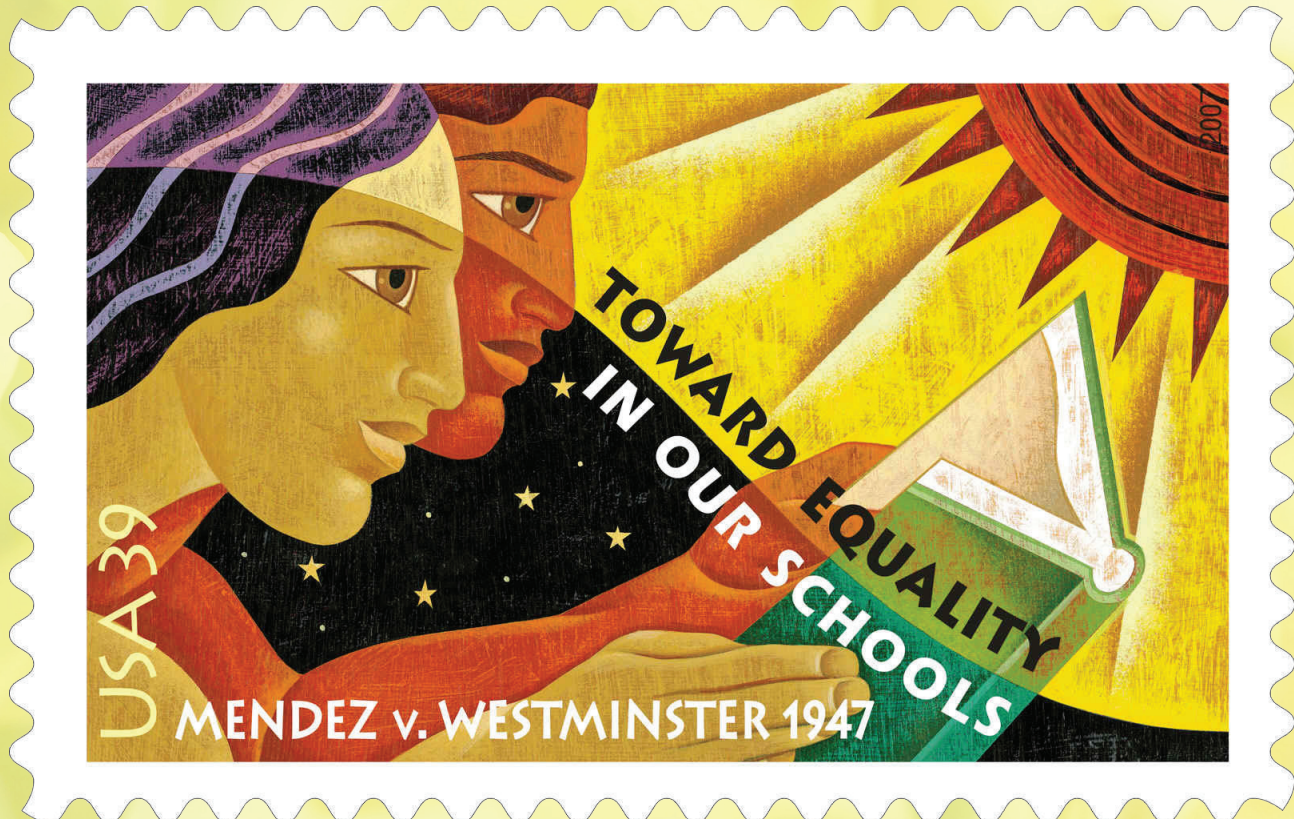


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California History Center State and Regional History Academic Program

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



Mendez v. Westminster School District

Course: HIST-055A -95

Units: 2

Instructor: Nannette Regua

reguanannette@fhda.edu

In 1947, the Mendez v. Westminster School District court case (Orange County, California) broke down legalized racial segregation and illuminated conditions of systematic racism and discrimination prevalent not only in California but the rest of the country. This important court case was a precursor to the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka case that ended public school segregation in the United States.

LECTURES: Thursdays, 6/1 and 6/8, 6:30 – 10:20pm, CHC

FIELD STUDIES: Saturdays, 6/3 and 6/10, 9am – 5:30pm



Left: Cover of Peninsular Railway Time Table brochure, effective November 10, 1917 – almost 100 years ago! Photo above and on the front cover were taken at the Western Railway Museum, Rio Vista Junction, Spring 2016. Peninsular Railway No. 52 is one of several trolley cars you can ride! Visit www.wrm.org/.

