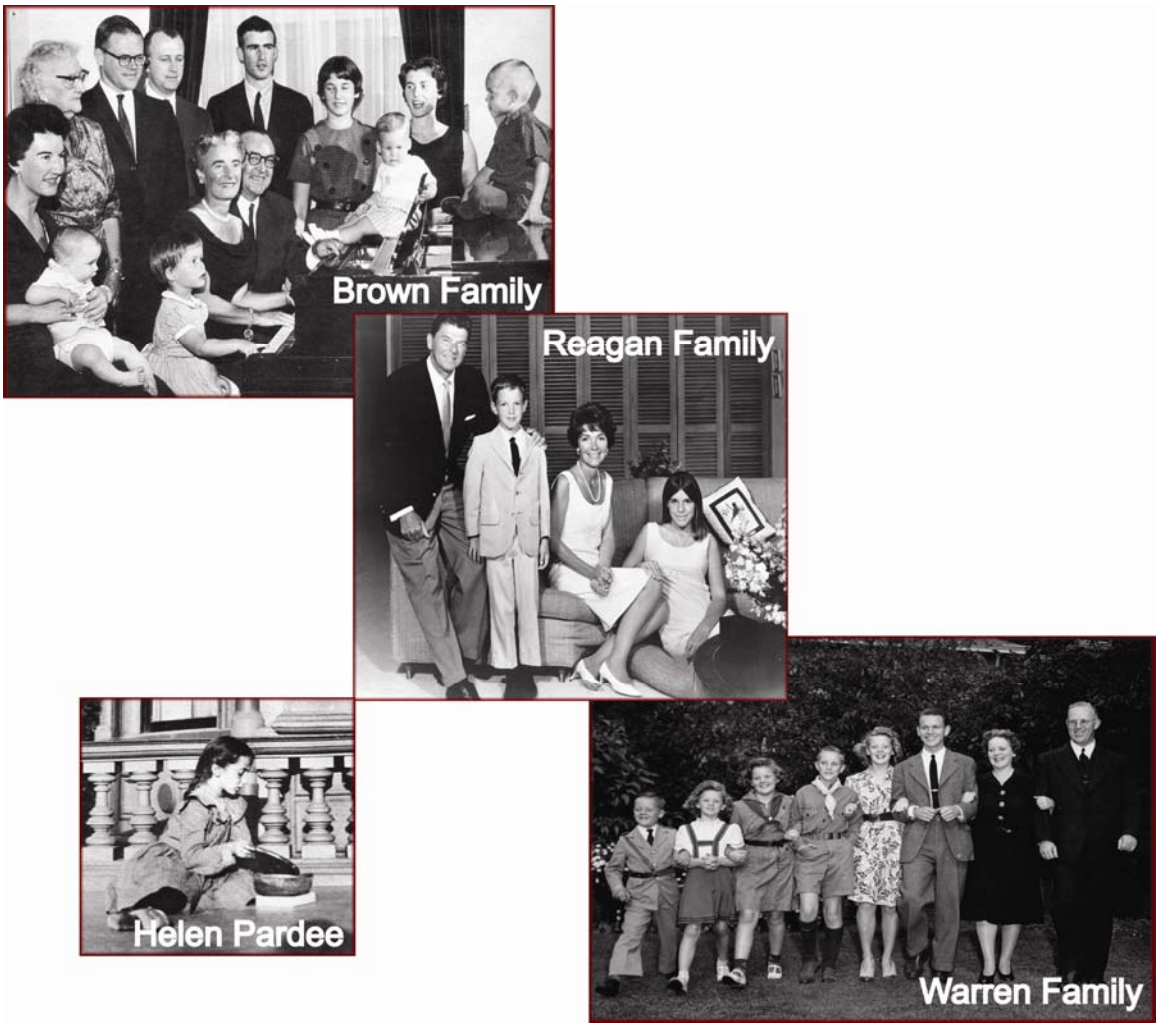
Lesson Five: Families in the Mansion



Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and function of the original mansion built on the corner of 16th and H Streets, Sacramento
- Explain the lives of the private families who lived in the mansion
- Describe life at the mansion from the perspective of the governors and their families who lived there

Pre-tour Activity 1: The Thirteen Governors and Their Families

Materials

- ☑ Handouts on each of the thirteen governors and their families
- ☑ Map of the United States (either a classroom map or student copies)
- ☑ "The Thirteen Governors and Their Families" worksheet

Instructional Procedures

1. Explain to the students that we learn about history by reading and thinking about the lives of people who lived before us. True life stories about people are called biographies. Have the class read the governors' biographies. As they read they should consider the following questions:
   - Where was the governor raised?
   - Who was his wife?
   - How many children did they have?
   - What was it like to be the son or daughter of the governor?
   - What did the governor do before he became governor?
   - In what ways did the governor's family make the Governor's Mansion a home?

2. Explain to the students that most of the governors were not born in California. On the United States map identify the city or state where each governor was raised and his family was from. Students may work in pairs or small groups to label the map.

3. Assign "The Thirteen Governors and Their Families" worksheet. Students may work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to gather the information to complete the worksheet.

Warren Family

The Thirteen Governors and Their Families

Governor George Pardee, Helen Newhall Penniman Pardee and Family
Republican 1903-1907

George Pardee, known to be thoughtful, kind, quiet, reserved, and a good thinker, was born in San Francisco in 1857 and grew up in Oakland. After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley, he joined his father's medical practice, specializing in diseases of the eye and ear. Interested in his community and politics, Dr. Pardee was mayor of Oakland from 1893-95. Elected governor in 1902, his was the first California governor's family to live in the mansion at 16th and H Streets. After moving into the mansion, the Pardees added an office that had a stairway and entrance from the outside so visitors would not disturb the family. Governor Pardee is remembered for the personal direction that he provided in rebuilding San Francisco after the earthquake of April 18, 1906. He was the first governor to request and get federal aid for a natural disaster.

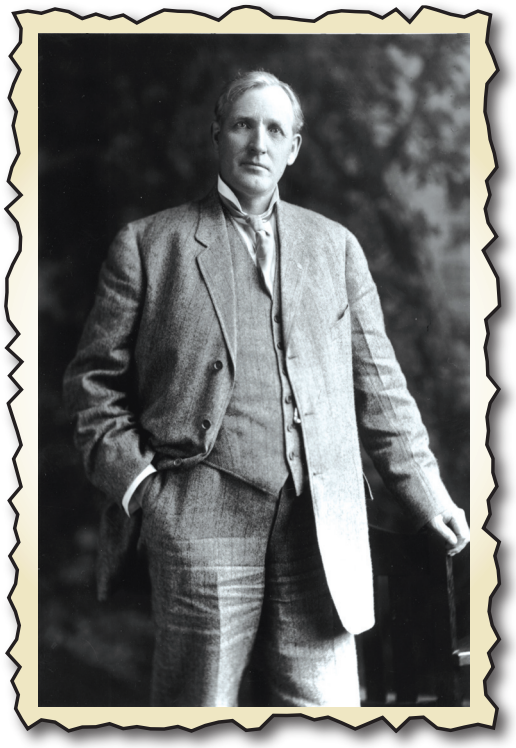
George and Helen Pardee met when they attended Oakland High School and graduated together in 1875. When they moved into the mansion their family included four daughters: Florence was 15; Madeline, 14; Carol, 12; and Helen, 8. Mrs. Pardee's sister, Miss Marietta (Aunt Etta) Penniman, supervised the girls and the home when the parents were away. Delia Malloy, a young Irish housekeeper, helped Aunt Etta. The southern cook, Leona, prepared food for the family and their many unexpected guests. The gardener Olaf cared for the horse, Lady Jane, and the carriages. The girls had a variety of pets—two dogs, a cat, a parrot, a lamb, and a chipmunk that would hide in the draperies.

The Pardees entertained with concerts, card games, and Thursday afternoon gatherings with tea and cookies. One time the governor entertained his classmates from the University of California Glee Club, hosting them for a meal and an overnight stay.

Young Helen and her friends formed the Puritan Club and planned a children's fair in the basement to raise money for the new Sacramento Children's Home. Florence played tennis, Madeline practiced her piano lessons on the Steinway piano, and Carol liked to sew. They enjoyed roller skating on the newly-cemented floor in the basement.

When Governor Pardee went to the Bay Area to help recovery efforts after the San Francisco earthquake, Mrs. Pardee and the children stayed in Sacramento and rolled bandages for the injured victims. After several months the governor returned to Sacramento, and the girls were shocked that his black beard had turned gray. That fall, when a new governor was elected, the family took their personal belongings—half a train car load—and moved back to Oakland.

Governor James Gillett, Isabella Erzgraber Gillett and Family
Republican 1907-1911



James Gillett was born in 1860 in Wisconsin. When he migrated to California, the six-foot-tall, 240-pound lawyer settled in Eureka. Although he was elected governor with the support of the Southern Pacific Railroad, Governor Gillett called for railroad reforms. He is known as the father of the modern highways because of his leadership in providing financial support for highway improvements. He started California government reforms and set the foundation for the election of the next governor, Hiram Johnson.

James Gillett's first wife, Adelaide Pratt, died in 1896, leaving him with two daughters, Effie and Ethel, and a son, Horace, who died in early childhood. Then in May 1898, he married Isabella Erzgraber and they had a son, James, Jr. When Governor and Mrs. Gillett moved into the mansion, James, Jr. was six years old.

Young James loved to slide down the curving banister while his father clapped and his mother looked on with dismay. He also liked the big stable, where he could play with pet chickens and keep out of the way of the carriages and horses. In later years he would remember playing army in the area under the front steps that he used as a fort against an imaginary invading enemy. His weapons were sour oranges collected from the trees in the neighborhood.

Isabella Gillett was worried for her son's safety, and it turned out she was right. A San Quentin prisoner planned to have James, Jr. kidnapped. The convict hoped to gain a pardon for his crime upon returning the kidnapped boy. However, the plot was discovered in time. News of the plot upset James, Jr.'s half-sisters who were students at Stanford University. The girls spent most of their time at school, but they came home to the mansion for summer vacations. Ethel Gillett announced her engagement to Sidney G. Thorp in 1911 at a tea in the mansion.

Young James, Jr. frequently had asthma attacks. So that he could sleep in fresh air, the porch above the mansion's 16th Street entrance was made into a sleeping porch. This was next to the governor's bedroom. If James, Jr. had trouble breathing, his father was nearby to help him.

Isabella Gillett made other changes to the mansion. She redecorated the formal parlor into an elegant orchid and white room that complemented the white marble fireplace. Besides entertaining guests and taking care of young James, Mrs. Gillett wrote poetry and was an excellent pianist. She played the Steinway piano frequently. Her book of poems, "Gleanings and Weavings," was published in 1922.

Governor Hiram Johnson, Minnie McNeal Johnson and Family
Republican 1911-1917

Hiram Johnson, born in Sacramento in 1866, was short, stocky and red-faced. After attending the University of California at Berkeley for three years, he left to study law and establish his practice in Sacramento. In 1910 he ran for governor on an anti-railroad platform and toured the state in a red Locomobile, a steam powered automobile, with the slogan "Kick the Southern Pacific out of Politics." He won the election, and Californians reelected him governor in 1914. Two years later, he was elected to the United States Senate where he served until his death in 1945.

Although he was controversial, Governor Johnson got things done. He enacted the initiative, referendum, and recall procedures. Because he rallied for women's rights, California was the sixth state to allow women to vote.

Governor Johnson, who had grown up in Sacramento, was not excited about moving into the mansion because of its bats. He relied on his wife, Minnie, to make the mansion livable. She called in the "pest eradicators" to get rid of the bats. Then she called interior decorators from San Francisco and the whole house was modernized.

All the mahogany woodwork in the mansion was painted gray to blend with the wallpaper. The brown Italian marble fireplace in the living room was also painted gray. The library was papered in gold, draped in purple, and carpeted in gray with purple bands. The furniture was upholstered in plum-colored velour, as it remains today.

Minnie Johnson wanted a new bathroom so she converted the nursery area on the second floor. The biggest challenge, however, was the carriage house. It became a place for the recently-invented gas engine automobile and housed their Locomobile. Instead of a stable man, the Johnsons had a driver.

Their two sons, Hiram, Jr. and Archibald, were grown and lived in San Francisco. But there was one person at the mansion who had been a lifelong member of the household—a cook of Chinese descent nicknamed "Joey Johnson." Que Hong, another Chinese man, was employed as a housekeeper.

Governor William Stephens, Flora Rawson Stephens and Family
Republican 1917-1923

William Stephens was born in Ohio in 1859, but moved to California when he was 11 years old. He was a tall man with twinkling eyes and a ready smile. Before entering politics, he was a teacher and a successful grocery store owner. Because he was governor during World War I, he was known as the war governor. He is remembered for making special proclamations, such as Go to Sunday School Sunday, Ripe Olive Day, and Order Sunday. It was during his administration that women became members of the legislature for the first time in California history. He studied law and received his degree from the University of Southern California after becoming governor.

For the first year the governor and his wife Flora had the entire mansion to themselves. Their only daughter, Barbara, was living on Mare Island while her husband, U.S. Marine Corps officer Randolph T. Zane, was overseas during World War I. However, Major Zane was killed in action in France in 1918, and Barbara and her five-year-old daughter, Marjorie, came to live at the mansion.

A room for Marjorie was built from the west bedroom on top of the north porch. By pulling a window forward, the front appearance of the home was not greatly changed.

Flora Stephens was an important part of Sacramento social life and was very active in church activities.

In 1921 their widowed daughter, Barbara, was married to Dr. John Osburn in a ceremony in the front parlor of the mansion, which was decorated with living plants and pink blossoms. Luncheon was served from a buffet with a centerpiece of pink roses and crystal candlesticks. She was the first governor's daughter to be married in the mansion.

One December evening in 1917, the mansion was rocked by a charge of dynamite. No one was hurt, but the mansion and neighboring properties were damaged. Both the Governor and Mrs. Stephens were upstairs when the blast occurred a few minutes before midnight. They came downstairs to find the basement flooded, the kitchen demolished, and a pantry full of crushed cans of food. It was thought that the Industrial Workers of the World, a militant labor organization, was responsible for the dynamite attack.

A few years later the mansion was damaged again. During a ten-minute thunder and lightning storm, a lightning bolt set fire to the tower. The fire department came and quickly put out the flames. Mrs. Stephens was in the living room with her daughter, and the governor was at the Capitol. No one was injured.

Governor Friend William Richardson, Augusta Feider Richardson and Family
Republican 1923-1927

Friend William Richardson was born in Michigan in 1865 and later moved to California. Relatives and friends considered him to be shrewd and forceful. He told things like they were, but he also had a sense of humor. For fun he would work crossword puzzles. He was publisher of the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* newspaper, and from 1902 until his death in 1943, he was president of the California Press Association. When he campaigned for governor, he promised a conservative program to cut back government. His slogan was "Efficiency and Economy." Richardson Grove State Park, a redwood forest in Humboldt County, was named for him in 1922.

Governor Richardson was considered a very conservative leader, making many budget cuts. He was also conservative with his words. He gave the shortest university commencement address: "I am glad to give these diplomas to the fine-looking young people you see before you."

The governor and his wife, Augusta, were of the Quaker religious faith and preferred a simple life. Mrs. Richardson, the daughter of a Swiss doctor, insisted on cleanliness everywhere and on doing the cleaning herself. Quaker beliefs did not allow servants. When the family moved into the mansion, Mrs. Richardson cleaned it from top to bottom with the help of their three children, Ruth, 23, Paul, 21, and John, 10.

They washed the walls and had the original draperies and furniture cleaned. In cleaning the fireplace in the dining room, Mrs. Richardson discovered the original Italian brown marble under the gray paint put there during Mrs. Hiram Johnson's stay in the mansion. All the paint was removed. After all the cleaning, a fire was lighted in the west bedroom fireplace. The soot and ash that had built up for 25 years fell and spread all over the room. After that the Richardsons lit no more fires in the fireplaces.

In 1925 Governor Richardson's niece was wed in the mansion. The following year the Richardson's daughter, Ruth, married Frank J. Smith, who later became warden of San Quentin prison. The ceremony took place inside the entrance to the front parlor. The bride wore an ivory satin dress and carried a large bouquet of flowers.

Governor Clement Calhoun "C.C." Young, Lyla Vincent Young and Family
Republican 1927-1931

Clement Calhoun Young was born in New Hampshire in 1869. After moving to California, he taught high school English in San Francisco and developed real estate in Berkeley. He believed in progressive ideas for government and was founder of the Progressive Voters League. Friends thought he was sincere, hard working, businesslike, and attentive to details.

After he went into politics, he served as assembly speaker and lieutenant governor. As governor he reorganized state government and patterned it after the federal government. This included a cabinet of experts who helped the governor on policy and important government decisions.

Governor Young, his wife, Lyla, and two daughters, Barbara and Lucy, moved into the Governor's Mansion in 1927. At the time, Barbara was attending the University of California at Berkeley, and Lucy was going to Sacramento Junior College. Though not at home full time, Barbara and Lucy kept the mansion alive with their friends, particularly in the summertime. Lyla Young enjoyed entertaining. Every Thursday during the legislative sessions, she received visitors in the parlor where she served tea and pastries. She and the governor held several formal receptions for legislators, their wives, and friends; as many as 200 people would attend.

Lyla Young was a person of refined manners and taste. Except for Minnie Johnson's redecoration of the music room in purple velvet, she did not like most of the furniture in the mansion, but knew that there was not enough money in the budget the state gave her to make significant changes. With the available money, she purchased a sideboard table for the front hall and added a new, very modern piece, a console radio, in the parlor. In order to improve the appearance of the mansion, she placed her own rugs over the carpeting in the parlors.

She selected the crystal chandeliers throughout the first floor. These were to replace the one-bulb drop cords, installed in 1896, that replaced the original gas fixtures. Lyla Young also decided to convert the mansion's office addition into a breakfast room so that the family had a less formal place for meals. A room air conditioner, one of the first to be manufactured, was added to the breakfast room in 1928 and is still there today.

Lucy and Barbara Young

Governor James "Sunny Jim" Rolph, Jr., Annie Marshall Reid Rolph and Family
Republican 1931-1934

Born in San Francisco in 1869, James Rolph, Jr. was first a successful ship builder and then served as mayor of San Francisco for 19 years. When he appeared in public, he often wore a tall silk hat, striped trousers, cowboy boots, and a long coat known as a frock coat. People thought Sunny Jim was pleasant, folksy, friendly, and generous. He would entertain at parties, and the public loved him.

In the fall of 1930, as the Great Depression gripped the country, these traits helped him defeat incumbent C.C. Young for the governorship. Governor James Rolph preferred the glitter and pomp of ceremonies to the day-to-day administrative job of being governor. He was against any changes to California's tax structure.

When they moved into the mansion, Governor Rolph and his wife Annie had three grown children, Annette, married to John P. Symes; James III; and Georgianna, wife of Richard Willetts.

The Rolphs made the mansion their official residence, but they also kept their San Francisco home. They hosted a dinner for legislators, their families, and state officials at the Hotel Senator instead of in the mansion. Annie Rolph held receptions in the mansion for delegates to many of the large conventions in Sacramento, and she entertained visitors during the governor's conference.

Governor Rolph entertained his very closest friends at the mansion. He is said to have enjoyed a game of cards with his colleagues in the cupola.

A bit of sparkle was added to the mansion when Annie Rolph installed a beautiful crystal chandelier in the dining room at the same time they added the table and upholstered chairs that are still there today.

In February 1934, while he was campaigning in Marysville for a second term as governor, Governor Rolph suffered a stroke. He never returned to the mansion and died at a friend's ranch in Santa Clara County three months later.

Governor Frank Merriam and Jessie Steward Lipsey Merriam
Republican 1934-1939

Frank Merriam was born in Iowa in 1865 and came to California as an adult. He had a variety of jobs before becoming governor. He was a school teacher, a school superintendent, and a state auditor in Iowa. In California he was a Long Beach realtor, a newspaper reporter, and a member of the State Assembly. Serving as the lieutenant governor to Governor James Rolph, Merriam automatically became governor when Rolph died in office. He won a second term after a hard campaign against novelist and political activist Upton Sinclair.

Governor Merriam was 69 years old, healthy, and sturdy when elected. He was very friendly, but was sensitive about his age. As governor he traveled almost 7,500 miles a year by car. During his administration, both the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge and the Oakland Bay Bridge were constructed and opened.

Governor Merriam's first wife, Nellie, had died in 1931, and he continued to live in a Sacramento hotel until he was elected on his own to a full term. Even then, he left the responsibility of caring for the Governor's Mansion primarily to the guards and a gardener.

Then in January 1936 he became the first California govenor to wed in office. He married former Iowa acquaintance Jessie Steward Lipsey, and they moved into the mansion.

Jessie Merriam was a smiling, energetic, dignified woman with a quick sense of fun. She loved everything about the mansion. She liked the people of Sacramento, who welcomed her enthusiastically. She was delighted with the beauty of the trees and the mansion grounds. She said that it reminded her of her family home in Iowa.

The Merriams had many wonderful functions at the mansion. One noteworthy reception was held to honor Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who lectured at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium on "A Typical Day at the White House."

Governor Culbert Olson, Kate Jeremy Olson and Family
Democrat 1939-1943

Culbert Olson was born in Utah in 1876 and politics was in his blood. His mother worked for women's rights and was the first woman elected to public office in Utah. He studied law, graduating from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He started a career as a news reporter and was later the city editor of the *Ogden Standard* newspaper. He entered politics and was elected to the Utah senate. In 1920 he and his wife, Kate Jeremy, left that life behind and moved to Los Angeles. In 1934 he was elected state senator representing Los Angeles.

He was the first Democratic governor in the twentieth century. Some think that his election was partly due to the unpopularity of Governor Merriam's tax increase and his handling of the 1934 longshoremen's strike. During Governor Olson's term, the Golden Gate International Exposition, which greatly helped the state's economy at the end of the Depression, was held in San Francisco. His term was a time of increasing anti-Japanese sentiment as a result of the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese military on December 7, 1941.

Culbert and Kate Olson had three grown sons when they moved in the Governor's Mansion, Richard, age 31, and twins John and Dean, age 21.

Mrs. Olson had been ill in Los Angeles, but came to Sacramento to attend her husband's inaugural ball at the Memorial Auditorium on January 6, 1939. Soon after his inaugural, Governor Olson himself became ill and was hospitalized until mid-February.

Their son Richard, his wife Adelle, and their two small children stayed at the mansion to help Mrs. Olson move in. Then in April Mrs. Olson died, and the governor's sister, Mrs. George M. Hanson, served as the official hostess when guests arrived.

The governor's niece, Dorothy Olson of Utah, was married to Bruce B. Whitney in the mansion in 1941. The ceremony took place in front of a mansion fireplace that was decorated with white roses, asters, and zinnias. It was a happy event for the governor, his two sisters, and the 200 guests.

Governor Olson's term saw the start of World War II, when people responded zealously to help the war effort. Savings bonds were sold and campaigns were conducted to collect materials that could be used to help fight the war. During the scrap iron drive, Governor Olson climbed to the roof of the mansion where he used a crowbar to pry off the ornamental grillwork to contribute to the drive. It turned out, however, that the ornamental iron was the property of the state and could not be given away to the private individuals who were handling the scrap iron drive. Today it is not known what happened to it.

Governor Olson and President Roosevelt

Governor Earl Warren, Nina Palmquist Meyers Warren and Family
Republican 1943-1953

Earl Warren was born in Los Angeles in 1891 and grew up in Bakersfield. He graduated from the University of California, earned a law degree, and started to practice law. When the United States entered World War I, he joined the U.S. Army. After the war, he began a life of public service. In 1938 he was elected state attorney general and served in that office until he was elected and sworn in as governor in 1943.

Earl Warren married widow Nina Meyers in 1925 and adopted her five-year-old son James. They moved into the mansion with five of their six children. By then James was grown, married, and in the U.S. Marine Corps, Virginia was a high school sophomore, Earl, Jr. was in the ninth grade, Dorothy was 11 years old, Nina Elizabeth, nicknamed Honey Bear, was 9, and Bobby was 8. As the state's first family, they resided in the mansion for ten years.

With such a large family, some changes to the mansion had to be made. Nina Warren spent many weeks renovating and selecting furnishings. She purchased reproductions of Victorian furniture for the front parlor and Oriental rugs for the downstairs. She updated the kitchen with cupboards, ceramic tile, new appliances, and utensils. Mrs. Warren enjoyed being in the kitchen preparing the children's school lunches and baking cakes. She and Governor Warren hosted dinner parties and official social events in the mansion. She was the first governor's wife to have her own secretary, Betty Foot, to keep up with the increasing obligation of public correspondence.

On a memorable day in November 1952, Governor Warren was elected to a third term. That same day young Nina, always called "Honey Bear," became ill with spinal poliomyelitis (polio). Not understanding the seriousness of her illness, she said, "Oh, Daddy, I've spoiled your day." Happily, she recovered.

In June 1953, when Governor Warren was appointed to the Supreme Court, the children were all grown or away at school. Mrs. Warren was faced with packing and moving ten years' accumulation of the family's goods and personal effects. By December the Warren family was in Washington, D.C.

Governor Goodwin "Goodie" Knight, Virginia Carlson Knight and Family
Republican 1953-1959

Goodwin Knight was born in Utah in 1896 and came to California as a boy with his family. He studied at Stanford and Cornell Universities before becoming a lawyer in Los Angeles. He was an enthusiastic, positive, colorful, likeable person. In addition to being a judge, he hosted a popular public affairs radio program, which made him a well-known political personality. Earlier he had been a newspaper reporter, grocery clerk, and a hardrock miner. At age 13 he wrote a book of stories for boys called "Good's Budget."

He was elected lieutenant governor, in 1946, serving with Governor Earl Warren. He stepped in as governor when Earl Warren was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1953. Governor Knight was reelected in 1954. During his term, he raised unemployment benefits and financial assistance for the elderly. He was responsible for consolidating the state's water agencies into the Department of Water Resources and he supported controls on air pollution.

Goodwin Knight was a widower when he became governor. His wife, Arvilla Cooley, died in October 1952. He had two grown daughters: Marilyn, married to Robert Eaton, and Carolyn.

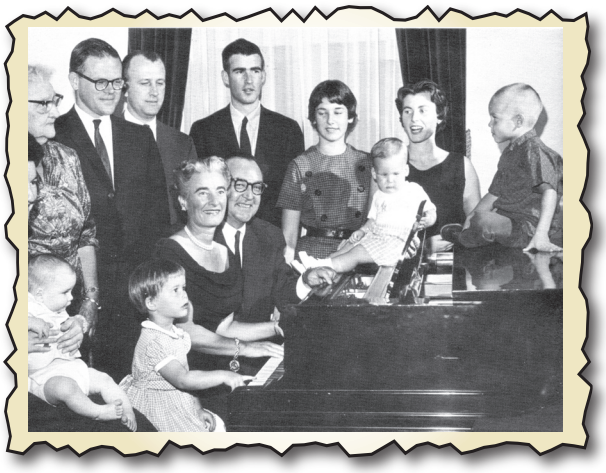
Governor Knight held his first open house at the mansion in January 1954. Over 4,000 people came to meet him and walk through the mansion's first floor rooms. At the following year's reception, Governor Knight proudly introduced his new bride, Virginia Carlson, widow of a World War II veteran. They had met while she was volunteering on behalf of veterans.

When Mrs. Knight first saw the mansion, she called it a palace. She added her own touches to the home by having the light in the tower turned on each evening. At Christmas each of the round windows was circled with a wreath of lights. She also remodeled the kitchen to reflect her Scandinavian heritage.

In June 1955 Governor Knight's daughter Carolyn married Charles V. Weedman in the mansion. Carolyn was escorted down the curved staircase by her father. The ceremony was performed in the formal parlor in front of the fireplace decorated with flowers. More than 40 relatives and friends attended.

Mrs. Knight was interested in the governors' wives who had lived in the mansion before her. She said, "I feel sure that some day this beautiful home will become a museum and I think people will be interested in the women who have lived here." She collected photographs of each of the previous ten first ladies, had them framed and hung in the downstairs hall. The project, the First Ladies Gallery, was completed just before Governor and Mrs. Knight moved out of the mansion in 1958.

Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Bernice Layne Brown and Family
Democrat 1959-1967



Edmund G. Brown, the son of a storekeeper, was born in 1905 and grew up in San Francisco. During World War I, he used Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty…" speech to sell war bonds, and this gave him the nickname "Pat." While attending the University of California at San Francisco, he decided to become a lawyer. He entered politics and was elected San Francisco's district attorney in 1944. In 1958 he became the Democratic candidate for governor, and he won the election by over a million votes.

Governor Brown was considered able and sincere. Among his achievements as governor were the California Water Project, which built the California Aqueduct; the Higher Education Master Plan, which added three university and six state college campuses; the Fisher Act, which upgraded teacher education; and the Rumford Fair Housing Act, which outlawed racial discrimination in home sales.

When Governor Brown and his wife, Bernice Layne, moved into the mansion, only their 14-year-old daughter, Kathleen, moved in with them. The two older girls were married; Barbara to Charles E. Casey, Jr., and Cynthia to Joseph T. Kelly. Their son Edmund, Jr., nicknamed Jerry, was away at college.

During their eight years at the mansion, Bernice Brown redecorated two bedrooms and restyled the informal parlor by adding more comfortable furniture. Interested in California history, she borrowed works of art from California museums to hang in the parlors. She also had the parlors papered with a pale gold Victorian-style flocked wall paper.

Governor Brown was fond of swimming and would go across the street in his robe and slippers to the Mansion Inn Hotel where the owners offered him the use of the swimming pool. However, friends of the governor's family thought it would be more dignified if a pool were added to the mansion's grounds. Enough private funds were raised to build the pool. It was placed in front of the carriage house, where a gazebo had been, and a fence was added for privacy.

Bernice Brown, a friendly and gracious woman, continued the practice of opening the mansion to the public. Holidays were the time for large family gatherings. One small grandson said, "You don't have to worry about entertaining us, Grandma. The house is fun enough." One special occasion was the wedding reception of Mrs. Brown's niece, Kathleen Bonnell, who wed William Dowdall in September 1964. The reception for more than 300 guests was held around the mansion's pool.

Governor Ronald Reagan, Nancy Davis Reagan and Family
Republican 1967-1975

Ronald Reagan was born in 1911 in Illinois where he graduated from Eureka College. From 1937 to 1960 he was an actor in Hollywood motion pictures and on television. During World War II he served as a captain in the U.S. Army Air Corps, and at the end of the war, he continued his acting career. In Hollywood he served as president of the Screen Actors Guild and head of the Motion Picture Industry Council.

In 1966 he was elected governor even though he had never before held public office. When Governor Reagan was in office, he cut funding for colleges, Medi-Cal, and welfare. He also completed highway and school building projects started by previous governors. He was reelected for a second term. In 1980 the Republican Party nominated him for President of the United States. He won the election and became the fortieth President, serving two terms from 1981 to 1989. He is the only California governor to have achieved the presidency.

In January 1967 Governor Reagan and his wife Nancy Davis moved into the mansion with their eight-year-old son Ron (Skipper). Before moving in Nancy Reagan met with Bernice Brown, the former first lady, and discussed the condition of the historic home. They noted the lack of privacy, the noise from the busy city streets, and the potential for a fire in the home.

When a false fire alarm scared Nancy and Skipper into a hurried exit from the mansion, the family reconsidered where they would live. A suitable home for rent was found in a residential area of Sacramento. The Reagans moved out of the Victorian mansion on April 1, 1967, just three months after they moved in.

Arrangements were made for the California Department of Parks and Recreation to operate the Governor's Mansion as a state historic park with conducted tours. On Admission Day, September 9, 1967, Nancy Reagan returned to the mansion to cut the ribbon tied across the 90-year-old newel posts on the front steps. The mansion was officially turned over to the public as a museum.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

The Governors and Their Families

Directions: Write your answers to each of these questions using complete sentences.

1. What activities did the Pardee children do? *Helen and her friends formed the Puritan Club and had a children's fair in the basement to raise money for the Sacramento Children's Home. Florence played tennis; Madeline practiced her lessons on the Steinway piano; Carol liked to sew.*

2. What bothered Governor Johnson about the mansion, and what his wife do about it? *Mrs. Johnson was bothered by the bats in the mansion so she called the exterminator to get rid of them.*

3. Name the two events that damaged the mansion during the Stephens' term? *The mansion was damaged by dynamite in 1917, and a few years later lightning set fire to the cupola.*

4. What happened after Mrs. Richardson finished cleaning the fireplaces? *A fire lighted in the west bedroom fireplace caused soot and ash to spread all over the room. After that the Richardsons did not light any fires in the fireplaces.*

5. Why was the office addition converted to a breakfast room? *Mrs. Young wanted a less formal place for meals so she converted the office into a breakfast room.*

6. What president's wife visited the mansion? *President Franklin D. Rosevelt's wife, Eleanor, visited the mansion when Governor Merriam lived there.*

7. Who climbed on the roof at the start of World War II? Why? *Governor Olson climbed on the roof to pry off the ornamental grillwork to contribute to the scrap iron drive to help fight the war.*

8. How many children did Governor and Mrs. Warren have? *They had six children.*

9. What did Mrs. Knight call the mansion the first time she saw it? *She called it a palace.*

10. Why did friends raise money to have a pool built at the mansion? *Governor Brown was fond of swimming and used to go across the street to the hotel to swim.*

11. Why did the Reagans move? *They moved because of the potential fire danger in the house.*

12. Which five governors were born in California? *Governors George Pardee, Hiram Johnson, James Rolph, Earl Warren, and Edmund Brown were all born in California.*

13. Which of the governors' families who lived in the mansion would you like to live with and why? Support your choice with information from the biographies.

Pre-tour Activity 2: The First Two Families

Materials

- ☑ "The First Two Families" handouts: "Albert and Clemenza Gallatin, Entrepreneur and Mansion Builder" and "Joseph and Louisa Steffens, Longest Mansion Residents"
- ☑ "The First Two Families" worksheet

Instructional Procedures

1. You will be reading the biographies of Albert Gallatin and Joseph Steffens, whose families were the first two to live in the mansion on the corner of 16th and H Streets in Sacramento. These families were important to the mansion history because the Gallatins had the mansion built for themselves, and the Steffenses sold the mansion to the state. The mansion then became the official residence for thirteen governors and their families.

2. Have the students read the handouts on the Gallatin and Steffens families, and complete the worksheet "The First Two Families."

3. As the students read the handouts, they should think about how the Gallatin and Steffens families obtained their wealth, why the mansion was important to these two families, and what life was like for the families living in the mansion.

Albert Gallatin & his daughter Leta

Note: *Lincoln Steffens's book* *<u>Boy on Horseback</u>* *is a wonderful autobiography on life in the Sacramento area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It would be a good supplement to this lesson.*

The First Two Families

Albert Gallatin, Entrepreneur and Mansion Builder

Albert and Clemenza Rhodes Gallatin (married 1866-1881)
Albert and Malvina Robin Gallatin (married 1884-1905)

1877-1887

Albert Gallatin

Albert Gallatin's dream as a young man, like so many before him, was to strike it rich in the gold rush. Born in Sparta, New York in 1835, he attended commercial college in Baltimore before going west at age 18. Moving first to Hudson, Michigan and working in a hardware store, then to Missouri and Kentucky, he finally set sail for California from New York in 1860, crossing the Isthmus of Panama on his journey. His luck in the gold fields north of Sacramento was no better than that of most of his fellow miners. Returning to Sacramento, he got a job as a clerk at the Huntington & Hopkins Hardware Store. With his strong work ethic, he was put in charge of the hardware store when its owners, Collis P. Huntington and Mark Hopkins, became involved in building the western half of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Malvina Robin Gallatin

Mr. Gallatin expanded the business, supplying hardware for the new state capitol. He was an entrepreneur who founded the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce and pioneered the development of hydroelectric power. He also raised livestock, farmed grain, had fruit orchards, and raised and raced horses.

Having achieved financial and social success, the proud Mr. Gallatin wanted a home to show off his position in the community. In 1877 when he and his wife, Clemenza Rhodes Gallatin, moved into the mansion on the corner of 16th and H Streets, they had three children—Jane, age nine; Albert, Jr., age seven; and Grace, age five.

The Gallatins enjoyed entertaining friends in the handsome four-story residence, where there was a ballroom and billiard room with hand painted decorations on the third floor. Clemenza was appointed as a Board of Trade director in 1881 and helped Albert form the Chamber of Commerce. Despite the social activities and their beautiful home environment, something happened between the Gallatins and they divorced. Clemenza moved back east with her 9-year-old daughter Grace. Albert Gallatin then married Malvina Robin of Sacramento. Their daughter, Leta Robin Gallatin, was the only baby to be born in the mansion. When the Gallatins moved to San Fransisco in 1887, they sold the mansion to their good friends and business associates Joseph and Louisa Steffens.

The Gallatin children went on to built successful lives and contributed to the growth of California. Daughter Jane, along with her husband Frank Powers, established the artist colony Carmel-by-the-Sea. Jane's younger sister, Grace, founded the Camp Fire Girls. The Gallatin ranch in Lassen County is now the Ronald McDonald House.

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The First Two Families

Joseph Steffens, Elizabeth Symes Steffens and Family

1887-1903

Joseph P. Steffens was born in Canada in 1837 and moved to Illinois, where he dreamed of moving west. He crossed the Great Plains in 1862 and passed through Sacramento on his way to San Francisco, where he started work as a bookkeeper for a paint firm.

In 1865 he married Elizabeth Louisa Symes, another westward emigrant. She was born in England and her family moved to New Jersey. A skilled seamstress, she sailed for San Francisco to find work and a new life.

Their first child, Joseph Lincoln, nicknamed Lennie, was born in San Francisco in 1866. Lennie grew up to be a prominent journalist and author. He was a muckraker, a person who looks for and tries to correct corruption in business and politics.

In 1870 the family moved to Sacramento where Joseph Steffens quickly moved up the ladder to manage the paint company. Eventually he was promoted to a full partnership.

The family grew in Sacramento with the birth of three girls—Louise ("Lulu"), Lottie, and Laura. Neither Joseph nor Louisa Steffens was well educated, but they firmly believed in an education for their four children. All attended a college or university.

As Joseph Steffens's job improved, the family gained greater wealth and a higher social standing. In 1887 Joseph Steffens bought the mansion on the corner of 16th and H Streets from his friend and business associate Albert Gallatin and his wife, Malvina, who were moving to San Francisco. The house was considered a palatial residence and a symbol of wealth and status.

The first wedding to take place in the mansion occurred during the 15 years that the Steffenses lived there. On December 11, 1900, Lottie Dorothy Steffens married John James Hollister, a Stanford University classmate from the Santa Barbara area. The small family wedding was in one of the spacious parlors, decorated with yellow marigolds, ferns, and branches of fragrant oranges.

By 1903 the Steffens family decided they did not need such a large house since only one of their children, Laura, was still living at home. The mansion was sold to the State of California, and the first governor moved in. The Steffenses moved to their smaller home at 815 15th Street.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

The First Two Families

Directions: Read "The First Two Families" handouts and complete the following. Write your answers to each of these questions using complete sentences.

1. When was the mansion at the corner of 16th and H Streets built? *It was built in 1877.*
2. Who built the mansion and why? *Albert and Clemenza Gallatin built the mansion so their family could have an impressive home.*
3. Why did he come to Sacramento? *Gallatin came for the gold then to work in a hardware store.*
4. What route did he travel to get to California? *He went from Michigan to Missouri and Kentucky, then set sail from New York to California. He crossed the Isthmus of Panama, then went to the gold fields north of Sacramento.*
5. What kind of work did he do in Sacramento? *He worked as a clerk in the Huntington & Hopkins Hardware Store.*
6. What was life like for the Gallatin family at the mansion? *The family enjoyed living in and entertaining friends in the mansion.*
7. Who bought the mansion from the Gallatins? Why? *They were longtime friends and business associates of Joseph and Elizabeth Steffens, who bought the mansion when the Gallatins moved to San Francisco in 1887.*
8. How long did the new owners live in the mansion? *The Steffens family lived in the mansion from 1887 to 1903.*
9. Which of the two families celebrated the birth of a daughter in the mansion? *The Gallatins' daughter Leta was born in the mansion.*
10. What was the name of the daughter? *Her name was Leta Robin Gallatin.*
11. What were the names of the Steffens children? *Joseph Lincoln (Lennie), Lulu, Lottie, and Laura.*
12. Which of the Steffens children grew up to be a famous journalist? *Joseph Lincoln Steffens*
13. Which of the two private families to live in the mansion lived there the longest? *Of the two private families, the Steffens family lived in the mansion the longest.*
14. Why did the Steffenses sell the mansion? *The family no longer needed such a large house.*
15. Who bought the mansion in 1903? Why? *The State of California bought the mansion so that the governor could live there.*

Post-tour Activity: A Press Conference

Materials

- ☑ "The First Two Families" handout
- ☑ "The Thirteen Governors and Their Families" handout
- ☑ Research materials

Instructional Procedures

1. Explain to the class that they will be preparing for a press conference on the families that lived in the Governor's Mansion.

2. Each student should select one of the 15 families who lived in the mansion. They will research the family and the historical period in which they lived. Each student will choose a member of their respective family to portray during the press conference. The student should become so familiar with the family and its history that their characters become very real. Students might even want to dress up in period clothing for the press conference.

3. The press conferences can be spread out over a period of time with small groups of students acting as members of the press. The interviewers ask each character questions about their way of life and, of course, how they lived in the mansion and what they did there.

Note: *It might be beneficial for you as the teacher to develop some focus questions for the students to ask, but also allow students to develop some of their own questions.*