Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection

Special Collections Department

Robert E. Kennedy Library
1 Grand Avenue
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Contact Information
Special Collections Department
Robert E. Kennedy Library
1 Grand Avenue
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
Phone: 805/756-2305
Fax: 805/756-5770
Email: archives@calpoly.edu
URL: http://lib.calpoly.edu/specialcollections/index.html

Processed by:
Teresa Van Doren
Processed by:
Catherine Trujillo
Date Completed:
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Encoded by:
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Descriptive Summary
Title: Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection
Date (inclusive): circa 1960-2003
Date (bulk): 1999-2002
Collection number: MS 098
Creator: Echavarria, Manuel, 1940-Valle, Victor M., 1950-Cuauhtémoc, Lara
Extent: 7 boxes, (8.58 linear feet)
Language: English
Repository: Special Collections, Robert E. Kennedy Library
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, California 93407
Abstract: The Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection contains materials relating to migrant farm workers on the Central Coast of California, including oral histories, reports, correspondence, strike ephemera, and secondary sources. Photographs taken by Manuel Echavarria documenting the United Farm Worker movement and used in the exhibit "iViva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast" are included in the collection.
http://digital.lib.calpoly.edu/rekl-centralcoastfarmlabor-ms098
Provenance
Gifts in 1999 and 2010.
Restrictions on Access
Collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information on access policies and to obtain a copy of the Researcher Registration form, please visit the Special Collections Access page.

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item]. Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Abbreviations Used:

UFW: United Farmworkers of America
CFA: California Faculty Association

Biography

The California farm labor movement started in the early 1960s with the unionization of the migrant farm workers. In 1962 César Chávez and Dolores Huerta founded a union for the farm workers of the Central Valley of California, the National Farm Workers Association. This organization joined the Filipino American Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) in 1966 to create the United Farm Workers of America (UFW). The farm labor movement in the San Joaquin Valley, known as "La Causa" ("The Cause"), grew due to dissatisfaction with unfair pay, unsafe living conditions, and lack of pensions of Valley farm workers. With the growing support of the public César Chávez called for a grape boycott in 1966 and started the 5-year Delano grape strike. In 1975 the California legislature passed the Agricultural Labor Relations Act giving farm workers the "right of collective bargaining."

The farmlands of the Santa Maria Valley, Oceano and Guadalupe switched from vegetable farms into over 5,000 acres of strawberry fields by the 1980s. Migrant farmer workers, including Mixtec Indians from Oaxaca, Mexico, and laborers from Michoacán, Mexico, and from the Philippines, migrated to work the seasonal strawberry crops with the hopes of finding work in other fields when the season ended. The strawberry is considered "la fruta del diablo" ("the fruit of the devil") to migrant workers because strawberry picking is the "lowest paid, most difficult, and least desirable farm work in California."

Manuel Echavarria

The photographer Manuel Echavarria was born in 1940 in Lorraine, Texas. His father was a former military cadet originally from Michoacán, Mexico and his mother was from Texas. Echavarria was three years old when his mother died, and when he was six the family moved to Guadalupe, California to find work in the fields. They worked in the fields of Oceano and Guadalupe until Echavarria was almost fifteen, when he dropped out of school. In 1969 Echavarria organized for the United Farm Workers of America and in 1999 Echavarria served as a board member of Federacion Unida En La Reserma ze Servicios y Abogacia (FUERZA), advocating for better treatment of strawberry pickers.

In the 1960s, over the span of ten years, Echavarria took photographs of the Santa Maria Valley farm workers laboring in the conditions that would drive them to join the United Farm Workers (United Farm Workers of America). Although he was an untrained photographer the photographs brilliantly illustrate the struggle for farm worker rights, and depict United Farm Workers of America president César Chávez, United Farm Workers of America supporters, picketers, and the local farm workers and their families. The film for these photographs was not developed until Victor Valle’s preservation efforts in 1999. Valle said ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast is the first photographic history of Central Coast Valley farm workers to "commemorate and give meaning to their collective experiences."

Victor M. Valle

Victor M. Valle, Professor of Ethnic Studies at California Polytechnic State University, has written several books including Recipe of Memory: Five Generations of Mexican Cuisine, Latino Metropolis, and most recently City of Industry: Genealogies of Power in Southern California. Valle won a Pulitzer Prize in 1984 for an "in-depth examination of southern California's growing Latino community by a team of editors and reporters" from the Los Angeles Times. Valle interviewed Manuel Echavarria and later collaborated with co-curators Catherine Trujillo of Special Collections, Kennedy Library at Cal Poly and Pedro I. Arroyo to create a traveling exhibit of Echavarria's Santa Maria farm worker photographs entitled ¡Viva La Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast. Valle also spearheaded the project to bring the preservation prints to Cal Poly.

Sources


Scope and Content Note
Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection (MS 098) contains strike ephemera, secondary sources, reports, and oral histories chronicling the farm labor movement on the Central Coast of California, from 1960 to 2003. Strike ephemera contains United Farm Workers of America flyers from the early 1970s and a strike song on CD with lyrics. Secondary sources include articles about Dolores Huerta’s visit to Cal Poly and controversy over the César Chávez holiday. Central Coast immigration and discrimination school scandals are documented in pages from a scrapbook of newspaper clippings, reports and correspondence. Subject files include oral history interviews Cal Poly Professor Victor Valle and Cal Poly Ethnic Studies students conducted in 2001 and 2002. The Subject Files compiled by Victor Valle include clippings and correspondence on the Manuel Echavarría Photograph Archive. The collection also includes photographs by Manuel Echavarría documenting migrant worker conditions and activities in Santa Maria, California circa 1960 to 1973, and ephemera from the traveling exhibit ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast.

The Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection is divided into four series:
Series 1: Preservation Prints By Photographer Manuel Echavarría, circa 1960-2003
Series 2: Subject Files and Secondary Sources on the Manuel Echavarría Photograph Archive, 1995-2001
Series 3. Files on the Exhibit ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast, 2000-2003
Series 4. Central Coast Farm Workers Subject Files and Secondary Sources, circa 1970-2002

The Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection is housed in seven boxes, with Preservation Prints By Photographer Manuel Echavarría and Central Coast Farm Workers Subject Files containing the most extensive portions of the collection. Where possible, the provenance, or original organization, of the papers has been preserved. However, in order to simplify access to the collection for researchers, some materials in specific formats and topics were reorganized and refoldered to more accurately reflect their contents.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has generously funded the arrangement and description of this collection, along with matching funds from California Polytechnic State University.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Subjects
Chávez, César, 1927-1993.
Huerta, Dolores, 1930- United Farm Workers.
Agricultural laborers--Labor unions--California.
Labor leaders--United States--History.
Agricultural laborers--California.
Strikes and lockouts--Vineyard laborers--California.
Migrant agricultural laborers--California.
National Farm Workers Association--Archives.

Genres and Forms of Material
Correspondence.
Oral Histories.
Photographs.
Reports.
Interview notes.
Secondary sources.
Related Materials

Materials Cataloged Separately:
Oral history interviews produced by documentarian John Murillo have been cataloged with separate MARC records.

Related Collections:
Special Collections, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo: Guadalupe Speaks, (MS 120)
Labor Archives & Research Center, SFSU: United Farm Workers Grape Boycott Papers, 1952-1982
San Joaquin Special Collections Library, California State University, Fresno: Guide to the San Joaquin Valley Farm Labor Collection, 1947-1974
Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine: Guide to the United Farm Workers Information Fair Collection (MS-R015)

   Scope and Content Note

   A. Preservation Prints
   Scope and Content Note
   Contains 51 preservation prints (images #6, #28, and #46 are not included in the collection) of the Echavarria migrant worker photographs printed in 1999, and the captions list, arranged numerically according to the caption list, from circa 1960-1973. 1 box.
   Box 1, Folder 0 Preservation Prints, circa 1960-1973
   Box 1, Folder 1 Caption List of Photographs, undated

   B. Research Prints
   Scope and Content Note
   Contains 51 research prints of the Echavarria migrant worker photographs, arranged numerically according to the caption list, from circa 1960-1973. 1 box.
   Box 2, Folder 0 Research Copies, circa 1960-1973

   C. Copy Prints
   Scope and Content Note
   Contains 41 copy prints of the photographs of the Echavarria migrant worker photographs, arranged numerically according to the caption list, from circa 1960-1973. 1 box.
   Box 3, Folder 0 Copy Prints, circa 1960-1973

   D. Framed Print
   Scope and Content Note
   Contains one oversized framed print of the Echavarria migrant worker photographs showing farm workers with "El Cortito" ("the Short-handed Hoe"), 2003. 1 box
   Box 4, Folder 0 Framed Print, 2003
E. Negatives

Scope and Content Note
Contains negatives of the Echavarria migrant worker photographs, arranged numerically according to the caption list, from circa 1960-1973. 1 box.

Box 5, Folder 1
Negatives, circa 1960-1973


Scope and Content Note
Contains one subseries: A. Manuel Echavarria Photograph Archive Files.

A. Manuel Echavarria Photograph Archive Files

Scope and Content Note
Contains flyers, correspondence, articles, newspaper clippings, memos, brochures, report, and a map, compiled by Victor Valle regarding the establishment of the Manuel Echavarria Photograph Archive, arranged alphabetically by last name or subject, from 1995-2001. 4 folders.

Box 6, Folder 1
Echavarria Archive at Cal Poly, 1999-2001
Box 6, Folder 2
Latino Parks and Recreation, Correspondence and Publications, 1998-2001
Box 6, Folder 3
Physical Description: 222-224

Box 6, Folder 4
Mixtec Indians, Newspaper Clippings, 1977

3. Files on the Exhibit ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast, 2000-2003

Scope and Content Note
Contains one subseries: A. Secondary Sources on the Exhibit, ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast.

A. Secondary Sources on the Exhibit ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast

Scope and Content Note
Contains correspondence, articles, newspaper clippings, flyers, exhibit text, a press release, memos, and grant application, arranged alphabetically by author or subject, from 2000-2003. 11 folders.

Box 6, Folder 5
Andlig, Maya. County Historical Museum Art Exhibit Celebrates César Chávez, California Farm Workers. San Luis Obispo, CA: Cal Poly Public Affairs Office, 17 April 2001
Box 6, Folder 6
Arts Council Grant, Application and Correspondence, regarding ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast Exhibit, 2000-2001
Box 6, Folder 7
Physical Description: H1

Box 6, Folder 8
Exhibit Memos, undated
Box 6, Folder 9
Exhibit Panel Draft Text for ¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast, undated
Box 6, Folder 10
Heritage Shared Living on the Land Flyer, undated
Physical Description: D18

Box 6, Folder 12 | "Latino Laborers." *Beach Gazette*, 23 March 2000  
Physical Description: B1

Physical Description: F5

Box 6, Folder 14 | Stulberg, Kate. ""*¡Viva La Causa!* Photo Exhibit in Mid-March to Depict Farm Worker Community in San Luis Obispo County." *Art Rag*, Spring 2001  
Physical Description: 1+

Box 6, Folder 15 | *¡Viva la Causa! A Decade of Farm Labor Organizing on the Central Coast* Exhibit Flyers, 2001-2003

4. Central Coast Farm Workers Subject Files and Secondary Sources, circa 1970-2002

Scope and Content Note
Contains five subseries: A. Central Coast Farm Workers Subject Files, B. Secondary Sources on Dolores Huerta, C. Secondary Sources on César Chávez Day, D. Secondary Sources on Central Coast Farm Workers, and E. Oral Histories.

A. Central Coast Farm Workers Subject Files

Scope and Content Note
Contains flyers, CD, lyrics, program, reports, scrapbook, newspaper clippings, bumper sticker, transcripts, and correspondence, arranged alphabetically by subject, circa 1970-2002. 8 folders.

Box 6, Folder 17 | César Chávez Day, Program, 2002
Box 6, Folder 18 | "Corrido A César Chávez," Song, CD, circa 1970
Box 6, Folder 18 | "Corrido A César Chávez," Typescript Lyrics, undated
Box 6, Folder 18 | Lecture by César E. Chávez, CD, 1992
Box 6, Folder 19 | Farm Workers Strike History, undated
Box 6, Folder 20 | "The Schools of Guadalupe...A Legacy of Educational Oppression," Report, 1973
Box 6, Folder 21 | Scrapbook of Central Coast School Controversies, Newspaper Clippings, compiled by Lara Cuauhtémoc, 1973-1974
Box 6, Folder 21 | Correspondence, 1974
Box 6, Folder 22 | Strike Ephemera, Bumper Sticker, undated
Box 6, Folder 23 | United Farm Workers of America, Flyers, 1972, 1975

B. Oral Histories

Scope and Content Note
Contains typed oral history transcriptions, drafts of transcriptions, and sound recordings of interviews, in English and Spanish, arranged alphabetically by last name of the interviewee, from 2001-2002. 4 folders.

Box 7, Folder 1 | Echavarria, Manuel. Oral History Interview by Victor Valle, Corrected Draft of Transcript, undated
Box 7, Folder 2 | Echavarria, Manuel. Oral History Interview by Victor Valle, Transcript, undated
Box 7, Folder 3 | Pacheco, Señor Paulino. Oral History Interview by Fidel Castro, Cassette (Spanish), 16 November 2002
Box 7, Folder 4 | Villarino, Liz. Oral History Interview by Katie Minton, Transcript, Cassette, Questions, 20 October 2001
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<td>Dickerson, Bryan. &quot;United Farm Workers of America Co-founder Huerta Shares 'Field' Experience.&quot; <em>Mustang Daily</em>, 10 April 2002</td>
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<td>Dolores Huerta, &quot;Her Role in the History of the United Farm Workers of America,&quot; Flyer, 2002</td>
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<td>&quot;Braceros' in Search of Recognition, Money.&quot; <em>The Tribune</em>, 2 October 2001</td>
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Scope and Content Note
http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/95nov/strawber.htm