

# Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

“For what is the present, after all, but a growth out of the past.” – Walt Whitman

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 37, NUMBER 1

JUNE 2017

### President's Notes

I hope that all of you successfully navigated this month's heatwave! Today is only the second day of summer and I, for one, am really looking forward to a “cooling” trend. It is difficult to get motivated with day after day of 100+ degrees ....even the pool isn't refreshing.

First, I would first like to congratulate outgoing President, Barbara Damion, for her successful tenure. She did a great job and is very dedicated to our organization. Barbara is happily continuing on as Corresponding Secretary.

The Board has seen significant turnover with the exit of longtime members; Kathleen Hutchinson, Doris Pylman, Phil Pezzaglia, and the loss of Bobbie Collier. Kathleen will continue to write the wonderful historic stories that grace our newsletters and the Society is most appreciative of her hard work. All of these board members served faithfully, some for many years, and all members should celebrate their contributions!

With loss, there is renewal, as four new members joined the board. They are:

Maryellen Dabaghian (Vice President). Maryellen is an avid historian, writer, and food expert. Maryellen has also volunteered to staff the Oral History position on the board.

Jack Carmany, a Sacramento resident who grew up in Walnut Grove, his family living in what is now the van Loben Sels house on River Road.

Richard Marshall, a longtime farmer/resident from Clarksburg.

Connie Salzwedel, a Walnut Grove resident. Connie is volunteering her time in the SRDHS Resource Center, much appreciated by Esther.

Activities since our December newsletter include; a wonderful Christmas Party/Board Meeting at the beautiful house of board member Linda van Loben Sels. Their historic house reflects the elegant homes that were built all along the river; the January Potluck and General Meeting, and two general meetings that were all well attended. The May general meeting was held at the museum in Mickle Grove. Members who attended were treated to a very interesting tour of the museum that holds many historical artifacts from the surrounding Native American Tribes and the founders of modern day Stockton. All members are encouraged to visit this exceptional museum.

I continue to marvel at the quality of programs that Tom Herzog (Program Coordinator) schedules for our general meetings. The upcoming year should be no exception!

We are always looking for new speakers for our general meetings and encourage members to make suggestions. To enhance these great programs, the SRDHS purchased both a new projector and video camera to record our presentations.

The Society has several new initiatives that are currently moving forward. We hope members will be interested in participating in both of them.

The first item involves the republishing of the Pear Cookbook, originally compiled by Barbara Dahlberg. Maryellen and Tom are working with Barbara on the editing and should have the cookbook printed in time for sale at our table at the Pear Fair, in Courtland, on July 30<sup>th</sup>.

In March, the Board developed a resolution that declares the last full week of September to be designated “Sacramento River Delta History Week”. We are joined with declarations by many other local historical societies. This idea was coordinated by the Linda Mae Mahon Lema Foundation of Wilton. There will be a LMML Foundation dinner/performance held in Hood, on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The performance highlights a local family and includes riverboats, songs, and stories that reflect their oral history. The Foundation will be joining us at our table at the Pear Fair to distribute information about the event.

In closing, I encourage all members attend our general meetings, promote our history to young people, and if you are so inclined, volunteer to assist board members at the Pear Fair. Please call me or email if you are interested.

John Stutz, President  
530-219-4420  
jstutz@ix.netcom.com



**45th Annual July 30, 2017**

NL VOL 37 #001 JUNE 2017

## Letters from Bill Hutchinson, Sr.

Presented by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

With the finish of the asparagus season, we publish another letter from Wm. N.L. Hutchinson's 1938 informative inspection trip east for the Tyler-Pac growers of Walnut Grove

Chicago, Illinois.  
May 16, 1938.

California Asparagus Growers Association,  
Walnut Grove, California

Since I wrote you my last letter from Pittsburgh I have traveled through Michigan and am in Chicago at the present time, and leaving for Southern Illinois today.

I went through the asparagus fields in Michigan and found that they have about 1500 acres in the state, and practically all of it is canned. The day I came through they had a frost and none of the canners were working and it did not look like they would be canning for several days. The asparagus was frozen right down to the ground. However, I think I got all the information necessary.

The cost of the land runs from \$60 to \$100 an acre, and the price of the land varies with the location; whether it is on the highway or close to some city. They all plant the Mary Washington asparagus and the holdings are all in small acreages - 2, 3, 4 and 5 acres. The life of the beds is about the same as in other districts, although I found one canner who said he was receiving asparagus from a bed that produced good asparagus and was 25 years old. The cutting is done by the owner himself or Pollock's, and the wage that they are paid in the field is 20¢ for women and 25¢ for men per hour. In the packing plants they pay 30¢ for women and 40¢ for men. They figure their season was three weeks early this year but they expect to go on canning until July 1st. They started canning this year on April 28th.

The price that the canner pays for the asparagus is 50¢ a lb. field run, for any length that the grower wishes to deliver. I talked to one grower and he went out in the field with me and showed me how he cut it. Some of the spears are 10" long,

some 4" long, but the canner takes them as is, and there are no deductions made for butts, hulls or anything else. The canner furnishes boxes and the grower hauls them to the factory.

In the cannery, the canner empties this asparagus in large tanks of water, then when he has enough asparagus to run on he has big pitch forks and he lifts this asparagus out of the tanks of water and puts them on a conveyor belt, along which girls stand and pick up the stalks of asparagus and break off the white portion of the butt. They call this process "snapping". Then the asparagus continues on the belt and goes through a cutter which is made to cut beans, but will work very well on asparagus, and the asparagus is put in the can. Tips center cuts and the whole works all go in the same can. Now this is the only style of pack which they put up in the state of Michigan, and seems to be the only pack that they are interested in. If they do not think the asparagus comes up to a good standard, like the day I was in the plant and they had some asparagus a little frozen., they put it up under another label but the same method of packing is used. They pack two size cans, #300 and #10, and this canner told me the sale price was \$1.55 per dozen on his #300 and \$8.75 per dozen on #10. They claim they get a yield of from 4000 to 5000 pounds per acre, the 5000 lb. yield being above the normal. They fertilize with manure, using no commercial fertilizer. One canner told me he only bought asparagus from growers who had a large number of cows because he felt sure if he had cows he had manure for his asparagus and correspondingly good asparagus. I bought a case of asparagus in Paw Paw and expressed it to you.

They do not seem to think that the acreage is increasing very much and I could not see many young plantings.

The small amount of asparagus which they ship to the market is put in a crate, laying flat on its side, field-run sizes, with no moss or paper, and sent to the market in this form. The crate is very similar in size to our Campbell lug. However, about the only time they send

asparagus to the market is when the canner gets stuck and cannot receive it all, and they say a few days at the start of the season before the canner has enough to run on. However, the canner will take small amounts of the asparagus and dump into large vats of water and keeps them there two or three days until he gets enough to run on. Some growers have 5 years contracts signed this year at the prices mentioned above.

The methods of preparing the ground is the same in all those districts. Some growers have small tractors and most of them do their cultivating with mules. The asparagus looked very good as to size, but I ate some in Benton Harbor for lunch which I thought was very poor, in fact very little asparagus taste to it, and I think you will find the cans I sent you, you will not enjoy the asparagus very much.

Wm. N. L. Hutchinson

\*\*\*\*\*

**Article from Sacramento History  
Journal  
2006**

**REPORTING THE FRUIT AND  
GRAIN TRADE**

"The *Capital City* left Sacramento this afternoon for down-river points with 8,000 cases of canned asparagus, a portion of this year's crop."

*Sacramento Bee*, Saturday, May 27, 1911

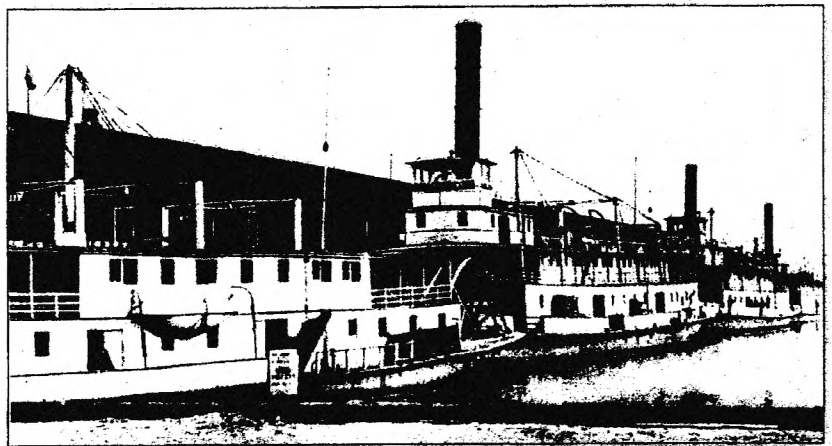
"A large amount of shook for fruit boxes is being carried down the river by steamers at the present time preparatory to the opening of the fruit season. The Southern Pacific steamer *Cherokee* carried its first load yesterday, and the Southern Pacific steamer *Fruto* has been carrying a load a day. The *Isleton* and the *Pride of the River*, belonging to the California Transportation Company, have been handling about three or four tons daily."

*Sacramento Bee*, Saturday, June 14, 1913

"The barley movement has commenced in earnest off the Sacramento River and yesterday two big barges of the Sacramento Transportation Company arrived at this city bound for the bay with loads of barley. . . Big shipments of pears for the canneries are reaching the City Wharf with the decline of the shipments of fresh fruits to the East. The steamer *Isleton* to-day brought between 500 and 600 boxes for the new Libby, McNeil & Libby Plant and the steamer *Valletta* brought several hundred boxes from up-river points for the Central California Cannery."

*Sacramento Bee*, Monday, July 28, 1913

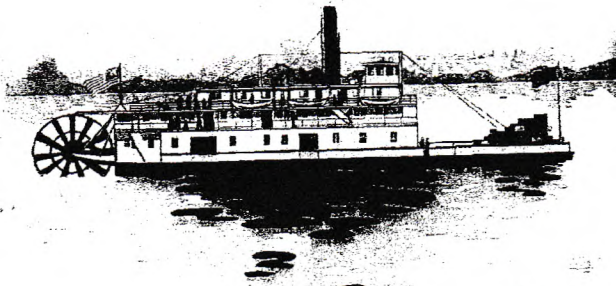
"The Southern Pacific to-day put on a special 'fruit boat,' the *Cherokee* for the accommodation of fruit growers along the Sacramento River. The Southern Pacific wharf resembled a small-sized lumber yard to-day, with about fifteen car loads of shook being transferred into the hold of the *Cherokee*. . . The *Cherokee's* cargo was designated for Steamboat Slough for the California Fruit Exchange. The steamer will make regular trips for several weeks, carrying nothing but shook, nails, paper, etc., for the fruit growers. . . The first boat load of shook which the Southern Pacific has moved this season left Sacramento Saturday. It was consigned to James Elliott, large fruit grower near Courtland, from the Pioneer Fruit Company."



*River steamers along the Jackson Street wharf in San Francisco, c. 1880.*

Courtesy Bill Stritzel

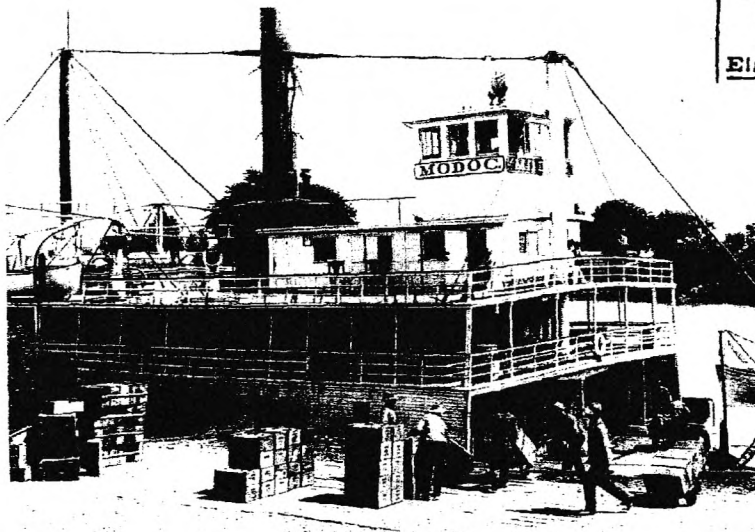
# SACRAMENTO RIVER SACRAMENTO RIVER



DISTRIBUTED BY THE PECK-JUDAH CO  
SAN FRANCISCO LOS ANGELES PORTLAND-EC

## SOUTHERN PACIFIC SOUTHERN PACIFIC

*This Southern Pacific timetable from 1909 features an illustration of the steamer Navajo.  
Courtesy Bill Stritzel*



### California Transportat'n Co

Freight and Passenger Steamers

#### PRIDE OF THE RIVER

—and—

#### CAPITAL CITY

Sacramento and San Francisco Daily,  
Sunday Excepted.

Leave Sacramento: Front and M Streets,  
New City Wharf, 5:00 p. m.

Leave San Francisco, Pier No. 5,  
Jackson Street, at 5 p. m.

Fare \$1.50. Berth 50 cents.

J. M. CREW, Agent.

Telephone Main 307.



### STEAMER NAVAJO

leaves foot of K Street daily, except Sunday, at 9 p. m. No stops en route, arriving San Francisco 5 a. m. Fare \$1.50. Berth 50c.

### STEAMERS

### MODOC and APACHE

leave 10:30 a. m. daily, except Sunday, stopping at all intermediate points. Arrive San Francisco 11:30 p. m. Fare \$1.50. Berth 50 cents.

### Southern Pacific Netherlands Route

Eighth and K Sts. Steamer Lndg.

*Courtesy Bill Stritzel*

*Considering the daily routine of steamers docking at river landing sites, it is surprising that few photographers captured the event. Here, in a classic image of Sacramento River life of the early 1900s, the Southern Pacific's Modoc receives a shipment of cantaloupes with Chinese farm workers performing the labor.*

SACRAMENTO ARCHIVES & MUSEUM

COLLECTION CENTER

Eugene Hepting Collection

1985/24/3868

**Spelling Correction** in December 2016 newsletter page 4:  
Should be:  
Advertisements Found in Old La "Perita"  
Yearbooks"

Here is another advertisement:

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS:  
PRES. DAN. FRENCH  
W. J. DEWITT, Vice-Pres. and Mgr.  
H. E. HARRIS, Secretary  
WILLIAM E. GREENE, Treasurer  
JAMES H. HORT, CHAS. E. BRYAN, CLERK  
A. BELMONT, A. J. VAN VORSTEL, G. W. LOCKE.

Sacramento, Sept. 1st., 1896

C. R. LOWES, Sutter Creek, Al. Telephone No. 10

To the Capital Telephone and Telegraph Company, Inc.  
CENTRAL EXCHANGE, 918 1/2 FIFTH STREET.

For Rental of Telephone and Lines and Service during month  
ending Sept. 30th., 1896 3 50

For Territorial Switching (Tickets attached)

For Messenger Service

Received Payment for the Company.  
W. Wallace

*George W. Locke was a director for the Capital Tel & Tel*

### William T. Sherman

Civil War General William T. Sherman spent time in California from 1846-1861. A considerable amount of this time was spent at the Benicia Arsenal. In 1849 as a lieutenant not long out of West Point, he was appointed to survey some of the riverine area around Benicia, surveying at least as far as Sherman Island on which his named was affixed.

*"Recollections of California 1846-1861" by Wm T. Sherman*

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### Books of Interest

*"Canton Footprints: Sacramento's Chinese Legacy"*  
by Philip P. Choy (2007)

"Land As Far As The Eye Can See: Portuguese in the Old West." By Donald Warrin and Geoffrey Gomes

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### Sturgeon: Living Fossils

These living fossils virtually unchanged from the Jurassic period dating back more than 70 million years, live to be 100 years of age and grow to 20 feet in length. They also migrate up stream to Red Bluff to spawn in the Spring and suck in food from the bottom of the waterways. They prowl all the waters of the Delta.

The white sturgeon is the largest fresh-water fish in North America. It is sometimes called the Columbia River, Sacramento, or Pacific sturgeon. It reaches a length of 20 feet and a weight Of 1,000 pounds. One specimen weighed 1,900 pounds.

Green sturgeon reach a length of seven feet and a weight of 350 pounds. In the Sacramento-San Joaquin estuary they are much less common than white sturgeon; however, they are apparently the only sturgeon in the larger rivers of northwestern California. Tagging studies have demonstrated that some green sturgeon travel long distances at sea. Individuals tagged in San Pablo Bay and in the Klamath have been recaptured in Oregon and Washington river and bays.

Sturgeons grow slowly and live for many years, some reaching 100 years of age.

When feeding, they root in the mud with their snouts, feeling around with their sensitive whiskers. When food is located the sturgeon protrudes its mouth and sucks the food up from the bottom. There must be a vacuum cleaner action, for rocks, twigs, and other odd items have also been found in its stomach.

**NEW REVISED “PEAR COOKBOOK”**

The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society and the Pear Fair Committee are reproducing and revising the Barbara Dahlberg cookbook produced in the 1960s containing Pear Recipes from many local residents and organizations of the Delta. It will be introduced and available at the Pear Fair on July 30<sup>th</sup>. It is a one of a kind, as very few pear cookbooks have been produced nationally.

**RESOURCE CENTER NEWS**

Thank you for your historical donations to our resource center! We are recording each item in our data base – many collections are done, but many still need to be entered. **Would you like to help?** We work almost every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and need people to enter data (it’s already handwritten and just needs to be entered into the computer.) Please call Esther at 777-2227 to make sure she will be there and join the fun.

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**INFORMATION**

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society has a “new and revised” web site. Type in [srdhs.org](http://srdhs.org) to view and enjoy the information. If you wish to email the resource center, the email address is [srdhs@riverdeltawireless.com](mailto:srdhs@riverdeltawireless.com) however we have been having difficulties with the connectivity at the center.

**SRDHS 2017 SCHEDULE**

July/August.....Summer Break  
 September 19.....General Meeting  
 October 17.....Board Meeting  
 November 21.....General Meeting  
 December.....Board Meeting  
 December Newsletter  
 January 16, 2018.....Annual Potluck

**MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

We would like to thank all those who made memorial contributions to the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Christopher & Haley Chan from Courtland  
 Dennis & JoAn Clifford from Walnut Grove  
 Scott & Katie Heringer from Courtland  
 J. L. Aldrich Ranch from San Rafael

**DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THIS GREAT PUBLICATION???**

*Then make sure you pay your 2017 dues – Use this form or one of our handy dues envelopes*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- I’m paying Annual dues for the following year(s):  
 2017     2018     Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$25.00 a year for Annual Membership
- I’ve enclosed \$150 to become a Lifetime Member
- I’d like to register as an Honorary Member – Free to those members 80 years and older

Please mail this form with a check payable to SRDHS to:

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

**NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Editor.....Kathleen Hutchinson  
 Design/Layout.....Esther Koopman

\*The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society publishes the Sacramento River Delta Society Newsletter twice a year.

## NEW "2018" SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR AVAILABLE AT PEAR FAIR OR AFTER AUGUST 1st

Here is a preview of the cover of the delightful 2018 Calendar representing more Pear Labels from Jim Dahlberg's Collection. Each month shows a different Pear Label that has not been published before from his wonderful collection.



The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society's "Pear Label" Calendar for 2018 may be purchased at the Courtland Pear Fair July 30<sup>th</sup> or at the Resource Center and at the Society Meetings after August 1st. You may also purchase the calendar by filling out the form below and mailing it with your check to:

SRDHS  
P O Box 293  
Walnut Grove, CA 95695

The price for each 2018 calendar is \$15.00 plus postage  
2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 calendar price is \$10 each plus postage

If you wish to have the calendar(s) mailed please add the following postage:

1 Calendar \$2.25 postage

2 Calendars \$3.50 postage

3 - 6 calendars \$6.65 for priority mail (2 to 3 day delivery)

### Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Calendar Order Form

Please send \_\_\_\_\_ 2018 calendars @ \$15 per calendar

\_\_2012 \_\_2013 \_\_2014 \_\_2015 \_\_2016 \_\_2017 calendars @ \$10 per calendar

Enclosed is payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (include postage in total)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_