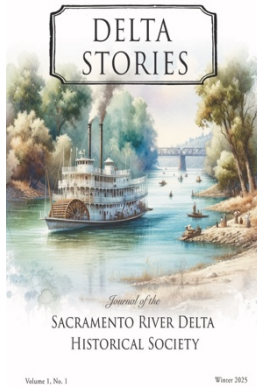


SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Join us **December 7, 2024**, at the historic **Ryde Hotel**, from **2 pm to 4 pm** for the launch of *Delta Stories*, the official journal of the *Sacramento River Delta Historical Society*. Hear stories, honor our wonderful donors and share in holiday cheer.

As autumn settles in and the holiday season approaches, many of us look forward to gathering with family and friends, savoring familiar traditions, and celebrating the joys of the season. Here in the Delta, our holidays reflect the rich cultural diversity that has shaped our community, bringing unique traditions, foods, and celebrations that enrich our shared heritage. Each tradition weaves a unique thread into the tapestry of Delta life, connecting us through shared customs, flavors, and memories.

2024 brought new traditions. We proudly awarded Giusti's Place and the Morais Family "The Delta" Award, honoring their long-standing contributions to our region's cultural fabric. We also introduced new, interactive programs that brought history alive in ways that resonated deeply with members and visitors alike. Programs like our *Historic Show and Tell*, *The Artists of the Delta*, *Movies of the Delta*, and *Hunting and Fishing of the Delta*, featured our members and friends sharing their personal stories and connected us in new and exciting ways.

Almost a year in the making, *Delta Stories*, our new history journal, launches on **December 7** at the **Ryde Hotel**, which will be decked out in its holiday finest. The festivities begin at 2 pm and include readings from the publication, a tribute to our incredible donors, plus desserts and holiday cheer. This publication, along with the commemorative booklet celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Courtland Pear Fair, reflects our commitment to capturing and celebrating the vibrant, complex heritage of the Delta.

We've seen some changes on our board as well, with **Esther Koopman** and **David Stuart** stepping down after years of dedicated service. We are grateful for their many contributions and warmly welcome **Ron Squaglia**, whose insights and enthusiasm will be instrumental as we look to 2025 and beyond. As we prepare for the new year, we're excited to introduce new day programs—often on Saturdays—that will make it easier for everyone to participate.

Our **Resource Center** is set to be reimagined as a vibrant hub for learning and connection, and we look forward to strengthening ties with other Delta historical societies and community

nonprofits. Together, we aim to celebrate our community's past while fostering a spirit of collaboration and unity that will carry us into the future. In this season of gratitude, let's take a moment to honor the stories, traditions, and communities that make our Delta home so unique. As we move into 2025, we hope you'll join us in building on these accomplishments, share in new adventures, and create lasting memories. Thank you for being part of our journey.

Delta Stories, Journal of the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society



Almost a year in the making *Delta Stories*, the official journal of the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society will be available for sale soon. This much-anticipated journal captures the fascinating and untold histories of the Delta through a blend of original and reprinted articles, essays, book reviews, oral histories, and personal narratives.

The launch, **December 7** at the historic **Ryde Hotel** from **2 pm to 4 pm**, is an opportunity to honor our many sponsors. We'll feature story tellers and stories featured in the magazine – The history of our legacy and lost towns, indigenous people, railroads, riverways, and literary giants. Copies of *Delta Stories* are \$20 each. We accept cash, credit cards and checks made payable to SRDHS. Proceeds help pay for our many programs and new initiatives. If you belong to a non-profit, a historical society, or have a business that would like to feature *Delta Stories* for sale, we have discounted copies.

🌟 Event Details:

- **When:** December 7, 2 pm - 4 pm
- **Where:** Ryde Hotel, 14340 CA-160
- **What to Expect:** A warm gathering celebrating our shared history, community, and the stories that define the Delta.
- **Who:** We welcome everyone – members, sponsors, Delta residents from the past and present.

Help Us Expand Our Reach: Share Your Email!

Our newsletter has long been a vital link between the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society and our members, but we're eager to connect with an even wider audience. If you're a member, please share your email address with us so we can deliver our latest news, event updates, and stories directly to your inbox. And don't stop there—if you have friends or family who would love to learn more about preserving Delta history, encourage them to sign up, too. Send your email or forward this request to others who might be interested to srdhsresident@gmail.com. Together, we can keep Delta history alive and thriving.

Looking Forward – Engaging the Community and Involving Everyone

Our Resource Center is evolving, and we invite you to be a part of this exciting transformation! We're working to make the center more accessible and welcoming to everyone in our community—a place where Delta history through artifacts, stories, and hands-on you have family heirlooms, historic letters, or books that reflect the unique Delta? We'd love to include them! By written materials, or even a bit of your us preserve and share the Delta's heritage come. Whether you're a longtime newcomer, or a history enthusiast, your contributions make a difference. Drop by, share your treasures, and let's work together to create a vibrant space where everyone can connect with the Delta's past.



comes alive engagement. Do photographs, character of the donating artifacts, time, you can help for generations to resident, a curious

Here are a few other ways that you can help:

- **File Organization & Cataloging:** We need a team to help organize, update, and revamp our historical files. With every piece of paper, artifact, and photograph, we're building a treasure trove of Delta history.
- **Oral History Transcription:** We have recorded a wealth of stories and programs that need transcription. By converting these memories into text, you'll be helping to preserve the voices and experiences of our community for generations to come.
- **Visitor Services & Research Support:** Join to welcome researchers, collect donations, and share our resources. We're looking for people who can make each visit a memorable one! Our Resource Center is open by appointment but we're often there on Tuesdays or Saturdays when we have a meeting.
- **Story Collection & Cataloging:** Capture the ongoing story of the Delta by gathering new contributions, adding them to our digital catalog, and helping us build a living history.
- **Creating a Welcoming Space:** We want our Resource Center to be a place for engaging conversations and community connections. If you have a knack for creating welcoming spaces, we'd love your input.

Resource Center not your thing? Help plan and run community events, lectures, and tours. Collaborate with local schools and community groups by organizing educational programs, creating historical materials, or leading youth activities that bring history to life for younger generation. Dive into historical research projects or support local researchers by helping them access information, find resources, and navigate archives. Help digitize documents, photos, and other materials, ensuring that these records are preserved for the future. Manage our online presence by sharing historical content, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities. Or interview longtime residents and community members for our Voices of the Delta project. Volunteers can help with everything from scheduling and conducting interviews to editing and archiving recordings. Volunteering with us is a rewarding way to connect with the community, learn new skills, and be a vital part of the Delta's historical preservation. Even if you can only commit to a few hours a week, your time can make a lasting impact. Please consider joining us! Reach out via email at srdhsresident@gmail.com or visit our website and Facebook page to learn more at srdhs.org. With your help, we can ensure that the Delta's rich history continues to be a shared resource for all.

In Memoriam



We know there are many others who's stories we should share, and we hope you will let us know their stories so we can feature them in future editions of the newsletter or on our website.

Dr. Henry Go: A Legacy of Compassion and Dedication

Dr. Henry Go's was the only physician for miles in the small rural town of Courtland. For Dr. Go, medicine was a calling, and his patients weren't merely charts and diagnoses—they were family, community, and the heart of his practice. Throughout his years in the Delta, Dr. Go built a reputation not only for his medical expertise but for his remarkable compassion. Patients recall his attentive listening and unhurried consultations, his readiness to answer questions, and the reassurance in his presence. In times of crisis, Dr. No often went above and beyond, making house calls, checking on patients after hours, and working with local organizations to ensure healthcare reached those most in need. But Dr. No's life wasn't limited to his white coat. He was a keen gardener, and his love for the land mirrored the Delta's agricultural heartbeat. Neighbors recall him sharing fruits and vegetables from his backyard, a small act that underscored his belief in the importance of giving back to his community. His passing leaves a profound void, not only in the healthcare system but in the Delta community's collective heart. Dr. Go's legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched, the families he comforted, and the enduring spirit of kindness he instilled in all who knew him.

D.R. Wagner: The Artist and Poet Who Captured the Delta's Heart

D.R. Wagner, poet and artist, saw the Sacramento Delta not just as a place but as a living, breathing work of art. His creative spirit found inspiration in the Delta's landscapes, its shifting waters, and its vibrant skies. Wagner's work didn't just depict the Delta—it revealed its heart and soul, capturing the unseen and bringing it to life for all who encountered him. Known for his evocative poetry and innovative visual art, Wagner played a pivotal role in the Delta's artistic community. His works were featured in galleries and exhibitions, and his words resonated with both locals and visitors, each line a reflection of the Delta's quiet beauty and untamed energy. He didn't just create in solitude; Wagner was a champion for other artists, fostering creativity and collaboration within the community. His workshops, readings, and exhibitions were spaces of inspiration, where emerging artists found a mentor and established artists found a kindred spirit. Friends and fellow artists describe Wagner as a deeply introspective and generous soul. He had a way of seeing beyond the surface, capturing emotions and ideas that others might overlook. In his presence, creativity felt boundless, and his passing has left a significant gap in the artistic landscape of the Delta. D.R. Wagner's legacy lives on in the inspiration he offered, the community he nurtured, and the countless lives he enriched through his art and his passion for the Delta's natural beauty.

Wally Chan: Cultivating Community and Tradition

For Wally Chan, farming wasn't just a profession—it was a heritage, a tradition, and a responsibility he cherished deeply. Inheriting his farm from his father Lincoln, Wally devoted his life to not only cultivating the land but also nurturing the community that grew alongside it. Under his guidance, the farm became a symbol of resilience, innovation, and community strength, rooted in values passed down through generations. Wally's dedication to the Delta's rich agricultural legacy went beyond the daily work on the farm. He was known for his commitment to sustainable practices, always seeking ways to improve the land and pass it on in even better shape for future generations. Locals recall Wally's openness in sharing his knowledge, especially with younger farmers and those interested in the traditions of the Delta. He often invited schools and community groups to the farm, sharing stories of his father's early days and the lessons he learned growing up in a farming family. Beyond his expertise in farming, Wally was a community pillar, frequently sponsoring local events and ensuring that Chan Family Farms remained a vibrant part of the Delta's social fabric. His contributions extended to annual harvest festivals and community fundraisers, where he could often be found welcoming neighbors and visitors alike with his signature warmth and a genuine smile. Wally's legacy is not only one of hard work and agricultural expertise but of dedication to his roots and community. His impact on the Delta is indelible, and his memory lives on in the fields he tended, the friendships he cultivated, the enduring spirit of family and community he embodied and his wife Debbie Chan, and family.

Voices of the Delta – Charmian London

Charmian London, wife of renowned writer Jack London, shared her husband's adventurous spirit and was captivated by the beauty of the Sacramento River Delta. Together, they explored its winding waterways, seeking inspiration from the Delta's landscapes and the communities along its shores. Charmian's connection to the Delta reveals a lesser-known side of the London's' lives—a retreat from their famed Glen Ellen ranch, where they embraced the Delta's unique blend of tranquility and rugged charm. The story of Charmian and Jack London in the Delta highlights the importance of capturing the experiences not only of the region's residents but also of the travelers, artists, and visionaries who have passed through. These visitors left an indelible mark on the Delta, adding richness to its narrative. By sharing these stories, we honor the Delta's role as a source of inspiration and cultural exchange, deepening our understanding of its legacy.



In 1910 we found the perfect boat, *The Roamer*, for one hundred and seventy-five dollars. It was a thirty-foot yawl, forty years old. It had a wide beam, an extra-large cabin, and huge sails, that helped make the boat very responsive.

From 1910 to 1915, we would spend long weeks aboard our new sailboat on the basin slough of the Sacramento River delta, a home away from home that provided relaxation and healthy exercise.

We would travel, first to Benicia and up to the Delta exploring the Sacramento River, in a carefree mood, leaving in October and returning to Oakland in time for Christmas. We would normally go alone with our two companions, Yoshimatsu Nakata, Jack's right hand man for eight years. And Yakamoto our cook.

Mornings we would write. I would help hash out characters, plots and settings with Jack and keep a journal of our adventures.

Afternoons were for fishing, swimming, lounging, and playing cards. Striped bass, the first northern flights of ducks, a floating sanctuary free from the problems and stresses endured on land.

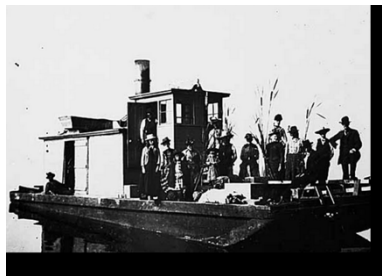
Night after night, fair weather or foul -- it was all a magnificence. In dead calm I took a notebook in pencil to the poop patch and painted as well as I could in words the sunsets and their mirrored reflections.

We cherished the privacy it offered, the opportunity to renew and celebrate our intimacy. Our life on the boat was thus not much different from ranch life. Mail was forwarded along to a post office along the route, so that correspondence, always voluminous, continued to claim our attention.

What a blissful passage it was, our first Roamer voyage, only to be surpassed by the second and third, and so on.

"Snarking once more," Jack named it; honeymooning upon the face of the winding waters; fanning into Benicia to the sunset melody of birds in the rushes; running across that "large, draughty, variegated piece of water, "Suisun Bay, where the great scows we had both learned to respect came charging down, grain-laden; picking our way in the "Middle Ground" channels, and gliding close-hauled into Black Diamond "in the fires of sunset, where the Sacramento and the San Joaquin tumble their muddy floods together" – to port the hazy, Aztec unreality of the tawny-rose Montezuma Hills palpitating in the westering sunlight; to starboard the low brown banks with green upstanding fringes of rustling tulles; all about-red sailed fishing boats homing for the night; and old Black Diamond's lazy water-front and lazier streets sloping upward toward the Contra Costa hills and in the morning Diablo crumpled against an azure dome.

Once, off a tree-plumed island "red-light "barge, with its within hailing distance of the to-morrow evening early, if and I was glad enough for a the next day he was invited by Vickers, to speak to the school river, which he consented to do, the Wild", and when we were once more aboard, he said soberly:



in the pictureful delta, a gay painted ladies, anchored *Roamer*. "I'll take you a board you'd like," Jack volunteered; new experience with him. But the principal, Professor children of the town across in a brief talk on "the Call of

"I guess we won't go adventuring next-door to-night, Mate – it might offend the good people ashore if they found it out. They wouldn't understand how you and I go about together. Also, there might be folks on the barge whom you've seen about and wouldn't want you to see them there. So, we'll just give up and wait for a better chance.

Together we came to know the rivers and serpentine sloughs, with their foreign inhabitants, The vessel all in order, laid against riverbank for the night, he would sit, placidly smoking in the blue dungarees in an old Tam come, humped comfortably on deck, his soft shot feet hanging over the rail, line overboard for catfish or bass. Meanwhile, he would argue for long with Nakata or the cook in all the art and simplicity of a sailor about some trifling points, relative to the size of fish each had hooked the day before or disagreement to the payment of a penny wager the week before.

This cruise and the others were all of a breadth of beneficence, loitering along in the Indian summer. Seeking yet further adventure from Walnut Grove we turned northward

between the high banks of the Sacramento, where we drove inland to see how rice was flourishing in our home state.

On the way downstream we were held through megaphones by captains of little sternwheel steamers who had said we could not make it under sail. That had never been done. The we would go aground. What good times we had, sailing where and when we listed. We lived on the fat of land and water, salmon, caviar, rock cod, sea trout, striped bass, snipe, and ducks of all sorts.

And there was that Thanksgiving feast on board when we landed just a few miles above Stockton. It was cooked by our good friend Mr. Ed Knowles. We laid in supplies of cranberries, geese, oysters, ducks, pumpkins, camembert cheese and there were gizzards and the goose sauce as well as goose livers.

Once we traveled in mid-April, the Roamer all shipshape from Nakata's def brown hands. We sailed on a month cruise. This outdoor life was the best thing that could happen to Jack who had been suffering from one severe cold after another.

Among other features new to Jack, was the growth of the Japanese Chinese village of Walnut Grove. Here we poked about tortuous roofed streets lined with gambling dens, geisha houses and teashops -entertained in these latter by the pretty toy-like women, with saki, and raw bonito soaked in soya sauce, to the debatable harmony of samisens. We would ask Nakata to go ashore and purchase lottery tickets as we couldn't. Near Stockton one year we stopped at "a God-forsaken Japanese workplace where the baby-eyed young.... mother cooks for 40 or 50 men! Such a dreadful life the poor, sweet little 'picture-wives' are lured into!

Jack, snugly at anchor, his work punctually disposed of, read intensively about agriculture, devoured a plunder of countless old books he had been collecting. To him relaxation consisted not in cessation but in change of thought and occupation. The vessel, all in order, laid against a riverbank for the night, he would sit, placidly smoking in the blue dungarees and old tam, humped comfortably on deck, his soft-shod fee hanging over the rail, line overboard for catfish or black bass.

Meanwhile he would argue for long with Nakata or the cook (name), in all the ardent simplicity of a sailor – some trifling point – say relative sizes of fish each had hooked the day before, or there would be a jokingly heated disagreement as to payment of a penny wager, a week old; or the three, stopping to catch laughing breath, feverishly laid new bets against the evenings basket.

Often, while I shopped or walked or rowed in the skiff for exercise, he drifted upon the towns, meeting men, going to their farms, inspecting cattle's and horses.

In September of 1913 we made our first visit to the State Fair at Sacramento. Jack was averse to showing his own stock, holding, and putting an animal and choke condition with the harmful process. His presence at the fair was for the purpose of getting in touch with the other fellow to see what that other fellow was doing in the matter of raising draft horses beef cattle and hogs.

During the fall of 1914, Jack's health began to decline. Jack developed a persistent rash that failed to respond to doctoring. We found solace on the Roamer, where I helped him compose "the Acorn Planter", a play he hoped would be accepted for production at the next Bohemian Grove outing and fought through his infirmities to show his pigs and cows, at the



agricultural fair in Sacramento before being distracted by his growing disabilities. By 1916 he would be dead of Uremic poisoning.

There are some that would say I played an integral part in shaping many of Jack's works. I would say that I my love of Jack is a kind of worship. Not a fetish sort of thing. It is a grand emotion – a high passion. He was thus determined to make the most of every day given. I am determined to give him life, after death.

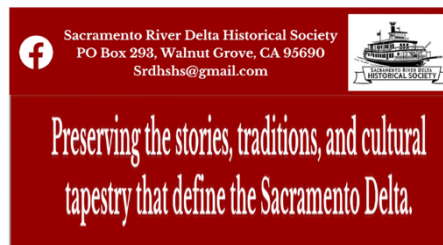
Our Editorial Team & Publications

If you have an essay, article or story idea, news, or events you want others to know about submit it to us at srdhspublications@gmail.com. We'll add it to the website, our Facebook page and upcoming publications.



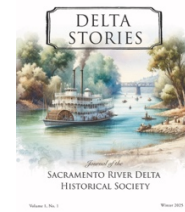
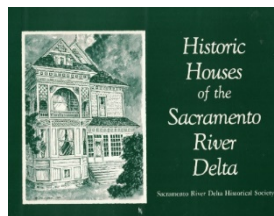
Maryellen Burns

Tom Herzog, John Stutz, Rafe Goorwich



We still have copies of our yearly calendars from 2023 to 2012. We no longer produce a calendar and offer a yearly journal, Delta Stories. Pear Pearfection and the Historic Homes of the Delta are also still available. For ordering information – check out our engaging and informative website or Facebook group page. Don't forget to follow us: Either search for us by name or copy this into your browser:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/163285254387856>



Our Tentative Schedule for 2025

Our board is rethinking nighttime meetings on the third Tuesday of the month, as so many of our members and friends hate driving the Delta roads in the dark. We also want to engage more with the libraries, other historical societies and non-profits on programs that benefit us all. Tentatively, we will meet every other month in January, March, May and July, plus September, and November, most likely on a Saturday afternoon, and occasional Tuesday night. We'll post through email, postcards, social media and our website.

Let's Connect! Become a Member of the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society and join us in our ongoing effort to document and share the untold stories that make the Delta a treasure trove of cultural and historical significance. Even if you're not a member, please send us your email so that we can provide the newsletter and other SRDHS information to you. Contact: srdhs@gmail.com

**Mail your membership dues to:
SRDHS
P.O. BOX 293
Walnut Grove, California 95690**

| SRDHS MEMBERSHIP DUES / UPDATE SUBMISSION | | | DATE |
|---|---------------|--|------|
| NAME (as you'd like it to appear on membership mailings) | | | |
| ADDRESS | | | |
| CITY | STATE | ZIP | |
| PHONE | EMAIL ADDRESS | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please update my current membership record to reflect the changes above. | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am including a check payable to the SRDHS for the following: | | | |
| MEMBERSHIP TYPE: <input type="checkbox"/> Annual (\$25) <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (\$150) <input type="checkbox"/> Honorary (FREE to those 80 years & over) | | | |
| MEMBERSHIP YEAR(S): | | <i>Undesignated dues applied to current year.</i> | |
| TOTAL ENCLOSED: | | <i>Checks only, please, made payable to SRDHS.</i> | |

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society
P.O. Box 283
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

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