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DEFINING THE FOOD MOVEMENT IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA: BRANDING AMERICA'S FARM-TO-FORK CAPITAL

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DEFINING THE FOOD MOVEMENT IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA:
BRANDING AMERICA'S FARM-TO-FORK CAPITAL

by

Dawnie M. Andrak

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Defining the Food Movement in Sacramento, California:
Branding America's Farm-to-Fork Capital

Abstract

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2017

In October 2012, then-Mayor Kevin Johnson, surrounded by the region's chefs, restaurateurs, and others working in the food arena, proclaimed the City of Sacramento "America's Farm-to-Fork Capital." The basis for the designation, in part, was Sacramento's geographic proximity to agricultural production. With more than 50 farmers markets and between 7,000 – 8,000 acres of "boutique farms" in the region, the Mayor stated the designation would be more than "simply a marketing campaign." Based on interviews with a wide variety of people working in "local food" (including a non-profit organization with a mission to get kids to eat their vegetables, large corporations, and small businesses) this thesis will explore the concept of local food in Sacramento, the Farm-to-Fork movement and what it has meant for the region. With an annual festival that has seen increased attendance in each of its five years, from an estimated 50,000 people the first year, to 75,000 people in 2016, the designation branded Sacramento as a food destination city bringing visitors and their dollars as intended. Beyond a well-attended festival, what has the history behind the title of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital

has meant to the local food system and how has it impacted local farmers, chefs, restaurateurs and those whose livelihoods are closely tied to food?

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For generations the Sacramento region has had a significant agricultural economy, in no small part due to its geographic proximity to agricultural production. The City of Sacramento, the State Capital of California, sits almost directly in the middle of a region containing 1.5 million acres of farmland. The region is known for loamy soil that is nutrient rich and drains well, and a Mediterranean climate that is characterized in part, by mild winters and hot, dry summers. This combination can easily accommodate four seasons of growing food. The food movement—or rather food movements, from large production agriculture, to organic, to Slow Food, to farmers markets and local sourcing, and more—has a long history in Sacramento as well. To be sure, there are lots of people that are spending their lives making fresh, local food available to various factions of the local community. Food is around us in Sacramento, there are large production farms all around the region and smaller urban farms in neighborhoods. Food and food production is not uncommon in other parts of the United States, of course—corn and soybeans are ubiquitous to Nebraska and Iowa, for example—but Sacramento’s climate allows for year-round crop production for the huge variety of food grown to be uniquely Sacramento.

This “closeness” of food in Sacramento is evidenced in part too by what I sometimes call the “running of the tomato trucks,” an annual harvest sight of semi-trailer trucks each moving an estimated 60,000 pounds of freshly picked tomatoes to processing

plants along area interstates, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from mid-July to mid-September each year (Appendix A).

The early 2000s ushered in an era of increased interest food and drink for many in the United States and around the world—who is eating what, how much are they eating, what *should* they be eating. It is not uncommon to see terms such as “Local,” “Locally Grown,” “Farm-to-Table,” “Farm-to-Fork,” “Seasonal,” “Organic,” and “Beyond Organic” touted as part of marketing campaigns for any number of foods around the country. Sacramentans, residents of Sacramento, embraced the trend too and, in many cases, have had an easier time of doing so simply because of geography. That is, it is easy to know when tomatoes are in season when you see the fields where tomatoes are grown and follow trucks full of tomatoes on area roads during harvest.

In October 2012, then-Mayor Kevin Johnson, surrounded by the region’s chefs, restaurateurs, and others working in the food arena, proclaimed the City of Sacramento America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital, securing Sacramento’s role in the food world. With more than 40 farmers markets and between 7,000 – 8,000 acres of boutique farms in the region —small- and medium-scale farms focusing on tourism as much as agriculture and often offering “experiences” like A-Day-on-the-Farm, Hoes Down Festivals, upscale dinners on the farm, or rental options for weddings and other celebrations—the Mayor stated the designation would be more than “simply a marketing campaign.” The annual Farm-to-Fork festival, a free open-to-the-public celebration in late September that includes exhibits by businesses and nonprofit organizations both local and statewide, games, music, cooking demonstrations and lectures, food and beverages for sale, is similar to the California State Fair without the carnival rides. An estimated 75,000

people attended the one-day festival in 2016 (KCRA Reports, 2016), this designation of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital intends to, in marketing parlance, "brand" Sacramento as a food destination city bringing visitors and their dollars to the region to eat.

Beyond a well-attended festival and celebratory events, what has the title of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital meant to the Sacramento regional food system? This thesis will look at the history of farm-to-fork in the region, and attempt to qualify the impact of the designation of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital on food in Sacramento, including how and why it came to be, and on the local farmers, chefs, restaurateurs and those whose livelihoods are closely tied to region's food. I contend that America's Farm-to-Fork Capital is a brand marketed by Visit Sacramento and that the Sacramento food movement itself, while enjoying increased nationwide recognition because of the brand, is relevant with or without the "capitol-dom" designation.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Promoting Local

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* Word Of the Year for 2007 was “Locavore.” It was first used in 2005 by four women in San Francisco who proposed that local residents should try to eat only food grown or produced within a 100-mile radius (Trainer, 2014). The word, defined as a noun, describes individuals, but more generally has been used to describe a “movement” that includes an awareness of where food comes from, and the way it is raised or grown, farmed, processed, and moved, encompassing everything from the farm all the way to one’s fork. The “‘Locavore’ movement encourages consumers to buy from farmers’ markets, or even to grow or pick their own food, arguing that fresh, local products are more nutritious and taste better” (Oxford, 2007).

Taste is a matter of opinion, of course, and even the definition of what constitutes nutrition can be argued at some level. The Locavore movement also implies that “local” is better because less time and energy and certainly fewer resources are needed to get the food from its starting point to the ending point. “The word ‘Locavore’ shows how food lovers can enjoy what they eat while still appreciating the impact they have on the environment,” said Ben Zimmer, editor for American dictionaries at Oxford University Press. “It’s significant in that it brings together eating and ecology in a new way” (Oxford, 2007). Beyond the Oxford dictionary, the definition of local food is a little more vague but generally includes the notion that a short, less complicated food chain is

what once tied people to their food and that it *[food]* can do that again (Pollan, 2006).

With this general definition, a backyard garden would offer the closest possible connection and appreciation for the food that goes in one's mouth. Beyond that, knowing the farmer or the farm from which food is produced—that is, the food is not packaged and processed by a large corporation—or purchasing from a local farmers' market offering seasonal and sustainable foods, is the goal.

There are other words used to describe similar collaborations, including Farm-to-Table and Farm-to-Fork. Each of these terms seems to promote having knowledge and appreciation of where food comes from, even if it is beyond the specific designation of 100 miles. For some, the designation of 100 miles is very important, for others not so much. What does appear to be significant for all who support this way of eating is an appreciation of the place, at all levels, and especially as it relates to food. Considering place as an important element for the purchase of food, specifically as it relates to the purchase of local food, cannot be overstated and is imperative in determining the value of the individual food items purchased within these associations. That is, an understanding and appreciation of what it takes to get food onto a plate is important. "Place, therefore cannot be alienated from the food system as a market but rather part of the food system helping to define what foods are consumed and how people value and engage with those foods" (Blake, p. 412).

Karin Dobernig and Sigrid Stagl (2015) contend that "local" is contingent of a lifestyle movement and has the potential to induce social change. More broadly, they claim that food system change would most certainly be defined as social change, and is positioned as a means to broader changes to the community and environment. To

“indulge in shared ethos of re-engagement with nature, meaningful work and authenticity not just as it relates to food but as it relates to a wide swath of socio-ecological issues that includes both consumption and production activities undertaken on a daily basis” needs to be part of the definition of local food (Dobernig and Stagl, 2015).

Kim Darby and others opine that perception plays the most crucial role in defining local and the “place” that local holds (Darby, 2008; Foltz, 2011). That is, the consumers’ perception of what qualifies as local changes based on place. It is also important to consider that a large multi-national marketing effort might be behind your “locally grown” campaign. And, most importantly, Darby asks us to consider what will happen when a locally grown food saturates a market, and thus becomes more scarce: will the locally grown foods continue to hold value, both perceived and realistically? Others agree, and ask us to consider using broader definitions when discussing food and the food movement. The contention is that a wider net, including individual lifestyle choices, is having an immediate social impact and should be considered, in and of itself, a social movement (Haenfler, Johnson, and Jones, 2016).

Marion Nestle (2013) writes that food as a social movement is inclusive of several movements. The goal of this inclusive food movement is a food system that promotes the health of people as well as the environment. The impact of humans on the environment and vice versa are long-standing topics of discussion with various points of view and any food movement walks a fine line while attempting to best look at both sides. A clear and honest comprehensive look at both sides of the argument may be naïve but it is also an aspiration in any movement, and especially so with food (Nestle, 2013). Simply put, it is complicated and there are many sides to the issue.

Critiquing Local

Positions abound claiming, very simply, that food is universally necessary and locally procured food is just better (Pollan, 2006; Haenfler, Johnson and Jones, 2016; Foltz, 2011). Verbiage of this nature is seen across the United States in local food system literature, where ethics, desire, realization, and a sustainable vision are the goal for the creation of alternative food systems. “Local,” as an ethics-based anthem and practice, becomes the best defense against anomic capitalism (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005). As such, it may be more a critique of capitalism and less about the food itself.

For the general public, local food is often associated with a more positive eating experience and positive impact on the planet. It is more than positivism though.

In activist narratives, the local tends to be framed as the space or context where ethical norms and values can flourish, and so localism becomes inextricably part of the explanation for the rise of alternative, and more sustainable, food networks (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005, p. 360).

The food movement itself, then, is a direct reflection of ethics and values and has less to do with local food than it implies. Feel good eating experiences with locally sourced food may be wonderful but local food is not by definition ethical and ethical food is not by definition locally procured.

Buller and Morris (2004) argue that, “once territoriality becomes a component of value, it also becomes a commodity in itself, to protect and exploit, a source of differentially commodified relationships” (p. 1078). That is, the Locavore movement has the potential to create “new rural geographies of value” (Marsden, 1999, p. 507).

Looking at “local” as the be-all-end-all, without questioning other details, raises the specter of ‘geographical fetishism’ (Castree, 2004; Watts, 1999). “Local” becomes the salable theme in the capitalist marketplace that it was originally designed, in part, to combat.

Branding Local

Embracing the selling of “Local,” Rebecca Sims (2009) suggests that when conceptualized as authentic, local foods can symbolize the place and culture of the destination. Further, she submits that by discussing and attempting to appreciate the definition of local, one

challenges existing understandings of [the] concepts and offers a new way forward for tourism research by arguing that local food has the potential to enhance the visitor experience by connecting consumers to the region and its perceived culture and heritage (Sims, 2009).

Essentially, she views the trend toward local as multi-pronged in its potential, offering opportunity to improve local economies and environmental sustainability. The enthusiasm for food products perceived to be traditional and local combines both tourism and agriculture, developing local food networks themselves, through small businesses with support in the local community and beyond, via the Internet.

In declaring itself America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital Sacramento has embraced its regional agricultural roots in an effort to promote positive social and environmental effects, and encourage tourism. This is not particularly unique in that, “[m]any cities have implemented aggressive policies to compete for tourism as a remedy for local economic crisis” (Judd, 2003, p. 11). Bell and Valentine (1998) expound on food as

popular culture and offer that the simple, every day practices of shopping, cooking, eating, and drinking offer opportunity for personal and collective identities and the construction of place. Right up front, they exclaim that “every mouthful, every meal, can tell us something about ourselves and our place in the world” (Bell & Valentine, 1998, p. 3). Eating has many ways of conveying identity and by exploiting the local connection to agriculture a branded regional identity has emerged for Sacramento. Pauline Adema (2009) writes of the “transactional character of food, its multi-valence and malleability as a symbol,” and the potential for its positive impacts on community building and “place differentiation” (p. 149). Sacramento has pushed the envelope on this idea of malleability by choosing not just one food with which to differentiate the city, but with any and all food that fits under the large umbrella of “farm-to-fork,” a concept with wide and varied borders around its definition.

By encouraging events related to food and touted as occurring in America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital, including an annual Farm-to-Fork Festival attended by tens of thousands, the branding takes advantage of people’s enthusiasm for local food and exploits that same enthusiasm as part of a branded foodscape. “People with discretionary income are willing to play, literally and figuratively, with their food, adding to its appeal as a commodity for symbolization, fetishization, and festivalization. Consumption of place and consumption of identity are made palatable in a festive foodscape” (Adema, 2009, p. 149). In America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital declaration is all of these things, part symbol, part fetish, and part festival.

The fact that Sacramento chose not to go with one specific food item (tomatoes, for example) for its America’s Capital declaration and instead choose the all food

inclusive theme of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital is a logical expansion of the idea that "[f]ood festivals can transcend social, religious, and cultural differences that might otherwise be divisive within a locality" (Adema, 2009, p. 147) by offering a place at the table for all local foods, from apricots to walnuts, even those that are not in season during the festival itself. A case in point is that the Farm-to-Fork festival is held each year at the end of September (high season for the harvest of tomatoes, peppers and other summer crops) but the brand is year-round. In America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, fall, winter and spring crops are not left off of the plate, so to speak. This appeals to a larger community for support of the declaration, one that can stand-up to changes in seasons and potential down years for a specific crop. If it is a bad season for those aforementioned tomatoes, for example, America's Farm-to-Fork Capital still rings true for peppers and squash; a nod to season specific appreciation and respect for the fickleness of Mother Nature.

Choosing a solid theme with which to brand a city can be a daunting task but it is important. When it works well, adding a theme to towns and cities can be a boost to the economic and social pressures of our modern age (Johannesson, et al, 2003). The City of Sacramento, and Visit Sacramento specifically, are hoping to reach just these types of boosts with the declaration of "America's Farm-to-Fork Capital." Direct attempts include the annual Farm-to-Fork Festival and somewhat more indirect is the marketing of Sacramento as a fresh and seasonal foodscape, an additional selling point for conventions and expositions without direct food connections. Both directly and indirectly marketed is a sense of place and community for people that live in Sacramento and the region. Adema (2009) writes of the potential for pride in place differentiation and of aggrandizing something that was there anyway. Sacramento is the state capitol of

California, but those responsible for marketing the city also want to make sure that is more than merely a capitol city on the western edge of the United States. Sacramento is America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, a brand that secures a position within the greater country—Sacramento is an important part of America—and boosts a pride in food, a universal human need.

In part to boost tourism and convention dollars, Sacramento has incorporated the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century tendency of the general public to focus on food by returning to its roots and embracing the agricultural identity that for many years it tried to hide. Long ridiculed as a cow town—slang for small rural towns whose residents lack sophistication—especially when compared to San Francisco, the metropolis 90 miles to the west, Sacramento embraced America's Farm-to-Fork Capital and relishes its new "capitaldom," an identity designed, in part, to differentiate and magnify its sense of place within a larger context of food branding. As with other popular branding attempts, "[t]he fortuitous combination of good marketing and a receptive public enabled business and town leaders to transform what was a communal embarrassment into positive identity capital" (Adema, 2009, p. 103). Reclaiming the nasty attribution of cow town is part of the farm-to-fork capitaldom declaration by design. As America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, Sacramento is supportive of agriculture in all forms, including cows. This is evidenced by the fact that cowbells—often branded with the America's Farm-to-Fork Capital logo—are now regularly handed out at sporting events and other community gatherings where a resounding "clang, clang" is deemed warranted. Sacramento's branding experts have turned a negative into a positive by

embracing an idea already in place, the negative “cow town,” and turning it on its head to, “cow town and proud of it!”

Good branding efforts can seem effortless. The practice of Lefebvre’s *l’espace consu*, literally “conceived space” represents a new reality in place branding (Pederson, 2004) and how place is envisioned, imagined and practiced. An idea that has long been in place is repackaged and in doing so becomes new again. By choosing to focus on agriculture, a permanent fixture of the regional economy, the branding fell easily, even organically, into place.

The branding of Sacramento, or place in general, is not a new phenomenon however. It could be said that Sacramento and the region was branded—before the word was applied to marketing—for the first time during the Gold Rush era. People moved west in search of opportunity and, more specifically came to Sacramento in search of gold. The growth of the American West, Sacramento included, stems from the American conception of land as a purchasable commodity (Boorstin, 1965). One currently popular district in the city is Old Sacramento, several blocks on the Sacramento River front, depicting the Gold Rush era, with saloons and horse-drawn wagon rides, that annually hosts Gold Rush Days where dirt is brought in to cover the streets and street performers dress in period clothing. Gold Rush Days is a spectacle of a festival in and of itself but one that has been propped up in recent years with the America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital declaration. People can come to Sacramento to experience Gold Rush days with the added bonus of being able to enjoy a locally sourced, seasonally appropriate meal. Food is currently the new gold in the region.

The fact that the City of Sacramento itself has little in the way of land for agriculture within the city limits has little impact on the branding of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, and even less on its perceived right to pride in locally grown food. This is not atypical of capitaldom declarations.

There are abundant examples of a communal resource promoted as identity capital to make place distinction in the service of securing economic capital: consider natural resources (the Grand Canyon, which serves as an attraction to surrounding towns); human-made resources such as amusement parks, shopping centers, or other cultural divertissements that become the focal point of a locality's identity (Orlando, Florida, as a gateway to Disney; Las Vegas, Nevada; Bloomington, Minnesota, as a home of the Mall of America); or imagined or real histories upon which image makers choose to capitalize and promote place identity (Leavenworth, Washington, and its manufactured Bavarian-ness) (Adema, 2009, p. 85).

Branding as a region also offers to the opportunity to broaden the appeal of the brand itself. Broad appeal in a brand's offering is important for locals as well tourists. The appeal is heightened today with social media expanding and reaching more and more people on a daily basis. The more people reached, the more potential for dollars, both from locals and from tourists.

Tourism studies are increasingly focused on scholarly literature as a basis for positioning identity marketing as cause célèbre. The air of academic study in tourism lends credence and data to the importance of tourism dollars. Identity marketing is now a

competitive international industry targeting cities and regions vying to secure a brand for tourist and investment dollars. Historically, this was a marketing tool that was only discussed with such great focus in themed environments, regions and larger cities such as Disney World, Las Vegas, or New Orleans (Gothamm 2002). The Farm-to-fork brand appeals to a wide variety of people and by including the entire region in its marketing efforts, the brand is more inclusive than if it was simply within the city or even county limits.

Well-executed place branding is dynamic and inclusionary. By using the universal “food” the City of Sacramento is affording itself a moniker of unprecedented opportunity for inclusion; everyone has to eat. In this regard, America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital could be considered a successful brand. The multiple dimensions of the brand can allow Sacramentans and visitors alike a collective identity.

This thesis will investigate the history of how and why Sacramento, California declared itself America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital and the intersection of tourism marketing, local identification, place branding, progressive economy, and the direct impact the intersection has or hasn’t had on the Sacramento Region and on those working within the food movement.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I am a “card-carrying member” of the Sacramento’s food scene. I live in Sacramento and eat there regularly of course, but I literally have cards that confirm my status as a member. There is my Sacramento Natural Foods Co-Op Membership Card, my Slow Food Membership Card, my Food Literati Membership Card and my Food Genius Identification Card, the latter two from the Sacramento-based Food Literacy Center, a nonprofit with a mission “to inspire kids to eat their vegetables.” I have a card that says I’m a farmer based on my schooling with the California Farm Academy, a program of the Center for Land-Based Learning, and a current Student Identification Card indicating that I am a graduate student in Food Studies at University of the Pacific. I also have a business card indicating that I am co-owner of Local Roots Food Tours, a food and history walking-tour company that depends a good deal on tourists looking for access to Sacramento’s restaurants and farms. All of these cards indicate that I am more than familiar with the food scene in Sacramento; I am part of the food scene in Sacramento.

Using a qualitative interview approach, I have created a grounded theory narrative to discuss the “food movement” in Sacramento and to qualify the impact the designation of America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital may have on the movement itself. The interviewees, save for two, Paul Cultrera of the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op and Clay Merrill, representing McDonald’s Corp., are personal friends and discussions of food and food movements are often a significant part of our social conversations. I eat, drink, and talk,

with these people on a regular basis. The one-on-one interviews were conducted in a casual environment for approximately one hour per sitting. Interviews were recorded on my iPhone 6 and transcribed by Rev.com. In all cases, I offered to buy lunch or coffee for the interviewees in exchange for their time. Where it seems relevant or important to disclose, more detail about the specific interview environment is described.

Interviewees were invited to participate and all expressed support of my research and the narrative approach. Each interviewee's role in the Sacramento local food system is described as well as any relationships we may have beyond friendship. I conducted seven interviews with three women and four men, all white, with the exception of one black woman, Gerine Williams. A major international corporation is represented with the inclusion of McDonalds, who has adopted farm-to-fork language in their marketing. Other interviewees represent several successful local corporations, Selland Family Restaurants, Produce Express and two nonprofits, Food Literacy Center and NeighborWorks' HomeOwnership Center, are represented, and the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op, a cooperative grocery store. All interviewees have been active in the Sacramento food movement for many years. Jim Mills of Produce Express, the oldest and most established interviewee, recently retired after working for 40 years with and around food. All interviewees are currently active in their communities and volunteer regularly with a variety of food and non-food related causes in the region.

Each of these interviews offers insight into Sacramento and how Sacramentans describe their food movement; each of them offered the perspective of people working within the movement itself. I started each interview by asking each interviewee to define America's Farm-to-Fork Capital as it relates to them personally, and ended by asking

where they thought the food movement was going. For questions in between the first and last, I used an open-ended conversational approach, allowing those I interviewed to dictate the direction of our discussion, and used active listening to ask for elaboration when necessary. Ultimately, the research shows that varied ideas and approaches have come together to impact the local food system in the Sacramento region and that while the branding of Sacramento as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital has played a role in fostering an identity, it has had minimal effect on those in the food movement in the region. That is, the marketing of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital is helpful but not integral to the work of those working in the food movement.

I use the terms Local, Locavore, Farm-to-Fork, and Farm-to-Table interchangeably in this paper. While Sacramento is officially America's Farm-to-Fork Capital as per resolution, I use these other terms to describe what is happening in Sacramento because public opinion of these words is often interchangeable. It is important to use the many variations of these terms because choosing one over the other of these words limited research search results. I loosely define the genre of words to include the purchase of local, seasonal, and sustainable foods, an understanding of where the food on your plate comes from, and an appreciation of the effort required to create it—from growing and harvesting, to preparation and eating.

Chapter 4: Case Description

Sacramento, California is located in the northern portion of California's Great Central Valley (Appendix B). Sacramento sits at the confluence of the Sacramento River and American River. The Sacramento River is the largest river in California and, along with the American River, the adjacent floodplain creates one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the world. And, while the City of Sacramento itself is a relatively small urban core of approximately 500,000 people, according to the United States Census Bureau, the county of Sacramento covers an area of 100.1 square miles (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Regionally, nearly 2 million people call the area home but the landmass also contains 1.5 million acres of farmland, 8,000 acres of boutique farms, and 70 percent of the region's land is agricultural, forest or other open space.

The Sacramento metropolitan area, often referred to as the Greater Sacramento region, encapsulates six adjacent counties (Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado, Placer, Sutter, Yuba, and Nevada) and the 22 cities within those counties. According to the City of Sacramento web site Economic Development section, the "Agriculture Cluster" includes activities such as food manufacturing and grocery- or farm-related wholesalers (City of Sacramento, n.d.). With around 6,400 jobs, the Agribusiness & Food Manufacturing cluster represents a \$3 billion industry in the region (City of Sacramento, n.d.). Simply put agriculture is an important economic marker for the Sacramento region.

Even with \$3 billion influencing the local economy, many people in Sacramento often take for granted the agriculture bounty that the area provides. With a year-round

growing season, it is quite common for the perception of the region to be verbalized using phrases like “stuff just grows here.” As Paul Cultrera, who moved to the area from Massachusetts 18 years ago and served until recently as the General Manager of the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op put it, when describing the region, “Do you understand what you’re living in here? This is heaven for food” (Cultrera, Paul. Interview, 2017).

And while “heaven for food” can certainly be said about most of California, the Sacramento region offers agricultural production that has at times been embraced and celebrated, and alternately, mocked and despised. On the celebration side of the issue is the \$3 billion industry, employing thousands of people mentioned previously. On the mocking side is the image of uneducated and unsophisticated people in the region. At times, the mocking has been direct and had a sting. In 2002, Phil Jackson, then-coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, a prominent team in the National Basketball Association, called residents of the area “semi-civilized” and “maybe redneck in some form or fashion.” He also called Sacramento a “cow town” and certainly didn’t say it while smiling (DuPree, 2002). This salvo came at a time when Sacramento was often compared to the world-class cities San Francisco and Los Angeles, seemingly offering few positive attributes by comparison.

Chapter 5: Data

Fore Farm-to-Fork: Local Before Branding

In Sacramento, the ideas of farm-to-fork and supporting local agriculture were in place long before the city anointed itself with the designation of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital in 2012. Even as the accolades and insults have been bestowed over the years, many Sacramento residents have embraced the notion of an appreciation for agriculture and the ease with which food can be grown in the region without much public fanfare. Gardeners and non-gardeners, farmers and non-farmers appreciate what the place allows to be grown. "*Everyone* plants tomatoes in Sacramento" (Arrington, 2017). What follows is from interviews with people working with and directly upon four representative conceptual pillars of the food system in Sacramento (Appendix C).

In 1991 Paragary's, a prominent restaurant in Sacramento's midtown neighborhood, planted a garden in the parking lot across from its storefront. As Jim Mills, a chef at the restaurant at the time says, "Kurt Spataro and I planted a little garden and harvested . . . the bakery maintained it and we harvested basil and squash." Jim, not one prone to self-aggrandizement, clearly didn't want to take credit for his part in the garden. He says,

I mean, that's something that occurred through generations. An herb garden, a kitchen garden, maybe more so in Europe than America, but a kitchen garden ... it seemed to be something we could do. A piece of

ground and we'll harvest basil. I didn't look at it as original or unique (Mills, Jim. Interview, 2017).

Maybe, through the ages, it hasn't been particularly unique for a restaurant to have a nearby garden, but at the time it was unique, even for Sacramento. No other restaurant was doing it. Even so, Jim says, "Alice Waters was influenced by a trip to France where there was, obviously, similar gardens, kitchen gardens in restaurants. It's not a new thing" (Mills, 2017). Randy Paragary, namesake owner of Paragary's restaurant where Jim was chef, has said on multiple occasions that when he was looking around for a catchy concept for a restaurant, it was the casual upstairs café of Alice Waters' Chez Panisse in Berkeley that drew him in. Of the space, Randy has said, "Unlike the formal main dining room, [the upstairs café] space was relaxed, dominated by a wood-fired pizza oven—but still focused on the ascetic approach of local, fresh ingredients gently prepared" (Chabria, 2015). Paragary's opened as a casual, relaxed restaurant, à la the café of Chez Panisse, using local, fresh ingredients. Because of its location in Sacramento, Paragary's was able to push the local concept even further. Local ingredients came from area farms—farmers were known to leave newly harvested items at the backdoor of the restaurant for potential inclusion in the Paragary's menu—and from the little garden they planted. For Paragary's, the Sacramento interpretation of Alice Waters' vision—one of Sacramento's earliest farm-to-fork interpretations—was as close as a few steps to cross the street.

The Sacramento Natural Foods Cooperative (SNFC) was also supporting local food before Sacramento was designated as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital. As Paul Cultrera, the General Manager for 18 years describes, SNFC was working directly with

local farmers and has been since it started in the early 1970s. Both the community and the farmers embrace SNFC. “We’ve been working with some farmers for 30 years, so we have a very close relationship with the growers” (Cultrera, 2017). And while locavore has only had an official definition since 2005 (and was the Oxford word of the year in 2007), shopping for local food and eating seasonal foods has been a way of life for SNFC members and non-member shoppers since its incorporation in 1973.

A natural food cooperative, by its very nature, has a bit of a “hippie” image. Until recently, granola, flax, and whole grains, items often associated with alternative food movements and lifestyles of the 1970s counter culture, were par for the course in natural food worlds. The structure of the business itself too—based on the cooperative model where members own the store and elect a board of directors to oversee the implementation of its mission—offers an alternative to a capitalist economic structure and did so in Sacramento too.

In Sacramento, however, the cooperative members and others that shopped in the store seemed to find a good deal more than alternative foods to be happy about. SNFC shoppers loved the information and the education that was available during their shopping experiences. According to Paul, there was never any kind of pushback on what would later become a major tenet of the farm-to-fork movement: purchasing locally grown food. Paul contends that the [SNFC] board was always supportive of the emphasis on local and natural foods. The staff was supportive of local and natural foods too, as were the customers. Paul says,

The more that we did in terms of providing more information about where the food was coming from, I mean, signage to indicate that, every sign in

the produce department said exactly what farm it was from. There was a standard joke shared between the grocer and its shoppers, they would come and say, "Yeah, I know it's from Full Belly [a mid-sized cooperatively run farm about 40 miles from Sacramento], but what field at Full Belly was it in?" (Cultrera, 2017).

The “standard joke” held truth though. It seems the customers of SNFC knew where their food was coming from and wanted more information still. They just couldn’t get enough of it.

The mission of SNFC includes a commitment to educate the consumers who shop there. A connection to food and where food comes from is inherent in their mission: To provide the benefits of natural foods and products, economic cooperation, and sustainable practices to as many people as possible in the communities that the store serves (SNFC, website, n.d.). Because of their location in relation to the farms—the location within the Sacramento region—implementing that mission is easier to do than in many other places. SNFC shoppers, more often than not, know where their produce came from. As Paul put it, SNFC was always local and that was demonstrated in all aspects of the store:

[w]e brought them [SNFC shoppers] out to Full Belly and they'd seen the place. We were having farmers coming in and having lunch with the staff every couple of months and farmers in the store and farmers coming and doing panels and things. So there was this really strong commitment to making the food system real, you know, so that people actually saw where the food was coming from (Cultrera, 2017).

Without a definitive definition of farm-to-fork, it is safe to assume that knowing where your food comes from and what it took to get it on your plate and into your mouth would be part of the ideal. This ideal that might even be called a food system “philosophy,” the basis of which is an understanding and appreciation for all aspects of food.

It seems that with Sacramento’s geographic access to good quality food, it just makes sense to purchase local. Josh Nelson, Chief Financial Officer of Selland Family Restaurants, claims they have been buying local for 27 years. As he puts it, “it’s never been a brand for us. It was built on philosophy of quality, right? Not built on the philosophy of source and look cool” (Nelson, Josh. Interview, 2017). His restaurants don’t necessarily have farm names on their menus or brag about how close they are to the farms where their produce is grown; they are not “Farm-to-Fork” for branding and marketing purposes. For Josh, and others like him, the idea of quality is an all-important element, no matter where exactly the food comes from. Much of the food does come from the region though.

Purchasing local may be important to some, and while it is easy to do in Sacramento, it is not the only consideration for Josh when he sources supplies for his family’s restaurants. Using quality ingredients, changing menus to reflect the season, the philosophy of understanding food, and having an appreciation of that food is important, but having relationships with people, with farmers, is paramount to Josh and to the restaurants that he is tasked with running.

Josh tells the story of Randall, his father, owner of Selland Family Restaurant and head chef, and the Nantucket-based scallops he buys every year. He buys them, even

though they come from the other side of the country, because he wants to support the farmer who is growing them. Josh says,

Because he has a relationship with that farmer, and that farmer has an incredible product and, I mean, he does us right. And Randall really doesn't give a shit that they're not from Sacramento. He's going to put them on the menu because he wants to support that guy (Nelson, 2017).

The appreciation of the growing process, an appreciation of the farm and farmers involved, is part and parcel of that "philosophy of quality" that Josh considers important.

Josh goes on to say that Randall has built relationships at the farmers' markets in Sacramento too. Randall speaks highly of the tomatoes grown by Clark and Heidi Watanabe of Watanabe Farms. "Clark and Heidi are the epitome of what a true small farmer is all about," said Randall. "They love what they do. They want to please their customers. They're just wonderful people" (Robertson, 2016). It's a farm-to-fork philosophy that's not only about geography. Food grown within one hundred miles of the region is not the only reason to buy the food. It's about farms and food, and the people that grow it, and the people the buy it, and the people that cook it. It's all encompassing. As Josh says, his philosophy of local is more than the "literal farm and the literal fork" (Nelson, 2017).

Whether tomatoes grown in Sacramento or scallops from Nantucket, Josh and the Selland Family Restaurants support a positive, all encompassing farm-to-fork ideal. He says, in regard to the Nantucket scallops, "It's a unique product, it's a special product and it's that person operating with that philosophy. We just happen to be far away from each other. And we support that philosophy no matter where it is" (Nelson, 2017).

A similar philosophical approach—beyond simply buying something because it is locally grown—can be taken even further, as evidenced in the work that Gerine Williams, a VISTA volunteer with AmeriCorps is doing, volunteering her time to NeighborWorks’ HomeOwnership Center, Sacramento Region, in their Community Development Department. Ostensibly her job is to help area residents with home repairs and such to better their communities, but what she really does, as the department name might attest, is develop community. The biggest project she works on is the Oak Park Farmers’ Market, a market that since 2010 has been held on Saturdays from May through October. Oak Park is a low-income neighborhood inhabited by a large percentage of Blacks and Latinos. Gerine’s job, in her own words, is to “help bring food access to the community, to level the playing field so everyone has access to healthy fruits and vegetables” (Williams, Gerine. Interview, 2017). She does that, in part, with private donations and a grant from Rabobank, who has a solid reputation and focus in agriculture, that is used to match Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars spent at the farmers’ market dollar-for-dollar. That is, one SNAP dollar is worth two dollars for any purchase at the Oak Park Farmer’s Market. According to Gerine, in 2016, the funding allowed area SNAP recipients with approximately \$20,000 in SNAP dollars, to leverage \$40,000 of purchasing power with local farmers and other vendors (Williams, 2017). This increase in purchasing power for historically under-represented communities is seen as an advantage to the farmers and vendors at the market too—many of which are living in the community themselves.

The Oak Park Farmers Market originated with a neighborhood association. As Gerine explains the history, the then-president of the association “[d]id this community

poll, kind of reached out, to see what were people looking for. A lot of people were talking about having access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Because at the time there wasn't really a place [to find these items]" (Williams, 2017).

According to Gerine, the community poll showed that the residents of the Oak Park district were looking for healthy options and access to clean and organic foods. The 2017 market has 20 vendors selling fruits, vegetables, breads, eggs, meats, among other items. One of the goals of the weekly farmers' market is to be a one-stop grocery shopping point within the community (Williams, 2017). Average weekly attendance at the market is 600-800 people, mostly community residents but not always. Several times per month, when special events are planned, the number of people in attendance can climb to 1,000-1,200. This is particularly noteworthy because the Oak Park Farmers' Market competes with other farmers' markets, at least two of which are within two miles of their site, held at the exact same time. While all of these markets are free and open to the public, most people visit the market closest to home, fostering support of their neighborhood community. It's so much more than just a farmers' market and that's what the philosophy of Farm-to-Fork must include.

The philosophy that Gerine ascribes is a "real community small-town feel" (Williams, 2017). Farm-to-Fork is fresh vegetables, of course, but it is also talking to your neighbors, supporting local farms, some of which are might be your actual neighbors thanks to the city's recent passage of urban farming laws,¹ and building

¹ On March 24, 2015 the City of Sacramento City Council passed an in an attempt to "to reduce the regulatory burden for urban agriculture. The ordinance amended Sacramento City Code to allow small-scale urban agriculture as the primary land use in most zones, and accessory uses such as temporary on-site urban agriculture stands. In addition, it included development and operational standards." Retrieved from

community. In this way, the food system and the community system rely on and support each other. Alice Waters' spoke to this idea when she spoke of the power of gathering and its ability to inspire hope, joy, delight and more thoughtfulness (Waters, 2011).

Before there was the notion of "branding" the city as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, Sacramento could hold claim to its residents incorporating seemingly farm-to-fork practices in their daily lives, to wit: restaurants with kitchen gardens, knowledge of your farmer, and encouraging community around food and eating.

Fostering Farm-to-Fork: America's Farm-to-Fork Capital Declaration

Sacramento was declared America's Farm-to-Fork Capital 2012. The folks in the local food movement, many of whom have been "doing" farm-to-fork much longer than that, didn't need the designation to understand the philosophy of the farm-to-fork movement. In this section I offer examples of how and why the branding of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital supports the movement while broadening and fostering movement ideals beyond those people that have been long-term adherents.

Josh Nelson will tell you he is not a philosopher. By his own admission, education, and experience, he's a "marketing guy." He's also a Sacramento native who really likes where he and his family live. Josh has a sense of ownership in Sacramento. When the Los Angeles Lakers and the Sacramento Kings were playing out a Northern and Southern California rivalry on the basketball court, he watched and rooted for the Kings. It was basketball but it was more than that too. Southern California has

Hollywood. For Sacramento, Hollywood is a hard act to follow. When Phil Jackson called Sacramento a cow town, Josh admits it stung a bit. He says,

It felt like we should say, no. We're a farm town, thank you very much and not take it as an insult. Then, I started working on the idea of t-shirts that were like "I Love NY" but "I Dig Sacramento" with that kind of farm theory behind it, which morphed into a conversation with my wife. She was reading an article basically about farmers being the new rock stars.² Chefs are played out, right? The idea of us having plenty of both and that all of it culminating on that idea; we put together a logo just because we used it on our 25th anniversary t-shirts for the restaurant. (Nelson, 2017) (Appendix D).

It seems Mr. Jackson's snarky remark about Sacramento may have been the inadvertent start of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital as a brand. Branding keeps messaging focused. Logos and tag lines and colors, etc. are all part of branding these days and nary a successful business is without a branding plan.

In true twenty-first century parlance, Josh and his wife, who also works for Selland Family Restaurants (as does his father, Randall, his mother, sister and extended family), secured Twitter handles, a Facebook page, and purchased domain names. They then wrote a resolution that was eventually adopted by the Sacramento City Council

² The article that Josh and his wife discussed was written by Amber Stott, for a publication titled Edible Sacramento and was part of a series she did on Sacramento and its "food scene." Amber, Josh and his wife did not know each other at the time she wrote the article. They have since become friends and Amber and Josh serve together on Visit Sacramento's Farm-to-Fork Steering Committee.

(Appendix E). Josh had a good friend in then-City Councilmember Darrell Fong and says,

I talked to Darryl about the idea of declaring Sacramento Farm-to-Fork Capital of America. Mind you, this is not in my mind a city identity. This is a piece of a city identity, I guess, in my mind at that point (Nelson, 2017).

Councilmember Fong suggested that Josh speak with Visit Sacramento, then called Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB). And he did. Josh put together a proposal—“a nice little package” in his words—including his idea for a logo, the social media tags, and the resolution and handed it to Visit Sacramento (Appendix F). “I was of the belief that ...it’ll take on a life of its own. It’s an ‘open source’ product, right?” (Nelson, 2017). Josh reiterates the open source idea—most frequently associated with computer software for which the original source code is made freely available and may be redistributed and modified by anyone—that America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital is going to mean different things to different people, and will be used without a strict definition of farm-to-fork. Initially, Josh’s goal was to create a bit of civic pride in direct response to Phil Jackson’s slight. It quickly grew to more than that, however. Josh’s idea was to take the negative association of being “merely” an agriculture region and turning it into a positive. America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital? By physical location, Sacramento is inherently farm-to-fork, but Josh emphasizes, “[p]hilosophically we have to work at it like everybody else” (Nelson, 2017).

As a brand, America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital is enjoying success, at the very least in terms of visibility: there are banners waving on downtown signposts sporting the

America's Farm-to-Fork Capital logo, a new multi-million dollar Golden 1 Center—an arena for basketball, other sporting events, and concerts—regularly declares that the event center is 90/150: ninety percent of the food offered at the arena is sourced within 150 miles of the center itself.³ Restaurants too, both local and chain, use the local or Farm-to-Fork monikers on their web sites, food related businesses are thriving, and even businesses that seemingly have little relation to local food, realtors for example, are touting their connection to “local” and food in their marketing materials (Appendix G).

The general philosophy of Farm-to-Fork appeals to those in the food movement community, more so than the branding, and the philosophy is what takes precedence in the work that they are doing. Food Literacy Center is a good example of this. Food Literacy Center's mission is to teach kids to eat their vegetables. I currently serve on the Board of Directors for Food Literacy Center and have done so for 4 years. Amber Stott,

³ The Golden 1 Center web site reads, in part: “Together with hospitality partner Legends, we're working directly with farmers, growers, and chefs who produce the highest quality ingredients and menus so that every bite adds to the excitement of the main event. Have a seat and dig in — no one leaves here hungry.

Our executive chef and restaurant partners source 90% of their ingredients from a 150-mile radius, so whether you choose handmade tacos, wood-fired pizza, or a bier hall sausage, dining at Golden 1 Center is a celebration of Sacramento's diversity and abundance. When you eat at Golden 1 Center you are an active participant in the Slow Food Movement and the radical notion that big crowds can be fed great food. Delicious is always in season in Sacramento.

We will source the majority of our beer, wine, and spirits within the same 150-mile radius.

All leftover, edible food will be given to Sacramento Community Food Bank and Family Services via our Second That program, supporting over 200 local agencies.” Retrieved from <https://www.golden1center.com/visit/local-eats/philosophy>. Viewed March 15, 2017

Executive Director the Food Literacy Center and member of the America's Farm-to-Fork Capital Steering Committee,⁴ when asked what Farm-to-Fork meant to her, replied,

To me, Farm-To-Fork goes back to the way Alice Waters defined it as one of the pioneers, but essentially it's about having an understanding. There's an active education of what we're eating, and that we're recognizing that it's not just food on the plate, but there is a trail that goes all the way back to the farm. Different things happen to the food that we eat, and we need to be conscientious about understanding these things. It is essentially also the definition of food literacy, understanding the impact of your food choices and how those play out for the economy, environment, health... any of those pieces (Stott, Amber. Interview, 2017).

Amber recognizes that Visit Sacramento's branding has a different motivation for using the term Farm-to-Fork than she philosophically ascribes to, but the branding does afford some benefits to her and the organization she runs. She explains,

The first question to ask is, 'What is the goal of Farm-To-Fork within SCVD, or within Visit Sacramento versus what is the goal of Farm-To-Fork via Alice Waters?' Because they're two different things; the problem is that most of Sacramento is pre-launching Farm-To-Fork Capital campaign. The people that understand what Farm-To-Fork means had an

⁴ As listed on the web site, farmtofork.com, the Farm-to-Fork Steering Committee is one of three sub-committees listed under the Board and Committee caption. No individual names are listed as being members of the committee or of the board but information reads, "The Farm-to-Fork steering committee is composed of farmers, produce distributors, educators, restaurateurs, non-profit leaders and and (sic) other individuals who are committed to seeing Farm-to-Fork flourish in the Sacramento region. (March 21, 2017).

education and a knowledge seat in the Alice Waters version of it, the flow version of it; the actual food movement version of it. When they created the campaign, and they handed us, on a platter, a giant marketing platform, the people that don't know about Alice Waters, the people that don't know about slow food, the general public, all they heard was 'food,' right?

There's a difference. The goal of Visit Sacramento is to put people in hotels (Stott, 2017).

For Amber, Farm-to-Fork is one thing and America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, as a citywide identity or brand, may be something else entirely. The work of Visit Sacramento is to promote Sacramento in various ways that might appeal to tourists and bring in conventions and other well-attended events. "Heads in Beds" is the pithy vernacular that is often used to describe the work. That is, people staying in area hotels will generate more tax revenue for the City of Sacramento, a portion of which is used to help fund Visit Sacramento. One way to get those heads in beds might be to promote the idea of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital but it is not the only way in which promotion occurs. Visit Sacramento weaves the farm-to-fork brand through other industries—everyone has to eat—it is helping to support thereby promoting Sacramento as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital.

Nicole Rogers, who served as the Director of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital Program for Visit Sacramento until early 2017, explained that regional branding of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital took an unconventional path to find it's home at Visit Sacramento, a travel and tourism bureau. As Nicole puts it, "So they created the program and created this declaration, and then they did these events, and then they were like,

‘Okay now we need to make this an actual thing.’ So instead of creating the thing which the events celebrate, they created the events and then made the thing” (Nicole Rogers, Interview, March 10, 2017). The “thing” that Nicole references is the concept or brand of America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital. And as she goes on to say, the problem with the thing is that people wanted to take credit for it and claim it as an identity. As she puts it, “farm-to-fork is what this region always was” (Rogers, Nicole. Interview, 2017). That is, the philosophy rings true and always has. The branding of Farm-to-Fork with capital letters is the thing, the identity that Visit Sacramento is charged with selling.

The celebratory foodscape events referenced by Nicole most notably include a Farm-to-Fork week in late-September with multiple and varied events throughout the region. The first Farm-to-Fork week in 2013 opened with a cattle drive on Capitol Mall, in front of the California State Capitol. Long-horned cattle (raised in the region and used for this very sort of parade) were led down a street, Capitol Avenue, in Sacramento by cowboys and cowgirls on horses. Urban cattle drives are not often seen but it offers a spectacle that conjures an image from another time period, while at the same time making for dramatic pictures of long-horned steers walking down the street with the capitol dome in the background (Appendix H). The following year it was a tractor parade with vintage tractors followed by modern tractors that kicked-off the weeklong celebration. This type of spectacle is not something that has been done by the likes of Alice Waters at Chez Panisse.

In subsequent years, the kick-off of Farm-to-Fork Week has been similarly dramatic, albeit with a much more community-benefiting and community-building approach. In 2015, the kick-off event included an attempt to set the Guinness Book of

World's Records record for the most fresh produce donations to a food bank. The goal was 25,000 pounds of food. Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services served as the recipient food bank and would be responsible to distribute the food itself to area food banks and shelters that serve those in need within the community. With shifts of volunteers weighing donations that came by bag, box and semi-trailer truck, the promotion collected 170,923.8 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables and crushed their intended record. The next day the food was distributed by the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services to 30 partner agencies across the region and subsequently was delivered to families in need. In 2016, the same event collected 493,977 pounds, nearly one-half million pounds, of fresh fruits and vegetables, again securing the world record title, but, more importantly, providing fresh food to thousands (Lindelof, 2016).

The first Farm-to-Fork celebration week culminated in two dramatically different events. The first event was a festival—free and open to the public—celebrating agriculture with gardening and farming tips, cooking demonstrations, food and drink, and music. In 2013, 25,000 people attended the festival on a gorgeous, sunny day. In 2016, just three years later, estimates put that crowd between 60,000 – 65,000 people under cloudy skies (Branan, 2016). That's an impressive increase in participation, especially with less-than-perfect weather. People seemed to enjoy themselves and while the event was free to the public, there were plenty of vendors selling all sorts of things, including fresh produce, prepared foods, and local beer and wine. Not all was local though, if you consider local to small and independent. Chipotle, the nationwide fast casual restaurant chain was there (they have a policy about using locally sourced produce within their billion dollar company) selling burritos, as was Case with a rice thrasher (a type of

tractor) valued at several million dollars. Tractors are relevant to farmers of course, but the price of the one on display made it highly unlikely that any of the area small- to medium-sized farmers could afford them. These huge tractors are impressive pieces of agriculture equipment and are used in large-scale production agriculture. The tractors themselves added to the spectacle of the festival with its America's Farm-to-Fork Capital theme.

Each year Farm-to-Fork Week has officially ended with an event on the other end of the spectrum from the free, open to the public festival. The closing event for the Farm-to-Fork celebration is a \$175 per person dinner for 600 coveted ticket-holders. The dinner is served on white linen tables set-up through the span of the Tower Bridge over the Sacramento River—an impressively distinct looking bridge that serves as a western entrance to the city that terminates on Capitol Avenue with the California State Capitol building directly in view. The inaugural event proved to be the first time this venue had been used for a dinner or event of similar sort and, in addition to the complexities of orchestrating the food, required multiple municipality and agency permissions to secure, as the bridge spans both Sacramento and Yolo Counties, crosses a California waterway, and is a major thoroughfare into the cities on both sides of the river. Additionally, several contingency plans were in place for the event; one included options for moving people off of the bridge quickly should the Tower Bridge, a vertical lift drawbridge, need to be raised in an emergency. The planning of the event was well over one year in the making. The community support for the event was wide but there was room for naysayers from many corners.

In addition to criticisms over the price of the dinner ticket, many area residents were outraged when the tickets themselves sold out in a matter of hours. Of the 600 tickets sold for dinner the first year, only a couple hundred were available to the general public for the \$175 asking price. The bulk of the tickets were sold prior, bundled in groups of 10 and 20, to corporate sponsors. Visit Sacramento countered the nay-sayers by saying that money earned from the Tower Bridge dinner was used to help fund the free, open-to-the-public event the day before, the Farm-to-Fork Festival.

The first year I purchased a ticket online and attended the event. Local chefs working together and led by chef Patrick Mulvaney, of Mulvaney's B&L, in midtown Sacramento executed the multi-course meal. Patrick also serves on the Visit Sacramento Board of Directors. The chefs roamed the bridge during the dinner, answering questions, bantering with guests, and everyone in attendance, seemingly, had a wonderful time. The inaugural year of Farm-to-Fork celebrations in America's Farm-to-Fork Capital was deemed a success. Visit Sacramento was pleased with the results and while more hotel rooms were booked in 2013 than in the year prior—more heads were in beds—there was no data collection and therefore no way to attribute the increase to the branding of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital. About that, Nicole said, "...they [Visit Sacramento] saw it as a long game, and I believe they still do see it as a long game where if we create this regional identity, it will help attract those visitors to want to come and experience the food culture" (Rogers, 2017).

Subsequent years of the Tower Bridge dinner have showed increased interest in, and increased interest in publically debating the details, of the event. In 2014 & 2015 tickets sold out in mere minutes, and in 2016 & 2017 a lottery system was put into place

in an effort to be fair to those wanted tickets. Also in 2016 ticket prices were raised to \$199 per person and the total number of people served during the dinner was 782 (Gemmel, 2016). But again, large orders of tickets were pre-sold to corporate sponsors, many of which were scrambling to support the event in hopes of basking in the association with success similar to the previous years. Corporate sponsorship of Farm-to-Fork events is not without controversy. The number of tickets each sponsor was allowed to buy was the least of the controversial issues. Who was being allowed to sponsor was the real problem. In a *Sacramento Bee* opinion piece, Michael Basson Reynolds and Steven Mavilio urged Sacramentans to reject the McDonald's as a sponsor of the farm-to-fork events. In their opinion, McDonald's did not belong anywhere near the designation of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital (Basso Reynolds & Maviglio, 2016). There is some precedent for their arguments. In the words of Alice Waters, fast-food is the antithesis of the Farm-to-Fork philosophy:

I think America's food culture is embedded in fast-food culture. And the real question that we have is: How are we going to teach slow-food values in a fast-food world? Of course, it's very, very difficult to do, especially when children have grown up eating fast food and the values that go with that. (Cavanaugh, 2014)

McDonald's is a major sponsor of the Tower Bridge dinner. While Chipotle, a company that claims to show that food served fast didn't have to be a "fast-food" experience, (Chipotle, n.d.) was at the festival the day before the dinner, Chipotle was not a sponsor with top billing at the event.

Faux Farm-to-Fork?: Local, hmmm . . .

Farm-to-Fork has not always had positive associations in America's eyes. In 2016, for example, Florida's *Tampa Bay Times* did a seven-part exposé titled Farm-to-Fable that exposed a significant number of restaurants in Florida marketing themselves as farm-to-fork, even going so far as to credit specific area farms on their menus with which they had no relationship (Reiley, 2016). They lied. The exposé inspired similar stories across the country with investigative reporters connecting, or more commonly *not* finding any way to connect restaurants, with the farms they credited with producing and providing their produce.

In September 2015, Valli Herman, writing for *Fortune Magazine*, declared “The Farm-to-Table Backlash is Here” (Herman, 2015). The article referenced the television show *Portlandia* and described a skit from the show,

where two absurdly earnest diners badger their waitress on the provenance of their dinner. To reassure them of the chicken's humane and organic bona fides, their server delivers a dossier detailing the bird's diet, weight, parents, birthday, and even his name—Colin (Herman, 2015).

After summarizing that marketing has replaced what once was a movement, the piece ended with a simple truth, “Selling a heritage breed, woodland-raised chicken fed a diet of sheep's milk, soy, and hazelnuts is a lot sexier—and much more profitable—than a shrink-wrapped bird in a Styrofoam tray” (Herman, 2015).

While rumors might get passed around inner circles of some restaurants playing a little fast and loose with their proudly flown America's Farm-to-Fork Capital flag, there has been no exposé to date on the subject in Sacramento local publications, although

some have been deemed in social media and in popular discourse to be a bit more brazen with their marketing of the brand than seems reasonable. What follows are two such examples, one from a regional newspaper, *Sacramento Bee*, and one from the significantly wider audience reaching, McDonald's Corp.

Sacramento Bee, owned by McClatchy Newspaper group, offers The Farm-to-Fork Dining Card for \$29.95 on a full-page of its *Ticket*, a weekly entertainment section. The top half of the page appears to be an article about a Sacramento restaurant—no pictures, three columns—but is clearly labeled “Advertisement” in small print at the top of the page. The bottom half is a more obvious sales pitch for the dining card. The card, for only \$29.95, will afford you “\$15 OFF 2 DINNER ENTREES!” at each of 30 or so Farm-to-Fork restaurants. Not a bad deal of course, but the ad implies that these restaurants have some sort of special farm-to-fork distinction. The America's Farm-to-Fork Capital Seal appears at the center of the ad. (Appendix I)

As an advertising concept, this “certified offer” is not new to the *Sacramento Bee* or even to Sacramento. The restaurants, themselves, pay the newspaper to be among the “selected” in return for a positive association with America's Farm-to-Fork Capital. Restaurants pay to be featured on the top half of the page in what looks like a glowing review of the establishment. The advertorial style of advertising—publications offering advertising space that has the look and feel of an editorial or journalist article—is a widely accepted marketing practice used in publications across the country. And while several of the restaurants are among some of the best and most well-respected restaurants in town, there is at least one global franchise, The Melting Pot, and one publically held international restaurant, Ruth's Chris Steak House, which trades on NASDAQ as Ruth.

Even without a constant or universal definition of Farm-to-Fork, corporations with international reach and without a stated commitment to local purchasing seem out-of-place. The philosophy of farm-to-fork feels like it should be smaller—much, much smaller—than a global reach. Offering the designation of a farm-to-fork restaurant in exchange for advertising dollars doesn't seem to align with the spirit of the designation of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital.

In late 2014, McDonald's announced it was undertaking a greater effort at transparency and engagement with its customers by unveiling a campaign titled "Our Food, Your Questions." About this campaign, Naomi Starkman, writing for Civil Eats, said, "... [McDonald's is] angling for the farm-to-table crowd, as the world's largest buyer of beef and pork with hamburgers for as low as one dollar, McDonald's current practices will probably still be considered factory-farm-to-table" (Starkman, 2014). She expounds,

From food safety scandals to the serious public health impacts of eating fast food, consumers increasingly want truth, trust, and transparency in their food. But transparency demands responsibility and is toothless on its own. Today's eaters want to see where their food comes from so they can make informed choices and also advocate for change (Starkman, 2014).

Clay Merrill, a Communications Supervisor in the Sacramento office of Moroch, a Dallas-based, full-service independent marketing and communications agency, with 34 offices in the United States, leads the public relations efforts for McDonald's franchise owners in the Sacramento and Reno media markets. The media market includes 170

McDonald's stores. Clay's efforts include providing strategic planning and program implementation for the entire market.

In July 2014, Clay was awarded the "Best Marketing/PR Plan" by the McDonald's Corporation for his implementation of local farm-to-fork tours with McDonald's suppliers in California. According to Clay, the goal of the campaign, which was achieved and for which Clay received a Leadership Award from the McDonald's Pacific Sierra Region for his leadership role, was to highlight the growing and distributing of locally sourced commodities for McDonald's restaurants. McDonald's is not the only Moroch client for which Clay is point person. In perhaps an ironic twist, he and Moroch also represent the American Diabetes Association; fast food, a la McDonald's, is often associated with the rise in diabetes.

When I spoke with Clay, at the wildly popular Sacramento farm-to-fork, restaurant, Bacon & Butter,⁵ he said of his work with McDonald's, "Well the goal of what we're trying to do was not necessarily claim our farm-to-fork in the way that everyone else views farm-to-fork" (Merill, Clay. Interview, 2017). It was 2013, after the declaration of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital that the implementation of McDonald's campaign went into place. Clay says,

So that's when I started saying lets kind of at least help people understand that there is that farm-to-fork element like you're buying from the local guy down the street and they're using those elements in your menu. And

⁵ The Bacon and Butter web site reads, in part, "Our style is very California farm to table. We get what's in season and shop at local farmer's markets. Whatever our purveyors have, they keep us up to date." My partner and I have sold produce from our farm to Bacon and Butter in the past and we eat at the restaurant regularly. Clay and I met there on the day of the interview at his suggestion.

your menu is seasonal and all of that stuff. Which is great. I think there is [are] a lot of people that love and appreciate that and that's important but when you're also looking at traditional restaurants. I mean I would call McDonald's a traditional restaurant. We're buying a lot of local produce. And we're using it in our food and so that I thought was an important story to tell (Merill, 2017).

He goes on to say that as a traditional restaurant, there is room for a piece of the Farm-to-Fork pie. “We're providing jobs for local agriculture economy. We're helping to support growers and producers of food and it's on a much larger scale but it's a part of our agricultural economy” (Merill, 2017).

Clay makes a good point about McDonald's reach in the region. A quick search of the McDonald's web site, using a downtown Sacramento zip code, 95814, produces 30 McDonald's restaurants within 50 miles. When asked about restaurants in the vicinity, Clay says they typically look at the media market defined with boundaries of Sacramento to the north all the way south to Modesto, about 100 miles, an area that includes 170 restaurants. With 50-60 employees per restaurant, that means that McDonald's has over 9,000 employees, a significant number for the area, the quality of jobs notwithstanding. But it is not just jobs that McDonald's wants to claim as a piece of the farm-to-fork pie. Clay continues,

I've learned a lot about agriculture through this whole process because we have our suppliers. So for example Taylor Farms is a supplier but they contract out with growers to grow lettuce, to grow tomatoes, to grow any of the commodity's they provide. So the growers will grow the food,

they'll get it to the supplier which would be Taylor Farms and Taylor Farms will do their processing, mainly packaging it to the point where it can be distributed out to the individual restaurants (Merill, 2017).

The Taylor Farms, of which Clay speaks, is located in the Salinas, California—approximately 200 miles south of Sacramento in Monterey County and not part of regional Sacramento—and Clay tells me that is where McDonald's has much of their lettuce production. Taylor Farms is the colloquial name for Taylor Fresh Foods, which “currently ranks as the world's largest producer of fresh-cut vegetables” (Sherry, 2009). This centrally owned, large-scale production agricultural model is not generally what food activists, or even the general public, mean when they discuss Farm-to-Fork.

According to its own web site, TaylorFarms.com, of their 10,000 employees, a retail team of 2,000 is based in Salinas. There is no mention on the web site of the farmers that are producing lettuce in Salinas, but a 2010 Corporate Responsibility report for Taylor Fresh Foods and Taylor Farms Operating Companies with a subheading “Our Growers” introduces us to the Basore family of Florida and their tradition of growing leafy vegetables under the name TKM Farms. “In 1996, the Basores first partnered with the Bengard family out of Salinas, California. TKM-Bengard Farms, LLC is now the largest lettuce grower *east* [my emphasis] of the Mississippi River” (Taylor Farms, 2010). I can't help but consider that America's Farm-to-Fork Capital in Sacramento, California is just about as far away from “east of the Mississippi River” as one can get on the North American continent. The report highlights two additional similarly large farms in the Salinas area as being part of the “dedicated growing families” with which Taylor Farms works. And, while the potential distance the lettuce travels in this instance is

similar to the distance of the scallops that Selland's Family Restaurants procures, it seems difficult to believe that TKM-Bengard Farms, LLC farmers have a personal relationship with each of the McDonald's franchise owners on the other side of the continent.

Clay continues by saying that Tracy, California, roughly 75 miles from Sacramento, is home to Taylor Farms tomato production and the actual grower is located in Manteca, about 60 miles from Sacramento. Of the award-winning tours that he was credited with organizing he says, "[w]e call it a field-to-restaurant experience" (Merill, 2017). Invited guests to the "experience" included

[e]lected officials, people that have a stake or interest of local food or agriculture. We invited ladies from the Junior League because they're moms and they have a big interest in knowing what their kid are eating. So we take in women who are successful moms here in the area. NGOs. Just anybody who we know would be interested in knowing where our food comes from (Merill, 2017).

Clay offered a description about what the tours entailed.

Our first year we did tomatoes, that was really interesting because we went to Manteca we watched the tomatoes come in and they were green; as green as could be. But then they wash them and they gas them. And they let them ripen over the course of a couple days. Then once they're ripened they they're shipped to Tracy, the production facility where they're sliced, packaged, and sent to restaurants (Merill, 2017).

The description sounds similar to a scene in the 2008 movie, *Food, Inc.* that showed tomatoes being harvested green and gassed to turn red—a scene that was clearly an

attempt to elicit disgust, or at the very least disdain, for the practice—and yet Clay seems to be quite proud of having shown his tour guests that tomatoes are treated with ethylene gas to ripen. By embracing what is often depicted as a negative (using ethylene gas to ripen tomatoes), Clay has orchestrated a plan that touts McDonald's safety and transparency above all else, certainly above the harvesting and gassing unripe tomatoes.

When asked about the McDonald's campaign and tours, Josh Nelson, who insisted previously that the farm-to-fork brand was intended to be and will continue to be a open source concept, argues that the Farm-to-Fork branding can help McDonald's improve its production practices.

The fact that McDonald's wants to advertise farm to fork? I think that's a wonderful thing. Is it a bastardization of farm to fork? Sure. Is it moving the needle a little bit? Probably so. And I think that's an excellent thing, right? When Walmart's all organic, I don't think I'm going to have a problem with that. Do I shop at Walmart? No, but would I rather see them sell an organic banana, than a conventional banana? Absolutely. If these things move large corporate in that direction, I think it's totally positive. And not like I'm trying to pull the wool over someone's eyes but I think that people paying attention know where to go. [*They know*] what they're getting when they eat it (Nelson, 2017).

Josh may be under the general assumption ascribed to by many and exemplified in the Food, Inc. scene, that education will save the day. Once people have been educated about the fact that tomatoes are harvested early and gassed to make them look red, they will find them unappetizing and unappealing. McDonald's flips this idea on it's head by

focusing the marketing on transparency, pushing the concept of gassing of tomatoes to make them look red seems an “interesting process” without any consequence.

In addition to the farm tours and positioning itself as local to the region, McDonald’s is a sponsor of the Tower Bridge Dinner, the event that is culmination of the annual America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital celebrations. Listed below the Presenting Sponsor—Cadillac, a controversial sponsor because of the sheer size of the company, but much less so because Cadillac is not in a fast-food, or any food, business—McDonald’s sponsorship stirred significant debate in regionally media for the 2016 event (Basso & Maviglio, 2016).

Garnering corporate support and funding is an essential component of Visit Sacramento’s job, and certainly ensures that Visit Sacramento continues to exist, but McDonald’s as a major sponsor confuses a huge corporation’s well-funded public relations campaign with efforts to support small farms and businesses in the Sacramento region. Clay says,

Again, no, I don't think we're necessarily trying to say McDonald's is farm-to-fork in the way that the traditionalists view it. But we have a piece of that pie and it may not necessarily be the way you see it or perceive it, but it's there (Merill, 2017).

McDonald’s role in Farm-to-Fork, Locavore, Slow Food, and similar food movements, is an important one. McDonald’s has a piece of that pie, albeit maybe not the most palatable portion. It was, after-all, the strong and vocal resistance to the building of a McDonald’s near the Spanish Steps in Rome that spurred the formation of Slow Food, an organization with a firm footing in the philosophy of farm-to-fork. Alice Waters has

served as the Vice President of Slow Food International since 2002 (Cooke and Greenaway, 2017).

Farm-to-Fork's Future: Moving Forward

With Nicole's departure in February 2017, the position of Director of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital program is currently vacant. The organization responsible for that position, Visit Sacramento, is itself set to undergo some potentially dramatic changes as Steve Hammond, who has served as its President and Chief Executive Officer since 1999, retired at the end of June 2017. Mike Testa, who has served as Chief Operating Officer for the organization since 2001, was named the new President and Chief Executive Officer ensuring a level of institutional memory regarding America's Farm-to-Fork Capital and its branding. America's Farm-to-Fork Capital designation is now well established. It is also clear that the designation will continue to grow and change and, in some cases, be used by entities that really have no business doing so. As Jim Mills, the chef and produce seller says, "The negative part is the good ideas [will be] diluted" (Mills, 2017).

The dilution includes having corporations like McDonald's sponsor the Tower Bridge Dinner, a centerpiece of the annual Farm-to-Fork celebrations. Clay Merrill has indicated that McDonald's would certainly consider a larger sponsorship role if it was on the table. Josh Nelson, who came up with the idea for the branding in the first place, says McDonald's is getting a lot of their product from our region. "But philosophically we're dealing with a very different farmer than they are. Again keep doing what they're doing but it's just different, right?" (Nelson, 2017). His open source concept for the brand has room for McDonald's and others of their ilk. Josh says, "I think people think too

narrowly about it. That's all. I think that's the biggest 'problem' that arises with people that get too frustrated or 'poo-poo' that or whatever, they just don't understand it" (Nelson, 2017). He's all for getting information to people and seems to think they can make up their own mind based on that information.

The idea that America's Farm-to-Fork Capital brand can include corporate fast-food, while offensive to many, doesn't seem to bother some people working in the Sacramento Food Movement. Amber Stott and the work of Food Literacy Center will continue with or without Sacramento's moniker of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital. She asks and answers,

What's the biggest reason we need Farm-To-Fork? Everyone across the board, whether it was non-profit executive leaders, to people from Visit Sacramento, to food writers, to chefs, you name it within food system, every single person said education. Education. Education. Education. That's the reason I started Food Literacy Center. I one-hundred percent felt in my bones that the education gap existed in our food system (Stott, 2017).

She goes on to say that movements take time and she, as well as other people working in the food movement, is willing to put in the time. She adds, "We're talking about systemic change" (Stott, 2017). The Farm-to-Fork movement started and was happening long before the moniker and will continue with or without the designation. But what does she think about America's Farm-to-Fork Capital as a branded identity? Amber says,

No, that's not the full Farm-To-Fork spectrum, but I guarantee it's making those businesses [that are playing up the brand], it is making them think about it. In that

regard, no it's not making them change their business model, but it is making everybody think a little harder. Maybe it ups the bar for people (Stott, 2017).

McDonald's is practicing transparency by showing their production, a stepping-stone but, more importantly as it relates to the specific work she is doing, Amber says, "I don't think Farm-To-Fork as a campaign is creating setbacks for me in Food Literacy Center. It doesn't hurt Food Literacy Center for them to have a marketing brand" (Stott, 2017).

It is the job of Visit Sacramento, the job of their brand America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, to help raise money for regional businesses. "Are they going to turn down a restaurant that's not fully Farm-To-Fork when they can make a buck off of it? Heck no. That's not their mission," adds Amber (Stott, 2017). Within the Sacramento Food Movement, the goals seem clearly delineated. As she puts it, regarding the brand of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital,

Let's leverage this thing that I'm feeling bubbling in the world. How can I make that an economic driver? Yeah, I don't think Farm-To-Fork Capitol would have happened had there not already been an existing grassroots movement. That is all to the credit of the people that came before, the Alice Waters and such (Stott, 2017).

The "such" of which Stott speaks includes a number of Sacramentans; even Amber herself could be on the list of food movement elite. Sacramentans have a legitimate claim to adhering to farm-to-fork philosophies before they were even named as such, or at the very least of quickly joining the likes of Alice Waters by practicing them. Without a true definition however, the words farm-to-fork and its food associations, can spread and dilute. Much like "natural," a term that is

used with positive associations for food marketing, farm-to-fork, defined broadly, is currently enjoying a heyday in Sacramento and the region.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In October 2012, Sacramento, California declared itself “America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital.” As a brand identity, it works well for the region. It holds relevance across seasons and is not tied to any particular crop or production. America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital brand has relevance in drought years and in wet years. It’s fairly innocuous. The brand has spawned a public festival with growing attendance every year and a high-end dinner for the Sacramento social scene. Several other dinners and events have sprung up in September as a direct response of the declaration. Five years into it, many restaurants and food related establishments offer their own signature events during the month of September, Farm-to-Fork Month as it is known.

It has done more than that too. In 2017, the fresh produce drive that kicks off Farm-to-Fork Month “collected 503,071 pounds of fresh produce to be distributed to Sacramento Food Bank outreach programs, partner agencies and food banks in neighboring counties.” (Kawahara, 2017). The third year of this food drive proved to be the biggest yet, for a total of nearly 1.5 million pounds of fresh produced collected in three years. The story itself, however, ran in the entertainment section of the paper, potentially undermining the seriousness of the effort.

The designation of America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital has had antagonists in year’s past too but those in opposition do seem to be gaining momentum. An opinion piece that ran in the *Sacramento Bee* on the day of the 2017 Farm-to-Fork Festival was not the least bit supportive of the designation, ending with “It’s time to step away from the world-

class provincialism that has long constrained Sacramento. Let go of the images of our agricultural past” (O’Connell, 2017). And while that is potentially just the local paper offering multiple sides to an issue, this is the first time someone has written to do away with the designation altogether. Since it is being suggested that the designation should be removed and forgotten also seems to offer credence to the idea that Sacramento is America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital, or at the very least, was at one time.

Sacramento is home to the state capitol of the sixth largest economy of the world and the region has had agricultural ties since the city’s inception. The people working today in the Sacramento Food Movement there appreciate those ties. It makes it easier to do what they do. The Sacramento Natural Foods Co-Operative is experiencing record sales. Food Literacy Center reaches 20,000 kids with its educational programming. Produce sellers have seen increased sales as new restaurants are opening and others are expanding. All of these may be directly related to the branding of America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital but worldwide trends focusing on food—Instagram has all but made the sharing of food photos obligatory in some circles—is not to be discounted for playing a role as well.

Is there a final statement to be made about the branding of Sacramento as “America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital?” It is helpful to those in the Sacramento food movement but it is not an integral part of their work. On the other hand, America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital, as a brand, has the pioneers of the broader Food Movement(s) to thank for its current positive association even if it ignores the fundamental philosophy behind the Farm-to-Fork movement.

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Appendix A: THE RUNNING OF THE TOMATO TRUCKS



Appendix B: MAP OF CALIFORNIA WITH SACRAMENTO FOR CONTEXT

Appendix C: BACKGROUND ON INTERVIEWEES

Paul Cultrera recently retired after serving at the General Manager of the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-Operative. The Sacramento Natural Foods Co-Op has consistently ranked as one of the Top 10 Natural Food Co-Operatives in the county, during his 18-year tenure, achieved the first place ranking recently, in part because of the opening of new \$25 million dollar location that the Paul oversaw to completion. He is planning to move back to the East Coast in mid-2017, wanting to live one more artichoke season in Sacramento. I have been a member of the SNFC for 25 years and my sister, who works there was hired under Paul's and while I had never met Paul in person, I've followed his tutelage of the store and recognized him from pictures. Paul has a very distinct mustache.

My introduction to Clay Merrill came from a friend that knew him from Leadership Sacramento, a program of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce that strives to develop community-minded business and civic leaders. Clay works for Moroch, a national public relations and communications firm with offices in Sacramento. He was instrumental in creating an award winning marketing campaign for McDonald's Corp. franchises in the Sacramento – Modesto media market.

Jim Mills, a former chef and current produce purveyor, agreed to meet with me and said of the farm-to-fork movement, "Well, it really must be a thing now if you're studying it." He says he is done with food when he retires in September 2017, one day after his 70th birthday, but his attempts at sincerity on that fact seems less than believable.

The weekend after we met, he was planning to join in cooking with the Slow Food Chefs Alliance at a local art installation, ArtStreet. Jim and I run into each other at various food-related events, often several times per week.

Josh Nelson is the Chief Financial Officer of Sellands Family Restaurants and, for those in the know, is credited with the idea of declaring Sacramento America's Farm-to-Fork Capital and serves on the Visit Sacramento America's Farm-to-Fork Capital Steering Committee. He's known for being modest about his accomplishments, not the least of which, is the fact that he is the financial brain trust of his family's well-regarded restaurants started by his father, Chef Randall Selland. Josh has also been instrumental in the work of Food Literacy Center and we have had discussions regarding food generally and Food Literacy Center specifically on many occasions.

Nicole Rogers, who currently is employed as the Director, Marketing & Communications for Nugget Markets, Inc. is served as the Director of America's Farm-to-Fork Capital program until early 2017. Nicole is passionate about food and how it is grown. She is an outspoken supporter of all things Sacramento. I have known Nicole for 4 years and serve on the Food Literacy Board together.

Amber Stott is the Founding Executive Director of Food Literacy Center, a nonprofit organization that has, in the last five years, experienced rapid increase in both donations and reach. Food Literacy Center's mission is to teach kids to eat their vegetables. I currently serve on the Board of Directors for Food Literacy Center and have done so for 4 years. Amber also sits on the Visit Sacramento Farm-to-Fork Steering Committee and helped to found the Sacramento Food Policy Network. She has been an

integral player in the Sacramento Food Movement and the recipient of numerous local, national and international awards and recognition for her work.

Gerine Williams is a VISTA Volunteer with AmeriCorps. Her work with NeighborWorks' HomeOwnership Center, Sacramento Region, in their Community Development Department brings her in touch with the constituency she serves on a daily basis. A main responsibility is the management of the Oak Park Farmers Market. There isn't a garden plot or community event in her neighborhood where she doesn't play a role; Gerine is everywhere.

Appendix D: I DIG SACRAMENTO LOGOS



Appendix E: AMERICA'S FARM-TO-FORK CAPITAL RESOLUTION



Appendix F: AMERICA'S FARM-TO-FORK CAPITAL LOGO



Appendix G: LYON REALTY MAILER ADVERTISEMENT

cafeteria

Cafeteria 15L is an eclectic urban restaurant offering American comfort cuisine with a classic flair. Their traditional dishes are created with a twist to evoke the nostalgia and comfort of a home-cooked meal.

Present this postcard and you'll **enjoy a FREE* entrée**, with the purchase of another, as a gift from your friends at Lyon Real Estate!

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Appendix H: PHOTO OF CATTLE DRIVE ON CAPITOL AVENUE



Appendix I: SACRAMENTO BEE ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

Pearl on the River has an upscale ambiance with a casual vibe

By David Allen Brown

Pearl on the River owner Anthony Smith and Executive Chef Matthew Jones make sure there are always four or five choices on the small plate, entree, soup and salad and pizza menu. But because their focus is on Farm-to-Fork and providing guests with the freshest ingredients, you'll have to excuse them if the menu is always in a little bit of flux.

Because they have farmers showing up on their doorstep with produce picked that day, or seafood purveyors hooking their boats up just a few hours earlier, Smith and Jones have to be nimble and make changes to the day's menu on the fly.

"Everything we do is Farm-to-Fork," Smith said. "Even our cocktails, and we have a wonderful list too, feature ingredients grown locally."

When challenged to come up with an example of a cocktail that best encompasses the movement that focuses on hyper-local ingredients it took Smith about a nanosecond to say the raspberry puree lemon drop.

"The fruit is always local and we use house-made simple syrup," Smith said. It tingles all the senses and it's our best seller."

That house specialty pairs well with everything on the menu, Smith, but so too are any of the California wines Smith has collected and featured on the extensive wine list. Smith said the Farm-to-Fork focus is just a natural addition to his California-centric menu that appeals to most everyone.

California is blessed by the sun and with the most fertile valley in the world. Nature's abundance makes its way to the plates at Pearl on the River in myriad ways, especially the seafood. Smith said the two most requested dishes are the crab gnocchetti and the clam chowder. Both selections combine the best of sea and land.

The gnocchetti features house-made pasta pillows filled with fresh Dungeness crab with buttered spinach and Brussels sprouts served from local farmers. The mix also includes pancetta and mushrooms.

Smith claims his clam chowder is the best on the area and judging by the amount that he and Jones did not he may be right. But the fish tacos are close behind, he said, as the patrons get a nice surprise each time they order them. That's because the fish changes each day depending on the freshest catch.

"We serve the best of California every day," Smith said. "The fish tacos, no matter the type of fish that day, are doted by our house-made mix and accompanied by chipotle slaw. They're delicious."

Pearl on the River puts the fine art in casual dining. The taste bud decor is set off by the tables covered in white table cloths. But Smith said Pearl on the River is not pretentious. Situated along the Sacramento River off the Garden Highway, Pearl on the River has plenty of beacons motor up to the docks and come in to eat or to sit on the expansive deck and watch the sunset with a raspberry puree lemon drop in hand. They treatly mix and mingle with the diners in sport coats and dresses, Smith said.

"We never mind people coming in all the rivers," Smith said. "We have an upscale ambience but we also have a friendly, casual vibe."

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