

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

*"For what is the present, after all,
but a growth out of the past."*

— Walt Whitman

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No. 1

JUNE 1991

SOCIETY NOTES

The annual potluck dinner was a success for the hundred or so attendees. After a buffet dinner, officers were elected as follows: President Robert Augusto, Vice President Cathy Hemly, Recording Secretary Joanne Carr, Corresponding Secretary Carol Watson, Treasurer Clarice Jonson and Past President Don Quesenberry. The directors include Leonard Souza, Dorothy Wheeler, Robert James, Marshall Pylman, Jerald Waterworth, Tom Herzog and Jim Dahlberg. Connie King was presented a plaque from the History Society in recognition of her outstanding service to the Dai Loy Museum. She seemed pleasantly surprised. The program, ably coordinated by Cathy Hemly, presented "Growing up in the Delta." Bob Augusto narrated a number of slides of early Rio Vista. His mother had helped with the identification of some of the earlier pictures. Leonard Souza told of the founding and early days of Ryde and its fascinating hotel. Nelson Eddy described early Courtland charmingly including Frank Bates and Agnita Lample. Ping Lee gave a first-hand account of the establishment of Locke and how it was to enter school with not one word of English. Then the fun began as we all tried to guess the locale of the slides--even backwards. Much of the success of the dinner was due to the Committee, skillfully led by Joanne Wiseman abetted by Olga Andreucetti. Gene Wiseman, Don and Jan Quesenberry and Leonard Souza. It is not easy to set up, arrange and decorate the tables, present the food and cleanup. Many thanks for a job well done!

MARCH 18 MEETING SENIOR CENTER-RIO VISTA

Jim Tracy told about the artifacts he has collected while selling tractors in and around Rio Vista over the past 25 years. (See article page 6.) The meeting was chaired by President Robert Augusto, and refreshments were provided by his able helpmate Joy. Many thanks to both of you!

APRIL 27 - JEAN HARVIE COMMUNITY CENTER OPENING

On April 27th the Jean Harvie Senior Community Center was opened in the "brick school house." The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society's History Center located in the Center was open from

11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Leonard Souza and Terry Alcorn presided over the exhibits welcoming and explaining. Jim Dahlberg arranged for the loan of picture boards from the Friends of the Clarksburg Library. Leonard curated a collection of early farm hand tools. Jim Tracy loaned his collection of Indian artifacts and oral histories were available for browsers. Good job fellows!

MAY 20 MEETING HELD AT CLARKSBURG LIBRARY

Cathy Hemly introduced Dick Marshall, manager of Reclamation District 999, who spoke on the Holland Land Company. From its beginning in 1913 as the Netherlands Farm Company through conversion to the Holland Land Company, it was a well-planned and executed project involving thousands of acres and 33 miles of levee. The "west levee" was closed in 1921 and people began to move into the area. Early drawings of the town and houses of Clarksburg were shown. The drawings had been made in Saint Louis for the Holland Land Company. Today the district has about 1500 people in Yolo and Solano counties. (See article page 4.) The evening was arranged and hosted by Marshall and Yvonne Pylman. Bouquets for a pleasant and interesting evening.

DAI LOY

The Dai Loy Museum, in Locke, continues to draw a crowd. The agreement with Clarence Chew of Locke Development has been renewed to continue staffing the museum. A recent visit revealed the old familiar surroundings--a typical Chinese gambling hall in its original setting. A chat with the very pleasant attendant disclosed that many people enjoy their visit and often spend an hour or more studying the exhibits and learning the games. Admission is \$1.00 for adults.

SAVE THESE DATES!

JULY 28 - PEAR FAIR COURTLAND
SEPT 16 - BARBECUE JEAN HARVIE CENTER
NOV 18 - ISLETON
JAN 20 - ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER MTG.

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WE HAVE LOST YOUR 1991 DUES???

ML V CH 3001

NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Recent additions to the library:

Historical Aboriginal Groups of the California Delta Region, W. Egbert Schenck, Berkeley: U.C. Press, 1928.

The Geography and Dialects of the Miwok Indians, by S.A. Barrett.

On the Evidences of the Occupation of Certain Regions by the Miwok Indians, by A.L. Kroeber, Berkeley, U.C. Press, 1908.

The San Joaquin Historical Society established the "Golden Acorn Award" which recognizes any individual, group or business giving outstanding service in furthering the stated goals and programs sponsored by the Society and Museum.

Why a "Golden Acorn?" "The Oak Tree has historically provided an important source of nourishment for the native Californians, who harvested, pounded and leached the acorn before using the acorn meal for food. The Oaks are sentinels, which have stood over the Central Valley for thousands of years, and continue to be important symbols of strength, longevity and durability."

"These values are inherent in the volunteers, who give their time and talents unselfishly to further the goals and programs of the Society and Museum."

"Each year, volunteers provide thousands of hours of devoted service to the operation of the Museum. The Golden Acorn Award is an opportunity to recognize the efforts of these selfless individuals."

The categories of awards are:

- Outstanding individual volunteer
- Group providing outstanding support
- Business benefactor
- Individual or Family benefactor.

In April, the San Joaquin County Historical Society sponsored a day-trip bus tour which linked present and former communities important to its county history and heritage. The tour first proceeded through the communities of Lodi, Woodbridge, Thornton, New Hope, Benson's Ferry, Mokelune City, Acampo, Youngstown, Elliott, Liberty, Dogtown and Clements, with a rest stop at Lockeford.

Following the morning stop, the east side of the county was visited, linking Linden, Bellota, Peters, Farmington, Escalon, and Ripon. After lunch, the southern section of the county was visited: Durham's Ferry, San Joaquin City, Carbona, Tracey, Banta and Manteca.

Following a rest stop, the journey was completed touring central San Joaquin County, traveling through Simms, Five Corners, Turner, Lathrop, French Camp and Stockton to Waterloo. We regretted that not all county communities were visited, nor much of the Delta due to lack of roads.

[The above articles borrowed from the San Joaquin County Historical Society Newsletter.]



RIO VISTA MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Before moving from Willows to Victor, Montana, Dian and Gary Dirr Fouch donated to the Rio Vista Museum many historical artifacts. They include the 1909 Marriage License of Henry J. Dirr and Hollie Thomas, Hollie Thomas's wedding dress which was also worn by her daughter Dorothy Dirr, the deed of the sale of a parcel of land by Joseph and Gertrude Bruning to J.H. and Lydia Thomas for \$600 gold coins, 15 photographs, Henry Dirr's tuxedo and dark suit, 2 muffs, 2 fur capes and money to build a show case for the wedding dress. From Clarksburg, Ellis Nishi donated an old cast iron wood or coal heating stove in excellent condition. It's a small stove 12" in diameter at the top and stands 31" high. Dorothy Marsden of Vallejo donated the first issue of the "Netherlands" published by the students of Rio Vista High School in 1914 and the first three issues of "Hill Crest" published by the students of St. Gertrude's Academy. They are not dated but one article is signed "Gertrude-'06." From Bakersfield, Walt Dunbar gave us his collection of 29 different barbed wires mounted on a 22" by 50" frame.

YOLO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lansford Hastings of the Hastings Cutoff.

Hastings was a man of many parts, projects and adventures. It seems that one of these was as a Mormon agent sent out by Brigham Young, possibly at the direction or at least encouragement of Sam Brannon, to find a new "promised land" for the members of the church. The site Hastings selected was on a beautiful spot overlooking the Carquinez Straits where he built an alcove, hopefully the first of many such structures. The fact that he built out of adobe was not lost on his co-religionists as there was virtually no timber immediately available for further construction. Hastings nevertheless held out hope for development with or without church support, ordering a windmill and ferryboat to give more substance to his enterprise. Incidentally, the ferry provided access to the city across the straits then known as New York of the Pacific later renamed Pittsburg. The spot from which his ferry departed on the north bank became the community of Collinsville. Another reason the church withdrew its support was Fremont's Bear Flag Revolt and the subsequent annexation of California by the United States, which also doomed Hastings' other plan to become president of a separate country of California but that's another story. The adobe has gone through a number of changes and uses. Evidence at one time indicated that it was used for the counterfeiting of coinage and there is a legend about that it was used to hide some sort of treasure. Structurally, it has been altered by, I have heard, panelling, and on the outside it is apparent that someone has added siding giving it a distinctly un-adobe appearance. The site is owned by PG&E and highly fenced to keep out vandals and would-be treasure seekers. The site is just east of Collinsville. I hope to pursue the story of Hastings and Montezuma, the "city that never was."

[Reprint of an article by David Lundquist, President of the Yolo County Historical Society.]

BOOKS OF INTEREST

San Joaquin historian, Olive Davis, has written her third and latest book: From the Ohio to the San Joaquin: A Biography of William Moss (1798-1883). This timely book reflects the changes San Joaquin County is presently undergoing. Lathrop became a bonafide city in 1989, French Camp's farmland has given way to an industrial park, and South Stockton's Weston Ranch anticipates a population of over 20,000. One name stands out as having had title to all this land from the 1860's onward--William S. Moss.

Davis gives Moss his due as being present at a number of historic events. Driving the Golden Spike occurred in Promotory, Utah; but the final leg of the transcontinental railroad crossed over the San Joaquin river on William Moss' land. The Hearst empire built the San Francisco Examiner. Senator George Hearst and his son, Randolph, are major figures in twentieth century California history, but Moss was the founder of the famous newspaper.

Born in Virginia, Moss rose from operating a flatboat on the Ohio River in the 1820's to building railroads in the 1850's in the Chicago-Peoria area. In 1861 Moss (at age 63) led a wagon train to Stockton. Locally, Mossdale Wye and Moss Landing are but a few reminders of this person's influence in San Joaquin County.

[Review from the San Joaquin County Historical Society.]

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST

* Headlands: The Marin Coast at the Golden Gate. Miles DeCoster. 1989, Univ. of New Mexico Press. \$19.95 Pprbk.

* Picturing California: A Century of Photographic Genius. Therese Heyman, editor. 1989, San Francisco Chronicle Books. \$19.95 Ppr.

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST (continued)

* Henry J. Kaiser: Builder in the Modern American West. 1989, Univ. of Texas Press, Austin. \$29.95.

* Indians of California, the Changing Image. James J. Rawls. \$18.50 Ppr.

* If the Walls Could Talk: Colusa's Architectural Heritage. Jane Foster Carter. City of Colusa. \$40.00.

* The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California 1826-27. George R. Brooks, ed. Univ. Nebraska Press, 1989. \$8.50 pr.

* Place Names of the Sierra Nevada. Peter Browning. \$6.95 Ppr.

* The Earth Is Our Mother: A Guide to the Indians of California, Their Local and Historic Sites. Dolan Eargle. Trees Co. Press. \$12.95 Ppr.

* California Indians, An Illustrated Guide. George Emanuels. Diablo Books. \$14.95 Ppr.

Sweet Bamboo: A Saga of a Chinese-American Family. Louise L. Larson. Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. \$12.95 Ppr.

Ho for California: Pioneer Women and Their Quilts. Jean R. Lowery. E.P. Dutton. \$32.50.

* Loren Nicholson's Old California Picture Postcards: A Historic Journey Along California's Central Coast. Loren Nicholson. California Heritage Publishing Associates. \$12.95 Ppr.

* Available in Sacramento City/County Libraries.

Asian America

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"Drawing upon archival records and previous studies of Chinese and Japanese in the U.S., Daniels has written a broad and rich synthesis encompassing the history of these two groups. . . . He has consciously tried to avoid writing what he terms 'negative history,' that is, a history of his subjects as pariahs and victims. Instead, he has focused on their patterns of community and traced the threads of change and continuity that touched them through time. In the process, he has embarked upon a bold, refreshing, and thoughtful evaluation of the existing writing and historiography concerning Chinese and Japanese Americans. . . . Daniels's treatment of Chinese and Japanese Americans is likely to be the standard work on the topic for some years to come."—*Choice*

"Roger Daniels is one of the premier historians dedicated to the field of Asian-American studies. . . . In this, his latest book, he interprets the political and socio-

economic history of America's two pioneer Asian-American groups: the Chinese and the Japanese. He provides a fine overview, illuminating the history of these two groups from 1850 to 1980, a span of 130 years in America. . . . *Asian America* should be in the library of everyone interested in the field of American ethnic groups. Daniels' command of the material makes for a book deserving of our praise."—*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*

"Massively researched and eminently readable."—*Washington Post Book World*

Winner of the 1988 Outstanding Book Award of the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights in the United States

August. 402 pp., illus., bibliog., index, 6" x 9",
LC 88-5643
(Orig. pub. 1989)
Paper, ISBN 0-295-97018-9 \$17.50
Cloth, ISBN 0-295-96669-6, \$30.00*

R D TRIPLE 9

(The Holland Land Company)

The following is based on information gathered at the presentation by Dick Marshall at the May SRDHS meeting.

The United States government claimed the unclaimed land (tidelands, etc.) from the states and then returned it--with conditions--in the Swampland Act of 1858. In 1868 the California Legislature enacted the Reclamation Act. This was, in part, to combat the debris sent down the rivers from mining operations. Reclamation was later turned over to the counties. The reclamation districts are numbered as organized--#1 is down near Sherman Island where the Chinese built peat levees.

Dr. Ryer of San Francisco became interested in reclamation and studied the Netherland polders. His descendants still own over half of Ryer Island.

The Tidelands Reclamation Company developed many types of dredgers: bucket-ladder (The reason for broad levees in Pierson District. It pumped mud through pipes from dredger to levee); suction dredger, which clogged too easily; and in 1882, the clamshell dredger, most important and widely used.

One of Tidelands engineers, Thomas Williams, was active in the development of Grand Island (not popular because of one acre-one vote principle). David Bixler and Thomas Williams became partners and for \$600,000 bought the Yolo Basin. These lands were sold for \$1 an acre to anyone who would reclaim them and thereby protect the area from flooding caused by the rivers and sloughs filled with mining debris.

August 10, 1913 Reclamation District 999 was formed. In 1914, the Netherlands Farm Company began the reclamation of many thousands of acres which would involve 33 miles of levee and moving 10 million cubic yards of soil (75,000-150,000 could be moved in one month.) This company was wealthy, well-planned and had many excellent engineers. Land sales were to begin in 1915. Plans were interrupted by financial reverses and the company reorganized as the Holland Land Company with many of the same people. One of the leaders was Guy Frazier, an engineer.

The Holland Land Company promoted excursions from San Francisco to sell land between 1916 and 1918. There are 1919 plans for the town of Clarksburg, including streets, stores, a hotel, etal. Homes were to be sold and they were planned by St. Louis architects right down to the vegetable gardens. Land throughout the District was \$100 to \$175 an acre. The west levee was closed in 1921. It was 15 miles long from Minor Slough to West Sacramento along the ship canal.

Many families moved to the area in the early 1920's and they and their descendants are there today in the 1990's.

The By-Laws of Reclamation District 999 are dated August 1913 and it has operated ever since. After the 1914 Water Resources Act, rights changed so these dates are very important today. The men involved in the signing were B.P. Lillenthal, Vice-President, Wm. Herlitz, Secretary, F.T. King, P.A. Krull, J.H. Glide, F.F. Cooper, T.S. Glide, W.W. Bassett, Thomas H. Williams and Lewis Cowgill as Trustee for Frank Hansford Johnson.

RICH DELTA LAND

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PROPERLY CULTIVATED THIS LAND WILL PAY FOR ITSELF FROM THE SALE OF CROPS IN FROM SIX TO SEVEN YEARS.

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References: Tenants on the property; Italian-American Bank and Crocker National Bank, San Francisco, Calif.

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NEW CENTER

On Saturday, April 27, Nancy Kaiser of Sacramento Parks and Recreation, orchestrated a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the Jean Harvie Senior and Community Center. The dedication was held in the auditorium and included many of the people involved in this lengthy and demanding project. Some of the participants were Supervisor Toby Johnson, Kathy Baranek, Cathy Hemly, Carole Schauer and Jean Harvie. These people did a major job of planning and financing over a period of years. Money was put into the project from the Senior Citizen Bond Act, the County Hotel/Motel Tax and the California Historical Preservation Fund. The reason the California State Historical Preservation Fund contributed so heavily to the restoration is that the building is an architectural gem.

Built in 1924-26 and designed by the distinguished California School architect, W.H. Weeks, it was first used for graduation exercises in 1926. The building is noted as one of the best examples of its type of architecture. At the 1926 dedication ceremony, Joe Brooks, proprietor of the Walnut Grove Hotel, donated the pine tree which stands in the front yard and 8th grade student, William Barry, planted the seedling.

The Southern Pacific locomotives watered near the back of the school yard. Students tended a vegetable garden on the south side and weeded for Physical Education classes.

The Delta Progress club met at the school and produced its renowned comedy skits, written and directed by Russell Graham, Sr., in the auditorium to raise funds for school lunches for the underprivileged and for other civic needs. The auditorium was also used by the Walnut Grove Dancing Club, for piano recitals played by students of Ada Barry and by other community groups. In 1942, during World War II, the school children were transferred to the newer Oriental School which accommodated more children (the present Walnut Grove Elementary School). During the war, the "Brick

School," as it was called, was used by various rationing boards and other wartime services. After the war it housed kindergarten through grades 3 and 4. It was later named in honor of the long-time teacher and principal, Miss Jean Harvie. It was last used as a school in 1976 when it was closed retroactively as a result of enforcement of the Field Act result of enforcement of the Field Act which required all schools built before 1930 to be made earthquake sound or be abandoned.

The adjacent "Yellow Schoolhouse," which was built in 1905, once stood level with the top of the old lower levee roughly opposite the front door of the "Brick School" on land deeded by the Sharp Estate. When the "Brick School" was built, the "Yellow Schoolhouse" was moved to its present site. The deed between the school trustees and Mrs. Clarabelle Lord, a Sharp heiress, stipulated that the school be surrounded by a six foot fence and that the fence must be whitewashed. In total, 3.768 acres were ultimately deeded with the added stipulation that the acreage revert to the Sharp Estate if not used for a school.

In 1905, the School Trustees were J.L. Kercheval, John S. Brown and R.F. Thisby. Twenty years later Brown was still a trustee and Jesse Wise was the other trustee.

Inside the schoolhouse, in the center of the room, a four foot high pot-bellied stove provided heat. In the early 1920's, playing inside during inclement weather, several children were badly burned when they fell against the stove. In later years the building was used as a manual arts room, then a "Boy Scout" room and lastly by "Head Start." At one time the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society hoped to renovate it as its headquarters and museum but was thwarted when its grant application was rejected.

The green two-room building adjacent was used for the migrant farm workers' children during the months the families resided in the district.

+++++

ASK A FRIEND TO JOIN

Do you know someone, family or friend, who would enjoy hearing about and supporting the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society? It's fun to be part of preserving and sharing our local history.

- Regular \$6.00
- Family \$12.00
- Sustaining \$20.00
- Patron \$50.00
- Life \$150.00

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 P.O. Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

INDIANS OF THE DELTA

The following is a resume of the meeting in Rio Vista in March when Jim Tracy shared his knowledge and artifacts dealing with the California Indians in the Delta area (mostly Miwok and Nisenan.)

There are various estimates of the number of Indians in California before the arrival of Europeans. They range from 150,000 to 600,000. The three periods are Early Horizon, Middle Horizon and Late Horizon. These periods cover from 15,000 to 1,200 years ago.

The artifacts passed around at the meeting included glass beads from Hudson Bay trappers in French Camp (1812) and Russian glass beads traded from Fort Ross.

Indian mounds are located at the Ryer ferry, under the Del Rio Hotel in Isleton, at the grain elevator, under the Jean Harvie School and the other locations throughout the delta.

Other artifacts that were circulated were jewelry (ear or nose plugs), obsidian knife, spear and arrowheads. (Bows were a late introduction to this area 800-1000 years ago). Asphalt (from oil spills) was used as glue by the Indians.

Cooking rocks were made from clay. The Late Horizon Indians used rocks that fit the purpose, i.e., pestles. Early Horizon formed rocks for the purpose.

There were fish net weights from Scribner's bend, sun-dried tobacco, crude pipes, charm stones, throwing stick, (games? spear?), whirl stones to start a fire, alabaster charm stones from Thornton 5-10,000 years ago (traded from coast? on coast?) and brown awls--drills needles.

California Indians did not make effigies or statues. They are believed to have been about 5'5" with a husky build and strong grip. The Early Horizon may have been 6 feet. Their language was of the Patwin tongue. In 1833, malaria, brought in by trappers, wiped out the Indians in the delta. They made and used reed boats, dugouts and elk horn tools.

COMING UP

DON'T miss Peter Leung's exhibit "One day one dollar," the Chinese in the Delta. The exhibit is located in the Sacramento History Museum at 101 I Street -- until June 30.

DO celebrate Sacramento's Birthday, August 10 at Sutter's Fort.

DO attend the Pear Fair Historical exhibit, July 28, Courtland.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor Kathleen Hutchinson
Co-Editor Carol Watson
Typist Judy Johnson

IN MEMORIAM

The following members of SRDHS will be sorely missed:

THEODORE SEAMONS
CLAUDINE FRIEDERS
MARIE LEARY



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