



History
Lives Here

PAJARO VALLEY Historical Association

Spring 2026

A Lifetime Stored in a Box Kate Moore of Chittenden

By Priscilla Partridge

A box arrived at PVHA—labeled “Moore, Chittenden.” The items inside had been left behind in a house where Kate Moore and her son had once lived, and remained there for nearly 100 years, until the passing of the next family of occupants. Most of the items are older than a century and had been brought to the house when it was built in 1923. Among the items are more than 30, mostly unidentified, photographs taken in studios all over northern California, plus Illinois, Ohio and New York; a handwritten story about her mother during the

Civil War in Illinois; a handwritten bequest of inheritances to her children; a copy of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy with annotations by Kate Moore; and an 1859 *Bible*. Hidden within the *Bible* was an inscription: “To Kate Boston, From her loving Father, 1860 Virginia, Ill.”

The 1910 census for Watsonville showed that Kate Moore was living with her husband of 21 years, James E. Moore, and their son Wm E.E. Moore. James was a dentist, Kate was postmistress in the Chittenden post office, and the son worked as an



Kate Moore

agent at the express office. A search of the *Polk's* business and residential directories showed “James E. Moore, dentist” at 439A Main Street from
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Pulitzer Prize Plaque on Display at PVHA



The large Pulitzer Prize plaque received by the *Register-Pajaronian* in 1956 is now prominently displayed at the PVHA archive. The two round insets on the plaque are much larger versions of the front and back of a 4-oz., 2 3/4-inch gold coin also awarded to the R-P in 1956. The coin's location is unknown.

The PVHA Archive is now the custodian of a plaque given to the *Register-Pajaronian* in 1956 when the paper won the top award in American journalism that year—the Pulitzer Prize in Journalism for Meritorious Public Service. They were the smallest-circulation daily newspaper ever to win the top prize.

The high award was in recognition of the paper's 18-month long fight against vice and corruption in Santa Cruz County. In the face of threats, even at gunpoint, it took on 28-year-old District Attorney Charles L. Moore Jr. and exposed his gambling and vice connections. The

R-P's editor, Frank Orr, was threatened with prosecution by the young district attorney who later resigned rather than face trial for misconduct in office.

More direct threats were received by photographer Sam Vestal and reporter William Kennedy who were held at gunpoint by Raymond Jehl, a former brothel owner, who became “vice advisor” to District Attorney Moore. Jehl was convicted and sentenced to one to 14 years in prison for using his connections with Moore as the basis of an extortion racket.

(From *The California Publisher*, Vol. XXXV, No. 8, June 14, 1956)

Jay R. Leite Joins PVHA Board

Jay Leite (pronounced LAY-tee) was recently added to the PVHA Board of Directors and will serve as treasurer after the retirement of Ralph Jacobs, who was on the board for over 10 years. Leite has been a licensed certified public accountant since 1977. For most of his career he has been in private practice, specializing in assisting financially stressed businesses. He is a graduate of San José State University with a bachelor's degree in accounting. He was the CFO of Borland Software during its transition from a publicly traded company to private ownership. He has been a resident of the Pajaro Valley since 1982. 🌿



Jay R. Leite

Partnering with Watsonville Library

The PVHA is partnering with the Watsonville Public Library in a display of Native American artifacts from the PVHA archives. The items will be on display from mid-March to

mid-May at the library in two areas: downstairs across from the information desk and upstairs near the Reading Room. The focus of the current display is plants and seeds used by

Native Americans. The PVHA contributed baskets, a mortar and pestle, a fishing pole, and deer-hoof rattles used in ceremonial dance. 🌿

PVHA

**Preserving the History
of the Greater Pajaro Valley
Established 1940
Incorporated 1956**

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PVHA Vintage Picnic Set for June 27

The PVHA Vintage Picnic will be Saturday, June 27th at 11 am, under the oaks. PVHA Board President Ken Dobler will give a brief talk about farming in the 1950s. Member Dominic Muzzi will talk about growing Brussels sprouts. Both men have been longtime farmers in the Pajaro Valley. 🌿

One hundred years of wedding dresses

Now on display in the Bockius-Orr house are 17 vintage wedding dresses spanning 100 years, from 1890 to 1990. The dresses will be on display through August 2026. The Vintage Picnic would a perfect time to view and learn more about these beautiful dresses. 🌿



Lifetime Stored in a Box continued from p1

1907 to 1913, with a residence of Chittenden. (Chittenden was once a town along Highway 129, at the southeast tip of Santa Cruz County.) The *Pajaronian* announced on November 30, 1907, that Mrs. Moore had been appointed postmistress of Chittenden and that Dr. and Mrs. Moore had “extensive property interests near the Chittenden railroad station.”

The Moore family built a new home at 463 Old Chittenden Road in 1923. On November 30, 1926, the *Evening Pajaronian* reported under the heading “Flower Business Increasing” that “Mr. E.E. Moore, of Chittenden, has gone into the bulb business . . . and he finds a ready market for all the bulbs he can raise.” The business was a family affair, as photos show Kate holding cut daffodils, and Kate and daughter, Edna, with flowers in front of the new building.

Catherine Boston was born in 1853 in Virginia, Cass County, Illinois, about 30 miles from Springfield. A photo taken by a Columbus, Ohio, studio of a young lady wearing several medals upon her dress may have been a young Kate. Columbus was 400 miles away from home. Did she travel to Ohio alone? What organization did she belong to? Although Kate’s mother was born in Kentucky from southern parents, Mrs. Boston was firmly pro-Union during the Civil War. In Kate’s later years, she recounted a tale of her mother baiting her Southern-sympathizer sister to reveal the secret plans of the Copperhead League (a group of Southern sympathizers) in their town.

By age 23, Catherine had ventured west to Marysville, California without any known family members, where she gave birth to Edna on March 2, 1880. Whether she traveled as an unmarried woman or was married to husband Ed Fulton prior to her arrival in Yuba County is not known. Kate retained a friendship with a French family from Marysville named Royat. One of their sons was named William Boston, Kate’s father’s name.

Catherine, now called Kate, gave birth to a son, William E.E. Moore on September 20, 1889. The 1900 census in Marysville shows that she was married in 1888 to James E. Moore, a California-born man whose occupation was Dentist, and that her daughter Edna “Moore” was a “Dr. Dental Surgeon.” After this, Edna moved first to San Francisco where she may have trained, and where she married. She then moved to Santa Clara, and after that was a regular visitor to the house on Chittenden Road.

The box does not appear to contain any artifacts relating to James. He is likely present in one family portrait but none



Kate Moore and daughter Edna

show him at the Chittenden house. Directories show his dental business at 457A Main Street from 1916-1919 but he is no longer listed after that. An interesting find was the 1880 census listing of a 23 year old man born in California named James Moore. He lived in Colusa County at the time and his occupation was photographer. Many of the photographs have Colusa, Calif. on the covers. Could James have been the source of the photographs? Did he use photography to fund his dental career? Maybe Kate was an assistant or was she a photographer as well?

Kate is not found in censuses after 1930. A death record in Santa Cruz for Catherine A. Moore, whose spouse was “J. E.,” was found dated March 19, 1936. Edna Broad and William E. E. Moore both died in Santa Clara, Calif., Edna in 1965 and William in 1967. Neither sibling had children, so the box of memories remained tucked into a corner of the Chittenden house.

Kate appears to have been a confident, competent, and adventurous woman, as were her mother and her daughter. Traveling east to Ohio and then west to California as a teen or early 20-year old, alone or with family friends, during the years of wagons and early railroad is remarkable. Kate ran the rural Chittenden post office and farmed with her son. Husbands appear to have come and gone. Yet, the box of mementos, including handwritten comments in the Mary Baker Eddy book, give insight to the inner being of this pioneering woman. ❀

A Tale of Two Houses

By *Georg Romero*

In 1900, the intersection of East Beach Street (then Third Street) and Lincoln Street was within a block of the city limits, and less than a few yards from the start of the green fields that surrounded—and still do today, only further out—the city of Watsonville. Two of the houses currently at that intersection have been there for well over 100 years: the Warren Reynolds Porter home, and the George Seitz home.

The Porter Home

Warren Reynolds Porter (1860–1927) was quite the local political and financial mover and shaker. He managed the Loma Prieta Lumber Company, was associated with and ultimately became president of the Pajaro Valley National Bank, and served as the California Lieutenant Governor from 1907–1911. In 1900, William Weeks built a house for Mr. Porter at 302 E. Beach Street, which was lauded in the local press as one of the finest houses in town. The house was originally painted red with white trim, and today continues to elegantly grace the eastern corner of the intersection.



Warren Reynolds Porter from Wikipedia

The Seitz Home

Kitty-corner (actually “cater-corner”—from an old word for the diagonals between dots on dice) from this house was the home of George Seitz (1834–1911), at 265 E. Beach Street. The busy architect William Weeks built this house in 1896, a lovely classic Queen Anne style home. Mr. Seitz was a long-time owner of the Watsonville Opera House, as well as owner of the Mansion House during some of its most successful years as a hotel and eatery. He made his fortune as a young man mining for gold, silver, and copper in Nevada.



George Seitz

Today, both houses are surrounded by blocks and blocks of neighbors, with the city limits now nearly one mile down East Beach Street. Next time you drive by that intersection, try to picture what it would have been like 100 years ago, seeing these remarkable houses greeting you like punctuation marks at the end of town. 🐾



Above: the Porter Home, circa 1912

Below: The Porter Home, 302 East Beach Street, today



Above: the Seitz Home, circa 1905

Below: The Seitz Home, 265 East Beach Street, today





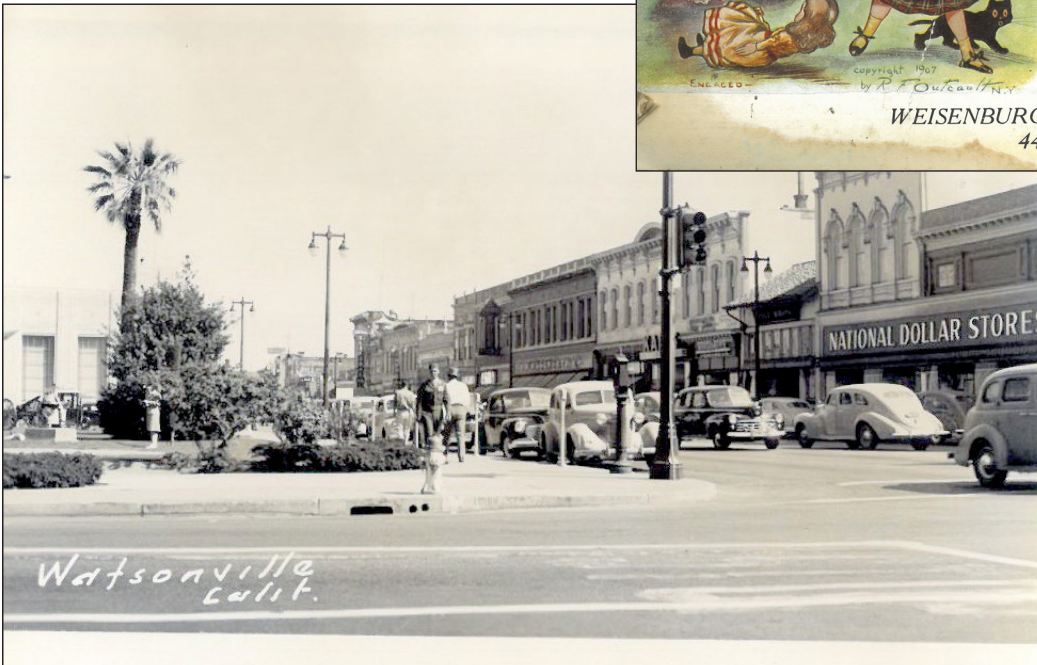
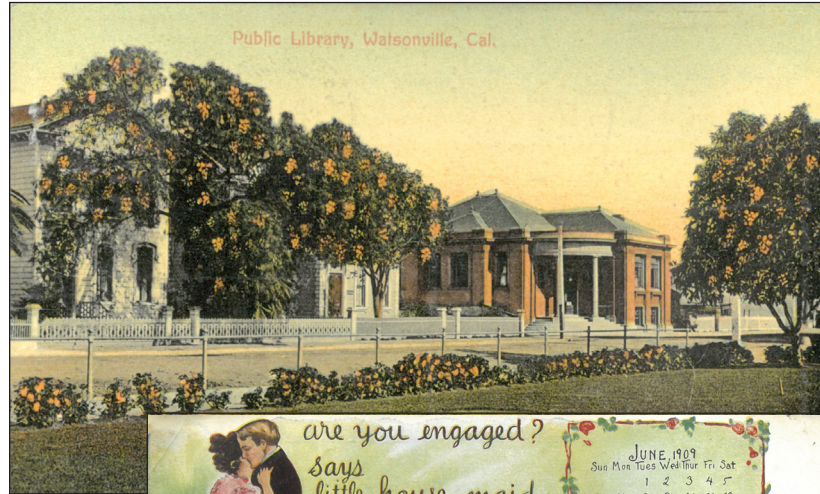
Ralph Jacobs retires

Ralph Jacobs recently retired as PVHA board treasurer after over 10 years of service. Board president Chuck Allen said that Ralph has been invaluable as the board's "grant writer, tour guide, maintenance person, treasurer, and negotiator, in addition to his standard activities as a Board Member. Ralph is almost beyond description. Ralph was the glue that held PVHA together." He will be missed.

Prodigious Profusions of Postcards

The PVHA vintage postcard collection has now grown to over 1500 postcards, thanks to a recent donation from former Watsonville City Attorney (and former Cabrillo College Board member) Alan Smith. Alan donated his collection of over 100 mostly local postcards, all of which have now been scanned and entered into our database. Postcard collecting has been extremely popular since the early 1900s, since they were quite affordable for most people, while providing a connection to so many exotic worlds both near and far.

Come by and spend a mesmerizing hour or two perusing our rich collection of glimpses into the Pajaro Valley's past!



Email Your Newsletter?

PVHA would like to know if you would prefer your newsletter emailed? If so, please send your email address to info@pajarovalleyhistory.org and ask to put you on our newsletter email list.



Memorials

Antoinette Lukrich

- Nicholas Banovac

Craig George

- Dana George

Charley Parkhurst

- Lee Parkhurst

Emil and Lois Gumper

- Nelle Lyons

Jane Borg and Alzora Snyder

- Randy Repass
and Sally Christine Rogers

Benjamin Evens

- Alice Bankhead

Grace Dickson Smith and Clara Dickson

- Anonymous

Betsy Woolpert

- Rose Ann Woolpert

Cloy McPherson Codiga

- Mary Ellen Irons

Gino Stefanini Jr.

- Louis and Geneva Ivanovich

Jim Barsi

- Louis and Geneva Ivanovich
• Carl and Fran Dobler



In Honor of

Dominic and Martha Muzzi (Merry Christmas)

- Lisa Muzzi



Donations

General

- Brandon and Trisha Kett
- Ralph and Susan Jacobs
- Steven and Kristin Smith
- Mabel Cole
- Patricia Lester

- Brandon and Trisha O'Conner Kett
- Tony Scurich
- Richard and Jean Skillicorn
- Steven and Kristin Smith
- Gayle Ivanovich'
- Skillicorn, Skillicorn, Bechtel ,LLC
- Skillicorn Trafton, LLC
- Skillicorn Ranch, LLC
- Richard and Jean Skillicorn
- Tony Scurich
- Phil and Shaz Ybarra
- Colleen Brunetti (Christmas Decorations)
- Margaret Bloom
- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Sharon Bystran
- Sally Christine Rogers and Randy Repass
- Rocky and Judy Franich
- Lester Pedrazzini

Research

- Dan Carrillo
- Watsonville Buddhist Temple



Welcome

New Members

- Kevin Larkin and Karen Zydner
- Jay Leite



Membership Renewals

November

- Virginia Avila
- Jody Belgard
- Peter and Kristy Bobeda
- Robert Brownell
- Carl and Fran Dobler
- Friends of S.C. State Parks
- Fred and Gail Haas
- Dobie and Ann Jenkins
- Donald Kenrichsen
- Wayne Kelly
- Elizabeth Ludden

- Dennis and Laurie Osmer
- Mark and Carol Pista
- Rita Pope
- Deborah Rider
- Adolph S. Rosekrans
- Susan Scurich
- Phil and Shaz Ybarra

December

- Doug and Noris Anderson
- Alice Bankhead
- Margaret Bloom
- Daniel and Patricia Davis
- Dana George
- Ron Gordon
- Marilyn Hyde
- Jeff and Karen Kane
- John and Yolanda Kane
- Luann Lauesen and Emmanuel Brion
- A.L. Lease Company
- Nelle Lyons
- Donn Marinovich
- Bill and Karen Moncovich
- Dominic and Martha Muzzi
- Lee Parkhurst
- James Scurich
- Tony Scurich

- Jim and Shirley Spain
- Art Wagner

January

- Chuck and Ramona Allen
- Annamarie Dugger
- Bridget Fairhurst
- Scott and Jodi Frensley
- Rosa Guerrero
- Mary Ellen Irons
- Paul and Carolyn Mecozzi
- Arlene Okamoto Minami
- Kathleen Reynolds
- Jeff and Lisa Rosendale
- Susan Scurich
- Alex Solano

February

- Ed and Kathleen Banks
- Rose Marie Cardona
- Loretta Estrada
- Gina Gallucci
- Donald and Diana Henrichsen
- Pat Johns
- Terry Locke-Paddon
- Joann Petznick
- Robert Wall

Ways to Donate

- Become a member.
- Upgrade your membership level.
- Make a general donation to the PVHA.
- Make a donation to our endowment funds: The Historic Preservation Fund or Archive Fund, both established at the Community Foundation.



The Story of Three Labor Camps

by Naomi Witmer and Tina Baine

In August 1942 the United States and Mexico instituted the Bracero Program to help provide farm-workers during the World War II labor shortage in the U.S. One month later, Braceros arrived in the Pajaro Valley for the sugar beet harvest. Only a small number were admitted, typically under short-term agreements.

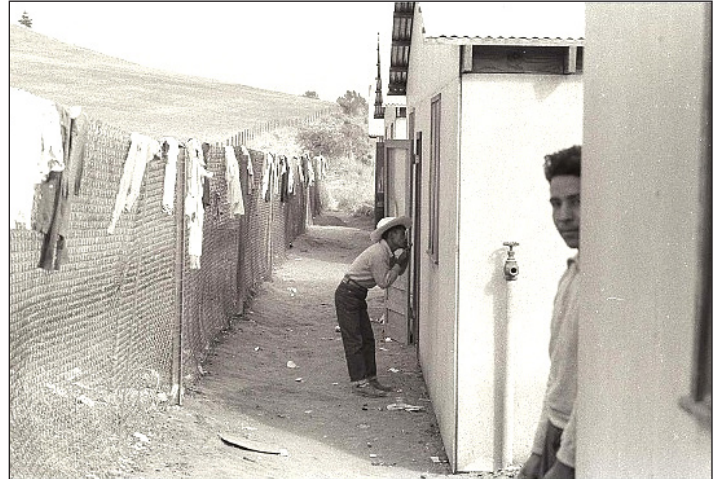
After the war, the Bracero Program expanded and more Mexican workers were allowed to enter and stay for longer periods of time. To ensure a steady flow of seasonal migrant workers, labor camps were built on or near farms. Workers were housed in long buildings where many migrant men lived in common quarters. One such facility was the Gondo Labor Camp near the foothills at 20 Hecker Pass Road, which became one of the largest labor camps in Santa Cruz County.

Gondo Labor Camp

Eugene and Hisako Gondo—a Japanese-American couple who leased farmland in Stockton before their war-time internment in Colorado—purchased a small labor camp surrounded by a lettuce field in 1955 and began building a second camp which would eventually provide room and board for hundreds of workers. The Register-Pajaronian published a glowing report of the project, headlined: “Gondo Camp Features Up-to-Date Facilities,” after it opened. For \$1.75 (deducted from their paychecks) workers received barracks housing (where they slept on long, compact rows of metal cots), warm meals (including tacos made by a “conveyor belt-type machine”), a canteen for snacks and other items for purchase, a rec hall, a volleyball court, and transportation to and from the fields.

But the Gondos ran into trouble in 1957 when the U.S. and Mexico were alerted to violations. Both countries sent investigators to the Gondo camp and found that it wasn't meeting the standards set up by the international agreement. The Mexican Consul General used the word “deplorable” to describe the camp conditions. The manager of the Watsonville Growers Association said that cleanliness was the main issue.

Operations were suspended for about a week and close to 300 residents were removed to another camp on Riverside Road until improvements could be made. The San Francisco Chronicle reported in August 1957 that



Braceros stand between living quarters and a chain link fence at the Gondo Labor Camp in Watsonville in 1956.

Photographer: Leonard Nade; source: <https://braceroarchive.org/items/show/2592>

the Gondo suspension was the 58th that year in California and Arizona, which represented about 10 percent of the camps in these states housing Mexican nationals.

Hisako Gondo blamed the suspension on “a lot of little things,” but admitted that repairs were needed and that they were short-handed on janitorial help. Tellingly, a Santa Cruz County health sanitarian told a reporter that there was no question of uncleanliness in the food, but that he knew of several other camps in the area that were operating on standards below those of the Gondo camp.

The camp closed in 1962 when the Gondos moved to Texas. In 1970 one of the barracks was being used as an indoor archery range.

Murphy Camp

John Murphy's ranch established a solid place in California race-riot history on January 23, 1930 when Filipino farmworker Fermin Tobera was shot through the heart while trying to hide in the bunkhouse from a mob of angry white men. In the days preceding his murder, Watsonville experienced some of the worst instances of anti-Filipino violence in the U.S.

Murphy Camp, located on Murphy Crossing Road near Highway 129, wasn't in the news much for the next 48 years. By 1978 the barracks had been converted into two-room units suitable for families. Although most of the

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The Story of Three Labor Camps continued from p7

150–200 residents were farm laborers, Murphy Camp was not legally considered a farm labor camp, and, therefore, was not subject to regular inspections by either the state or the county.

Nevertheless, tenants began filing complaints after new owners took over in 1978. Manager Jim Hicks, who leased the property from the Gerber family, received numerous fix-it citations for unsafe and unsanitary conditions. Official investigations ramped up further in 1982 after a fire took the lives of a pregnant woman and her 8-month-old son when a stove exploded. Inspectors uncovered numerous problems including contaminated water, faulty wiring, inadequate heating, and infestations of vermin and roaches.

In 1986, after inspectors discovered three unreported fires resulting from faulty wiring and a water-heater explosion, Santa Cruz County sought a court injunction to close the camp. Hicks gave up his lease later that year.

After a decade of changing ownership, debate, and attempts to move or tear down the camp, Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition stepped in and began the task of refurbishing Murphy Camp in December 1995. They secured a commitment for federal funding needed to buy the camp and met with camp residents to collaborate on design. They created living space for 18 units—which had been reduced to meet the capacity of the septic system. The grand opening took place in October 1997 and is today known as Jardines del Valle (Gardens of the Valley).

Buena Vista Migrant Labor Camp

Many labor camps closed after the Bracero Program ended in 1964, but migrant farmworkers were still needed. In response, the state created government-owned housing for farmworkers and their families. Buena Vista Migrant Labor Camp was built to the west of Highway 1 near Harkins Slough in 1967.

In a recorded 2016 interview, Eugene and Hisako Gondo's youngest son, Glen (born in 1948), remembered growing up in Watsonville and working at the labor camp as a kid. He remembered filling up the 15 trucks that transported workers to the fields with gas; selling candy and soda to the workers at the canteen; and bringing hot lunches to workers in the fields. To hear the full interview go to: <https://haaa.rice.edu/interviews/Glen-Yoshiaki-Gondo>



Long view of the Gondo Labor Camp, situated at the base of the foothills, 1956.

Photographer: Leonard Nadel; source: <https://braceroarchive.org/items/show/2592>

By 1969, at least 40 families were in residence there and camp expansion was urged. In 1971, the Santa Cruz Housing Authority was slated to assume responsibility for the administration of the camp. But first, they had to address the inadequate sewage system due to the land's unsuitability for leaching. Long-term, the Housing Authority would also need to find funding to replace what one director described as, the "substandard, rickety-looking old housing." Some thought the camp should just be closed.

When two county supervisors consulted with United Farm Workers Organizing Committee leaders in January 1972, they were told that if the camp was to be continued, it should be transformed into a year-round facility so that children could get adequate, uninterrupted schooling. One serious impediment to extending the stay of workers beyond six months was a regulation which required workers to live at least 50 miles away from their migrant housing center for half the year to be eligible to reside there the following spring through fall.

With the plan for the creation of sewage ponds finally approved, more than 80 families moved into the camp on May 1, 1973 and construction began on 64 replacement units that summer. Eventually childcare services were provided free of charge to residents, which included day-care, health education classes, and social services referrals.

The 50-mile rule was changed in 2018 when Gov. Jerry Brown signed SB 850. The new law allowed families to reside at migrant centers year-round so their children could stay enrolled in the same school. 🌿