Women's Work: The Daughters of Charity Orphans' Fairs and the Formation of the Los Angeles Community, 1858-1880
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Source: *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (Winter 2011-2012), pp. 373-406
Published by: University of California Press on behalf of the Historical Society of Southern California
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41328535

Women's Work

The Daughters of Charity Orphans' Fairs and the Formation of the Los Angeles Community, 1858–1880

By Kristine Ashton Gunnell

ABSTRACT: From 1858 to 1880 the Daughters of Charity religious order held an annual "fancy fair" in Los Angeles to support the work of its orphanage and school. The women of the town's elite families—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish—managed the event and made the hand-crafted wares. Women across the class spectrum attended the fairs and purchased the wares. The important role of the fairs in community formation and in building a philanthropic culture enriches our understanding of the complexity of this frontier town beyond the focus on economic, political, and male-oriented events that dominate the standard literature.

As Kathleen D. McCarthy, Nancy A. Hewitt, and others have argued, women's charitable activities provide a site from which to analyze the constructions of class, gender, and ethnicity in a given community. At times, gendered prescriptions of "charity work" facilitated cooperation across ethnic or denominational boundaries. Beginning in 1858, Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant women regularly organized fundraising fairs on behalf of the *Institución Caritativa*, the orphanage and school operated by Roman Catholic sisters formally known as the Daughters of Charity. Through the fair, women who belonged to the business, professional, and landowning classes crafted an image of Los Angeles that stressed domesticity, genteel

entertainment, and concern for the plight of the poor. The commonalities of class and commitment to a common cause temporarily overrode ethnic and religious differences that tended to divide the community, and these women offered an alternative vision to the competition and tension that too often characterized the male-dominated economic and political arenas. The fundraisers' success—and the legitimization of the community spirit its organizers encouraged—depended on the elite women who managed the fair and crafted the wares to be sold. It also depended on men and women from various elements of Angeleno society to patronize the fair as customers of the wares. In the name of charity, organizers welcomed patrons with different class, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. And patrons, whether wealthy or not, bought into the organizers' vision by attending the event and purchasing items at the fair. Angelenos came together and supported a charitable cause with their presence and their pocketbooks.

Studying the activities of the Daughters of Charity and their benefactors in Los Angeles adds an important dimension to scholars' understanding of the influence of Roman Catholic sisters in the American West. Most scholarly studies of Roman Catholic sisters, like those by Maureen Fitzgerald, Suellen Hoy, and John Fialka, tend to concentrate on sisters' activities in New York, Chicago, and other eastern cities.[1] Few assess the ways that social conditions in the West shaped the sisters' work and their relationships with the residents of these often-isolated communities. However, Anne M. Butler argues that harsh physical

1. Women's involvement in charity work and reform has been a vibrant area of scholarly interest for several decades. A few of the most relevant studies to my research include Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797–1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Nancy A. Hewitt, *Southern Discomfort: Women's Activism in Tampa, Florida, 1880s–1920s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700–1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women, Philanthropy, and Civil Society*, Philanthropic Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). Recent studies on Catholic sisters include Maureen Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of New York's Welfare System, 1830–1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); John J. Fialka, *Sisters: Catholic Nuns and the Making of America*, vol. 1 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003); Suellen M. Hoy, *Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Barbra Mann Wall, *Unlikely Entrepreneurs: Catholic Sisters and the Hospital Marketplace, 1865–1925* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005). The scholarly literature on the Daughters of Charity in the West is rather limited, but Anne M. Butler wrote an essay about the Daughters of Charity in Virginia City, Nevada, and Michael Engh included a chapter about the Daughters of Charity in his book about nineteenth-century Los Angeles. See Anne M. Butler, "Mission in the Mountains: The Daughters of Charity in Virginia City," in *Comstock Women: the Making of a Mining Community*, ed. Ronald M. James and C. Elizabeth Raymond (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998), 142–164; Michael E. Engh, *Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple, and Synagogue in Los Angeles, 1846–1888* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992).

conditions, the lack of wealthy Catholic patrons, and the diverse ethnic and racial population of the West forced Catholic sisters to adapt their traditional cloistered practices and become more involved with the communities in which they lived.[2] Similarly, frontier isolation encouraged other residents to reach across religious and ethnic boundaries to cooperate on issues of mutual interest.

Common class interests, such as boosting the reputation of the city through improved education and social services, drew women of various backgrounds together in support of the Daughters of Charity in Los Angeles. Although they did not participate directly in the governance of the sisters' institution, laywomen played an instrumental role in organizing the orphans' fairs and other community events. As a site for community formation, the fairs illuminate strategies for dealing with the diversity that characterized the nineteenth-century American West. They also provide a venue to illustrate the interplay of gender and class in the development of a racial discourse that divided Anglos from Mexicans. Women's work in the name of charity opened the door for ethnic and religious cooperation despite the growing divisions between "American" and Californio-Mexican elements in Los Angeles during the 1860s and 1870s.

The Daughters of Charity and Gendered Fundraising Strategies in Los Angeles

In 1850, the Sisters of Charity, an American-led religious community founded by Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton in 1809, merged with the Paris-based Daughters of Charity, founded by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac in 1633. The merger connected these American sisters to a rapidly expanding religious community which extended from Europe to Latin America to China by the end of the nineteenth century.[3] As

2. Anne M. Butler, "The Invisible Flock: Catholicism and the American West," in *Catholicism in the American West: A Rosary of Hidden Voices*, ed. Roberto R. Treviño, Richard V. Francaviglia, and Anne M. Butler, vol. 1 (College Station: Published for the University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 14–41.

3. The Daughters of Charity expanded from France into Poland in the seventeenth century, and established missions in Spain, Italy, Russia, and Lithuania in the eighteenth. The Daughters of Charity also expanded into Mexico in 1844, and the community first sent sisters into China in 1852. See Vicente De Dios, *Historia de la Familia Vincentina en Mexico, 1844–1994* (Salamanca, Spain: Editorial CEME, 1993); Susan E. Dinan, *Women and Poor Relief in Seventeenth-century France: The Early History of the Daughters of Charity* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2006), 143; Daniel Hannefin, D.C., and Vincentian Studies Institute (U.S.), *Daughters of the Church: A Popular History of the Daughters of Charity in the United States, 1809–1987* (Brooklyn, New York: New City Press, 1989), 216.

The Daughters of Charity founded L.A.'s first hospital, commonly referred to as Sisters' Hospital, in 1858. The hospital was located on Naud Street, between Ann and Sotello streets, northeast of the town's center. Photo ca. 1880. *Title Insurance and Trust/C. C. Pierce Photography Collection. Courtesy of University of Southern California Libraries Special Collections.*

part of this expansion, Sister Mary Scholastica Logsdon and five other sisters accepted an assignment to establish an orphanage and school in Los Angeles. In October 1855, five of the sisters left the motherhouse of the American province in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and traveled via Panama to San Francisco. Since she was already serving in that city, Sister Corsina McKay joined the band there, and all six traveled aboard the coastal steamer to Los Angeles. They arrived on January 6, 1856. Poverty, accident, and disease deprived many children of their parents, and the orphans needed to be housed, clothed, and educated. In addition, frontier isolation had left many other Catholic children unfamiliar with the fundamentals of their faith, and the Daughters of Charity sought to rectify this situation. Angelenos later induced the sisters to open a hospital, known variously as the Los Angeles Infirmary, County Hospital, or simply, Sisters' Hospital. With the support of the Board of Supervisors, the Daughters of Charity cared for the county's indigent patients in the facility between 1858 and 1878. They completely privatized the hospital in the 1880s, and the Daughters of Charity continue to operate the institution, now called St. Vincent Medical Center.[4]

Although Sister Scholastica and her companions formally belonged to the *Daughters* of Charity when they arrived, many of the town's English-speaking residents would have been familiar with Seton's *Sisters* of Charity and they continued to call the religious women by that name. In vernacular practice, the terms remained interchangeable for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, historians need to remain attuned to the organizational differences associated with the name change. Sister Scholastica belonged to an international

4. The institutions founded by the Daughters of Charity in Los Angeles have undergone several name changes during their tenure. The orphanage and school, named the *Institución Caritativa* in 1856, changed its name to the Los Angeles Orphan Asylum when it incorporated in 1869. When the sisters relocated the facility to Rosemead in 1953, they changed its name to Maryvale. Currently, Maryvale is a residential treatment home for children having difficulty in foster care—a modern-day orphanage. Under Sister Scholastica's direction, the Daughters of Charity also opened a hospital, incorporated in 1869 as the Los Angeles Infirmary. Since the Board of Supervisors provided a majority of the funding for the institution, the press tended to refer to it as "County Hospital" in the 1860s and 1870s, but the facility was also referred to as Sisters' Hospital until the end of the century. The Daughters of Charity changed the institution's name to St. Vincent's Hospital in 1918, and the hospital is now called St. Vincent Medical Center. *Daughters of Charity in the City of Angels: A Compilation of Their Early Writings.* (Los Altos Hills, California: Daughters of Charity Province of the West Seton Provincialate, 2008), 155. For more on the sisters' early activities in California, see Hannefin, D.C., and Vincentian Studies Institute (U.S.), *Daughters of the Church: A Popular History of the Daughters of Charity in the United States, 1809–1987*, 94–103.

community whose intent was to spread education, healthcare, and social services for the poor to what was then considered the ends of the earth. Other American sisters resisted submitting to European leadership, and they formed splinter groups that retained the title Sisters of Charity. Even though they had separate administrative structures, the members of both of these groups held the distinct status of "sister" within the Catholic Church. In contrast to nuns, sisters make simple (generally annual) vows, and interact directly with the poor through their schools, orphanages, and hospitals.[5] In the nineteenth century, Angelenos knew who they were talking about; it did not matter which name they used. But, since both groups remain active today, we should remain cognizant of their differences. In any case, the Daughters of Charity founded the first hospital and orphanage in Los Angeles. Both institutions served immigrants and residents alike, and the sisters admitted all those in need, regardless of race or creed.

The sisters' institutions required high levels of community support to survive, and the strategies chosen to raise these funds demonstrate the gendered dynamics of charitable giving in southern California. Since Roman Catholic sisters took vows of poverty, the Daughters of Charity did not bring any money with them to purchase property or to

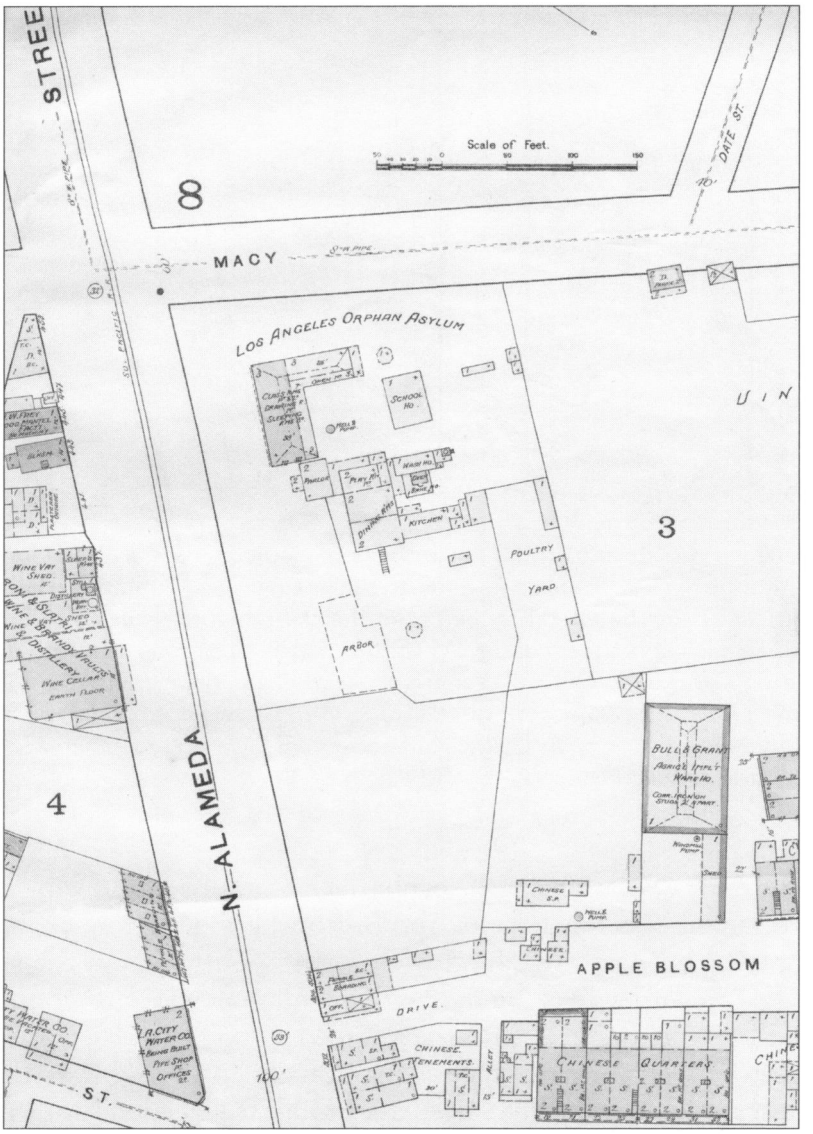
5. Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton established the Sisters of Charity in Emmitsburg, Maryland in 1809. Seton modeled the religious community on the French Daughters of Charity, founded by Vincent DePaul and Louise de Marillac in 1633, but the groups did not formally merge until 1850. Sparked by a controversy that resulted in separating the sisters in New York City from their motherhouse, the merger was intended to secure the American community's viability by insulating the sisters from the direct governance of American bishops and by strengthening the community's male advocacy within the church's hierarchy. However, not all Sisters of Charity (or the bishops in areas where they served) agreed with the change, and splinter groups formed in Cincinnati and Leavenworth, Kansas. These women kept the name *Sisters of Charity*. Interestingly, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth also operate a hospital in the Los Angeles area. St. Johns Hospital, Santa Monica, opened in 1942. Although the Sisters of Charity and Daughters of Charity share similar values and a mission to serve the poor, they are completely separate organizations. Ibid., 11–18, 58–62, 87–93.

According to the agreements developed at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), nuns are religious women who make perpetual (lifetime) vows and generally remain in their convents due to the rules of enclosure. In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, most nuns belong to contemplative orders that focused on worship and education rather than performing acts of service in the neighborhoods in which they lived. In contrast, sisters make simple (generally annual) vows, and, as members of active religious communities, they are not required to remain in their convents, or houses. In 1633, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac specifically designed the Daughters of Charity to avoid the rules of enclosure, thus allowing the sisters to work with the poor directly either through personal visits at home or in the sisters' charitable institutions. Albert J. Nevins, M.M., *The Maryknoll Catholic Dictionary* (New York: Grossett and Dunlap, 1965), 408; Susan E. Dinan, *Women and Poor Relief in Seventeenth-Century France: The Early History of the Daughters of Charity* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Press, 1968), 3–5, 43–45, 55–57.

The Daughters of Charity orphanage and school, named the Institución Caritativa at its founding in 1856, changed its name to the Los Angeles Orphan Asylum when it incorporated in 1869. In this 1869 photo, it is the white three-story building beyond the plaza on the far right. At that time, the plaza was a utilitarian plot containing a brick reservoir. Olvera Street takes off from the plaza to the left of the orphanage. The plaza church dominates the left side of the photo. *Title Insurance and Trust/C. C. Pierce Photography Collection. Courtesy of University of Southern California Libraries Special Collections.*

fund the daily operations of the orphanage. Initially, fundraising efforts relied on men's social networks, and Bishop Thaddeus Amat sought to engage local businessmen, landowners, and politicians in the sisters' work. In December 1855, he met with an all-male citizens' committee chaired by Abel Stearns, and they agreed to collect subscriptions to purchase property for the sisters' orphanage and school.[6] Although the subscription committee raised about half the needed funds by the end of 1856, drought struck the region the following winter and the resulting economic crisis hindered collections. Sister Scholastica then

6. Influential men such as Augustín Olvera, Ygnacio del Valle, Antonio F. Coronel, David W. Alexander, and Benjamin I. Hayes lent their reputations to the effort, thereby marshalling the social, economic, and political backing needed to raise the necessary funds. In early 1856, the committee negotiated the purchase of Benjamin D. Wilson's property on Alameda and Macy Streets for $8000, and they raised about $4000 by the end of the year. "Public Meeting," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, December 22, 1855); "Resolucion de la Commision encargada del establisimiento de las Hermanas de la Caridad, Febrero 17 de 1856," Maryvale Historical Collection, Box 3, Folder 3, Maryvale, Rosemead, California.



This 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map detail shows the extended complex of the sisters' Los Angeles Orphan Asylum at Alameda and Macy streets: the L-shaped, 3-story classroom and sleeping quarters structure; the added 1- and 2-story wing containing a parlor, playroom, wash room, dining room, and kitchen; and a separate school house. An arbor and poultry yard were also on the grounds. *Courtesy, Geography Map Library, California State University, Northridge.*

sought new fundraising strategies.[7] Although the sisters continued to accept individual donations of cash, goods, and property, the American tradition of hosting a fundraising fair proved to be the most effective strategy to build a benefactor network in the city. It was so successful that the sisters continued this tradition for forty years.

In November 1857, Sister Scholastica turned to the woman-centered American tradition of the "fancy fair," or charity bazaar, to raise money on behalf of the orphans. Taking on some of the connotations of Near Eastern markets, or bazaars, "fancy fairs" generally offered nonessential, handmade, or luxurious goods sold by women. Proceeds from the pincushions, lace, candy, and the like would then be donated to an orphanage, school, church, or other charitable cause for which the fair was organized. Fundraising fairs offered community recognition for the organizers, entertainment for the fair's consumer patrons, and a source of financial support for charitable institutions.[8] In a letter to her superiors, Sister Scholastica commented that the fair would be "something new here," and after months of preparation, the first orphans' fair occurred on September 22, 1858.[9] Although agricultural exhibitions had been held in the northern part of the state, the American fair tradition had not yet taken hold in southern California in the 1850s, and it appears that the sisters sponsored the first charity bazaar in Los Angeles. Since the organizing, production, and sale of wares, and the purchasing at these events were feminized as "women's

7. When the remaining donations needed to pay for the sisters' property did not materialize by the fall of 1857, Sister Scholastica started to consider other options. Bishop Amat renegotiated the terms of payment with Benjamin Wilson and paid him $2000 in August 1857. The bishop then left the remaining $2000 for the sisters to raise during 1858. "Mary Scholastica Logsdon, D.C., to Francis Burlando, C.M., June 23, 1857," in *Daughters of Charity in the City of Angels: A Compilation of their Early Writings* (Los Altos Hills, California: Daughters of Charity Province of the West Seton Provincialate, 2008), 71–72. The Daughters of Charity also charged tuition to students whose parents could afford to pay for their education, and they used tuition dollars to supplement the costs of caring for the twenty-two orphans and boarders who resided at the school in 1858. "May Festival," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, May 2, 1857). In addition, the Los Angeles Orphan Asylum received $1000 from the California State Legislature in 1860. Mary Scholastica, "Mary Scholastica Logsdon, D.C., to Francis Burlando, C.M., June 19, 1859" (Daughters of Charity Province of the West Seton Provincialate, 1859). "Report of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum of Los Angeles, Dec 1860," in *Appendix to Journal of the House of Assembly of California, 12th session, 1861* (Sacramento: CT Botts, State Printer, 1861).

8. Beverly Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies: The History of the American Fundraising Fair* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 5–8.

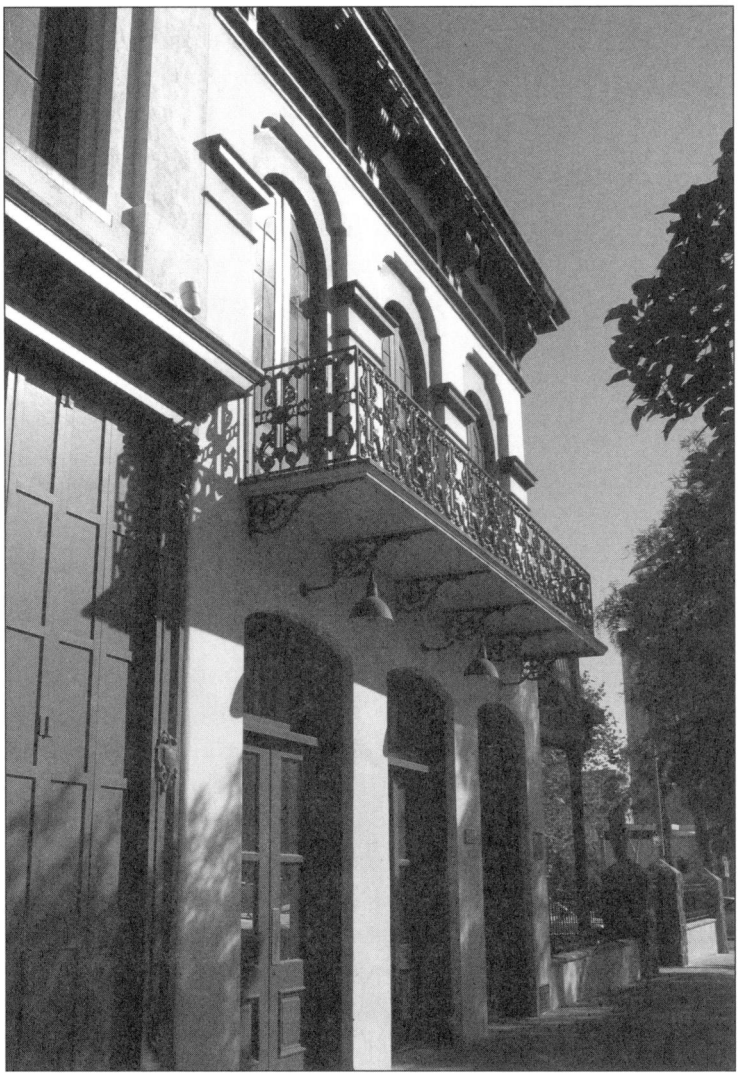
9. "Mary Scholastica Logsdon, D.C., to Francis Burlando, C.M., November 23, 1857," in *Daughters of Charity in the City of Angels: A Compilation of their Early Writings* (Los Altos Hills, California: Daughters of Charity Province of the West Seton Provincialate, 2008), 77–78; "Cronica Local," *El Clamor Publico* (Los Angeles, September 18, 1858).

work," Sister Scholastica used this opportunity to cultivate relationships with women throughout the community, regardless of religious or ethnic background. Importantly, a fundraising fair fostered community involvement, a necessary element in building a stable economic base for a charitable institution.

Fairs were nearly ubiquitous throughout the United States by the time of the Civil War, and Sister Scholastica Logsdon had likely been involved in similar fundraising activities before coming to Los Angeles. For example, Catholic women's parish charitable associations in New York City began sponsoring fundraising fairs in the mid-1830s. Sister Scholastica served at New York's Half-Orphan Asylum between 1841 and 1846, so she may have interacted with fair organizers, attended the events, or made items to sell on behalf of the orphanage.[10] Fairs offered a means for the sisters to build relationships with laywomen, networks that could serve as lifelines of support for the sisters and orphans. Laywomen organizers rarely limited their donations to the annual event; they often provided Christmas gifts for the children, sponsored activities at the school, and donated food, clothing, and cash throughout the remainder of the year. By developing relationships through women's participation in the fair, the Daughters of Charity constructed a network of benefactors which they could call on as needed. Garnering an influential woman's support could also result in access to her husband's social, political, or economic resources, and the sisters often established benefactor relationships based on family ties.

Instituting the orphans' fair was a telling choice, both for the Daughters of Charity and for the laywomen who supported it. At first, Sister Scholastica had deferred to the bishop and followed his fundraising strategy of a subscription committee. When that failed to generate enough support, she turned to what she knew—fundraising fairs. The decision to organize an orphans' fair was likely one of expediency. With few patrons able to contribute large sums to the sisters' school in the midst of a drought, Sister Scholastica opted for a solution that gathered smaller sums from large numbers of people. And, as anti-slavery advocates had learned in the 1830s, fairs aided in "mobilization and

10. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism*, 182; Colleen McDannell, "Going to the Ladies' Fair: Irish Catholics in New York City, 1870–1900," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 236; "Daughters of Charity, Consolidated Database (10–0), Archives St. Joseph's Provincial House, Emmitsburg, Maryland."



The first Orphans' Fair was held in the upstairs meeting room of Perry & Woodworth's furniture and cabinetry business on North Main Street in September 1858. That meeting room was designed for the use of Lodge 42 Free and Accepted Masons. Originally (1858) a brick façade on which the Masonic emblem was prominently displayed, it was altered in 1870 to harmonize with the Italianate style of its neighbors, the Merced Theater (1870) and the Pico House hotel (1869). All three structures are historical monuments but the marker for Masonic Hall makes no mention of the Orphans' Fair. *Photo: M. Ovnick, 2011.*

movement momentum."[11] The events brought public attention to the cause, provided an opportunity to craft the organization's message, built a network of supporters, and brought in much needed cash.

The First Fair, 1858

The first Los Angeles orphans' fair took place on Wednesday, September 22, 1858. Announced in both the Spanish and English newspapers, the "Ladies of Los Angeles" intended "to give an entertainment . . . for the benefit of the orphans in charge of the Sisters of Charity."[12] Held in the hall above Perry and Woodworth's furniture store on Main Street, the event featured "feasting, music and dancing," and according to the announcement in *El Clamor Público,* patrons were expected to pay a small entrance fee, the proceeds of which would be used to support the orphans.[13] The 1858 "Ladies' Festival" (the term "orphans' fair" was not used until 1862) included supper, a single table filled with "luxuries" for sale, and music by the Los Angeles Brass Band. Dancing proved to be the event's most popular attraction, since the *Los Angeles Star* reported it "was kept up with great spirit till an early hour in the morning."[14]

Organizers scheduled the event in such a way as to maximize potential attendance. They invited Captain Thomas W. Seeley, captain of the steamer *The Senator,* to preside over the fair, thus ensuring that the fair would be held on or near "steamer day" when residents of outlying areas came into town to pick up mail, freight, or passengers. The full moon also emerged on September 22, thereby providing a more jubilant atmosphere (and a measure of safety in a rough town without street lights). According to Boyle Workman, organizers continued to hold the orphans' fairs on "steamer days" with a full moon, presumably until the city was accessible by railroad. Although maximizing attendance was the likely motivation for the scheduling of the fair, another account

11. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism,* 183. See also Lee Chambers-Schiller, "'A Good Work Among the People': The Political Culture of the Boston Anti-Slavery Fair," in *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America,* ed. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 249–274; Lawrence B. Glickman, "'Buy for the Sake of the Slave': Abolitionism and the Origins of American Consumer Activism," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (2004): 889–912.

12. "Cronica Local"; "Remember the Orphan," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, September 18, 1858).

13. "Remember the Orphan"; "Cronica Local."

14. "Ladies' Festival," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, September 25, 1858); "Remember the Orphan"; "The First Fair," ca. 1891, Maryvale Historical Collection, Newsclipping in Maryvale Scrapbook 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Maryvale, Rosemead, California.

suggests that the ship's cargo played a crucial role in the timing of the event. The steamer brought ice from the north, an essential ingredient in one of the most popular treats at the fair—ice cream.[15]

The benefits which became known as the orphans' fairs provide a venue to analyze community formation in Los Angeles. Like fundraising fairs elsewhere, organizers were drawn from the wives of the "commercial and professional elite"—doctors, lawyers, judges, ministers, and other businessmen. In his study of women's philanthropy, Simon Morgan argues that family position or the "nature of their husband's occupation" created a social expectation for certain women to take high profiles in charity events, particularly if, as a doctor or minister, her husband had frequent contact with the poor.[16] For these women, charity work reflected both their social position and their perceived virtue. But acting in the name of charity also reinforced women's moral authority, cloaking any social positioning with a layer of piety, domesticity, and altruism. This is not to say that charity organizers were not motivated by a sincere desire to serve others and selflessly work for worthy causes. Fundraising fairs served multiple functions in American communities. To borrow Lori Ginzberg's term, charity events were part of the "culture of class."[17] Organizers displayed, and perhaps sought to secure, their class status through fundraising fairs.

Because of the importance of agriculture, ranching, and real estate in the Los Angeles economy, the particular configuration of the "commercial and professional elite" differed from that of more urbanized regions, but Los Angeles fair organizers generally fit the pattern found in Morgan's study. In 1858, two of the organizers' husbands had connections with the sisters' hospital: one was the wife of a religious leader, and the others were the wives or daughters of lawyers, businessmen, politicians, or large landowners. Mrs. Thomas J. White and Louisa Hayes Griffin headed up the supper table, and one of White's daughters brought a fortune-teller doll, which "furnished a number of curious young ladies

15. Boyle Workman and Caroline Walker, *Boyle Workman's The City that Grew* (Los Angeles: The Southland Publishing Co., 1936), 43; "Ladies' Festival"; "The First Fair"; Harris Newmark, Maurice Harris Newmark, and Marco Ross Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853–1913: Containing the Reminiscences of Harris Newmark*, vol. 4 (Los Angeles: Zeitlin & Ver Brugge, 1970), 154. The perpetual calendar available at http://timeanddate.com indicates that September 22, 1858, was the date of a full moon.

16. Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 108.

17. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, 18.

[with] some very desirable predictions about future husbands."[18] Both the White and Griffin families had professional connections (or at least a vested interest to build a relationship) with the Daughters of Charity. Dr. John S. Griffin treated patients at the sisters' hospital, which opened about three months before the fair, and Dr. Thomas J. White received a rotating appointment there during the following year.[19] Known for hosting "extensive entertainments," the Whites also had a social reputation which could draw patrons to the event—a reputation which Mrs. White would diligently work to uphold.[20] As doctors' wives, White and Griffin held respectable positions in the community, and their husbands' connections with the sisters positioned these women as leaders for the first charitable fundraising event in Los Angeles.

Interestingly, ethnic and religious differences appear to be subsumed underneath the common class backgrounds of fair organizers. When the Daughters of Charity arrived in Los Angeles, Sister Corsina McKay commented, "We seem to belong exclusively to the Spanish," and according to an account saved in the sisters' scrapbooks, Maria Antónia Perez de Woodworth (a member of the Lugo family), Francesca Sepúlveda, and Ysabel del Valle were among the organizers. Refugio Bandini (the stepmother of Arcadia Bandini de Stearns) sold brandy after dinner, "always careful that no one person should be allowed to purchase more than one draught."[21] While Californio-Mexican

18. "The First Fair"; "Ladies' Festival." Whenever possible, I prefer to refer to women by their full given names. However, when a woman's first name is obscured, as in the case of Mrs. White, I refer to her as her name appears in the sources.

19. The Los Angeles Infirmary, a.k.a. County Hospital or Sisters' Hospital, opened May 29, 1858. Griffin treated most of the facility's patients, but White and Griffin rotated responsibilities at the hospital in 1859. "County Hospital Advertisement," *El Clamor Publico* (Los Angeles, May 29, 1858); "Minutes, May 4, 1859," Book 2 (8 November 1855–16 January 1861), 265–267. Historical Board Minutes, Box 1, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles.

20. Harris Newmark, Maurice Harris Newmark, and Marco Ross Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 4:185.

21. The fullest account of the "First Fair" was likely written in the early 1890s as part of the promotional material for the orphans' fairs held during those years. Saved in the sisters' scrapbooks, the history highlights the interfaith cooperation during the event, as well as the sisters' widespread support among various ethnic communities in Los Angeles. Since it was written long after the event, the account may contain some inaccuracies, but I believe the overall dynamics that the history identifies are correct. "The First Fair"; "Corsina McKay, D.C., to Francis Burlando, C.M., January 13, 1856," in *Daughters of Charity in the City of Angels: Sesquicentennial Book* (Los Altos Hills, California: Daughters of Charity Province of the West Seton Provincialate, 2006), 38–39. Maria Antónia Perez was likely a relative of Maria de la Merced Lugo and Josef Perez, the daughter of Don Antonio Maria Lugo. After Perez's death, Merced married Stephen C. Foster. Maria Antónia Perez was listed in their household in the 1850 census, but the relationship was not defined. Marie E. Northrop's series of genealogical work does not list Maria Antonia as one of Merced and Josef Perez's children, so it is likely that (*continued*)

Catholics remained supportive, the Daughters of Charity also managed to extend their network of benefactors across religious and ethnic lines. French and German Jewish women served refreshments and sold items at the fair, including Caroline Hellman, Rosa Newmark, and Fanny Sichel. The French-speaking community also supported the fair, including Leonide Ducommun and Jeanne Sansevain.[22] Even Anna Ogier, who privately expressed anti-Catholic sentiments, donated items and may have also taken a turn at the sale table. She was, after all, the wife of Judge Isaac S. K. Ogier, and it would have been unseemly for her not to participate in such an event.[23] Catholics, Protestants, and

Maria Antonia was one of their nieces. Nevertheless, she was connected to the Lugo family. Maria Antónia Perez married Wallace Woodworth sometime in 1857, since their child Joseph was three years old in the 1860 census. *U.S. Census, Los Angeles*, 1860, 98; H. D. Barrows, "Don Antonio Maria Lugo," *Publications of the Historical Society of Southern California* 3 (1896): 31; Marie E. Northrop, *Spanish Mexican Families of Early California*, vol. 3 (Burbank, California: Southern California Genealogical Society, 2004), 157–159; Harris Newmark, Maurice Harris Newmark, and Marco Ross Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 4:263. In addition to the reference to Bandini selling brandy in the "First Fair," Joseph Mesmer also states that Mrs. Juan Bandini (Refugio) was in charge of "after dinner stimulants" in his manuscript of *80 Years in Los Angeles*. See Joseph Mesmer, "Eighty Years in Los Angeles," Joseph Mesmer Collection, 539, Box 1, Folder 20, UCLA. A Mrs. Johnson is also listed as one of the women in charge of the fancy table, and this is likely Mrs. Charles R. Johnson, or Dolores Bandini, Arcadia's sister. See Patricia Baker, "The Bandini Family," *Journal of San Diego History* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1969), http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/69winter/part2.htm.

22. Leonide Ducommun was the wife of Charles L. Ducommun, a Swiss-born (but likely French-speaking) merchant who arrived in Los Angeles in 1853. Jean Louis Sansevain was the nephew of Louis Vignes. Although Sansevain arrived in 1849 or 1850, he returned to France in 1855, marrying and bringing his son Michel to Los Angeles. The couple was listed in the 1860 census under "Louis Sansevarins." See also Fernand Loyer and Charles Beaudreau, *Le Guild Francais de Los Angeles et du Sud de la Californie (English edition)* (Los Angeles: The Franco American Publishing Company, 1932), 35. Fanny Sichel was the wife of Philip Sichel, a Bavarian Jew and prominent merchant in Los Angeles. He was one of the eight self-identified Jews listed in the Los Angeles 1850 census. His partner, Felix Bachman came to Los Angeles in 1853, and his wife likely also participated in the first orphan fair. Caroline Hellman was the wife of Isaias M. Hellman, and Rosa Newmark was the wife of Joseph Newmark, who arrived in 1854. Harris Newmark, Maurice Harris Newmark, and Marco Ross Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 4:68, 122–123, 198–199, 290. Michael Engh discusses Jewish participation in Catholic philanthropic efforts. See Michael E. Engh, "Charity Knows Neither Race Nor Creed: Jewish Philanthropy to Roman Catholic Projects in Los Angeles, 1856–1876," *Western States Jewish History* 21, no. 2 (1989): 154–165; Michael E. Engh, " 'They All Pulled Together': Challenges to Community Building in 19th-Century Los Angeles," *Californians* 10, no. 6 (1993): 22–28. For further discussion of the French, German, and particularly the Jewish community in Los Angeles during the mid-nineteenth century, see Karen S. Wilson, "On the Cosmopolitan Frontier: Jews in Nineteenth-Century Los Angeles" (Los Angeles: UCLA, History, 2011).

23. In a letter to her friend Margaret S. Hereford Wilson, Ogier expressed her dislike for the sisters, and she hoped that they wouldn't be able to raise the money to pay for the orphanage property. Although difficult to tell how strongly she held anti-Catholic beliefs, the 1858 festival likely raised the remaining money needed to pay off the sister's property, an outcome that Ogier did not want. Either the sisters won her over, or she felt social pressure to participate. Anna Ogier to Margaret S. Hereford Wilson, February 4, 1856, B. D. Wilson Collection WN 1458, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. See also Harris Newmark, Maurice Harris Newmark, and Marco Ross Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 4:53–54.

Jews joined together to support the mission of the Daughters of Charity. Michael Engh attributes this interfaith cooperation to a scarcity of financial resources, and while this was true, a need for cash does not fully explain why Angelenos crossed ethnic and religious boundaries to support another religious community's projects.[24]

Despite their ethnic and religious differences, class interests brought organizers together in the name of charity. These women belonged to the families of the town's merchants, professionals, and leading ranchers. Woodworth, Ducommun, Newmark, and Sichel married merchants. Anna Ogier and Henrietta Thom married lawyers, and as mentioned above, White and Griffin were doctors' wives. The Sansevains owned a vineyard, and the del Valles, Sepúlvedas, and Bandinis stood among the elite Californio-Mexican *rancheros.* In addition to his business connections, Joseph Newmark was a founding member of the Hebrew Benevolent Society and acted as *schochet* (ritual slaughterer) in the Jewish community.[25] His wife's participation in the fair illustrates not only the family's commitment to philanthropy, but also provides an example of interfaith cooperation in Los Angeles.

As business and property owners, these families had a keen interest in improving the town's social and educational services. In the 1850s, boosters posited that education and charity work would play an important role in transforming Los Angeles from a frontier outpost to a "respectable" city. Shortly after the Daughters of Charity arrived in 1856, the editor of the *Los Angeles Star* argued that the sisters' services would be economically advantageous for the city, attracting respectable families who would "soften and elevate the tone of all our social relations."[26] Proponents viewed education as an economic investment and an attraction for middle-class immigrants. Merchants needed customers, and many of the town's professionals bought and sold real estate. Improved social services attracted additional investment and raised property values. Although economic opportunity remained the primary motivator for migration, middle-class families would also seek out places where they could pursue genteel entertainment and participate in social activities, including charity work. The orphans' fair satisfied these needs on all counts, providing funds to improve the city's social

24. Jews donated liberally to Catholic community projects, including attending benefit productions of Christmas plays, donating to the cathedral building fund, and raising money for St. Vincent's College. Engh, "Charity Knows Neither Race Nor Creed."

25. Frances Dinkelspiel, *Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant named Isaias Hellman Created California* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 32–33.

26. "The Sisters of Charity," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, January 12, 1856).

services in a way that strengthened the community through ethnic and religious cooperation among the business and landowning classes.

In the *Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (1999), Linda Gordon argues that ethnic and religious differences among whites were largely subsumed under the racial constructions that distinguished "Anglos" from "Mexicans" in the mining regions of Southern Arizona in 1904. While it is useful to examine the role of religion in local constructions of race, the sharp divisions Gordon describes in 1904 Arizona significantly differ from the fluidity that characterized social relations among the Los Angeles elite in the 1860s. The influx of Mexican peasants into the Arizona mining regions in the 1890s and labor conflict in 1903 hardened racial boundaries there, resulting in the controversy surrounding the care of white Irish Catholic orphans in southern Arizona. And although, as David Torres-Rouff argues, competition between Americans and Californio-Mexicans grew in Los Angeles during the 1860s, I argue that there still remained a significant space for cooperation when it came to charitable activities.[27]

When analyzing a fundraising fair as a site for constructing community, an examination of the organizers only tells half the story. Through their consumption of goods, food, and festival entertainment, patrons played a key role, not only in the success of the event, but also in shaping the community image that organizers sought to promote. If patrons failed to attend, or if they came to look and not to buy, then the organizers' efforts were largely wasted. On some level, fundraising fairs had to offer patrons the opportunity to buy something worth having, to do something worth doing, or at least to create a sense that fairgoers could be "somebody" by rubbing elbows with the elite. Community formation at the fair depended on the interaction between organizers and patrons and on maintaining a certain degree of responsiveness to social needs and demands. While class lines did not completely disappear, organizers constructed a vision of community that emphasized genteel entertainment, concern for the poor, and feminine domesticity. Through their participation, patrons chose whether or not to endorse that vision. In Los Angeles, differences based on ethnicity, religion, and to some extent, class receded as fairgivers and fairgoers came together in the name of charity. The fairs elicited a sense of community, support for a common cause of aiding innocent children.

27. Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999); David S. Torres-Rouff, "Making Los Angeles: Race, Space and Municipal Power, 1822–1890" (Santa Barbara: University of California, Santa Barbara, History, 2006), 211–260.

While ethnicity and the religious affiliations of most of the organizers can be ascertained from existing records, the patrons' identities tend to remain obscured. In 1858, the *Star* touted the event as an evening of "feasting, music, and dancing," so presumably both men and women attended the festivities. The 1890s history saved in the sisters' scrapbooks implies that the first fair was an exclusive event, since handwritten invitations were "sent to the guests in lieu of tickets." However, the editor of the *Star* exhorted "our citizens [to turn] out *en masse* on this most interesting occasion."[28] While there is no reason to doubt that invitations were extended to certain individuals, the article in the *Star* suggests that the fair had a wider patron base than the town's upper crust. The *Star's* audience included residents who could read English, and therefore, many of those in the middling classes may have been aware of the event. Likewise, organizers placed an announcement in *El Clamor Público,* so patrons of the fair likely included both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking individuals from the middle and upper classes of Los Angeles society.

Through the *Institución Caritativa,* the Daughters of Charity offered Angelenos a way to improve the city's social services—benefits that cut across ethnic and religious boundaries. They also institutionalized charitable giving in the form of their orphans' fair. The "fancy fairs" and charity bazaars which dominated fundraising activities for churches, schools, and charity organizations in the United States during the nineteenth century became woman-centered spaces. Women organized the fairs, contributed the items for sale, acted as salespersons, and served as consumers during these high-profile events. Well-managed fairs bolstered women's reputation for efficiency, securing their social reputation among the elite or at least as part of the "respectable" classes. As Simon Morgan argues, charity bazaars also "gave women an important role in the production of middle-class cultural identity and a place at the heart of civic life."[29] Through the Los Angeles Orphans' Fairs, organizers such as Mrs. Thomas J. White and Louisa Hayes Griffin articulated a vision of community which stressed women's abilities to put aside cultural and religious tensions in the name of charity. As key players in the provision of social services, these women reinforced boosters' efforts to cultivate an image of the "good life" in their city.

28. "Ladies' Festival"; "The First Fair."

29. Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place,* 117. See also Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism,* 173–186; Beverly Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies,* 1–11.

Growth of the Fairs in the 1860s and 1870s

The first charitable fundraising event in Los Angeles functioned as a dinner and dance with a few items to sell on the side. By the early 1860s, organizers revamped the event to make it much more "fair-like" and to expand its audience. Dancing still capped off the evening in 1862, but fairgivers set up fanciful booths like "Sybil's Grotto" and the "Elephant's Cage." They also made the fair a much more family-oriented event. The *Star* remarked on the "number of 'little people' who were hugely delighted with the raffles, lotteries, &c."[30] Allowing children to attend the event, perhaps including the orphans themselves, reminded fairgoers of the joys of childhood and reinforced the purpose of the event—to provide for destitute children.

Fairgivers encouraged patrons to buy donated jewelry, "fancy goods," and refreshments, and they also introduced strategies to attract more patrons to attend the event. As Colleen McDannell has noted, raffles added the element of luck to the consumerism of a fundraising fair, in effect democratizing the event and making it attractive to individuals of all ages and classes. In a raffle, luck mattered as much as purchasing power, and although wealthy individuals could buy more chances to win, "organizers promoted the illusion that the fair was fair."[31] In addition, organizers introduced the concept of pre-paid tickets in 1862. According to the *Star,* Angelenos could purchase tickets at "all the stores in the city."[32] By selling tickets, shopkeepers illustrated support for the fair among the business classes and expanded the marketing for the event. While the newspapers continued to advertise to the reading public, shopkeepers also promoted the fair by discussing it with their customers, and anyone who could afford to buy a ticket could attend the event. In 1863, a ticket cost fifty cents, approximately the wholesale price for two pounds of coffee. Participating in the fair remained within the reach of small farmers, store clerks, and skilled craftsmen, as well as the Angeleno elite.[33] Organizers also expanded

30. "Orphans' Fair," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, November 29, 1862).

31. McDannell, "Going to the Ladies' Fair," 239.

32. "Final Arrangements for the Orphan Fair," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, November 22, 1862).

33. "Orphan's Fair [ticket]" (Los Angeles, November 5, 1863), Antonio F. Coronel General Collection (1001), Document No. 795, Seaver Center, Los Angeles. According to the Global Price and Income History Group, a pound of coffee cost 26.9 cents (wholesale) in San Francisco in 1863. The earliest data available for wages in California was collected by the census bureau in 1870, but in that year, bricklayers make $5.00 per day, carpenters made an average of $3.83, and blacksmiths made $3.90, so it's not totally inconceivable that the most skilled of the working-class could attend the orphans' fair if they desired to do so. Global Price and Income History Group, UC Davis, "San Francisco Wholesale Prices, 1857–1928 and California Wages, 1870–1928," December 2005, http://gpih.ucdavis.edu/Datafilelist.htm#NorthAmerica.

the fair into a three-day event in 1863, changing the entertainment each night to encourage repeat visits. By lengthening the fair, accentuating the fantasy-like environment with decorated booths, and introducing pre-paid tickets, fairgivers further increased the event's public profile and extended the range of people who could attend the festivities.

Unfortunately, the press did not publish the names of any of the fair's organizers during these years, so it is difficult to know who inspired these changes. Were they newcomers from the East, women who were more familiar with fundraising fairs? Did an organizer make a trip east and attend a fair while she was away, or did the sisters encourage these changes? Any of these options is a possibility, but the historical record remains silent. In the *Star* all the organizers were lumped together as "the ladies of the city." Men did attend the fair, including Phineas Banning who donated $100 in 1863, but the event remained a woman-centered space. Charitably-minded laywomen remained its driving force. They created and donated items, decorated the hall, acted as salespersons and customers, made food, and performed at the concert.[34] Women crafted a genteel and cultured image of their community through the orphans' fair, and they encouraged a wide swath of Angelenos to join that vision by participating in the event.

Although the identities of fairgivers in the 1860s remain obscured, the Daughters of Charity drew support from Catholics, Protestants, and Jews from various ethnic backgrounds in the 1870s events, just as they had during the first fair. Representatives of the Sepúlveda, Bandini, and Lugo families continued to participate, as did the Downeys and Griffins. Former restaurateur Bridget La Rue Wilson managed the food in 1873, just as she had in 1858.[35] Even after her husband's death in 1871, Arcadia Bandini de Stearns donated the use of Stearns Hall in the Arcadia Block for the fair, and when other organizers sought to

34. "The Orphans' Fair," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, November 14, 1863); "Ladies' Fair," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, November 7, 1863); "Orphan's Fair," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, October 31, 1863).

35. "The First Fair." The *Californio* families were represented by Luisa Sepúlveda, Refugio Bandini, Maria Ascención Sepúlveda de Mott, and Concepción Olvera. Maria Guirado Downey and Louisa Hayes Griffin also participated in the orphans' fair. Bridget Johnson, an Irish woman who married Frenchman John La Rue in the early 1850s. La Rue operated a restaurant on the east side of Los Angeles Street, near Bell's Row. La Rue died in 1858, and Johnson remarried John Wilson, a blacksmith from Ireland in 1862. Harris Newmark, Maurice Harris Newmark, and Marco Ross Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 4:27–28, 263; *U.S. Census, Los Angeles*, 98; "Card," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, November 1, 1871); "The Orphans' Fair," *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, October 29, 1873); "The Orphans' Fair," *Evening Republican* (Los Angeles, October 19, 1876); "The Orphans' Fair," *Evening Republican* (Los Angeles, November 8, 1876).

move the event to Turnverein Hall in 1873, she likely insisted that it be returned to its previous venue.[36] The wives of the sisters' business contacts also participated in the fair, including Emeline Childs and Lucy Glassell.[37] The Jewish community showed its support, as Sarah Polaski and her daughters Annie and Augusta managed a table that sold "fancy goods" made by the orphans in 1876. The French community also remained supportive during the 1870s. Mrs. Pigné-Dupytren, Mrs. Domingo Amestoy, and Mrs. De Camp sold toys, candy, and other homemade goods at the fair. Some of the sisters' students also participated in the event, including Natalie Du Puy, Julia Dyer, Rachael Happ, and Mary Fitzgerald. Mothers such as Regina Weinshank and Maria Antónia Perez de Woodworth brought their daughters, in order to train them in charity work and social responsibility.[38] By drawing on

36. The first recorded instance that the orphans' fair was held at Stearns Hall was in 1862. "Final Arrangements for the Orphan Fair." The fair was also held in the Arcadia Block in 1871. The first announcement for the 1873 fair noted that it would be held in Turnverein Hall, but the venue was changed back to Stearns Hall shortly thereafter. Although the *Star* did not explain the reason for the change, I suspect that Bandini de Stearns was not aware of the change and complained to the sisters. The sisters talked to the organizers and they changed the venue back to Stearns Hall to avoid offending the Bandini family. Arcadia Bandini de Stearns also participated in the events herself, acting as fortune-teller in 1873. "The Orphans Fair," *Los Angeles Star* (Los Angeles, October 25, 1871); "The Orphans' Fair," *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, October 11, 1873); "The Orphans' Fair," *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, October 25, 1873); "The Orphans' Fair," *Los Angeles Herald*, October 29, 1873.

37. Ozro W. Childs and his wife Emeline Huber Childs had a long-standing relationship with the sisters. In 1858, the county's Board of Supervisors paid him to conduct repairs on the county hospital. "Minutes, August 4, 1858," Book 2 (8 November 1855–16 January 1861), 190. Historical Board Minutes, Box 1, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles. In June 1866, Ozro W. Childs (an Episcopalian) donated a lot near Olive and Sixth streets for the construction of St. Vincent's College. Engh, "Charity Knows Neither Race Nor Creed," 160. Lucy Glassell, of South Carolina, married Los Angeles lawyer Andrew Glassell. *U.S. Census, Los Angeles*, 1870, 58. In 1870, Childs and Andrew Glassell sold the sisters some property near St. Vincent's College for a new hospital. However, William Moore disputed the title and the sisters were never able to build on the property. Childs eventually agreed to take the property back and refund the sisters $2800. "Minutes, April 4, 1870," Maryvale Historical Collection, Book 32, Los Angeles Orphan Asylum Minute Book, 21 June 1869–13 July 1940, Maryvale, Rosemead, California; "The Orphans' Fair," *Evening Republican*, October 19, 1876; "The Orphans' Fair," *Evening Republican*, November 8, 1876.

38. "The Orphans' Fair," *Evening Republican*, October 19, 1876. For additional participants, see also "The Orphans' Fair," *Evening Republican*, November 8, 1876. The Polaskis are listed in Norton Stern, "Jews in the 1870 Census of Los Angeles," in *The Jews of Los Angeles: Urban Pioneers*, ed. Norton Stern (Los Angeles: Southern California Jewish Historical Society, 1981), 135–144. Originally from France, Domingo and Mary Elizabeth Amestoy owned 650 acres at Rosecranz. Domingo Amestoy also served on the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and sat on the board of the Farmers and Merchants Bank. Three of the thirteen Amestoy children attended the sisters' school between 1874 and 1876, and this likely explains Mary Elizabeth Amestoy's involvement in the fair. John Steven McGroarty, *Los Angeles: From the Mountains to the Sea* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1921), 342–344. Dr. Pigné-Dupuytren married Isabelle Grain, the daughter of a French colleague in San Francisco. Originally from Paris, Dr. Pigné-Dupuytren emigrated to New Orleans in 1845. He later (*continued*)

supporters from different ethnic and religious groups, the Daughters of Charity promoted an inclusive approach to dealing with social welfare issues. The sisters provided a neutral arena for interfaith cooperation and acted as intermediaries between various religious and cultural groups. They continued in this role for several decades, as the fair was held regularly, if not annually, until 1900. The orphans' fairs allowed the sisters to act as bridge-builders. They connected women through charitable networks, strengthening class ties while minimizing ethnic or religious differences.

A Daughters of Charity Orphanage: An Educational and Charity Institution

Why did Angelenos support the fundraising fair? The Daughters of Charity offered solutions for a community in transition. First, they could care for destitute children who were not fully integrated into existing social networks. Secondly, the sisters offered an *American* education, including instruction in English, to all children who attended their school. Third, the orphans' fair provided an opportunity for women to display their talents, thereby reinforcing their class status by donating their time and means to charity. The Daughters of Charity understood the social needs that accompanied philanthropic giving, and a fundraising fair provided a venue to bolster a woman's social reputation. And finally, the event provided a more genteel form of entertainment that softened the image of this frontier town. Both fairgivers and fairgoers bought into the notion that the *Institución Caritativa* was good for the city, thereby creating a sense of community through their actions, whether by donating items or merely attending the event. Charity remained the focus of the event and the sisters acted as intermediaries between the rich and the poor, but through the fair, participants at all levels created a community that cut across class and ethnic lines.

Before the sisters arrived, Angelenos primarily cared for destitute children through *compadrazgo* relationships, often taking orphaned or

moved to San Francisco in the early 1850s. The family, including his daughter Leona, moved to Los Angeles in 1874. The De Camps are also listed in *Le Guide Francais* as immigrants to Los Angeles in the late 1860s or early 1870s. Loyer and Beaudreau, *Le Guild Francais de Los Angeles et du Sud de la Californie (English edition)*, 29, 62, 67–68. For a complete list of students who received awards and performed at the annual school exercises, see "Exhibition at the Sisters' School," *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, June 17, 1874); "Sisters' School," *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, June 17, 1875); "Sisters' School Entertainment," *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, June 14, 1876).

needy children into their homes or putting them to work on the *ranchos*. As Erika Pérez argues, *compadrazgo* (Catholic sponsorship and spiritual guidance by those designated as godparents) became an integral part of Spanish colonization in Alta California. It established a set of social relations in which indigenous people obtained food, clothing, and spiritual knowledge in exchange for social deference, and more often than not, labor. Pérez demonstrates that compadrazgo relationships between indigenous and Californio-Mexican families continued after the American conquest, and she suggests that the state's vagrancy laws reinforced the power *compadres* had over their indigenous godchildren, and in at least one case facilitated a path to indentured servitude.[39] Nevertheless, Pérez asserts that compadrazgo did act as a social safety-net (of sorts) for destitute children, whether their parents died or were merely unable to support them in the aftermath of multiple waves of colonization and conquest.[40]

While compadrazgo implied that orphans would be incorporated into society through fictive kinship relations, the Daughters of Charity offered an institutional response to the problem. This alternative became especially important for the Irish, French, and American children whose parents, as relative newcomers, might not have fully integrated their children into the compadrazgo system. And if, as Pérez surmises, compadrazgo may have reinforced indigenous forced labor, white orphans' racial identity would make it much more difficult to indenture them, even in their impoverished condition. In the 1850s and 1860s, both Anglos and the Californio-Mexican elite considered indigenous people as "culturally unassimilable and unambiguously non-white," legitimizing a labor system that (at its worst) mirrored slavery.[41] Under the guise of the "Act for the Government and Protection of Indians," the 1850 state legislature authorized the "apprenticeship" or indenture of Indian minors until they reached the age of majority,

39. In 1858, Ysidora Bandini de Couts and her husband Cave Johnson Couts submitted a petition to the Justice of the Peace for the return of Bandini's godson Francisco, who had run away from the rancho. By law, unattached Indian minors could be bound to ranchero families who provided food and clothing for them in exchange for labor. Ysidora Bandini's status as Francisco's godmother reinforced her legal claim over his labor. Erika Pérez, "Colonial Intimacies: Interethnic Kinship, Sexuality, and Marriage in Southern California, 1769–1885" (UCLA, History, 2010), 285–287. For more on Couts' relationship with his Indian laborers see, Michael Magliari, "Free Soil, Unfree Labor: Cave Johnson Couts and the Binding of Indian Workers in California, 1850–1867," *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 3 (August 2004).

40. Pérez, "Colonial Intimacies," 18–20, 26–28, 285–290.

41. Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 150.

eighteen for boys and fifteen for girls. An estimated ten thousand Indians were indentured in California under the act until its repeal in 1863, and even then forced Indian labor did not dwindle until the late 1860s, when the availability of Chinese agricultural workers offered a viable alternative.[42] Indenturing white children, or those with mixed heritage, would undermine California's racial hierarchy by blurring the connection between race and forced labor. By establishing an orphanage in 1856, the Daughters of Charity offered an alternative that satisfied the needs of a society in transition, taking in children who did not fit easily into existing social networks and shaping the social welfare system that developed under American rule.

The possibility that the sisters saved white children from a life of forced labor is intriguing, but hard to prove. In 1858, the legislature authorized parents, legal guardians, or in their absence two county supervisors to "bind out" minors as apprentices or indentured servants.[43] Theoretically, the statute applied to all children, regardless of racial background. However, the pervasiveness of interethnic relationships among indigenous, Californio-Mexican, and Euro-American men and women makes it difficult to conclusively identify a child's racial identity from existing records. Therefore, scholars can only speculate about the numbers of white children indentured under the statute. Because of high rates of illegitimacy and the incidence of economic instability among those in interethnic relationships, most children affected by the statute (and those children most likely to be sent to the sisters' orphanage) probably had mixed racial heritage.[44]

The 1860 census demonstrates that the Daughters of Charity accepted children from a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds at the orphanage. Thirty-three of the children were born in California,

42. Ibid., 131–143; James J Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image*, 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 81–115.

43. "An Act to provide for the Binding Minors as Apprentices, Clerks, and Servants." Approved April 10, 1858, in *Statutes of California Passed at the 9th Session of the Legislature, 1858* (Sacramento: John O'Meara, State Printer, 1858), 134–137. In 1860, the legislature extended the power to "bind out" orphans to managers of orphan asylums. In 1870, asylums could also indenture half-orphans if their surviving parent did not provide child support for six months. "An Act supplementary to an Act entitled an act to authorize the Board of Managers of the San Francisco Orphan Asylum, or any other orphan asylum society in this State, to bind, as apprentices, clerks, and servants, orphan and half orphan children under their care and tuition, approved February 22, 1860," Approved 18 March 1870.," in *Statutes of the State of California Passed at the 18th Session of the Legislature, 1869–1870.* (Sacramento: D. W. Gelwicks, State Printer, 1870), 334–335.

44. Miroslava Chavez-Garcia, *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770s to 1880s* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 151–173.

five in Mexico, two from other places in the United States, two from Australia, and one each from France, Ireland, and Argentina. While the records do indicate the school's ethnic and national diversity, the children's racial identities are obscured. With the exception of two Indian children, census-takers did not identify the race of the children living at the orphanage. This suggests that they were considered white or had mixed heritage. Since the federal census bureau did not institute "Mexican" as an official racial category until 1930, it is not clear how many of the sisters' charges were perceived as "white." Of the children born in California, twenty-one have Spanish last names, so they may have had Spanish-speaking or indigenous parents. Yet even those children with more clearly Euro-American names could have also had mixed heritage.[45]

Where did these children fit in the existing social system in the 1850s and 1860s? Orphans and half-orphans (children with one parent unable or unwilling to care for them) tended to be drawn from families hanging on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. Some children may have had living relatives or godparents, but given the mounting economic difficulties at the time, even some of the landed elite may have been reluctant to take home another mouth to feed. The Daughters of Charity provided a home for children unable to find someone willing to care for them. As Sister Scholastica reported to the State Assembly in 1860, "no orphan has ever applied for admittance into the Asylum without having been received, and her wants provided for." In addition, the sisters also offered their charges "an education suited to the wants of this part of the country."[46] With its potential for social mobility, an education in the sisters' school may have appealed to relatives or a surviving parent as more advantageous than the alternative: labor on a *rancho*. The Daughters of Charity filled an important need in the community, providing opportunity for destitute children that not only benefitted them as individuals but also contributed to a more solid educational foundation for the community as a whole.

By establishing the orphanage, the Daughters of Charity filled an important social need, but the sisters did not merely rely on Angelenos'

45. *U.S. Census, Los Angeles*, 1860.

46. In her report to the State Assembly Sister Scholastica thanked the legislature for appropriating $1,000 to the orphan asylum and briefly explained the characteristics of the institution. "Report of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum of Los Angeles, December 1860." *Appendix to Journal of the House of Assembly of California, 12th session, 1861* (Sacramento: C. T. Botts, State Printer, 1861).

sense of altruism to build support for the institution. They offered other incentives to garner the community's assistance. The *Institución Caritativa* was primarily a private school, and the sisters used day students' tuition to supplement the cost of housing, feeding, and clothing the orphans who lived there. The Daughters of Charity also provided a trained teacher to inculcate students with an American education, most importantly instruction in English.[47] The Californio-Mexican elite saw the advantages of teaching their children English—particularly in a safe Catholic environment—and sent their daughters to the school. Students included Susana Avila, Ysabel Ramirez, and José Sepúlveda's daughters Ascensión and Tranquilina. Some adult women, most notably Arcadia Bandini de Stearns, also received English lessons at the school.[48] This evidence suggests that some of the elite saw the Daughters of Charity as a resource to enable their families to adapt and thrive under American rule.

Nineteenth-century fundraising fairs also served as community entertainment, and successful events encouraged patrons to happily part with their money for a charitable cause. Memoirs of the Los Angeles Orphans' Fairs also reinforce the entertainment aspect of the event. In *The City that Grew* (1936), Boyle Workman comments, "Socially, for many years, the biggest events were the fairs that were given for the support of the Sisters of Charity and their good work."[49] In a city more noted for its saloons, carousing, and violence, the sisters' fair provided a form of respectable *American* entertainment, a venue for men and women to socialize with each other, and an opportunity for Angelenos of different backgrounds to demonstrate their concern for the plight of poor children.

In some ways, the orphans' fair operated as a theater for social relations; the fantasy-like environment separated organizers and

47. Sister Corsina McKay (1810–1888) had been a public school teacher prior to becoming a Daughter of Charity. "Daughters of Charity, Consolidated Database (10–0), Archives St. Joseph's Provincial House, Emmitsburg, Maryland."

48. "May Festival"; "Primera Escuela. List of students (female) in first school [Los Angeles, 1856–1880]," n.d., HM 43963. Box 1. Reginaldo F. del Valle Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. The document in the del Valle collection is a reconstructed list of prominent women and girls who attended the sisters' school. However, it is only a partial list, so it is likely that other women and girls received instruction from the sisters. In her memoir, Sister Angelita Mombrado records that "Some of the Ladies used to come to school with their children. Their servants would bring their lunch and they had their table in the yard." Some of these women may have also participated in the English lessons. Angelita Mombrado, D.C., "Remembrance of My Youth," ca. 1917, Maryvale Historical Collection, Maryvale, Rosemead, California. Copy consulted at SVMCHC, March 2009. According to the census, Susana Avila lived with the del Valle family in 1860. She later married Juventino del Valle. Ysabel Ramirez was the sister of Francisco P. Ramirez, the publisher of *El Clamor Público*. *U.S. Census, Los Angeles*, 53; *U.S. Census, Los Angeles*, 1860, 98; *U.S. Census, Santa Barbara County*, 1870, 21.

49. Workman and Walker, *Boyle Workman's The City that Grew*, 43.

participants from the reality of daily life. But, the fair also remained important in the performance of gender and class identities. Although coming from different ethnic heritages, organizers held similar class backgrounds. Whether they prepared food, made lace, or sang a vocal solo, married and unmarried women displayed their domestic talents at the orphans' fair. In particular, the fair also provided a venue for single young women to demonstrate their skills and accomplishments, and it offered an opportunity to receive praise from one's parents, peers, and potential suitors. But, propriety demanded that these motivations be cloaked in the language of selfless service to the community. By participating in the fair, all of these women asserted their social status: they had the time, resources, and inclination to do charity work. Although scholars should not discount the authenticity of participants' charitable motivations, they should recognize that public performances at the fair served multiple functions in the social life of elite and middle-class women in Los Angeles. Fairs gave organizers the opportunity to perform acts of benevolence without actually interacting with the poor, and it also played into the larger desires of Angelenos to be recognized as part of a modern, cultured city.

In the 1850s, the Daughters of Charity engaged in gendered strategies to raise money to support the *Institución Caritativa*, the sisters' orphanage and school. Bishop Amat first chose to work through men's social and political networks. Members of the subscription committee included leading businessmen, large landowners, the former mayor, and members of the city council. But importantly, these men did not have any direct influence in the governance of the institution. The bishop held the deed to the property until 1884 (supposedly "in trust" for the sisters), and the orphanage did not have a board of governors or a board of trustees for over a decade.[50] When the Los Angeles Orphan Asylum

50. Initially, the Daughters of Charity sought to have the orphanage property deeded to their motherhouse in Emmitsburg, Maryland. However, the sisters' Californio-Mexican donors were reluctant to deed land bought with their money to a corporation out of state, believing it would be more secure if the title were in the name of the bishop. Bishop Thaddeus Amat received title to the property on Alameda and Macy Streets in December 1858, and despite consistent pressure from the sisters' superiors in Emmitsburg, he refused to transfer it to the sisters, citing a decision by the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide (the administrative arm of the Catholic Church's worldwide missionary effort which governed the American Catholic Church until 1908) that properties purchased with donations from the people were to be held in the hands of the bishop. Amat's successor, Bishop Francis Mora finally agreed to transfer the deed to the Daughters of Charity in 1884. In exchange, the motherhouse agreed to assume the debt which had accrued on the property during the preceding decades. See chapter two of my dissertation, Kristine Ashton Gunnell, "Without Regard to Race or Creed: The Daughters of Charity and the Development of Social Welfare in Los Angeles, 1856–1927" (Claremont: Claremont Graduate University, History, 2010).

officially incorporated in 1869, the president and board members were all Daughters of Charity. Laymen and laywomen may have acted in informal advisory capacities and played important roles in providing financial support, but they did not make any decisions about day-to-day operations, admissions, programming, or any other issues that affected the direct governance of the asylum.

Other than newspaper mentions of an occasional name of fair organizers or of students enrolled in the sisters' school, few records have survived to illuminate the intricacies of the sisters' benefactor relationships in Los Angeles during these decades, so scholars can only speculate about the power of personal charisma, family connections, and the desire to maintain (or improve) one's social reputation in shaping the interactions between the sisters and other women in the city. However, as Deidre Moloney and Mary J. Oates demonstrate in their work, tensions between sisters and laywomen could develop, particularly as Catholic laywomen sought to have greater influence in social welfare near the end of the century. Catholic sisters relied on laywomen as fundraisers, but most religious communities tended to place them in a subordinate position when it came to operations or policy matters.[51] Some women readily embraced this role as a matter of tradition, while others may have chafed under the sisters' attitudes. In any case, the Daughters of Charity had to carefully balance the needs of their benefactors with their desire to maintain their autonomy to control the institutions which they owned and operated.

When the men came up short in 1857, the Daughters of Charity turned to the women. Fundraising fairs became reliable, although labor intensive, sources of income for charity organizations throughout the United States in the nineteenth century. Women made lace doilies, baskets, confections, and other "fancy items" to sell. They decorated the hall, acted as saleswomen, and provided entertainment during the event. Successful fairs required the time, energy, and labor of dozens of women. For the sisters, the labor-intensive nature of the event proved to be a key element in building a strong benefactor network. Fundraising fairs required participants with a variety of skills and talents, and the elite and middle-class women who joined the effort often developed friendships with other organizers. Women articulated class identities through charity work, and the orphans' fairs provided Angelenos with opportunities to

51. Deirdre M. Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 141–144; Mary J. Oates, *The Catholic Philanthropic Tradition in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 87.

build a sense of community. Since the Daughters of Charity operated the only orphanage in the city until 1880, residents from different cultural and religious backgrounds "pulled together" to ensure its success.[52]

Minimizing Racial Tensions through the Orphans' Fair

Through the Los Angeles Orphans' Fairs, organizers constructed a woman-centered space that capitalized on women's talents, skills, and labor as they arranged events in the name of charity. The fairs' emphasis on domesticity, beauty, and wholesome entertainment also reflected a "culture of class" that stressed ethnic and religious cooperation among the wives and daughters of the town's merchants, professionals, and leading ranchers. Even if they could not afford to furnish their homes with porcelain tea sets or admire themselves in silver-handled mirrors, less wealthy fairgoers could still participate in this culture by buying a ticket, enjoying the entertainment, and entering a raffle. The orphans' fairs created a community that crossed ethnic, religious, and class boundaries as Angelenos came together in the name of charity.

Women organizers articulated this vision of community in contrast to the tension and division that so often surrounded men's economic, political, and even recreational activities. The gendered discourse surrounding charitable giving allowed civic boosters such as the editor of the *Los Angeles Republican* to praise residents' efforts to promote peace and harmony without seriously examining the structures that underwrote the marginalization of people of color in the city. Racial tensions erupted in violence against the Chinese in 1871, Californio-Mexicans from all classes had difficulty keeping their land, and economic pressures produced a high degree of instability in working-class families.[53] Nevertheless, the Los Angeles Orphans' Fairs provided a moment of cooperation that distracted public attention away from the more entrenched problems that faced the city.

52. Engh, "'They All Pulled Together': Challenges to Community Building in 19th-Century Los Angeles."

53. For an overview of social and economic conditions facing the Californio-Mexican community in Los Angeles during the 1870s, see Chavez-Garcia, *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770s to 1880s*; Richard Griswold del Castillo, *La Familia: Chicano Families in the Urban Southwest, 1848 to the Present* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984); Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850–1890: A Social History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-speaking Californians, 1846–1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). For recent discussions on the racialization of Chinese immigrants and the Anti-Chinese movement in California, see Najia Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the United States, 1848–1882* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 1–14, 178–195; Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 23–40.

While the orphans' fair promoted genteel entertainment suitable for "respectable" men, women, and children regardless of ethnicity, male-dominated recreational activities often capitalized on ethnic competition. In particular, horse races pitted Anglos and Mexicans against each other through contests of sport, not politics or violence.[54] In 1876, the excitement and spectacle of the race brought out many "prominent citizens," and the *Los Angeles Republican* noted that the "Spanish element" was particularly well-represented, since "one of their own people was a contestant in the race." Mexicans and Anglos expressed an intense sense of ethnic—perhaps even racial—competition by gambling on the event, and the paper noted that "the question of nationality enter[ed] into the contest in no small degree."[55] As Katherine Benton-Cohen argues, the racial constructions of "Anglo" and "Mexican" had not fully crystallized in the 1870s, and the editor's choice of words reveals that he was, in some ways, dancing around these categories.[56] The *Republican* omitted the names of the contestants in the paper, but horse racing appealed to Pío Pico, José Andrés Sepúlveda, and other members of the Californio-Mexican elite, who often sponsored horses and wagered on the contests.[57] By referring to the "Spanish element," the editor gave a nod to the class status of the *rancheros*, but he also reinforced the growing divisions in the community by separating them from the "American citizen[s] of our community [who] could not allow the opportunity to pass of showing their interest in the race."[58] This may not be racialized language, but the comments do indicate that the editor (and his readers) remained conscious of the development of a racial discourse and the sensitivity of the *ranchero* elite in being associated with racial labels. Even so, by shying away from the issue, the *Republican* confirmed the heightened importance of race and the climate of competition between elements of the "Mexican" and "American" communities.

Yet, even while the press emphasized the racial element at male-dominated sporting events, it praised the "absence of all bigotry" at the women-led orphans' fair.[59] Interestingly, the 1876 orphans' fair was held on November 2 and 3, the weekend before the national presidential

54. "The Great Race," *Evening Republican* (Los Angeles, October 8, 1876).
55. Ibid.
56. Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009), 6–8, 13–17, 27–47.
57. Harris Newmark, Maurice Harris Newmark, and Marco Ross Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 4:160–161.
58. "The Great Race."
59. "The Orphans' Fair," Evening Republican, October 19, 1876.

election. The election would bring people into town for rallies, and the horse races would keep them there for the weekend. By sponsoring the fair at that time, the sisters could collect donations from throughout the county before residents drank and gambled their money away.[60] The heightened political climate surrounding the election also likely encouraged the editor of the *Republican* to emphasize the community's cooperative efforts to make the fair a success, regardless of the divisions of race or religion in the city. He highlighted the cooperative efforts of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews in charitable efforts, as well as the participation of "matrons and misses . . . of all nationalities." Again, the *Republican* avoided racial categories in deference to the class status of fair organizers. Instead, the paper argued that the orphans' fair illustrated the modernity of Los Angeles, arguing that "the most pleasing feature of Los Angeles society is the absence of all bigotry in social and religious matters."[61] These articles reflect the tensions surrounding the development of an Anglo/Mexican racial divide during the 1870s. Angelenos expressed quasi-racial and quasi-national loyalties and affiliations in the horse races and gambling halls, but the *Republican* noted a more "civilized" tone in Los Angeles society through racial and religious cooperation for the sake of charity.

Promoting an egalitarian image had as much to do with boosterism as it did with any real sense of racial equality. With well-funded, modern social services, Los Angeles could claim its place as a modern city, rather than remaining the "Queen of the Cow Counties" on the southern California frontier. The emphasis on cooperation also lends itself to the larger discourse about the place of race and religion in social welfare. In the 1860s and 1870s, the California state legislature did not fund charitable institutions that discriminated based on race or religion, and women-led organizations like the San Francisco Ladies' Protection and Relief Society (LPRS) justified their petitions for state aid on their non-discriminatory policies.[62] A rhetoric of openness and equality abounded when it came to aiding poor children. If interpreted

60. "Advertisements," *Evening Republican* (Los Angeles, November 4, 1876).

61. "The Orphans' Fair," Evening Republican, October 19, 1876.

62. "An Act to appropriate funds for the relief of several orphan Asylums of this State, Approved 28 March 1870," in *Statutes of the State of California Passed at the 18th Session of the Legislature, 1869–1870* (Sacramento: D. W. Gelwicks, State Printer, 1870), 424–425; "Petition of the Ladies' Protection and Relief Society of San Francisco," in *Appendix to Journals of Senate and Assembly of the 18th Session of the Legislature of the State of California, 1870. Volume 3* (Sacramento: D. W. Gelwicks, State Printer, 1870); "Petition of the Trustees of the San Francisco Lying-In Hospital and Foundling Asylum for State Aid," in *Appendix to Journals of Senate and Assembly of the 18th Session of the Legislature of the State of California, 1870. Volume 3* (Sacramento: D. W. Gelwicks, State Printer, 1870).

cynically, it might seem like people tried to assuage their guilt by helping nonwhite children, when at the same time they cut their parents' wages, excluded them from decent neighborhoods, and limited their economic opportunity based on race. But despite these tensions, the orphans' fair remained a time to celebrate community, to put differences aside in the name of defenseless children. At least for elite and middle-class women, supporting the orphans became part of their vision of the city.

How could the discourse of charity for all and equality among the poor co-exist with a heightened xenophobia against the Chinese?[63] One possibility is gender. In some ways, charity work remained a woman's public prerogative, and it remained partially separated from mainstream politics. Elite and middle-class women built their moral authority in political matters by acting as advocates for poor women and children. Since few Chinese women and children lived in the state in 1870, particularly in southern California, few charity workers considered Chinese immigrants as part of their immediate concerns. At least for the sisters in Los Angeles, charity for "all" included Native Americans, Californio-Mexicans, and the orphaned children of European immigrants. Along with the LPRS and other Protestant-led charities in San Francisco, the Daughters of Charity stressed the ideals of taking care of everyone; no poor were turned away. This rhetoric acted as an effort to pull on the heartstrings of Judeo-Christian politicians, asking them to uphold Jewish philanthropic traditions or fulfill their Christian duty to care for the poor. In addition, increased funding for children's services was easier to sell. Children did not compete with adults for the jobs of working-class whites. Children were seen as helpless, and therefore they were not easily portrayed as lazy tramps, burdens on the largesse of the county. Charity work could be separated from the virulent attacks on immigrants, in part because women were in charge of it. It co-existed by stressing openness and "American" values, and

63. In an attempt to reduce prostitution and "coolie" slave labor, the California state legislature passed new requirements for ship captains to present evidence that Chinese men and women on their vessels entered the state voluntarily. "An Act to prevent the importation of Chinese criminals and to prevent the establishment of Coolie slavery," in *Statutes of the State of California Passed at the 18th Session of the Legislature, 1869–1870* (Sacramento: D. W. Gelwicks, State Printer, 1870), 332–333; "An Act to prevent the kidnapping and importation of Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese Females, for criminal or demoralizing purposes," in *Statutes of the State of California Passed at the 18th Session of the Legislature, 1869–1870* (Sacramento: D. W. Gelwicks, State Printer, 1870), 330–332. For a general discussion of Chinese exclusion and discrimination see Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Ronald T. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, vol. Updated and Revised (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998).

operated in a different sphere than the fears of racialized economic competition, disease, and social infiltration.

Conclusion

In the 1860s and 1870s, the Los Angeles orphans' fairs operated as woman-centered spaces in which women from different ethnic, class, and religious backgrounds could express one vision of their community. Grounded in domestic ideology, fundraising fairs provided opportunities for married and unmarried women to display their specialized skills and talents. Participating in the fair connected women organizers to an elite group of "city-makers," those intent on boosting the fortunes of the pueblo by improving its social services. By providing a genteel form of *American* entertainment, the fair served as a symbol for citizens' desires to be a "modern" city. Fairgivers and fairgoers supported a more "civilized" image for Los Angeles by participating in an alternative form of entertainment—one without heavy drinking, overt gambling (as opposed to a harmless raffle), or unrestrained sexuality. Although exact numbers were not reported, newspapers often commented on the large crowds at the event. Receipts ranged from $1534.55 in 1863 to $2316.60 in 1876, sizeable sums, given the value of the dollar in those days. In 1876, twenty-three percent of the fair's proceeds came from ticket sales and refreshments, so the average patrons without a lot of money to spend still contributed significantly to the event.[64] The fair's emphasis on ethnic and religious cooperation mediated racial tensions in these woman-centered spaces—at least on the surface. And even though aspiring working-class individuals could participate if they bought a ticket, charity work primarily operated as a marker of middle and upper class social identity. By donating their time and resources, organizers publicly displayed their social position in the community.

For the sisters, the orphans' fairs provided an opportunity to build a network of benefactors to support their mission. Since they were labor-intensive, fundraising fairs required the involvement of large numbers of women to make items to sell, to staff the booths, and

64. "The Orphans' Fair," Los Angeles Star, November 14, 1863; "The Orphans' Fair," Evening Republican, November 8, 1876. A simple inflation calculator available at http://www.westegg.com/inflation/infl.cgi indicates the values in 2010 dollars as roughly $26,000 to $46,000, though this figure may be too low. According to the *Evening Republican* on November 8, 1876, ticket sales for the fair amounted to $224.00. The ice cream booth earned $117.00, and the main refreshment table brought in $100.00. The soda water booth earned $53.45 and the candy booth brought in $27.50.

to provide the entertainment. In a small city like Los Angeles, the Daughters of Charity needed to reach beyond their Catholic circle, drawing in women from many different backgrounds. The sisters' anti-discriminatory stance—admitting all orphaned children regardless of race or creed—fostered interfaith cooperation. Through the orphans' fair, the Daughters of Charity acted as intermediaries between various religious and cultural groups during a time of intense economic, social, and political change. But the fair also served another purpose in the rhetoric surrounding the city's image. As an ascendant city, Los Angeles could assert its tolerance in matters of benevolence while largely ignoring tensions in other areas. These assertions relied on the gendered discourse that surrounded social welfare services in the city. Although women articulated a vision of the city that stressed ethnic and religious harmony, the imbalances in men and women's economic and political power meant that this vision would be difficult to implement for more than one or two nights a year.