



# Past and Present

Issue 1: Spring 2007

## Archives Receives CHRA Grant

The California Historic Records Advisory Board has awarded the Santa Clara County Archives \$8500 to process the County Photographer's collection. Containing approximately 25,000 images, the collection documents the operations of County government from the late 1950s until 1990, a period of tremendous growth and change. The pictures depict the full range of County services and facilities. For example, the School Department section includes pictures of buildings used for migrant education, classroom scenes, and even a 1967 student fashion show. Among other selections are interior shots of the

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**Board of Supervisors, 1960, from County Photographers' collection**

### Mission

The mission of the Santa Clara County Archives is to collect, preserve, and make available the historical records of Santa Clara County government. The Archives' goals are to be a center for research and information about Santa Clara County and to foster an appreciation and understanding of the county's history and development.

## Aerial Photos Show 1950s County

A recently processed collection of aerial photographs provides a unique view of Santa Clara County roads, streets, and highways in the mid-1950s. Previously housed in the Surveyor's Office, these pictures were taken primarily in 1956 and 1957. Because they were shot at low altitude (often 1200 feet), they show individual structures quite clearly. (In fact, the level of detail is high enough to show individual trucks and cars.)

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## Volunteers Make Records Available



Volunteers cataloging the twenty-seven boxes of wills held by the Archives.

For the past two months, volunteers from Marcia Holstrom's Genealogy and Family History course in San Jose's MetEd program have been indexing collections at the Archives. Their dedicated efforts already have resulted in indices for the Archives' collections of Court cases. Currently the volunteers are undertaking the large-scale project of indexing 27 boxes of wills, dating from the early to mid 20th century. The end result will be a finding aide for the estimated 6000 wills in the collection.

"Their assistance is invaluable," stated County Archivist Michael Griffith. "Without their help, patrons would have had to search these collections file by file. Soon, it will be possible to tell instantly whether we have the file a researcher is seeking and to quickly make it available."

According to volunteer Patricia Burrow, "I realized that I had always been the beneficiary of other's work....I am looking at 27 boxes of wills in the Archives that the descendants do not know exist....I want to ensure that, should a descendant want to know about THEIR Grandpa's will, he or she can find it."

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## **CHRAB Grant (continued)**

old county jail and the new county jail, both from the 1950s; pictures of the Boys' Ranch and of the Girls' Ranch, juvenile correctional facilities; and numerous pictures of county medical facilities.

The grant will fund a project archivist, who will enter information about the pictures into a database and then place the pictures into archival envelopes and boxes. When the project is completed, researchers will be able to search the collection for images by keyword. Processing should start in June and be completed by the end of 2007.



New computer equipment, 1960, from County Photographers's Collection

## **Aerial Photographs (continued)**

The collection is organized by street or highway name, in alphabetical order. For each street, the individual photographs slightly overlap and provide a picture of a length of road when placed together. Information on each set of pictures has been entered into a database available at the Archives. The pictures are often accompanied by a map showing exactly what part of a road has been photographed.

These pictures should be of value to researchers interested in the development of the county. Individually, they provide evidence of the existence of individual structures in the mid-1950s. Collectively, they illustrate, sometimes dramatically, the transition from a primarily agricultural economy to an urban world in the Santa Clara Valley.



Aerial photograph of Berryessa and Lundy intersection, 1956.

## **Friends of the Archives**

The Archives is looking for friends! We will be establishing a "Friends of the Archives" group for those who would like to help sustain the Archives as a resource for Santa Clara County and beyond. Look for details in our next issue.

## **Contacting the Archives**

Our address: 1875 Senter Road, San Jose 95112

Directions: Please see our website at <http://archives.sccgov.org>.

Our phone: 408-792-1895

E-mail: [Michael.Griffith@rec.sccgov.org](mailto:Michael.Griffith@rec.sccgov.org)

Hours: We are open on an appointment-only basis. Appointments are normally available Monday and Wednesday 10-5, and Tuesday and Thursday, 9-3.

## **Subscribing**

To subscribe (or unsubscribe) to this Newsletter, please send an e-mail to: [Michael.Griffith@rec.sccgov.org](mailto:Michael.Griffith@rec.sccgov.org).