



Silicon Valley, Women, and the California Dream: Gender, Class, and Opportunity in the Twentieth Century

Glenna Matthews

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What accounts for the growing income inequalities in Silicon Valley, despite huge technological and economic strides? Why have the once-powerful labor unions declined in their influence? How are increasing waves of immigration and ethnic diversity changing the workplace in the Valley? *Silicon Valley, Women, and the California Dream* examines these questions from a fresh perspective: that provided by the history of women in Silicon Valley in the twentieth century.

Silicon Valley is internationally renowned. It is less well known, however, that the Valley once contained the world's largest concentration of fruit-processing plants, set in a sea of fruit orchards. Despite the many differences between the fruit and electronics industries, one important thread connects them: the production workers have been preponderantly immigrant women. (In the early part of the twentieth century, the newcomers came primarily from southern Europe; in the latter part of the century, they came mostly from Asia and Latin America, especially Mexico.) The author examines both industries, both work forces, and the changing nature of the local power structure. Although she documents the many sources of vitality and ferment that have undergirded the region's economic might, she also demonstrates that its wealth has not been equally distributed.

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