

I. BEGINNINGS

A community college, like other institutions in our society, is a product of its inheritance. The land provides a physical setting, the people a character, and the society itself - its traditions and values, an identity for growth and becoming. Such is the legacy of Chabot College, set on the rich soil of the plains that border the Alameda, conceived by the people of these lands, and bearing the name of one of them whose life and work have been honored in several other areas of Alameda (and Solano) Counties.

Contrary to some popular opinion, however, the College was not named for Anthony Chabot, pioneer entrepreneur and philanthropist remembered mostly for his construction of Chabot Reservoir, better known in this region as Lake Chabot, and for other water associated projects. However, this lake, its access road, and other physical areas being named for him, gave the Chabot name wide acceptance in what is now the South County Community College District. When it was thought that the first permanent site for the College would be in the area of Lake Chabot, the name by which the institution is now known was selected. An article in the October 25, 1961 issue of the Morning News, San Leandro, California, begins with the following paragraph: "Don't address those letters to South County Junior College. For now it's Chabot J.C." The College Board, on the previous night, "adopted the new 'handle'," the article reports, "after hearing the results of recent student voting on proposed names."



Steve Hatfield



Dolores Bardon

Other proposed names: College of the East Bay, and Bayview College. Student Steve Hatfield, chairman of a student body committee on a permanent name for the institution was quoted as saying the students "desired Chabot because of its association with Lake Chabot. They hoped their choice would be an indication that the school (now temporarily situated in San Leandro) should be located by the lake."

The school's colors - brown and gold, were adopted at the same meeting after student body pro-tem president Dolores Bardon told the Board

that no other J.C. in California had those colors. But the Lake Chabot site was not selected. A bond issue, with what was then called the Fry site on Hesperian Boulevard included in the language, was to come before the voters of the then South County Junior College District the following April, and the permanent College was to be built there - with the name already selected. But we are ahead of our story.

Perspectives

Let us look first at the land. Fronting San Francisco Bay, the East Bay area is marked by a long mountain range comprised of the Berkeley-Oakland-Hayward hills, which hem in a narrow coastal plain. Numerous creeks and rivers carry water from the hills to the bay. The largest of these, the Alameda, flows from what is now Pleasanton through the Niles Canyon and southwardly to the sea. This long, meandering river, from which the county took its name, regularly replenishes the rich soils of the fertile plains where highly productive agricultural development characterized the area in earlier times, and where the college now stands. Those farm lands have long given way to urban development, now the site of homes, shopping centers, industrial plants, and the college. Yet the Alameda continues to feed the water table, percolating all through the coastal plain to provide the area with a nearly independent water supply. Here, amid the soft trade winds from the bay, and against the backdrop of the Hayward hills, the founders of Chabot College located a school for residents of the South County region.

This same geographic setting provided a bountiful existence for people. Historically, those first here were Indians living in scattered settlements along the San Leandro and other creeks, and on coastal sites notably the Coyote Hills near the present Newark, where artifacts span a period of 4,000 years. Then came the Spanish-speaking, whose language, customs and culture were to alter the land and the indigenous people. The Spaniards first appeared from Mexico in California in 1769. Three years later an expedition was sent to explore the East Bay region and select a mission site. Mission San Jose was established in 1797, just south-west of present-day Hayward. Nestled up against the hills near present-day Niles, the mission remains a symbol of our Spanish past.

When Mexico won its independence from the Spanish crown in 1821, the national government broke up the missions and created large land grants which were issued to prominent *Californios* who established huge ranches in this area. Notable among them in the East Bay region were Luis Peralta and his sons in what is now the Oakland area, Jose Estudillo in San Leandro, and Guillermo Castro in Hayward. Also in the Hayward area were Francisco Soto and Jesus Vallejo, brother of Mariano Vallejo of Sonoma whose land



MISSION SAN JOSE. Founded June 11, 1797, by Padre Lasuen at a place called Oroyson by the Indians. The quiet and peaceful aspect of the Mission still clusters about the place where the little town named for the mission stands. The mission is situated near the slope of hills with far-stretching vineyards nearby as in its earliest days when the good Padres taught the Indians to sow, reap, make soap, and tan. All the Mission lands were sold in 1846. Photo appeared originally in a San Francisco Sunday Chronicle supplement in the early 1900's. Loaned for inclusion in this book by the Hayward Area Historical Society.

holdings overlapped the site of present-day Chabot College. There were many more, including the early Portugese, but a brief text such as this one cannot include them all.

When the Americans, after 1848, came to the region, the land was again transformed. During the heyday of the Gold Rush, pioneer farmers - some of them disappointed miners - migrated into the area and acquired lands to develop farms and homesteads. These homesteads grew into villages in the 1850's, among them what came to be known as Mt. Eden at the junction of what is now Hesperian Boulevard and Jackson Road. A decade later, Mt. Eden was a thriving township noted for its diverse crops, a salt works and boat landing. Among the pioneers of that community was Cornelius Mohr, a German immigrant who purchased Soto-Vallejo lands for a grain farm. Mohr's farm flourished over the years, and grew with the developing economy as Mt. Eden evolved into a community of large-scale farms, orchards and vineyards. Cornelius Mohr died in 1878, and the farm passed on to his son, William, who further diversified operations to produce a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, experiment with seeds and plants, and develop improved grain seeds and iris bulbs. By 1880, William Mohr's agricultural operations were an important part of the whole growth of the area which made Alameda the State's leading agricultural county, and Hayward the principal township and railroad center.

From 1880 through 1945, Mt. Eden retained its character as a small, rural community. Descendants of the pioneers continued to operate many of the

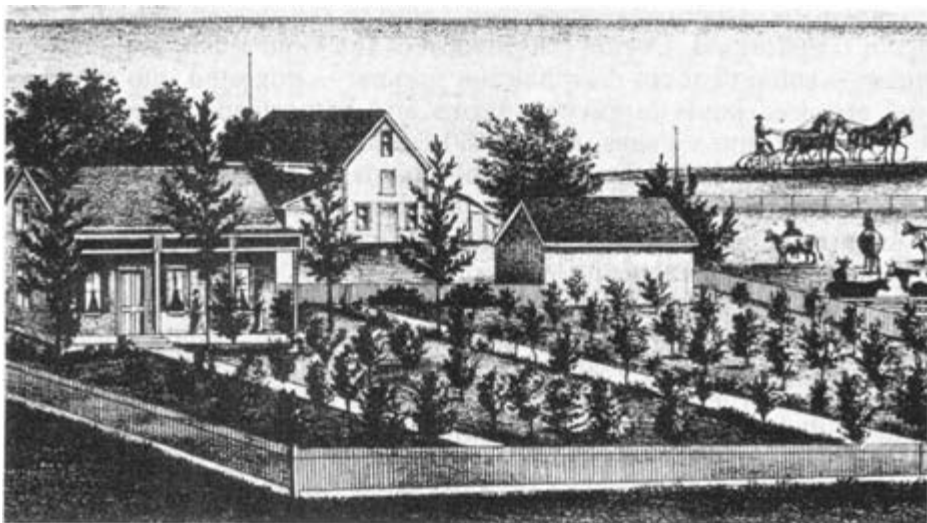


LOCATION OF MOHR FARM (Upper right corner of plate). This farm was to become the campus of Chabot College. Taken from the Bicentennial Reprint of the Official and Historical Atlas Map of Alameda County, originally published at Oakland, California, 1878. Used by permission of Western Tanager Press, Santa Cruz.

farms in the area on original holdings. Newcomers, including Chinese and Japanese, established businesses, farms, and flower nurseries. The Mohr family farm flourished until the death of William Mohr in an auto accident in 1923. After that his property was leased to various tenants and declined in production over the next decade as a result of mismanagement.

In 1936, William's daughter, Marian, and her husband, Jeryl Fry, took over the farm. They introduced needed improvements, renovated the old homestead and improved the irrigation system, re-

turning the farm to its former productivity. Renamed the Fry Estate, it continued to be a landmark on the edge of Mt. Eden community until it was acquired following the bond issue of 1961 for the Hayward campus of Chabot College.



OLD EDEN TOWNSHIP. The residence of John C. Willie. Located in the Rancho Arroyo area, this residence exemplifies the quiet charm of the early period. It is near the Mohr farm, which was the site later to become the permanent campus of Chabot College. Taken from the Bicentennial Reprint of the Official and Historical Atlas Map of Alameda County, originally published at Oakland, California, 1878. Used by permission of Western Tanager Press, Santa Cruz.



David Starr Jordan. Reproduced courtesy of the Stanford University Archives.



Alexis F. Lange. Reproduced through the courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

California's Junior Colleges

Having looked briefly into the historical perspectives of the land and the people, let us also look briefly at the junior college system Chabot College was to become a part of. The idea of a two-year institution beyond high school had begun to attract educators across the nation around the turn of the century. University leaders, in particular, were interested in the idea because the two-year schools could carry some of the lower-division load of the traditional baccalaureate institution and permit the university to expand upon and improve upper division and graduate curricula. U.C.'s Alexis Lange, Stanford's David Starr Jordan, and State Superintendent of Schools Will Wood were among those who supported the concept. They were anxious to broaden the state's educational system overall, and to provide students with education and training that would better prepare them for careers in California's increasingly complex society. The framework for funding, developing and setting this system in motion was established by these and other dedicated educators and State leaders, with a variety of sources at both state and local levels identified to pay the bills. Importantly, the principle of local option was emphasized in the legislation that created the platforms for these colleges.

By 1931 some thirty-five of them were operating in the State. In that same year the State Education Code was adopted, standardizing and improving provisions for organizing and operating junior colleges - an action which brought mixed blessings, for the code was henceforth subject to revision by the legislature according to the political climate of any given time, the temperament and special interests of lawmakers.

During the hard times of the Depression years, for example, and the emergency years of World War II, considerable reactionary legislation was adopted which limited the development of the junior colleges. Depression conditions also resulted in the development of Federal Grants to needy students, on the other hand, distributed by the newly created National Youth Authority of that era - a forerunner of many other student financial aid programs of later years.

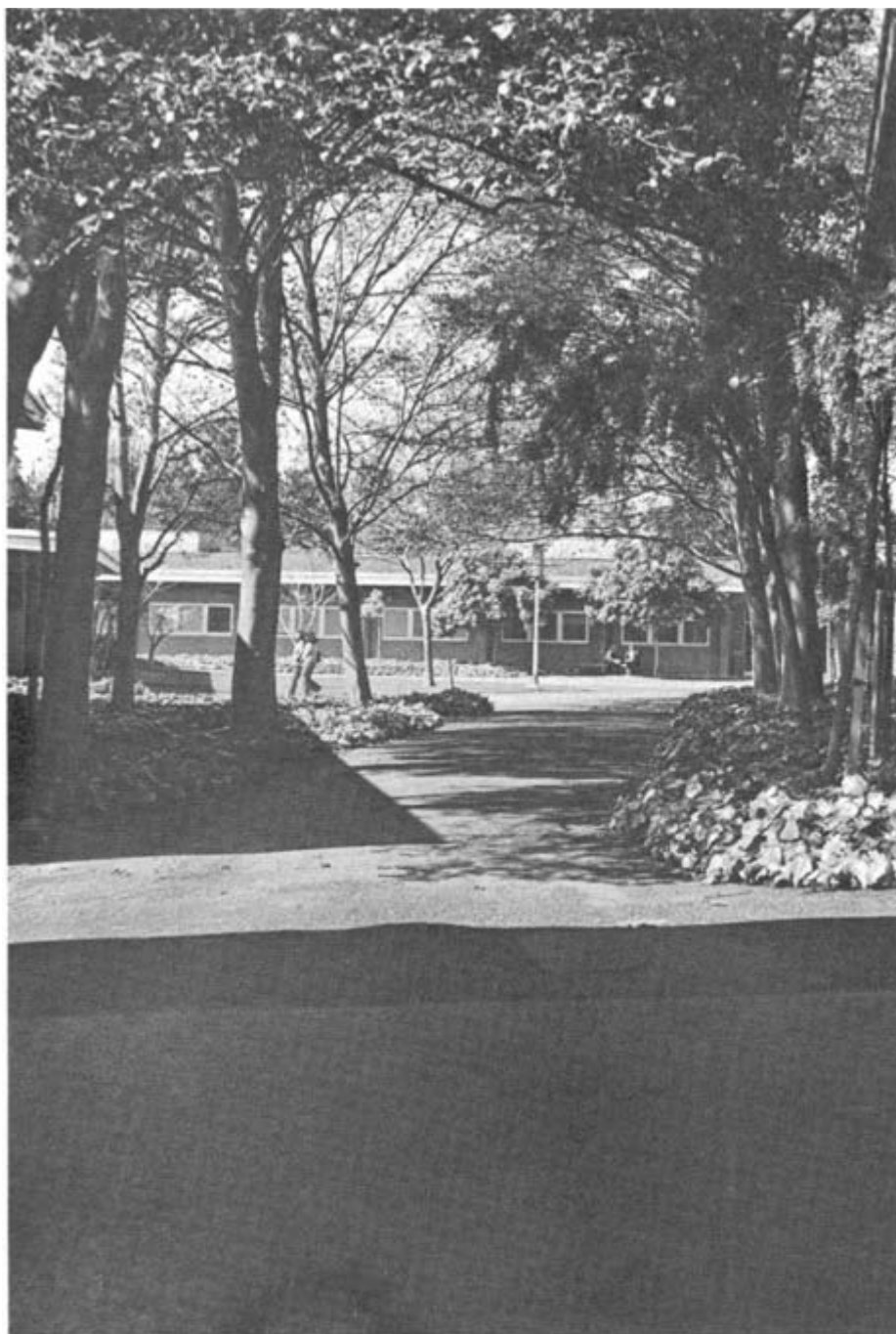
In 1945, following World War II, California's junior colleges entered a stage marked by great expansion and development. The state experienced a population explosion sparked by both a post-war baby boom and a flow of people from out of state. Both urban and industrial growth and development were marked in this period - particularly in the San Francisco and Los Angeles metropolitan areas, where transformation of the physical environment was spectacular. This growth, in turn, brought about new educational needs, to which junior college growth responded. In Sacramento, landmark measures altered the junior college system to help it respond to changing conditions. One law in particular, enacted in 1948, stipulated that any California resident with a high school diploma was entitled to enroll in a junior college. Another allowed non-high school graduates to take a general educational development (G.E.D.) test to qualify for admission. Both of these measures contributed to the broadening of the "open door" policy for which the California junior colleges were to become widely known, and strengthened the principle of equal opportunity for all who wished to enter, and could profit from post-secondary level education. At the same time, as returning WWII veterans were coming to the junior colleges in greater numbers - creating a demand for enlarged programs, a variety of legislation was also coming out which contributed to junior college growth. The so-called "G.I. Bill," the National Defense Education Act, foundation programs such as the Carnegie Fund, and programs such as those of the National Science Foundation had their impact on enrollments at the JCs as well as at the four-year institutions. In California, a series of laws were passed that increased financial support and improved organizational procedures for junior colleges. The net result of these measures, as suggested earlier in this review, was to give the college districts a sound basis for sustaining control over their local institutions within the framework of state permissive law and financial assistance - unique features of California's junior college system.

The junior colleges in California reached a high point in their development in 1960 with the passage of the Donahue Act, which instituted a master plan for higher education that better defined the relationships between and roles of the various institutions of higher education in the state - designating the two-year colleges and four-year state colleges as undergraduate institutions

primarily, and the University of California primarily for postgraduate study and basic research. The plan also called for every community to be part of a junior college district. Junior colleges were given responsibility for providing basic academic and general education, technical-vocational training, and preparation for students who would continue their education at four-year state or private colleges and universities. Programs of community services and continuing education were also provided for. The state master plan thus gave great impetus both to enrollments and to the creation of new junior colleges throughout the state.

The Southern part of the East Bay area was one of the areas profoundly affected by these various developments. There was massive movement of people and new industry into the south county area during the 1950's - particularly in San Leandro, Hayward and Fremont, and across the hills into the Livermore-Amador Valley. Understandably, great expansion was experienced in the same period in public elementary and secondary education, so that, by 1960, the need for both a junior college and a state college in the area became apparent. Chabot College was a product of this demand.





EVENING SHADOWS give the Hayward campus a "woody" look in this photo by student photographer William "Bill" Yee.