Since 1871, the California Historical Society (CHS) has been collecting, sharing, and honoring the extraordinarily diverse stories from throughout our state so that Californians may utilize history’s lessons to create a brighter tomorrow for everyone.

We champion PK-16 education and lifelong learning. Our Teaching California initiative provided instructional content for teachers across the state, and our four exhibitions and seventeen free public programs offered further educational opportunities.

We honor diversity and inclusion. Our work included lesser-known stories about historically disenfranchised communities such as African Americans during the Jim Crow era, gay suffragists, and Indigenous activists.

We reach Californians statewide. From Calaveras to San Diego counties, we provided free reference services and answered inquiries on topics ranging from genealogy to the environmental impact of mining.

We increase access to CHS collections. We continued to digitize our collections and add them to the CHS Digital Library, and presented two online exhibitions to showcase special discoveries.

We form and strengthen effective and mutually beneficial partnerships. We collaborated with the Chinese Historical Society of America to produce a 2022 exhibition and program series exploring the Chinese immigrant experience during the years of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

We advocate the relevance of history’s lessons to our contemporary lives. Our public programs demonstrated how history—even the unjust past—can be the basis for positive change and create healing for Indigenous peoples, bring communities together, and address housing issues.

Thank you to our valued contributors! The California Historical Society is grateful for the support we received from AT&T Corporation, California Humanities, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation, Hochstein/Lucan Family Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, Arthur & Toni Remba Rock, San Francisco Flower Mart LLC, Yerba Buena Community Benefit District, and hundreds of other foundations, corporations, individuals and families.

2021 IMPACT REPORT

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OTHER MAJOR PROJECTS

CHS contributed 1,300 items from its collections to the California State University Japanese American Digitization Project, including correspondence and artwork created by incarcerated Japanese Americans; records of activists working to overturn Executive Order 9066 and end the government’s policy of mass removal and incarceration; and documents from the wartime authorities who enforced the exclusion orders and administered the camps.

digitallibrary.californiahistoricalsociety.org

CHS published eighty inquiry sets of instructional materials for the Teaching California website. Currently in beta, the project is a collaboration between CHS and the California History-Social Science Project to provide free online resources for teachers in classrooms across the state. The inquiry sets are designed to improve reading, writing, and critical thinking and inspire students to discover the past.

teachingcalifornia.org

CHS published nearly two dozen blog posts on a range of subjects, including anti-Asian violence; the art of lithography; California Black History Month (resource guide); the California Flower Market; the gay leather community in San Francisco; the global history of the nineteenth century gold rushes; and Researching Your Family History (resource guide).

californiahistoricalsociety.org/blog

IN PERSON

Once pandemic restrictions lifted, the California Historical Society reopened its galleries on April 15, 2021, with two exhibitions: San Francisco Photographs by Minor White, a selection of gelatin silver prints of post–World War II San Francisco that White gave to CHS in 1957, and From the Gold Rush to the Earthquake: Selections from the Collection, featuring California’s late nineteenth-century history. 678 Mission Street San Francisco

ONLINE

CHS celebrated its 150th anniversary with an online exhibition California Counties: 150+ Years Documenting California History and a limited-edition calendar. Staff scoured the archives for images from each county, californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibitions

CHS went live for the first time and presented fifteen webinars. Topics included African American life in the West during Jim Crow; the role of sex in the suffrage movement; and California’s war on Dust Bowl refugees. The most viewed program was Harlem of the West: The San Francisco Fillmore Jazz Era.
youtube.com/californiahistoricalsociety1871

CHS worked statewide to inspire and empower people to make California’s past a meaningful part of their contemporary lives. The map above shows the number, location, and reach of CHS supporters throughout the state between January 1 and December 31, 2021.

Members & Contributors
Board of Trustees

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