

Date: September 30, 2026

To: Sacramento Historical Society

From: Joyce Wallach

Re: Research/**Leaders and Social Elites**

Thank you for sending this memo to SHS members to see if any might share their insights or direct me to reference materials. I am researching for an Historical Family Saga Series (1848 - 1917). This story is set in Sacramento. I am covering the "San Francisco Pipeline" and the interdependence of Sacramento, San Francisco, Chico, and Virginia City, Nevada.

My theme is how major historical events led to societal shifts. I'm covering the rise of wealth, economic power, political power, and social power. My perspective and lens are through prominent women. I am starting with Jane Stanford and Margaret Crocker.

I will insert my characters into their sphere and their husbands' sphere. My immediate priority is identifying men and women to base my fictional characters on. These could be individuals or composites of individuals. I intend my characters to be on a similar level of wealth and social power of the Big Four and their wives.

I'm thinking my male lead made his fortune "mining the miners" and then with the intercontinental railway, possibly in transporting produce in refrigerated rail cars or other goods to the East Coast.

His wife will be in the same high society circles as Jane and Margaret and involved in their social causes and philanthropies.

Sacramento's Black social elites was a very small population. I will include fictional characters in their social strata. So, also looking for historical figures to base these characters on.

Additionally, I am interested in the lives of domestic staff of white and black social elites.

Further to these goals, I am interested in locating letters, diaries, journals and finding newspaper and magazine articles. I hope to find details of social gatherings including teas, dinners, and balls, "good works" including charitable endeavors and social policy initiatives to improve health and welfare.

I have, or am waiting on, the following books.

Iron Will: The Life and Letters of Jane Stanford.

Fashion of the Gilded Age.

The Ladies' Book of Etiquette and Manual of Politeness (1860).

The Gentlemen's' Book of Etiquette and Manual of Politeness (1860).

The Big Four.

Disaster & Triumph: Sacramento Women, Gold Rush through the Civil War (has a chapter about Margaret Crocker).