

Progress and Its Discontents

The population and economy of California continued to grow during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Agricultural production expanded and new industries appeared.

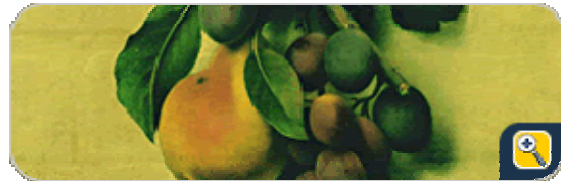
The state's growth was accompanied by intense controversies over the natural resources of California and among the competing forces of labor and capital. As the new century dawned, the forces of reform gained strength and emerged triumphant.



Industries Old and New

The economic growth of California in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included industries both old and new. Advances in agricultural technology contributed to a bonanza in wheat on the rich farmlands of the great Central Valley. Horticulturist Luther Burbank, the wizard of Santa Rosa, developed specialty crops that transformed California farming. The growing of citrus fruits, most notably oranges and lemons, spread throughout the southern part of the state. Inspired publicists blanketed the midwest with the slogan, "Oranges for Health--California for Wealth."

The discovery of vast petroleum resources contributed to the oil boom of the twenties, a time of headlong economic expansion. The prosperity decade also witnessed the blossoming of California's love affair with the car. Automobility became an integral part of the much admired (and much imitated) "California life style."



The greatest promoters of things Californian, of course, were all those motion pictures produced locally and distributed globally. The movies discovered California in the early years of the new century and the film industry soon became a mainstay of the state's economy. The story of "A Polish Goldfish" reminds us that many of the pioneers in the early film industry were European immigrants. The glamour of Hollywood stars--including their shenanigans at palaces like Pickfair--became the stuff of enduring legend.

A Bonanza in Wheat

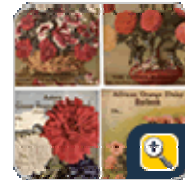


The most important California farm product in the late nineteenth century was wheat. The rich soils and dry summers of the Central Valley proved to be ideal for wheat production. Between the late 1860s and the early 1890s, grain poured out of the valley's enormous wheat ranches.

The scale of California wheat farming boggles the mind. The state's largest wheat grower was Hugh Glenn, owner of a mammoth ranch in Colusa County that covered 66,000 acres. He produced more than half a million bushels of wheat each year.

Wheat farming on such a scale could not have been possible without some fundamental advances in agricultural technology. The "Stockton gang plow" consisted of several plowshares attached to a beam mounted on wheels and pulled by a team of mules or horses. A hundred such gang plows, each drawn by an eight-mule team, plowed the fields of the Glenn ranch. The Central Valley also produced new machines for planting seeds and for cutting and threshing grain. Gargantuan steam-powered "combined harvests" were pulled by teams of thirty-six horses. The first steam-powered tractor appeared in the San Joaquin Valley in 1886. Benjamin Holt of Stockton later developed the nation's first tractor propelled by an internal combustion engine.

The Wizard of Santa Rosa



Born on a Massachusetts farm in the gold rush year of 1849, Burbank moved to California in 1875. He decided to settle in Santa Rosa, a gardener's paradise that he called "the chosen spot of all this earth."

From his experimental gardens came eight hundred new varieties of plants, many of which are still grown in California today.

Included in Burbank's astonishing cornucopia of new species were over a hundred types of plums and prunes, more than fifty lilies, and ten new berries. He took special pride in his new breeds of apples, rhubarb, and quince. Somewhere along the way, he also managed to perfect the Calla lily and the Shasta daisy.

Each new discovery increased Burbank's fame. A steady stream of visitors--including Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Helen Keller--made a pilgrimage to meet this magical,

mystical Californian. But Burbank was painfully shy, uncomfortable with crowds or public speaking. He preferred to spend his time alone in his beloved gardens and greenhouses, where passersby would strain to get a glimpse of this gardener touched with genius--the wizard of Santa Rosa.

A key player in the development of California agriculture was the famed horticulturist Luther Burbank.

"Oranges for Health-- California for Wealth"

Spanish missionaries introduced the first oranges to California during the late eighteenth century, but it wasn't until a century later that citrus fruits became an important part of the state's economy.



One of the earliest Californians to grow oranges commercially was John Wesley North. In 1870 he began planting trees in the dry, sandy soil near Riverside and irrigating his grove with water from the Santa Ana River. Refrigerated railroad cars carried his winter-ripening "Riverside navels" to markets across the country.

California farmers in 1876 began growing summer-ripening Valencia oranges. Now Californians could produce and market oranges all year round. Soon southern California was producing two-thirds of the nation's oranges and more than 90 percent of its lemons.

To promote California's booming citrus industry--and the quality of life in the Golden State--the California Fruit Growers Exchange and the Southern Pacific Railroad launched an advertising campaign in 1907. They targeted the state of Iowa, blanketing the state with pro-California propaganda. Posters were put up everywhere showing a little girl, Miss California, feeding an orange to a barefoot boy, Master Iowa. Wherever folks turned, they saw the slogan, "Oranges for Health--California for Wealth."

The Oil Boom of the Twenties



Discoveries of huge deposits of oil spurred the rise of the California petroleum industry in the late nineteenth century. The major deposits were in the San Joaquin Valley, Santa Barbara County, and the Los Angeles basin.

New discoveries, all in the Los Angeles basin, launched an even bigger oil boom during the early 1920s. Massive new fields began production near Huntington Beach and

Whittier. The richest of the world's known oil deposits was discovered at Long Beach. California soon ranked first among the states in crude oil production.

Derricks of oil wells popped up in orange groves and in city neighborhoods throughout southern California. Petroleum refining became the state's largest manufacturing industry, providing jobs for thousands of Californians. The harbor at Los Angeles became the largest oil-exporting port in the world.

Automobility

The oil boom of the twenties in southern California occurred at the very time and in the very place where the use of the automobile was spreading more rapidly than in any other time or place in history.



The population of Los Angeles County more than doubled during the 1920s and the number of registered automobiles quintupled. By the middle of the decade, Los Angeles was the most thoroughly motorized and motor-conscious city in the world. The automobile allowed workers to live at a considerable distance from their places of employment. A network of roadways connected the city center with suburbs of single-family residences, supermarkets, and shopping malls. Tourism became a major industry, spawning "auto camps," "tourist cabins," and "drive-ins" throughout southern California.

Commenting on the transformation wrought by the automobile, the Los Angeles Times in 1926 observed: "Our forefathers, in their immortal independence creed set forth 'the pursuit of happiness' as an inalienable right of mankind. And how can one pursue happiness by any swifter and surer means...than by the use of the automobile?"

The Movies Discover California

The first major motion picture to be produced in the United States was filmed in the New Jersey countryside in 1903.



The Great Train Robbery was an eight-minute, one-reel western, produced by the film company of Thomas Edison and starring an ex-vaudevillian named Gilbert Anderson as Bronco Billy.

At the time, Edison and a few others controlled the patents on nearly all the available motion-picture cameras and projectors. Independent or "outlaw" filmmakers soon rebelled against Edison's monopoly. One of these independents was Gilbert Anderson.

In 1908 Anderson began scouting the country for a location to launch his own film company; he wanted to be as far away as possible from Edison's patent attorneys. He soon found an ideal location in California, just southeast of Oakland, in a rugged little canyon near the village of Niles. There he produced 375 films over the next six years--

more than one film a week! The films all starred, of course, that lovable cowpoke Bronco Billy.

Eventually the fledgling motion picture industry abandoned Niles Canyon for southern California. The Los Angeles suburb of Hollywood offered a superior climate, a greater variety of landscapes, and something northern California simply couldn't match--easy access to the Mexican border across which worried filmmakers could flee (if ever necessary) to escape those pesky patent attorneys from New Jersey.

A Polish Goldfish

Many of the greatest directors and producers in the early days of the Hollywood film industry were Eastern European refugees, many of whom were Jews fleeing persecution.

One of the most successful of the eastern European refugees was Schmucl Gelbfisz, born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1882. He was the eldest of six children in a family of Hasidic Jews. As a young man he left his troubled homeland for London and New York. Along the way he changed his name to Samuel Goldfish.

In 1913 the young Goldfish moved to California and entered a new profession, founding one of the first feature motion picture companies on the West Coast. His early partners were Edgar and Archibald Selwyn, and it was from them that he got his new American name. He combined the first syllable of his old name, GOLDfish, with the last syllable of his partners' name, SelWYN, to get GOLDWYN.

With his new name in place, Samuel Goldwyn and Russian-émigré Louis B. Mayer got together in 1925 and formed Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, for thirty years the leading studio in Hollywood.

Pickfair

Two of the biggest stars in the Golden Age of Hollywood were Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. Public fascination with their lives--both on screen and off--was emblematic of the worldwide adulation of film celebrities.



Mary Pickford was born Gladys Smith in Toronto, Canada. Known as "America's Sweetheart," she played child parts and sentimental roles in dozens of Hollywood films. For twenty years, she managed to appear ever the young innocent, her face framed in a cascade of long, golden curls.

Douglas Fairbanks (born Douglas Elton Ulman) was the first in a long line of Hollywood action heroes. He swashbuckled his way through countless leaps and flips and mid-air somersaults, making his mark in such films as *The Mark of Zorro* (1920).

Perhaps the grandest and most prestigious mansion in Beverly Hills was Pickfair, originally a hunting lodge that Douglas Fairbanks bought and remodeled as a wedding present for his bride Mary Pickford in 1919. During the 1920s and '30s, Pickfair was the scene of some of the film colony's most glittering parties. Anyone who was anybody considered it an honor to be among the invited guests. Newspapers and movie magazines reported every detail of the comings and goings of the smart set at Pickfair.

Land and Water

Controversies over land and water resources have been a part of California history since at least the days of the gold rush. One of the earliest struggles was between the hydraulic mining industry and the state's farmers. In the matter of miners v. farmers, the farmers emerged victorious.



Scottish immigrant John Muir was an eloquent defender of California's natural resources against unrestrained development. He worked tirelessly but unsuccessfully to halt the transformation of the Hetch Hetchy into a reservoir for the city of San Francisco. The farmers of the Owens Valley waged an equally unsuccessful battle to halt construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

Serious efforts were undertaken such as the Central Valley Project, a system of dams and canals designed to move massive amounts of California water from north to south.

Miners v. Farmers

Hydraulicking was the dominant form of gold mining in California from the 1850s through the 1880s. Miners used water from high-pressure hoses to wash away banks and hills, uncovering gold-bearing gravels far beneath the surface.



The hydraulickers' runoff dumped tons of mud, sand, and gravel into the Yuba, Bear, American, and Feather rivers. The accumulated mining debris buried farms and silted up the rivers. Floods became increasingly common and the rivers themselves, including the Sacramento, became unnavigable.

Angry farmers formed an Anti-Debris Association and won a decision of the United States circuit court in 1884 outlawing the dumping of mining debris into rivers. But many hydraulickers continued their operations secretly, in defiance of the law. The matter was finally resolved in 1893 when Congress created the California Debris Commission, a federal regulatory agency.

John Muir



John Muir arrived in California in 1868. Shortly after his first visit to the Sierra Nevada, he dedicated himself to preserving the natural beauty of his adopted homeland. He wrote in his diary that "John the Baptist was not more eager to get all of his fellow sinners into the Jordan River than I to baptize all of mine in the beauty of God's mountains.

When he tried to convince his "fellow sinners" to get out of the cities and go into the mountains, he wrote with the fervor of an evangelist: "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."



Muir's greatest success came in 1890 with the establishment of Yosemite National Park. Two years later he founded and became the first president of the Sierra Club, dedicated to "preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada." His greatest defeat came in the battle to save Hetch Hetchy.

Hetch Hetchy

About twenty miles northwest of the spectacular Yosemite Valley once lay a similar but smaller valley known as the Hetch Hetchy. (The name comes from the Miwok language, meaning "grass-seed valley" or "acorn valley.") The free-flowing waters of the Tuolumne River raced through the valley floor. Waterfalls cascaded over magnificent granite cliffs.



Meanwhile, the population of faraway San Francisco was growing steadily in the early 1900s. Officials began searching for new supplies of water for the city. After considering several possibilities, they selected the waters of the Tuolumne River and decided to build a dam across the river to form a reservoir in the Hetch Hetchy Valley.

When plans for the dam and reservoir were announced, John Muir and other conservationists objected. Muir said that the flooding of the Hetch Hetchy would be like destroying one of nature's great cathedrals. In spite of Muir's spirited objections, Congress in 1913 approved the building of the dam and reservoir. Muir was greatly saddened when he heard the news. Brokenhearted, he died a few months later.

Construction of the dam began in 1914 and was completed within nine years. An aqueduct carrying water from the reservoir to San Francisco was in full operation by 1934. Today the Hetch Hetchy provides San Franciscans with about 85 percent of their water.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct



The booming population of Los Angeles in the early twentieth century was rapidly outgrowing its local water supply. Charged with solving this critical problem was an Irish immigrant named William Mulholland, the city's chief engineer.

Mulholland soon learned of a supply of water about 250 miles northeast of the city. The water flowed from the melting snows of the Sierra Nevada and into the Owens River. Farmers in the Owens Valley used the water to irrigate their crops. But Mulholland believed the water could better be used to meet the needs of the growing metropolis of southern California.

In 1905 the voters of Los Angeles approved a plan to build an aqueduct to carry the waters of the Owens River to their city. Mulholland began buying up land and water rights in the Owens Valley. Construction of the aqueduct began in 1908 and continued for five years. An army of five thousand workers cut more than 140 tunnels through mountains and laid huge steel pipes eleven feet in diameter.

The farmers in the Owens Valley waged a bitter campaign against the aqueduct. They wanted to keep the water of the Owens River for the continued agricultural development of their own area. In 1924 the residents of the valley began to dramatize their protests. Unidentified saboteurs dynamited the aqueduct fourteen times in 1927.

The Central Valley Project



A recent observer of California water policy had this to say: "In a normal year, 70 million acre feet of water splash down on California. Three-fourths of that precipitation occurs in the northern third of the state, while 80 percent of the water need occurs in the southern two thirds. Thereby hangs the tale of California water--movement of water from where it is to where demand has been created."

The most ambitious plan for the movement of California water was the Central Valley Project (CVP). First proposed by the California legislature in 1933, the project was approved by the federal government two years later. Construction began in 1937.

The original phase of the CVP included three dams, five canals, and two power transmission lines. The largest feature was Shasta Dam, impounding the waters of the

Sacramento, McCloud, and Pit rivers in Shasta Lake. Other units included the Friant and Keswick dams, and the Friant-Kern, Madera, Delta-Mendota, and Contra Costa canals.

The CVP continues to provide flood control and water for agriculture throughout the Central Valley. For years, the amount of water an individual farmer could obtain from the project was limited to what was needed to irrigate 160 acres. The federal government imposed this "160-acre limit" to insure that family farms, not corporate landowners, received the benefits of the relatively cheap, federally subsidized water. Large landowners fought for decades to have the limit removed. In 1982 Congress repealed the 160-acre limit, increasing to 960 acres the amount of land that any one owner could irrigate with water from the project.

Labor and Capital

Historian Carey McWilliams once commented that the struggle between labor and capital in California has been one of "total engagement." The struggle was especially intense in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when organized labor steadily increased its strength and challenged the powers of corporate America. "Closed shop" San Francisco emerged as one of the most thoroughly unionized cities in the nation. In contrast, the opponents of organized labor remained dominant in Los Angeles, led by Harrison Gray Otis and his Times.



Radical organizations appealed to discontented workers and called for fundamental economic and political change. The Wobblies in California organized migratory farmworkers and stirred intense opposition from farm owners. The Mooney case revealed the fiery passions that swirled around the ongoing contest between labor and capital.

"Closed Shop" San Francisco

The center of early union organizing in San Francisco was along the waterfront. Working conditions in the maritime industry were particularly atrocious--sailors were subjected to corporal punishment, fed vile rations, slept in cramped quarters, and could be arrested for "desertion" if they left their jobs.



In 1885 Burnette Haskell formed the Coast Seamen's Union, an organization that six years later merged with a separate union of steamship sailors to form the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. The leader of the new union was Andrew Furuseth, a passionately dedicated Norwegian immigrant. Furuseth led a national campaign to win basic improvements in the working conditions of American sailors. His efforts culminated in the passage of the La Follette Seamen's Act of 1915, a law which regulated working conditions and abolished imprisonment for desertion.

Other unions in San Francisco also made considerable headway in improving the harsh conditions endured by working men and women. San Francisco gained the reputation of being "the first closed-shop city in the United States." A closed shop is one in which employers agree to hire only union members. Few employers in San Francisco actually signed closed-shop agreements with their workers, but it is true that the City by the Bay was a stronghold of unionism from about 1900 until the early 1920s.

Harrison Gray Otis and his *Times*

Harrison Gray Otis, editor and publisher of the Los Angeles Times, believed that the key to the future growth and prosperity of California was the leadership of vigorous individuals like himself.



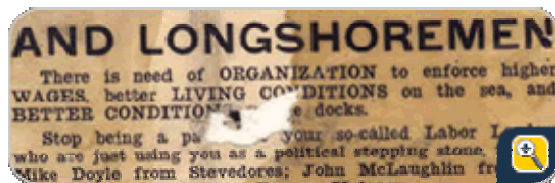
As part of his ardent individualism, Otis maintained an unwavering opposition to organized labor. He made the watchword of the Times "industrial freedom"--the freedom of workers not to join a union and the freedom of employers to discharge them if they did. Under his leadership, Los Angeles became the country's leading citadel of the open shop. An open shop is one in which employers refuse to make agreements requiring union membership of their employees.

When the metal trades workers of Los Angeles launched a strike on June 1, 1910, Otis and the Times denounced it as an assault on "the cradle of industrial freedom." The strike was the largest work stoppage the city had ever known, and it attracted nationwide attention because the whole future of the open shop seemed at stake in the city where it was the strongest.

Early on the morning of October 1, a tremendous explosion destroyed the Times building, killing twenty employees and injuring seventeen others. Otis called the blast "the crime of the century" and blamed it on the agents of organized labor. Six months later two officials of an iron workers' union were arrested and charged with the crime. When the union officials confessed their guilt, on December 1, 1911, organized labor across the country was demoralized. The result in Los Angeles was thirty more years of dominance for the open shop.

Wobblies in California

California agriculture long has depended upon the availability, season after season, of a supply of migratory farmworkers. Traditionally California farmworkers have been foreign-born, nonwhite, and unorganized.



The first widespread attempt to organize the farmworkers came in the early twentieth century with the appearance of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Members of the new union were known as Wobblies.

The IWW was unlike other unions. It organized unskilled workers, regardless of their place of birth or their race. The IWW also was more radical than other unions. Its "revolutionary watchword" was "the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism." It endorsed acts of sabotage and "any and all tactics that will get the results sought with the least expenditure of time and energy."

California farm owners regarded the IWW as a dangerous and threatening organization. Local governments adopted ordinances that made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Wobblies to organize the workers. The IWW launched "free speech fights," most notably in San Diego and Fresno, to overturn the ordinances.

California farmworkers often labored in barbaric conditions. They worked long hours for little pay. Shelter, water, and sanitation were woefully inadequate. They joined the IWW out of desperation.

The Mooney Case



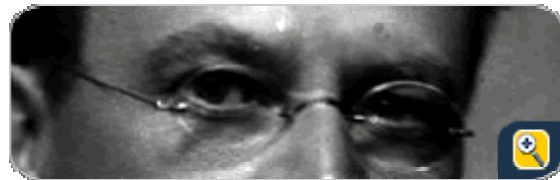
At 2:06 in the afternoon of July 22, 1916, an explosion rocked San Francisco. The blast came from near the waterfront, at the corner of Market and Stewart streets. A bomb had gone off during a patriotic parade, killing ten persons and wounding forty others.

Suspicion soon fell upon a radical labor agitator named Thomas J. Mooney. He had been active in labor disputes for several years and had been arrested previously for the illegal possession of explosives.

The San Francisco district attorney charged Mooney with murder. Mooney was convicted of the charge and sentenced to hang. Labor leaders across the country believed that he had been framed as part of an anti-labor conspiracy. The opponents of organized labor regarded the Mooney case as proof of the dangers of labor radicalism.

Impassioned debate over the guilt or innocence of Tom Mooney continued for decades, even after the governor of California commuted his sentence to life imprisonment. Mooney was pardoned and released from prison in 1939. He died three years later.

The Age of Reform



Discontent with corrupt governments and economic inequities led to an age of reform in California and the nation during the early twentieth century.

The demand for reform in San Francisco was especially strong following the devastating earthquake and fire of 1906. The city celebrated its recovery in grand style by mounting the Panama Pacific International Exhibition, also known as the PPIE. The San Francisco

reformers' most notable achievement was putting behind bars Boss Ruef, the mastermind of a citywide system of corruption.

Katherine Philips Edson and other reformers in southern California tackled a host of urban problems while Allen Allensworth founded an all-black community in the rural San Joaquin Valley. Anti-Japanese sentiment was on the rise throughout the state, a plague that poisoned race relations in California for decades.

The election of Governor Hiram Johnson in 1910 was proof positive that the forces of progressive reform were in the ascendancy. With the progressives in power, a series of reforms came pouring from the state legislature.

Earthquake and Fire



At 5:12 a.m., Wednesday, April 18, 1906, a low-pitched rumble awakened the people of San Francisco. It was a deafening sound, rising from deep within the earth as the massive Pacific and North American tectonic plates lurched past each other along the San Andreas Fault. When the first shock hit San Francisco, the ground began to heave and shake for an agonizing forty-five seconds. After a brief interlude of eerie silence, an even stronger temblor, estimated at 8.3 on the Richter scale, shook the city for another twenty-five seconds.

Buildings throughout the city collapsed, gaping fissures opened in the streets, sidewalks buckled in grotesque shapes, and water and gas mains snapped. Within an hour of the first temblor, over fifty fires were raging out of control. The flames spread rapidly, joining in a huge firestorm with temperatures reaching an estimated 2,000 degrees.

On Saturday, April 21, the heavens blessed the city with a spring shower, dousing the flames. As the smoke cleared, the magnitude of the disaster was revealed in all its horrible clarity. Four square miles--or 490 city blocks--were leveled. More than 28,000 buildings had been destroyed. The official death toll was set at 478, but more recent research has found that as many as 3,000 people lost their lives.

The city soon began the mighty task of recovery. Rescue crews dug through the rubble in a desperate search for survivors, while workers put up 200,000 tents at the Presidio and in Golden Gate Park as temporary shelter for those who were left homeless.

San Franciscans took great pride in their recovery from this horrible disaster. They heralded their triumph by adopting a new emblem for the city, a phoenix rising from the ashes.

Panama Pacific International Exposition



To show the world that it had recovered from the devastating earthquake and fire of 1906, the city of San Francisco hosted the Panama Pacific International Exposition nine years later. It was a glitzy extravaganza, billed as a celebration of the recent opening of the Panama Canal.

The PPIE, as the exposition was affectionately known, opened its gates on the morning of February 20, 1915. San Francisco Mayor Jimmy Rolph led a procession of 150,000 eager visitors onto the grounds amid shrieks of factory whistles, clanging cable car bells, and cannons booming from the Presidio. Within nine months of opening day, the exposition had attracted 18 million visitors.

Monumental buildings filled the grounds of the fair. Most impressive was the 435-foot Tower of Jewels, decorated with thousands of hand-cut multicolored Austrian glass crystals that glistened in the sun during the day and sparkled under a battery of searchlights at night.

The most popular area of the PPIE was known as the Zone. It featured a working model of the Panama Canal and a talking horse named Captain. Here also was a fourteen-foot painting of a female nude called Stella. Viewed in a darkened room, Stella was said to be of "magnificent proportions." Her appeal was further enhanced by special effects that made her appear alive and breathing!

Boss Ruef

Abraham Ruef was a bright and ambitious San Francisco lawyer in the early twentieth century. He also was the mastermind of an elaborate system of graft inside city government.



Wealthy public utility corporations hired Ruef as an attorney to represent their interests before city officials. Ruef then passed on portions of his attorney's fees as bribes. For example, the United Railroads of San Francisco sought an ordinance from the city to convert its cable cars to electric trolleys. The company paid Ruef an attorney's fee of \$200,000. Ruef then divided \$85,000 among the members of the city board of supervisors who promptly voted to pass the ordinance. Similar corrupt dealings involved gas, electric, telephone, and water companies.

A group of public-spirited San Franciscans demanded an end to such graft. They exposed and removed from office the corrupt city officials. In a series of widely publicized trials, the executives of several utility companies were charged with accepting bribes. None, however, was convicted. Of all the defendants, Ruff alone ended up in state prison.

Katherine Philips Edson

One of the most energetic reformers in southern California during the early twentieth century was a remarkable woman named Katherine Philips Edson.



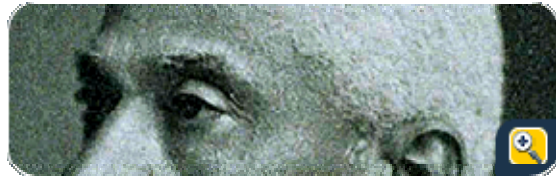
Edson began her fight for reform by demanding the passage of pure milk laws in Los Angeles. She had learned that babies were dying from drinking contaminated milk. In a letter to a friend, she wrote: "If the milk supply is in the hands of politicians, how can a woman who wants to do the right thing by her babies stay at home and keep quiet while they drink impure milk?" Edson pressured the city government to hire more inspectors to make sure that all milk sold in the city was pure.

Edson later became a leader in the fight for woman suffrage. California in 1911 became the sixth state in the nation to grant women the right to vote.

Women and children in the early twentieth century often worked ten or twelve hours a day in unhealthy and unsanitary conditions. Cannery workers, for instance, stood knee-deep in dirty water, breathed foul air, and received less than 15 cents an hour. Edson led the fight for the passage in 1913 of a minimum wage law for women and children. Governor Hiram Johnson appointed Edson to be the executive director of a state commission to enforce the new law.

Allen Allensworth

When Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth retired from the army in 1906, he was the highest ranking black officer in American history.



After leaving the army, Allensworth and his family settled in Los Angeles. It was there that he came up with the idea of establishing a self-sufficient, all-black California town, a place where African Americans could live their lives free of the racial discrimination that so often plagued them elsewhere. His dream was to build a town where black people might live and create "sentiment favorable to intellectual and industrial liberty."

In 1908 he founded the Tulare County town of Allensworth, a new settlement in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley about thirty miles north of Bakersfield. The black settlers of Allensworth built homes, laid out streets, and put up public buildings. They organized a glee club, an orchestra, and a brass band.

But the town soon ran into some serious problems. The dry and dusty soil made farming difficult, and poisons seeped into the drinking water. The town lost its founding father in 1914 when Colonel Allensworth was killed in an accident in Los Angeles. The town's discouraged settlers drifted away in the next couple of decades and Allensworth was reduced almost to a ghost town.

Anti-Japanese Sentiment

Japanese immigration to California steadily increased in the early twentieth century. As the number of immigrants grew, so too did anti-Japanese sentiment.

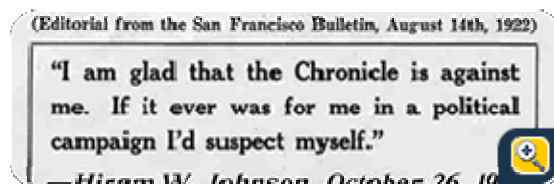
In 1905 San Francisco labor leaders formed an Asiatic Exclusion League to demand public policies against the new immigrants. Under pressure from the league, the city ordered Japanese children to attend a segregated school along with other Asian children in the city. Protests from Japan led President Theodore Roosevelt to intervene. The president persuaded the city to drop its segregation order in exchange for a promised limit on Japanese immigration. The promise was fulfilled in the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 in which Japan agreed not to allow any more of its workers to come to the United States.

As Japanese immigrants became successful farmers in California, white farmers sought ways to eliminate the competition. The whites succeeded in 1913 when the state legislature passed a law prohibiting aliens ineligible for American citizenship from owning land in the state. Under federal law, all Asians were ineligible for naturalization.

The greatest triumph of the anti-Japanese forces came in 1924 when Congress passed the National Origins Quota Act barring all further immigration from Japan. The Grizzly Bear, a publication of the Native Sons of the Golden West, growled with satisfaction: "And so, after a strenuous campaign, has another advance been made in the battle with the Japs to keep California white."

Governor Hiram Johnson

Hiram Johnson first came to public attention during the prosecution of Boss Ruef in San Francisco. Johnson was a lawyer who served as a special assistant in the district attorney's office.



In 1910 Johnson won the Republican nomination for governor. He was supported by a group of reformers within the party known as "progressives." The progressives hoped that Johnson would clean up corruption in the state, just as he had helped to do in San Francisco.

Like many others, Johnson believed that the greatest source of corruption in California was that dreaded octopus, the railroad. Wherever he went during his gubernatorial campaign, he pledged "to kick the Southern Pacific Railroad out of politics." He was

outraged that the railroad charged high shipping rates to cover the costs of the bribes it paid to public officials. "Get us coming and going?" he asked the voters of Los Angeles. "Why they get us every way, and we foot the bill--we pick our own pockets to bribe ourselves with our own money!"

Johnson served two terms as governor, working to achieve a wide range of reforms with the other progressives in power. He ran for Vice President under Theodore Roosevelt on the Progressive Party ticket in 1912, and was elected to the Senate as a Progressive Republican in 1916. He remained a popular public figure throughout his life, being re-elected to the Senate four times. In his later years he became increasingly conservative. He led the fight against Japanese immigration in the 1920s and was an entrenched isolationist in the 1930s.

Progressives in Power

Hiram Johnson and his fellow California progressives scored an impressive victory in the election of 1910. Promising to establish a new political order, they gained control of both houses of the state legislature. In the next year, a wide range of reforms came flooding out of the state legislature. Theodore Roosevelt described the California reforms of 1911 as "the beginning of a new era in popular government" and "the greatest advance ever made by any state for the benefit of its people."

First on the list of priorities for the progressives was to establish effective regulation of the railroad. The legislature in 1911 granted the state railroad commission full and effective power to control railroad rates. Separate legislation assigned the commission the power to regulate rates charged by other public utilities.

To insure that the will of the people was truly expressed in government, the progressives in 1911 introduced the initiative, referendum, and recall. The initiative allowed voters to directly create laws or constitutional amendments. The referendum allowed voters to veto acts of the legislature. And the recall permitted voters to remove from office any elected official. California was further "democratized" in 1911 when it became the sixth state in the nation to adopt woman suffrage, thus doubling the size of the electorate.

Among the many other reforms adopted by the progressives were several laws that benefited California workers. The legislature in 1911 enacted a system of workers' compensation, establishing the employers' liability for industrial accidents. Also in 1911 the legislature adopted an eight-hour work day for women. Two years later, prompted by Katherine Philips Edson, the legislature passed a law setting a minimum wage for women and children.