

“We Are Not Slaves”: The Photographic Record of the Wheatland Hop Riot: The First Images of Protesting Farm Workers in America

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Photographs depicting aspects of American labor history have played a critical role in shaping public consciousness. Usually they have been on the side of truth and accuracy.¹ But not always.² Some fail to withstand scrutiny. Their chief value seems to be the way they stimulate further and more precise research. Take, for example, the case of the two earliest known photographs of an agricultural laborers' strike in the United States.

The first of these photographs displayed a row of fifty people arranged diagonally from left to right, posed in front of tall vines, on the 641-acre Durst hop ranch, about one mile east of Wheatland, California, sometime in August 1913 (Figure 1). Hop baskets and dump boxes lined the edge of a dusty road. Trellis wires stretched overhead. A small group of men clumped together in the background. Young girls in long dresses stood in front of women wearing fancy straw hats. A father held his baby in his arms. Children of various ages protruded among the adults.³ The look of quiet dignity was etched on every face.

Gail Buckland spread the picture over two pages in her book *First Photographs: People, Places, and Phenomena As Captured For the First Time by the Camera*. Her caption described the workers as “organized into nonviolent protest . . .” Here, it appeared, was an unprecedented historic first: a visual document of great power which was far more easily recalled than the contents of an old and yellowed newspaper clipping or the dry prose of some dreary scholar.⁴ Was it really what it seemed?

Buckland obtained the photograph from the Archives of Labor

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and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. Her caption was based on information supplied by Archivist Thomas Featherstone who observed in a letter accompanying a batch of eight other “first” photographs, that the Archives lacked documentation on the image, and that all that could be said conclusively was that the photograph predated, if only by a short time, the riot which occurred on Sunday, August 3. Since nobody ever questioned this, and since the photograph had previously been published, and since it had always been labeled a strike photograph, Buckland had little reason to doubt that it could be anything else.⁵

Yet the picture was unusually placid. Nothing about it even vaguely suggested conflict or protest. No one picketed, no one held signs, and no one seemed even slightly agitated. Harvesting was clearly in progress. And the group seemed neither militant nor organized. Differing little from hundreds of other portraits showing groups of harvesters in the fields at the turn of the century, Buckland’s example – though technically and aesthetically very fine – seemed valuable mainly for its documentation of child labor, and family labor, rather than as a record of protest.⁶

But there were other problems. Examination of the original photograph revealed that the published version had been cropped at the top and on the left. Nowhere did Buckland mention this. More importantly, the image was not unique. Files at Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs contained at least a dozen other pictures depicting hop pickers at Wheatland. Several showed scenes in the labor camp. One captured workers waiting in the fields, apparently lined up to weigh their hop bags.⁷

All of these difficulties – the placid nature of the “strike” photograph, the ridiculous and unsubstantiated caption, the unmentioned cropping, and the omission of other pictures – cast doubt over the validity of Buckland’s presentation. But they did not make the error in *First Photographs* unique. Twelve years before Buckland’s book appeared, and completely unknown to her, another author had published a photograph incorrectly identified as portraying the Wheatland episode.

This image appeared in the August 4, 1968 issue of the *Marysville Appeal-Democrat* (Figure 2). Accompanying an article by Howard T. Johnston, Jr., entitled “Wheatland Hop Riots 55 Years

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Published in Gail Buckland's *First Photographs*, this beautifully composed portrait is presented as "the earliest known photograph of agricultural laborers on strike in America." August 3, 1913. Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.
C. C. Green photograph?



Often identified as the moment of the strike vote at the Wheatland hop protest meeting of August 3, 1913, this photograph actually depicts strike activity two years later, about 1,500 miles east of Wheatland, somewhere in the midwest. Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

Photographer unknown.

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Ago Today,” it showed a crowd of men, their right hands raised, gathered around a speaker who stood addressing them on an elevated platform. The mood was clearly one of defiant, united action. Tension was in the air. Johnston’s caption stated authoritatively: “The man standing above the crowd (center background) . . . probably was Richard ‘Blackie’ Ford, the I.W.W. organizer who presented the strike demands.”⁸

Three fold marks creased the center of the photograph, breaking the emulsion. This made the image look old. It also suggested — said one viewer — that being a valuable memento, the picture had been packed about by some long dead agitator. (One could easily imagine such a person, by campfire, late at night, in a hobo jungle, slowly taking the picture from his pocket, passing it around, then launching into a story about the Wheatland hop riot.)⁹

Everything about the photograph, in fact, suggested that it was authentic. But a close examination raised some doubts. First, the absence of any prominent landmarks from the Wheatland area, particularly the many water towers which were scattered about the area, or the hop fields which surrounded the camp on three sides, indicated the picture had not been taken on the Durst property. Second, the accession records for the original placed it not in California, but 2,000 miles to the east, somewhere in the midwest. Finally, the date for the photograph was not August 1913, but “sometime after 1915.”¹⁰

On these grounds the photograph was rejected. This left the issue thoroughly confused. Not one but two photographs presented in two separate publications by two different authors more than a decade apart had turned out to be of dubious merit. Could the record be set straight? The question had more than academic significance.

As an example of what journalist Carey McWilliams called “factory farming,” the Wheatland hop riot exposed all that was wrong with California’s farm labor system, while initiating a pattern of confrontation, violence, public outcry, and organizing activity that grew and festered from August 1913, forward in time. Obviously any photographic record of such an event would be historically valuable, particularly if it added new insights, or

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Hauling sacks filled with hops, pickers pose on the edge of the Durst hop field ca. 1905. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.

Clara Sheldon Smith photograph?



Photographed in a Marysville jail several months after the strike/riot are left to right agitator William Beck, I.W.W. member "Blackie" Ford, and picker Walter Bagan. Beck and Bagan were later acquitted of murder charges. Ford was sentenced to life in prison for second degree murder. Missing from the picture is Herman D. Suhr, also convicted with Ford. *Harper's Magazine*.

Photographer unknown.

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in some way conveyed a more vivid sense of the conflict. Clearly some additional research was required.¹¹

Before such research could proceed, however, one premise had to be examined. Was the Wheatland episode really the first agricultural laborers' protest recorded on film? Had this point been adequately established? If not, then Buckland's and Johnston's visual evidence, and hence any revision of that evidence, would diminish in importance. For this reason, the initial phase of inquiry asked if there were antecedents — any farm labor strike that had been photographed either in California or elsewhere before August 3, 1913?¹²

The replies came back. Librarians, archivists, photo-historians, picture editors, picture researchers, and scholars of California and the American working class agreed: There were woodcuts of protesting sugar plantation workers in Louisiana in 1887; and there were cartoons illustrating strikes among midwestern wheat threshers as early as 1911. But, as far as these authorities knew, there were no photographs depicting a farm labor strike before the Wheatland episode.¹³

That much had been expected. Completely unanticipated, however, was the observation that there could be no photographs of any "strike" at Wheatland. This was because no withholding of labor or refusal to work ever occurred. What in fact transpired — despite the widespread use of the term "strike" — was a growing discontent culminating in protest meetings, discussion of and voting on a strike, then a riot, arrest of agitators, scattering of harvesters, and an attempt at picking the crop with a force of "scab" workers. Surviving photographs might depict these events; but they could not show a "strike."¹⁴

Once these facts had been clarified, five questions emerged. First, how many photographs had been taken at Wheatland? Second, where were these images located? Third, who made them? Fourth, which image or images best illustrated the riot? And fifth, what — if anything — did these photographs add to our knowledge of the Wheatland episode, farm labor, and California agriculture?

Queries to dozens of people and institutions scattered across the United States eventually uncovered over forty photographs of the Durst hop ranch. Most dated from 1913, 1914 and 1915.

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Looking west from a barn roof toward the town of Wheatland, this photograph captures mid-day activities at the Durst hop pickers camp. Wheatland Historical Society.
C. C. Green photograph?



Technically and aesthetically the finest of all the pictures made at the Durst hop camp, this heretofore unpublished photograph shows children posed on the steps of a temporary shelter. Signs in English and Spanish announce Sunday worship, as well as free reading matter, and letter-writing services. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.
C. C. Green photograph?

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A few went back as early as 1900. The largest group of these images were contained in the official records of the Industrial Workers of the World headquarters office in Chicago; in the 1960s they were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. Another group drifted into various public libraries in California. Some gravitated to local historical societies. Many remained in private collections and family albums.¹⁵

Sharp, detailed, well-composed, and recorded with big glass-plate view cameras, these heretofore unknown images illustrate many aspects of the Wheatland episode (Figures 3, 4). They also reveal various styles and perspectives. This — plus the fact that they span fifteen years — suggests that they were made by several different photographers. But by whom?

During the early part of the twentieth century there were four professional photographers active in the Wheatland area. Three of them operated studios in Marysville, twenty miles to the north. They were: Clara Sheldon Smith, an adventurous and hard-working portrait and landscape photographer; C. C. Green, an obscure commercial photographer; and Henry Sackrider who operated one of the best-equipped studios between Sacramento and Portland, Oregon. The fourth photographer was Harold McCurry, founder of McCurry Foto Company of Sacramento, largest and most successful commercial photo business in the Central Valley.

Connecting any of these professional photographers with any of the Wheatland photographs is extremely difficult. This is because the surviving pictures lack the usual identifying information such as file numbers, studio stamps, or initials.¹⁶ Nevertheless, based on what is known, it is possible to develop a rough outline of which professional photographer photographed what and when. That outline looks like this:

1) Clara Sheldon Smith could not have photographed the events of August 1913, because she sold her business and retired from photography in 1908. She probably made some of the pre-1908 portraits of hop pickers, perhaps all of them.¹⁷

2) Henry Sackrider did not open his business until mid-1914, six months after the violence, and three months after the trial and conviction of two I.W.W. agitators.¹⁸

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A racially diverse group of over 200 pickers, including children, posed in the camp grounds at the Durst hop ranch. Wheatland Historical Society, Wheatland; a second copy is in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.
C. C. Green photograph?



Is this the first picture of protesting farm workers in America? The general view, looking east, away from the town of Wheatland, appears to be nothing more than a ground level photograph of the hop picker camp. But under a magnifying glass, a group of people can be seen listening to speakers who address the crowd from several platforms at the left-center of the picture. About three hours later, at this location, pickers and sheriffs clashed, and four people died. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.
C. C. Green photograph?

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3) McCurry Foto Company probably photographed at Wheatland on Monday, August 4, 1913, and on various occasions thereafter. The most likely scenario is that the company was hired by the Sacramento *Bee* (McCurry often photographed news events for the *Bee*), which needed pictures to accompany stories on the riot and subsequent events. It is also likely that the California Commission of Immigration and Housing hired McCurry to document improvements at the Durst camp during 1914 and 1915. It is equally likely that some of the pictures appearing in journals such as *Harper's Weekly*, *International Socialist Review*, *Industrial Pioneer* and the *San Francisco News* – though uncredited – were McCurry's.¹⁹

This leaves C. C. Green, who bought out Clara Sheldon Smith's studio in 1908 and operated it until selling out to Sackrider in 1914. Of all the professionals, Green is the only one who could have photographed at Wheatland on Sunday, August 3, 1913, the day of the riot.²⁰

Green probably traveled south from Marysville on Saturday, August 2, then spent most of Sunday touring the camp. As with most local photographers, he would have returned the next weekend, or dispatched an associate, intending to sell his photographs as mementos. The large number of people, about 2,800 by the best account, presented an opportunity for massive sales and orders. For this reason, Green made at least a half-dozen group portraits – of children, women, and men – posed in the fields and in the camp. After the violence, he probably lingered on the scene, recording pictures of the arriving National Guard, and making more photographs of the hop camp. He probably sold these to the newspapers.²¹

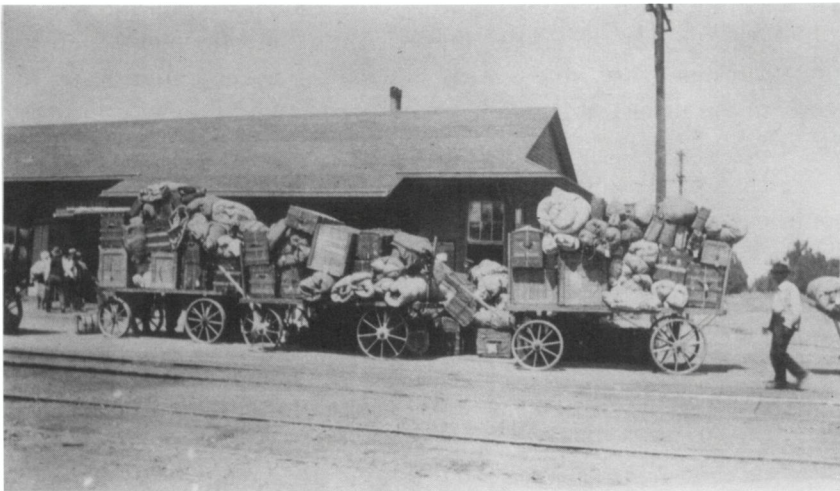
Green's August 3 photographs contain great masses of information. Unlocking that information, however, requires careful scrutiny; it requires a close look at the photographs, as if analyzing paintings, in effect "reading" the pictures. By this method small dramas are discovered, bits and pieces of data are magnified, and a fuller portrait of the Wheatland episode comes into focus.²²

Consider Green's photograph of the hop picker's camp (Figure 5). To make it, he apparently climbed to the roof of a barn or the top of a water tower, and from there executed a picture which surveyed the scene below like the eye of eternity. No detail es-

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Taken from a hotel window by an amateur photographer, this snapshot shows several hundred hop pickers awaiting the arrival of trains at the Wheatland depot following the violence of August 3, 1913. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland. Miss Elisabeth Carney photograph.



Bedding, camping equipment, and personal belongings piled on wagons at the Wheatland train depot by fleeing hop pickers demonstrate the mobility of these people. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.

Miss Elisabeth Carney photograph.

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caped the all-encompassing gaze (which constitutes one of the few surviving elevated perspectives of a migratory farm labor camp).

In composition, the photograph is essentially a landscape, with fully one quarter of the upper half given over to the sky and horizon. The rest of the image shows a temporary worker city sprawling over several acres of a dusty, unshaded field about one mile east of Wheatland. At the center is a commissary store, and several small, canvas-topped structures, housing shops selling camping equipment, and various necessities ranging from food to picking sacks. Tents, brush shelters, timber stockades called "bull-pens," gunny sacks stretched over fence posts, camp wagons and little "hooches" — many of them no more than shades against the sun — are scattered about, some in neat rows, others in haphazard fashion. Men stroll along well-worn paths. Clumps of people gather to talk. A child and adult carry a tub from the communal trough. A water tower rises in the background, marking the edge of town.

As an opening scene, the photograph is nearly perfect. Here, in one broad view, is a setting for all the subsequent action. Here is the atmosphere and the spirit of the camp, a picture which ushers the viewer back in time, providing a hook upon which to hang various story lines. Any cinematographer attempting to recreate the drama of the Wheatland strike would do well to copy the image.

All that is missing for the photograph to become a complete historical document — as opposed to being merely a riveting scene, instantly interesting, and instantly forgettable — is a lively, well-informed, narrative caption. Not the usual line, for example, "Hop Picker's Camp, Wheatland, California, 1913." There is a better way, and it consists of a short description, laying out the key facts, and building those facts into a prose structure exploding with information. Here is that description:

Driven into the countryside by a steadily deepening economic depression and by tight labor market in the cities, a rag-tag collection of 2,800 people — footloose, native American "bindle men," Hindus, Japanese, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, "quasi-gypsies," and middleclass families — swarmed into Wheatland during the last weeks of July. Some hitched rides on trains; some drove their

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Hop drying kilns at the Durst ranch. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.
Miss Elisabeth Carney photographer.



Slightly blurry and scratched, this important photograph records protest signs posted outside of I.W.W. local headquarters at 501 Main St., across from the train depot, one year after the hop riot. The poster in Spanish proclaims: "Give us freedom. We are humans. Not slaves." Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.
Miss Elisabeth Carney photograph.

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wagons from the Sierra Nevada foothills; some walked in from Sacramento and Yuba City. All expected a good three or four weeks of work, under good conditions, with high wages. At least that is what ranch owner Ralph Durst had promised them in advertisements and handbills disseminated in cities throughout northern California. What they found, however, was a hell-hole.

Nine shallow, doorless privies serviced the camp. But they were completely inadequate for the huge crowd. Never cleaned, these toilets soon became befouled with human waste, which overflowed onto various paths and trails where, each morning, long lines of men, women, and children stood waiting to use the few functioning outhouses.

Tents rented out at 75¢ per week, which was nearly one day's wage, and far too expensive. Consequently, many pickers camped in the open. One group of 45 people slept closely packed together on a large pile of straw, without blankets.

Trash cans were not provided, and piles of garbage accumulated in the nearby irrigation ditches and fields, which also doubled as toilets. Wells dried up, drinking water became contaminated, flies swarmed everywhere, typhoid and dysentery decimated the pickers, and by August 3, a sickening stench of human feces, ripening hops, and rotting trash hung over the camp.²³

Disease. Stench. Overcrowding. People sleeping packed close together on great heaps of straw! Such revelations highlight the difference between what is seen and what is happening. Thus transformed, Green's elevated view of the camp becomes more than an historic "first" photograph; it becomes a unique map, and the physical layout it records tells us much about the spatial and structural arrangements, and the living and working conditions, which prevailed throughout California, particularly on the largest ranches, wherever harvesters congregated to pick the crops.²⁴

Do Green's other photographs of the Durst camp contain equally latent messages? It appears so.

Consider the photograph of children standing on the steps of a temporary shelter (Figure 6). They are a racially-mixed group, about twenty-five in number, with both Mexicans and Anglos present. Some are shoeless. Most have hats. The boys are dressed in overalls; but the girls, according to the customs of the times, wear long dresses, a most uncomfortable requirement. All display the look of young people accustomed to adult work. What are they

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Banner announcing demands outside I.W.W. local headquarters in Wheatland, August 1914. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.

Miss Elisabeth Carney photograph.



The only picture which conclusively shows strikers engaged in protest, this image records a group of I.W.W. members marching through downtown Wheatland in August 1914. Signs demand wages of \$1.25 per 100 lbs. of hops, and freedom for "Blackie" Ford and Herman Suhr. Mrs. Juanita Neyens Collection, Wheatland.

Miss Elisabeth Carney photograph.

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doing? The signs at left, right, and center, as well as the presence of grownups in the background, plus a scattering of books among the children, suggest that this is probably a combination Sunday school, church, library, and letter-writing service. Hymns have just been sung, the people are departing, and the photographer has caught the moment.²⁵

But there is more here than meets the eye. Before the early part of the twentieth century children were never seen in farm labor camps or in the fields; women only slightly more frequently. That was because most of the work was performed by single males. Yet, very slowly, as the agricultural industry grew, married couples began drifting with the crops, their children in tow. It was a rough life, roughest for the children, who had to forego education, community ties, and the more “normal” components of adolescence. But the roughest aspect was the work, and at Wheatland the children, between 400 and 500 of them, suffered more than anyone else. According to several reports, the plight of these children — brought to the fields each morning at 4 a.m., many of them ill with dysentery and other diseases — was a major cause of the riot. At least one source claims that during the height of a protest meeting on August 3, one agitator had reached down from his speaker’s platform, taken a sick infant from a mother’s arms, and held the child up to the crowd saying: “It’s not so much for ourselves that we are fighting, as that this little baby may never see the conditions which now exist on this ranch!”²⁶

Another revealing photograph displays a crew of several hundred men and boys in their Sunday-best clothes (Figure 7). They are in the midst of the Durst camp, looking directly into the camera, adopting a position of pause and attention we recognize as a “pose.” Scanning the image closely, we discover details of the sort ignored by historians: precisely what kind of clothing — hats, shirts, suspenders, boots — were worn; what kinds of facial expressions workers put on when asked to pose; the way children mimic adults in stance and manner; and the difference in appearance between the laborers and their supervisors (who stand on the right, dressed in white shirts and dark ties). Above all, however, we discover the look of plain people engaged in hard labor. It is not a single look, but one of diversity: of Anglos, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and many different “people of color.”

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Green may not have recognized it as such, but his composition is a metaphor encapsulating the spectrum of races and nationalities then working in the fields.²⁷

But of all Green's photographs, only one documents workers engaged in protest (Figure 8). Discovered in an album owned by a life-long resident of Wheatland, it is ragged-edged, moldy, much-abused, and pasted onto a sheet of black construction paper. At first glance it appears to be nothing more than a ground-level panorama of the pickers camp as viewed from the east. The general layout of tents, buildings, and pathways, as well as many workers going about their daily activities, can be seen. But there is more. Close examination reveals some words, written in ink, a metaphor encapsulating the spectrum of races and nationalities and barely visible beneath a patch of mold in the upper left corner: "1913 — Durst [some people read this as 'Just'] before the riot."²⁸

Further scrutiny under a magnifying glass yields another unexpected discovery. To the left of a canvas-roofed commissary sporting a large sign advertising "Near Beer," and other refreshments, a cluster of several hundred people mill about. Enlargement reveals the focus of their attention: a speaker and several other men who address the crowd from a wooden platform. Is this the earliest known photograph of protesting agricultural workers? Possibly.

Short shadows in the picture place the time at early afternoon. According to newspaper reports, court testimony, and government investigations, the following sequence was unraveled: that morning Richard "Blackie" Ford, Herman Suhr, and a delegation of discontented hop pickers met with Ralph Durst. When Durst rejected their demands for more toilets, better pay, an end to the "hold back" system, reinstatement of "high pole men," and clean drinking water in the fields, the pickers returned to camp and convened a series of meetings lasting throughout the afternoon. This is what we see on the left side of the photograph: part of the dialogue preceding the strike vote.²⁹

In contrast to the image used in *First Photographs*, this one definitely captures farm workers engaged in protest, rather than just posing in the fields. And unlike the picture offered by Johns-

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ton, there is no doubt that it was made at Wheatland. Yet, it is not the only candidate for a unique niche in the annals of American labor history, and the history of photography. That is because at least one other photographer besides Green was present at the Durst camp, and in Wheatland, on August 3, and in the year following.

This second photographer was an amateur, not a professional. Her name was Elisabeth Carney, age seventeen, and for about a year before the riot she had been photographing the town and her family with a new Kodak Ensignette #1, given to her as a high school graduation present.

When the riot erupted on August 3, young Miss Carney was working at the Wheatland Hotel. As the workers fled into town and began congregating at the train depot, Miss Carney grabbed her Kodak, leaned out the window, and snapped several pictures (Figure 9). Then she moved outside, recording scenes of the pickers as they moved through the streets. The next day, she photographed pickers in the fields.³⁰

But that was not the last of her documentary work. A year later – when workers once again flocked to the Durst Ranch and the Industrial Workers of the World once again attempted to organize them – Miss Carney once again recorded this activity with her Kodak. And in doing so she provided us with the first photographs of a farm labor union hall; the first photographs of posters and slogans demanding justice for farm workers, especially the two strike leaders – Herman Suhr and “Blackie” Ford – who had been convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison; and the first photographs of protest marches by agricultural workers and their sympathizers.³¹

In total, Miss Carney made a dozen pictures – six on August 3, and on August 4, 1913, and six more the following year, again in early August. Hardly works of art, these fuzzy, poorly composed, improperly exposed, spontaneously executed snapshots nevertheless demonstrate a remarkable understanding of the Wheatland episode. Arranged in sequence resembling that of a modern photo essay, these images – despite their technical deficiencies – present much more than a mere record of events. Thus a picture of bedding piled high on wagons at the train depot symbolizes the mobility and meager possessions of hop pickers (Figure 10); a

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photograph of the National Guard equipped in full fighting regalia plus gas masks shows the state's fears of rebellion and its determination to suppress the strikers rather than understand their plight; and an image of silhouetted hop kilns at evening presents something of the dark terror and foreboding that swept through Wheatland, poisoning the atmosphere for years following the riot (Figure 11).

But one picture more than any other captures the historian's attention. It is a plain photograph of strike headquarters at 501 Main Street, Wheatland. In front of the headquarters, amid various signs and banners, is a poster. It declares in Spanish: "Give us freedom. We are men. Not slaves." Reiterated on hundreds of separate occasions, in dozens of languages, up and down the length of California, that simple declaration grew until during the 1960s, it became the rhetorical cornerstone of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers (Figure 12).

So there are actually a large number of photographs depicting the Wheatland hop riot and its aftermath. More than a dozen qualify in one way or another as authentic "firsts" (Figure 13). However, the beautifully composed portrait appearing in *First Photographs* is not among them. Nor is the picture that accompanied the article in the Marysville *Appeal-Democrat*.³²

How many other inadequately researched and misrepresented images that are today accepted as valid "first" pictures is difficult to determine. Certainly the mistakes in *First Photographs* and in the Marysville *Appeal-Democrat* are not unique. But so long as historians fail to accord photographs their legitimate status as important documents, and so long as they fail to evaluate photographs according to well-established procedures of critical inquiry — errors will continue. As a result, common pictures of harvest workers will pass for extraordinary moments in the saga of American farm labor. A scene of workers voting to strike on a midwestern farm after 1915 will be presented as depicting organizing activity in Wheatland, California, in 1913. And extraordinary snapshots such as those made by Miss Carney will linger unnoticed and unappreciated in obscure family albums.

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NOTES

¹ For the role of photographs in one key labor case see Richard Frost, *The Mooney Case* (Stanford, 1968), pp. 184-185; for the way pictures have reshaped inaccurate press coverage of an important event in labor history see Donald G. Sofchak, "The Chicago Memorial Day Incident: An Episode in Mass Action," *Labor History*, VI (Winter 1965), 3-4.

² Wei Min She Labor Committee, *Chinese Working People in America: A Pictorial History* (San Francisco, 1974), p. 17 identifies a woodcut (based on a photograph) of Chinese hoeing crews in the Louisiana sugar fields during 1871 as taking place in California ca. 1890. Besides misrepresentation, other problems include the unauthorized use of visual data, failure to attribute material to rightful owners, an unwillingness to track down original images, and a propensity to lift pictures from books and then republish them as grainy, poor quality prints. For a sprightly review of these and other problems see Joseph W. Snell, "Who Says Pictures Never Lie?," *American West*, XVIII (July/August 1981), 22-27; see also Savoie Lottinville, *The Rhetoric of History* (Norman, Okla., 1975), pp. 212-215, and Oscar Handlin, *Truth in History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), pp. 227-240.

³ Gail Buckland, *First Photographs: People, Places, and Phenomena As Captured for the First Time by Camera* (New York, 1980), p. 115.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

⁵ Richard Steven Street to Thomas Featherstone, September 28, 1981; Featherstone to Street, October 26, 1981; Featherstone to Street, July 2, 1982; Buckland, *First Photographs* p. 11. Because of lack of documentation on the photograph in question, Featherstone had long avoided making a definitive judgment on it. The caption Buckland used was based on her own assumptions. She did not personally inspect the files at Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. This is, of course, quite understandable, given the scope of her project. Less comprehensible, however, is Buckland's failure to contact local sources in California, and in Wheatland, where one might logically expect to find a fuller photographic documentation.

⁶ Long engaged in the writing of a definitive history of California farm workers, 1769-1982, I had evaluated the photograph in 1974 while researching the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University.

⁷ Margery S. Long to Richard Steven Street, July 2, 1982, notes the existence of another photograph, very similar to the one published in *First Photographs*. The remainder of the Wheatland photographs at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs are described in various letters and accompanying photocopies. In fairness to Buckland, the cropping of the photograph in *First Photographs* was probably the result of the decisions of the layout designer, or the reproduction photographer, and Buckland probably had little control over this. Yet these changes do "alter" the photograph. For this information I am indebted to the critical evaluation of Buckland's work supplied to me by Nikki Pahl, consultant to the Sacramento History Center.

⁸ Howard T. Johnston, Jr., "Wheatland Hop Riots 55 Years Ago Today," *Marysville Appeal-Democrat*, August 4, 1968; see also Howard Johnston to Fred Thompson, March 26, April 20, 1968, Fred Thompson Papers, Chicago, Illinois.

⁹ Interview with Charles A. Litzinger, Assistant Professor of History, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon, June 3, 1982.

¹⁰ Accession notes, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, contained in Thomas Featherstone to Richard Steven Street, October 26, 1981, give neither a date nor location. In Dick Meister and Anne Loftis, *A Long Time Coming: The Struggle to Unionize America's Farm Workers* (New York, 1977), pp. 84-85, the picture is dated 1915, but not placed in the midwest. This leads the viewer to assume it is a California scene. In Paul S. Taylor and Anne Loftis, "Migratory Farm Labor in the Wheat Belt: Early Twentieth Century," *Agriculture in the West*, Edward and Frederick Schapsmeir,

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editors (Manhattan, Kansas, 1980), p. 105, the photograph is similarly presented.

¹¹ Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Fields* (New York, 1939), p. 162.

¹² Buckland's book is admittedly provocative. It was not intended as the final word on what images constituted the initial pictures of any given subject, including the Wheatland episode. Buckland's intent, in fact, was didactic: to provoke further research, and set in motion a rigorous checking of her facts, thereby deepening our understanding of the history of photography. To this end, she has called for correction of any mistakes, and has promised to incorporate changes or additions in a second edition (Buckland, *First Photographs*, pp. 16-18).

¹³ The correspondence is voluminous and in the author's possession. For woodcuts of the Louisiana sugar workers strike of 1887, see the *Louisiana Weekly Pelican*, November 12, 1888. The cartoons appear throughout *Solidarity* and *Industrial Worker*.

¹⁴ Margery S. Long to Richard Steven Street, July 2, 1982, makes the point that no "strike" occurred. However, several authors have carelessly labeled the event a "strike." See, for example, Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, IV (New York, 1965), p. 261.

¹⁵ Photographs appeared in the *Sacramento Bee*, *Sacramento Star*, *Marysville Appeal-Democrat*, *San Francisco News*, *Harper's Weekly*, *International Socialist Review*, *Outlook*, and *World's Work*. I have not used any of these photographs mainly because of the problem of "lifting" prints from published work and because the technical quality of such prints would be poor. Original photographs or high quality copies are in the Wheatland Historical Society; the Dam Family Collection, Wheatland; the Mildred Philips Collection, Wheatland; the Merriam Griffith Collection, Wheatland; the Emma Hutchison Collection, Marysville; the Orrin Rounds Collection, Marysville; the Mary Aaron Museum, Marysville; the Juanita Neyens Scrapbook, Wheatland; the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University; the California Commission of Immigration and Housing Papers, Bancroft Library; and Robert V. Howard, "Bloody Sunday: the Wheatland Hop Fields Riot" (unpublished research paper, Sacramento State College, 1973). There are many postcards showing the Wheatland hop fields. Wheatland Historical Society, *Wheatland: 1874-1974*, (Wheatland, Calif., 1974), pp. 53-55, publishes many photographs. See also, *Marysville: An Historical Sampler* (Marysville, 1978).

¹⁶ Two elevated photographs showing the Durst camp have negative numbers (7948 and 7947). They are published in Robert Coe, Jr., "Once the Largest Producer of Hops," *Wheatland News*, July 13, 1973. The numbers on these photographs match the McCurry Foto Company negative list in the California Room, California State Library, Sacramento. But there is no identifying information next to the numbers. Research in Wheatland failed to discover the originals or copies of them. The maker of these photographs, therefore, remains unknown. Interviews with Marianne Leach, California State Library, May 26, 1982, and Robert Coe, Jr., May 23, 1982, Wheatland.

¹⁷ Nikki Pahl, Mary Swisher, and Genevieve Troka, *Camera Craft: Commercial Photography in the Sacramento Valley: 1900-1945* (Sacramento 1982), pp. 4-6. Advertisements indicate that another female photographer operated Griffith's Studio in 1901. But that is the extent of the information. See *City of Marysville, Souvenir . . . Marysville Fire Department Illustrated* (Marysville, 1901), advertisement section. See also Jean Gustin, Director, Sutter County Memorial Museum, to Richard Steven Street, June 6, 1982.

¹⁸ Interview, Dr. Richard Lininger, Lafayette, Calif., July 30, 1982. Many of Sackrider's original negatives are in the Odd Fellows Building, Marysville. But the owner, Juanita Clark, has not inventoried them, and refuses access to local historians. This is her "retirement project." Sackrider's Studio is described in the *Marysville Evening Democrat*, February 14, 1914.

¹⁹ At the time of the Wheatland riot, McCurry had been in business for about five years. He employed many talented and energetic photographers, and worked

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for a wide range of clients, including many farming enterprises, such as the California Almond Grower's Exchange and the Holland Land Company. Biographical information on McCurry is in the California Section, California State Library.

²⁰ Almost nothing is known about Green.

²¹ Although the people in Green's photographs appear to be dressed in their Sunday clothes – suggesting that August 3 was the date of his tour of the Durst camp – earlier pictures taken at Wheatland also show the same formal, puzzling style of dress.

²² Following the ideas in Alan Trachtenberg, "Photographs as Symbolic History," *The American Image: Photographs from the National Archives, 1860-1960* (New York, 1979), pp. x-xiii.

²³ The literature of the Wheatland riot is vast and confusing. My extended caption is based on the manuscript studies in the Commission on Industrial Relations Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; the Wheatland Hop Field Riot Scrapbooks, Bancroft Library; various publications issued by the California Commission of Immigration and Housing; and Carleton Parker, *The Casual Laborer and Other Essays* (New York, 1920), pp.169-199.

²⁴ Albert Croutch, "Housing Migratory Agricultural Workers in California, 1913-1948" (Master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1943), pp. 40-44.

²⁵ This is my "reading" of the photograph. There is no identifying information on the back. The location seems to be the west side of the Durst camp, near town.

²⁶ I have described the emergence of child labor in the fields in volume one of my forthcoming history of California farm workers. The quote is from Meister and Loftis, *A Long Time Coming*, p. 12.

²⁷ This photograph was published in Chicano Communications Center, *450 Years of Chicano History in Pictures* (Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1976), p. 96, with the caption "Wheatland, Calif. – August 3, 1913. Day before strike."

²⁸ The photograph is also cracked and suffering from severe fading. Mrs. Juanita Neyens, who owns the print, recalls that Yuba County Sheriff John Dower rescued the picture from the archives of the Marysville Court House, just before the building was demolished. According to Neyens, the picture is one of the original exhibits used in the court case which grew out of the riot. Interviews with Mrs. Juanita Neyens, January 5, 1981; July 24, 1982; Neyens to Richard Steven Street, December 21, 1980.

²⁹ Following the summary by Carleton Parker in the Commission on Industrial Relations Papers, Record Group 174, National Archives.

³⁰ Interview with Neyens, October 27, 1980.

³¹ Neyens Album, Wheatland; Orrin Rounds Album, Marysville.

³² Scholars may argue that subjective judgment alone determines which of the Wheatland photographs best expresses that episode. By this criteria, aesthetics, technical quality, and many other factors become involved in making a selection. But a more precise method would stress the closeness of the photograph to the event itself, *e.g.*, the riot. By this procedure, the Buckland picture – as well as most of the other photographs of Wheatland – would be eliminated as essentially posed, commercial images, made before the riot. Only the Carney snapshots – poor in quality as they are – *document aspects of the riot*, anonymously and spontaneously, freezing the action at 1/25 second or less, without posing or arranging or interceding.