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Sourisseau Academy

Smith-Layton Archive presents:

Women at Work

by Thomas N. Layton

Les Amis (The Friends)

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[84] **At Home on the Range** - Santa Clara Valley's earliest business was ranching and we have celebrated our rancho heritage through modern times. This 1860s photo shows two women, perhaps related, on a Santa Clara Valley ranch. The two are dressed identically with costumes that include holstered pistols and lariats. This carte-de-visite depicts the local version of an early American cowgirl. We suspect-women may be dressed to participate in a local parade or similar event.



[85] **Women Fruit Growers** - By 1900, there were enough women orchardists to establish *The Women's Fruit Preserving Association*, with their own *Honeysuckle Brand* logo. During the late 19th century, many Valley fruit growers began forming associations to harvest, process and market their produce. The late 19th century also saw the formation of local women's associations promoting suffrage and women's rights.



[86] **Candy and Fizz!** - Three women employees of O'Brien's Confectionery and Ice Cream provided service to the many customers of this extremely popular Downtown establishment. Located at 30 South First Street, this candy store was established in 1858 by Irish immigrant Maurice O'Brien. The candy counter is on the left, and the soda fountain serving fizzy drinks is on the right. It was reputed to be the oldest soda fountain west of Detroit.



[87] **Santa Clara Ladies at Work** - No self-respecting woman left the house without a hat, a custom that continued until well after World War II. By 1905, Alice Iola Hare had achieved local recognition as a commercial photographer. We are grateful to Mrs. Hare for documenting everyday life in the Valley including these ladies sorting cherries in Santa Clara.



[88] **Navlet's Seed Store** - Charles Navlet, a native of San Francisco, moved to San Jose in 1885 at the age of 18. He opened the first real florist shop in town, and quickly discovered an Eastern market for pampas grass, which grew abundantly here. He branched out as a nurseryman and bulb importer and brought his brother Arthur into the business. The Navlet Company mail order business expanded and Navlet issued his first catalog in 1903. He built this two-story office the same year, located at 20-22 East San Fernando Street. The business served an international clientele. He created a three-fold business; florist, retail seeds and a mail order plant company. The floral business alone required forty-five employees according to a local history. In 1913, nine women and one man posed for this photo in front of *Navlet's Seed Store* in San Jose. But, were they employees, or visitors?



[89] **And the answer is . . .!** - They were employees!! And, here they are, a few minutes later, back at work inside the store! With thousands of mail-order customers, the business required detail-oriented women who could maintain mailing lists.



[90] **Number please!** - The year is 1917, and *Pacific Telephone Company* telephone operators are on their break, reading magazines in the employees lounge. Their rest area is furnished with tasteful wicker and Mission revival furniture. Note their attendant standing at the counter at left rear. The image is carefully staged to promote the newly organized Bell System as a comfortable place for women to work,



[91] **Aspiring teachers!** Life Near the San Jose State Campus - In 1915, most of the graduates of San Jose Normal School became schoolteachers. This photo is from an album depicting the life of Normal School students. In the days before dormitories, students lived in boarding houses located near the campus and many formed lifelong friendships as a result.



[92] **Promoting Downtown Business in a Big Way** - On June 11, 1922, the *F.W. Woolworth Company* honored its "Go-Getters," employed at San Jose's Store #221, with a gala parade to a celebratory picnic. Women employees in retail establishments were common after World War I, and San Jose's Downtown was a good place to work. Founded in New York in 1878, the company began an aggressive expansion campaign after World War I, opening stores across America.



[93] **Modern Facilities for Food Canners** - Seasonal work for canneries provided many families with essential supplementary income. Here at the *Schuckl Cannery* in Sunnyvale in 1931, these women weigh cans of peaches before the lids are applied. This carefully posed promotional photograph emphasizes the sanitary conditions with cannery workers wearing hair coverings and white uniforms.



[94] **Time Out for Pie and a Cup of Joe** - In 1935, long before nationally franchised fast food operations took over the breakfast and lunch market, a family-run cafe such as this one, located somewhere along Monterey Road, served a loyal clientele. This was the era of pie and coffee, and a good cook in this type of establishment could develop a notable reputation for their fried chicken and their pies.



[95] **Fast Food of the Fifties** - Lunch counters provided a quick bite for downtown business people and their customers. Soup and a sandwich were the standard fare, and a grilled cheese sandwich with a pickle could be a thing of beauty. Salaries were minimal and waitresses relied heavily on tips to provide a reasonable income. The presence of business clientele suggests the waitresses at this establishment got better than average tips.



[96] **Effie Walton's Los Gatos Village!!** - Real Estate broker Effie Stapp Walton (1884-1969) served as President of the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce in 1943. Mrs. Walton was also one of the founders of the local Board of Realtors. She really loved property development, and one of her gems was this circa 1950 "Little Village" on North Santa Cruz Avenue. This collection of shops included her office to the left. Located at 350 N. Santa Cruz Avenue, the office is now a retail business, and the charming Calico Shop business has been replaced with a much larger structure.