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University of California Launches Calisphere Web Site

Web site offers a free public gateway to thousands of digitized primary sources

OAKLAND, Calif. — August 21, 2006 —University of California officials today (Monday) joined State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell to announce the launch of the Calisphere web site at www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu. This free web site offers educators, students, and the public access to more than 150,000 images, documents, and other primary source materials from the libraries and museums of the UC campuses and cultural heritage organizations across California.

Calisphere's primary sources include photographs, documents, newspapers, political cartoons, works of art, diaries, transcribed oral histories, advertising, and other cultural artifacts that reveal the diverse history and culture of California and its role in national and world history. The site also provides a single entry point to more than 300 UC-created web sites on a wide variety of subjects.

Especially for Educators

Calisphere makes it easy for educators to find images and documents aligned with the K-12 California Content Standards.

"We know that learning is more exciting and teaching is more effective the closer a student can get to primary sources of information," O'Connell said. "The Calisphere web site is a remarkable learning tool that will provide students with a rich experience of California's multicultural heritage. It puts the libraries and museums of the entire University of California system, along with rich historical resources from cultural heritage organizations, right at the fingertips of California students."

These primary sources can be used by teachers in a variety of ways. A high school history teacher could quickly locate photos of the Black Panthers, UC Berkeley's Free Speech Movement, or the Chicano Moratorium Committee to illustrate the social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Or, a library media teacher could help a fourth-grade teacher find photographs and drawings of ethnically diverse miners and everyday people during the Gold Rush to demonstrate California's early multicultural population.

"Calisphere embodies the University's ongoing commitment to enriching the cultural lives of all Californians, and to enhancing lifelong educational opportunities," said Wyatt R. Hume, UC executive vice president and provost. "Its innovative approach emphasizing technology, unbounded access to educational and cultural resources, and partnerships with educators is a model for the future. In Calisphere, we see how the University can bring education to students wherever they are, whatever their needs, and whatever phase of life they are in."

Images in Historical Context

Calisphere's primary source sets also include overviews that provide historical context. The web site's special features include:

- **Themed Collections:** Primary source materials are organized into historical eras, from the Gold Rush to the 1970s, and aligned with California Content Standards for K-12 use.
- **California Cultures:** California's multicultural heritage is revealed through photographs and documents selected from UC's libraries and special collections relating to African, Asian, Hispanic, and Native Americans. The collection also features teacher-created lesson plans. California Cultures was funded through an appropriation from the US Congress through the Library of Congress American Memory program.
- **Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives:** More than 10,000 personal and official images and documents bring educators inside the story of Japanese-American internment during World War II.

Calisphere is a public service project of the California Digital Library (www.cdlib.org). Through the use of technology and innovation, the CDL supports the assembly and creative use of scholarship for the UC libraries and the communities they serve.