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Reflective Essay
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The formulation and path taken to articulate the research question.

During my undergrad studies, I took a class on California history. In this class, we were assigned to do a research paper on anything California and having just finished a class in wine I thought I would do something on local wine history. As I was working with the sources provided to me by our special collections staff I noticed that Rancho Cucamonga was once part of the largest grape growers in the country. It was during this research that I thought to myself why did Rancho Cucamonga and San Bernardino County shrink in grape acreage to Napa, Sonoma and Temecula? Because I was already invested in just the state history of wine this question had to be put to one side for the time being. Several years later in my graduate studies I now had an opportunity to revisit this question.

Special collections provided me with many sources that gave me leads towards external sources such as the USDA's National Agricultural Statistic Service. Our collection had a couple volumes that are not available online from the late 40s and 50s and 60s. From these sources, I contacted the department of agriculture after visiting their website that had only published grape data from 1990s until present. The USDA had records that went as far back as 1970s and published those records online not long after. The thing about grape acreage in the USDA records was they provided information by county. To get a better idea of what grape acreage was like or at least the percentage of land used by the city of Rancho Cucamonga for agriculture over the 50 years I had to go directly to city hall to locate the General Plan. One source really

helped tell the story of Rancho Cucamonga and the decline in wine acreage was the oral history of the Filippi family winery.

The most frustrating part of doing this research had a lot more to do with sources that I had found at city hall. The General Plans published show the changes in the methods used to track how city land was being used had changed over time with the introduction of Global Information. I had to make corrections in some of the actual data that from cities happened to mix into different categories and I had to change the newer GIS information to match up closer to the older data.

When it really comes down to it the beginning of my research started here at our special collections finding grape acreage information, books, oral biographies and new statistical information that was only recently published, because of my efforts to go beyond to contact the USDA. Our special collections have so much to offer and it's because of our sources that allowed me to have a better vision of what my paper would turn out to be. When I was missing something, I knew where this information was, I knew what it contained and this isn't a skill you can get overnight. This is the real experience, reporting, information gathering, visualization and even with all this I know this paper isn't perfect because there were so many sources for me to use I would have probably lost focus on the narrative; however, I know this is a paper I am very proud of and will return to and submit for historical review. This paper would not have been possible without the help of our Special Collections and library staff.