

ABSTRACT

MINNIE ESHLEMAN SHERMAN: AGRICULTURAL PIONEER, SOCIAL ACTIVIST, CITY MOTHER

This thesis describes the life and work of Minnie Eshleman Sherman, one of Fresno's earliest and most significant woman agricultural and civic leaders. While brief summaries and short sketches of Minnie Eshleman Sherman have appeared in local histories, no study has provided an in-depth look at her historical significance. One of the goals of this study is to provide a complete as possible look at her life and work. Historians have also emphasized Sherman's role in agriculture while neglecting her civic work, which arguably was a large part of her life and legacy. Sherman, it is argued, was not only an agricultural pioneer but also the leading voice for a socially more aware Fresno, fighting for beautification projects, children's welfare, and aid to the poor. No other Fresno woman up to this time had her vision or lasting legacy.

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