

Black Historian Bill Petty at Guinda's Logan Cemetery on the Summit today.

Clarence Van Hook hopes to eventually use his part of the old Rancho Canada de Capay land grant as a multi-cultural retreat, celebrating the diversity in the valley, especially the unique Black American Enclave represented by the Guinda area. The old Ribbs ranch cuts across Highway 16 to Cache Creek and claims one of the oldest barns in Capay Valley.



HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT AFRICAN-AMERICAN ENCLAVE IN THE VALLEY

Before statehood and even after, since California was a free state, there are enclaves throughout with sizable early pioneers of African Descent. One such area is the Guinda area in the Capay Valley. Local Black Historian Bill Petty explains that the Guinda area has a rich history of being well integrated from the beginning of early settlements. Many of the blacks settling in the area were never slaves, while others were freed after settling in the area. One of the most common names was Logan, with many descendants still in the area today. Another valley pioneer of interest Basil Campbell. Given his freedom by the Stephens family, he went on to buy available sections of land that eventually led to his being the largest black landowner in the area of the Dunnigan Hills between Hungry Hollow and Zamora. And in the Capay Valley, the summit or the hill had a mixture of races, all attending the local school and some of them joining in marriage. Some interviewees considered poverty the early commonality. Early Summit family names included: Logan, Hayes, Simpson,

Longrus, Benham, and Zacker; some White, some Black. The 1896 census showed close to 25 school-aged children in the area, a figure to remained constant into the 1900s. August Simpson became a Guinda barber, becoming the first Summit resident to work down in a valley business.

Summit School

As the community on the summit grew, so did their concern for the education of their children. Albertine DuBois had been providing informal schooling in the early 1890s. The Pace family had a sheep ranch in the East Side hills and the neighbors met at his sheep camp by a big spring, where students had been taught by Mrs. DuBois, and discussed a proper

Below, Summit School - postcard photo courtesy of Jeannette Molson, inherited from her mother, Addie Mae (Logan) Molson, who grew up on the Summit.



The Summit School: 1895 to 1912, is no longer standing.

A Community is Born--and then a Proper Road and School ...

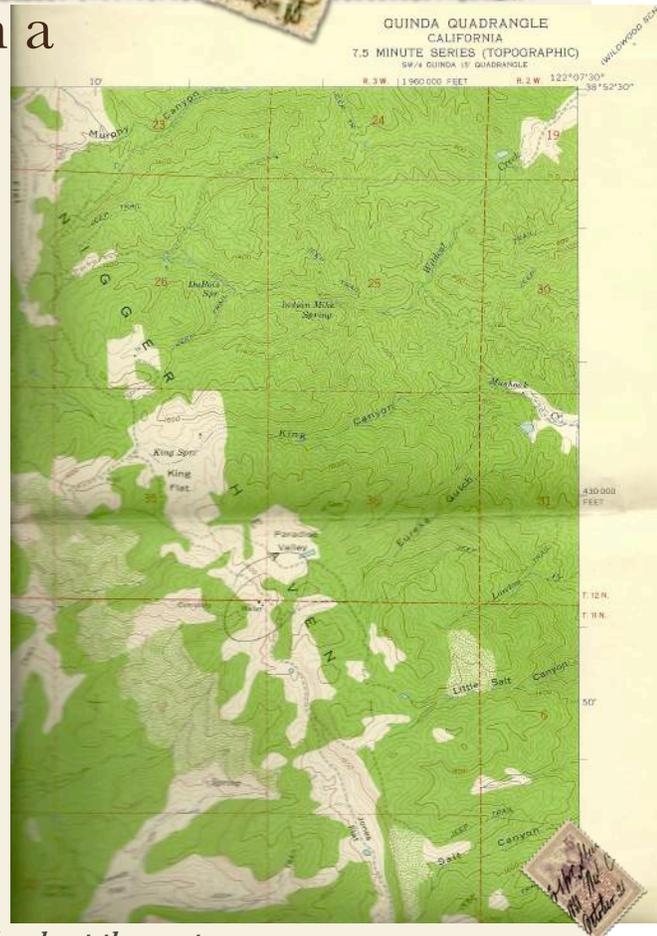
school. After the next census showed enough potential students, the supervisors approved their petition for a school district, called "Summit."

On an acre donated by non-resident Vanaleen Scofield, and with lumber bought with county funds, free local labor created the Summit School "on a slope up from a small flat...and in July 1895 Albertine DuBois came with her two little girls Pearl and Birdie to teach a class of 11, the usual attendance. Along with others, her husband Joe and his brother Bill from Guinda worked on the frame building with its full length porch along the elevated east side."

SIMPSON GRADE

A community up on a hill needs a reliable road. A local summit family, Charles and Harriet "Hattie" Simpson would give them one.

Green Berry Logan's sister-in-law Harriett lived in Oakland. Later Harriett (Hattie) Emily Logan met and married the barber Charles Simpson. They moved to a homestead of 160 acres, filed in 1890, on the summit, near Green Berry Logan's homestead. By 1896 Charles was successful with fruit and nut trees due to a good well dug in 1893. Hattie was a skilled dressmaker, sewing for local Guinda families....Seeing the importance of contact with Guinda, he laid out a road from



the ford at the end of Forest Avenue to switch-back to the 1,200 foot level...at the west side of King Flat. Worked on for several years, it proved its value in the summer of 1894 when it acted as a barrier to a forest fire and was always referred to as the 'Simpson Grade'. Today, Doug Hayes, descendent of another early settler, George Hayes, keeps that road open and passable for all the families to have access to the summit, the Logan Cemetery, the Summit School site, and the various homesteads and properties--at his own expense. He was honored recently at the 9th annual Black History Celebration in Guinda for this generosity.

Much more will be forthcoming on other early families, such as the Hayes family, in future volumes. Many of these families still live in the area and join the tribe descendants and "new comers" (those arriving in the last 50-100 years!) in keeping the valley alive and vibrant.

Not all History is pretty. While it is rightfully considered inappropriate today, there was an area on a summit above the town of Guinda that was once commonly referred to as "Nigger Heaven"--even appearing on county maps as such.

There are some today who claim it was dubbed so by the pioneers who settled there, many of them of African Descent, while still others, direct descendants among them, claim this is a bit of "revisionist history"--perhaps to help focus on just celebrating the history of the racially integrated and cooperative nature of the area, while softening the distastefulness of this blemish. The geological survey maps until the 1970s still carried this place name. At that time, a movement (headed

*up by historian Bill Petty) to have it expunged succeeded in removing it from maps. Since that time it has commonly been either referred to as *The Hill*, *The Heaven* or *The Summit*, but what is most significant is the rich black heritage of this area--and the fact that the summit and school were integrated, as were the other schools throughout the Greater Capay Valley area.*

Guinda now celebrates its unique Black History, as well as that of the nation, the second Saturday each February.