

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 2

DECEMBER 2006

PRESIDENTS NOTES

As 2006 comes to a close so does my term as your president. I've had a rewarding and exciting time working with your wonderful board. They are the nuts and bolts of the inner workings of our society. My hats off to them. Thanks to them for making it a fruitful four years for me. One special person who is going off of our board is Jim Dahlberg. He has served the society for probably as many years as I've been a member. When I've needed help to set up, move something or get advice, Jim was there for me. Thanks Jim!

Again, we lost some of our Delta residents. To name a few are Joe Green, Pete Budnik and Jan Stewart. Joe and Pete were born the same year, went to school together, lived in the Delta their whole life and died in the same week. We will miss them all. I especially miss Pete, a dear friend, with his great humor and jokes, his intellectual ideas, and the history he gave us. He was truly a great historic treasure of the Delta.

Carol Watson is retiring as Co-Editor of our Newsletter. The job will now be done in our Resource Center. Many thanks to Carol for a job well done.

I can't say this enough! We need to obtain more oral histories of our older Delta folks. Time is slipping away and the oral histories we get are real treasures for our future generations. We do need a new chair for this

position as Fran is retiring from the job. A big thanks to her for the wonderful work she has done. We are in need of more volunteers to obtain these histories. We also are in need of more help in the Resource Center. We usually open the center on Tuesdays from 10 AM until early afternoon. Call Bobbie Collier or Esther Koopman for more info. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Tom

SOCIETY NOTES

Our second part of the year started with the PEAR FAIR. It has returned to the simple fun party it used to be. Milo and Nonie Wetzel were the Grand Marshals-a long over due tribute. The historical collection in the auditorium was done by Joe Perry. Pears were sold, a new Queen was chosen, books, pears, plants, all kinds of pear food, a pear eating contest, and a whole lot more.

Our trip to the Elk Grove House Stage Stop & Hotel Museum was most interesting. The kitchen and living room were especially fascinating. They have done a excellent job of furnishing the museum. The headquarters of the house were moved out of the way of the freeway and then the work began. If you missed this meeting be sure to go visit on your own.

A brief history of our newsletter. About 30 years ago the society was formed and the newsletter a natural addition. The history, text and information has been written by Kathleen Graham

Continued on Page 2

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING & ANNUAL POTLUCK

Tuesday, January 16th at 6:00 pm

Jean Harvie Community Center 14273 River Road, Walnut Grove

"Pete Budnik and His Walnut Grove"

Please bring food for 10: A - N: Hot Dish O - S: Salad T - Z: Dessert

Please call Tom Herzog at 916-775-1479 if you have any questions

Society Notes (Continued)

Hutchinson. As corresponding secretary Yvonne Pylman typed, retyped, formatted, published and mailed each edition for ten or twelve years, when Carol Watson became corresponding secretary computers were glorified typewriters and she typed set for editing, retyped and took the material to a professional typist for formatting the paper and then it went to a printer and mailing sorts with the help of former postmaster Clarise Johnson and other members. Computers and the internet arrived and the newsletter is now received by Email.

January is time for our ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER. We have the perfect program. It will be all about Pete Budnik. No one can epitomize the Delta any better. There are lots of stories, pictures and tributes so it will make a very interesting and entertaining evening.

SRDHS 2007 SCHEDULE

Meetings are typically held on third Tuesday of each month. Tentative schedule – Subject to change.

- January 16.....General Meeting/Annual Potluck
- February 20.....Board Meeting
- March 20.....General Meeting
- April 17.....Board Meeting
- May 15.....General Meeting
- June 19.....Board Meeting

June Newsletter

- July/August.....Summer Break
- September 18.....General Meeting
- October 16.....Board Meeting
- November 20.....General Meeting
- December.....Board Meeting

December Newsletter

CONTENTS

Presidents Notes - Society Notes.....1 & 2
 Clarksburg & Freeport.....2 - 4
 Freeport.....4 - 7
 Corrections Clarksburg Article.....7
 Troy Dye "A Melancholy Episode".....8
 SRDHS Notices.....2 & 7

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

CLARKSBURG & FREEPORT

Written by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

This is the continuation of our Towns along the River series. We have completed Ryde, Vorden, Courtland and Walnut Grove. Because some of the material is conflicting and some is vague or ambiguous there are sure to be inaccuracies in this article and recollections can be fallible. As with all previous articles, additions or corrections are welcomed.--Ed.

Bits & Bites of Early Area Settlers

-- Philip George Riehl of Freeport married Hannah M. Webber Bogel.

-- Frederick Babel was from Baden, Germany. Born in 1817 he emigrated as a youth, first living in Missouri and Ohio. He came to California in 1845 by the Overland Trail and settled in Yolo County in 1849. He married Augusta Weaver in 1852. She died as a result of childbirth and he married Sophia Market in 1853. His third wife, Carrie Tiegler, he married in 1873. Frederick Babel built a home on the high bank of the overflow slough at the Sacramento River, hence named Babel Slough. Babel Slough was also to become the site of the first operation of a side-draft clam shell dredger operated by Anton Dutra.

-- J. H. Glide was born in England and came to California in 1857 where he lived in Sacramento. His modest beginning herding sheep across the valley built up into the land holdings that in 2006 still extend from the Sacramento River in Reclamation District #765 to the town of Winters.

-- Arne A. Krull was born in 1834 in the Netherlands and arrived in the U.S. in 1854 where he settled near Elkhart, Indiana. In 1858 he sold his property and left for California via Chicago, the Mississippi River to New Orleans where he took a ship to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and crossed southern Mexico to Acapulco where he boarded the steamer "Pacific" to San Francisco, arriving in Sacramento in 1859. He bought land on Merritt Island and sold his produce in Placerville and other mining communities. He also owned land near Florin. In 1872 he married Rebecca Schlater, a native of Holstein, Germany who must have died from undocumented causes. Then in 1879 he married Marietta Savage of New Brunswick, Canada.

-- John Klotz, a native of Germany, arrived in Philadelphia in 1848 and decided to go west to seek a fortune. With his brother Rudolph, he operated a sash and door business in Shasta County and raised livestock on the side. In 1867 he moved his ranching business to the Freeport/Pocket area. With his wife, Catherine, he raised four children: Fred, John, Louis and Annie. The family acreage was roughly between Meadowview Road (the large Oak Grove) and Freeport, taking in the area of the water tower where son Louis's house stood. The John (Jr.) Klotz family moved to Clarksburg where he owned a blacksmith shop. The shop is now on view at the Silverbend Pumpkin Patch.

-- John Herringa was born in 1819 in Guoninger, Netherlands. His parents died when he was very young and he was raised by his grandmother until he was 12 when he was bound out to do farm work in Birum. For the next nine years he lived with an uncle in Appingediam who owned a dry goods store and small woolen mill, where by he learned the weaving trade. He next joined the Army until 1855 when he joined the police force in the town of Oppenhuzen, Friesland and where he married Geertje Joustra in 1857. He saved \$1,100 and in 1868 left for America, taking passage from Liverpool, England to Boston, New York and Panama to San Francisco and Sacramento. He bought land from a friend at Walsh Station, northeast of Sacramento where he farmed and had a dairy. His children were Peter, Joseph, John, Jennie and Charles. Joseph bought land on the west bank of the Sacramento River just below the Freeport ferry. His sons, John and Steven farmed extensively in the Delta. At some point in time the name was Anglicized and respelled to Heringer.

-- Julius Clinton Beach was born in Ohio in 1824. The family moved to Missouri and then to Illinois from where they started west in 1849. The family wintered in Salt Lake but Beach and some other young fellows decided to push on via the southern route, having known the story about the Donner Party. The rest of the family followed in the spring. His father, on arrival, bought property just below Freeport, on which he built his house (still stands), raised dairy cattle, hay and some fruit. In 1855 Julius Beach returned east to marry Mary S. Davis, the girl he left behind. Before returning West, Julius farmed for a year before leaving for California again. This time he traveled by ship via the Isthmus of Panama. In 1869, Alvin C. Beach, the grandson, had rented the farm to Frederick and Robert Kirtlan, fourth generation descendents of a local "1849 family." The Beach Ranch

headquarters was purchased by Harvey and Lois Collins. Dr. Harvey Collins is the brother of the sisters Violet and Hazel who married brothers Frederick and Robert Kirtlan.

-- George Washington Hack of Freeport married Berdenia Frances Keys, the daughter of Harriet Beach and William Keys.

-- Ralph Henry Pylman emigrated from Leovarden, Friesland, the Netherlands, in 1882. His wife, Alberti Hartema, had friends living along the Sacramento River and Ralph decided to join them. Arriving at Ellis Island, they then took a ship around the Horn and then to California. They rented land along Elk Slough and raised a family: Henry, Amos, Garrett, Alida, Charlotte, Ida, Lottie and Jennie. All the children worked on the farm to make ends meet. In 1900 the three brothers pooled their money and bought acreage from J. B. Greene where they raised large crops of pink beans. They farmed as Pylman Brothers until 1913 when they divided the property. Between 1900 and 1913, they had greatly increased their property, purchasing the Nelson Ranch, the King ranch and two others. Henry married Nettie Smith and their children were Albert, Alice, Thornton, Gordon, George, Jackie, Evelyn and all lived on the King Ranch. Jennie married Edward Bunnell and had sons Norman and Elwood. Lottie married John Heringer. Amos married Nellie Perry and they had sons Harvey and Ralph. Alida married Bill Atkins and their children were Della, John, Nettie, and Henry. The Nelson Ranch was the home of Garrett and his mother who was widowed in 1906. Garrett married Maybelle McGillivray and their children were Robert, Emeline, James and Ethelmae. All of the Pylmans lived in a row between the Nelson Ranch and the King Ranch. Only Ida left the river. She married Alec Creason and settled in Fresno with children Jessie, Lester, Byron and Charlotte. The family has stayed close, although many of the girls moved away and some of the boys but twenty-first cousins "grew up together and old together."

-- John B. Cave descended from very old Virginia families. He was born in 1819 in Boone County, Missouri, near Columbia. His brothers were William J. who was born in 1814 and who by 1890 was living in Yolo County, John B. and Jesse H. (who also lived in Yolo County in the Clarksburg area). In 1833 he was living near Bonaparte, van Buren County, Iowa. In 1850 he left for California, settling near Goodyear's Bar in the Downieville District in Sierra County. In 1857 he drove

200 head of cattle and 25 horses to California where he sold them along the Sacramento River. He then again went back to Iowa in 1853 and in 1858 was back in California, having driven 350 head of cattle, 18-20 horses and mules overland. He was caught up in the Mormon Rebellion, Indian raids, took the southern route, then north to the northern route, was raided again and entered California finally over the southern route. He lost \$14,000 to a sharkster from Yuma who took his teams but didn't pay him. Cave had intended to sell the teams to teamsters who were freighting goods to the California mining districts and Nevada. Finally, in 1877, after many more ups and downs, he bought 1,100 acres in Yolo County from George L. Clark. He was married to Delilah Donaldson of van Buren County, Iowa. They had four children: Reuben, David, Ella and Hugh. Hugh was born in Iowa in 1849. He arrived in California in 1859 with his parents (apparently John went back to Iowa again in 1858/9). Hugh remembered the family took the "Beale Route" to California. He married Maggie Larchlan in 1873.

FREEPORT

Freeport, located about eight miles south of the State Capitol in Sacramento, was established in 1862/3 by the Freeport Railroad Company. The land underneath the town site is sticky adobe and during winter floods, the site was surrounded by water to the west, east and south. Beach Lake to the south expanded a mile or more in width. Wild raspberries and wild grapes "festooned" the forest like broadleaf trees. The tules in the surrounding bowl shaped swampland grew several feet higher than a horse's back and when they caught fire in summer, the cinders were broadcast for miles. Towards "the Plains", the flat land to the east of town, men hunted wild boar among the tules and market hunters shot wild water fowl by the thousands during the autumn fly over, dressing them for resale.

The Freeport Railroad Company, purposefully established to connect with the Sacramento Valley Railroad at Folsom, grew out of a dispute between the City of Sacramento and the Sacramento Valley Railroad. The city routinely collected a tax on all passengers departing Sacramento, whether by road, river or rail. After the SVRR established its Folsom depot, the stage lines to the mines moved their terminal to Folsom. Freeport was the major port between 1855 and 1870 and Sacramento wasn't.

Freeport's transportation preeminence deeply cut into the city's tax revenue. To compensate for the loss, the City levied a tax on each passenger connecting to the railroad from the river and on each pound of freight transshipped. The railroad countered, and eliminated Sacramento altogether. Thus, the name "Free-port" -- from where freight, mail and passengers avoided the city tax and reached the mines twelve hours faster.

Furthermore, the rail company founders knew the site of Freeport enjoyed a distinct advantage as a port over Sacramento. Sailing ships which docked at Freeport avoided the torturously slow passage through Garcia Bend. Garcia Bend is just upstream from Freeport. A tight river bend, the prevailing southwesterly winds necessitated tight and frequent tacks.

Nine miles of track was laid in 1863, the town platted and lots sold. By 1864, the population had grown to about 400, mostly railroad employees and Freeport was well on its way.

Azorean Portuguese began populating the surrounding area soon after the Gold Rush. By 1880, 38.4% of the Portuguese in Sacramento County lived in the surrounding areas: Riverside/Pocket and Lisbon District. Often the general region comprised of Clarksburg and Freeport was termed "Little Portugal." The Portuguese operated small farms first selling potatoes to gold seekers then branching out into other truck farm produce. They established dairies in the Lisbon, fished the river commercially and hunted wild fowl for sale. They were among the early market hunters and commercial fisherman.

Freeport's heyday lasted until 1870. In 1866, it had been projected as a terminus for a transcontinental railroad of which the Sacramento Valley Railroad was to be a part. But, the rival Central Pacific gained control of the SVRR and it was absorbed into the CP system. After 1870, the Freeport-Brighton line was discontinued and the town subsequently declined as a port of entry. But by the 1880's, the town recovered enough to become a river shipment point for grain and other local produce. Across the river in the Lisbon District, the small dairies owned by the Portuguese sent cream cans once a week to Freeport where they were stacked at the railroad depot and loaded onto a local for Sacramento. Among early businesses were a general store, hotel, Wells Fargo Express Office, blacksmith, saloon, boot and shoemaker, cabinetmaker and "carriage works." Also, David Tileston

Lufkin and Davis & Roberts operated two nearby brickyards. All these in addition to the wharf and railroad depot. Lufkins' son resided in Walnut Grove for a time.

In 1863, Andrew J. Bump opened a store. In the rear of the store was a saloon where gambling was the local pastime. A plank porch accommodated wooden benches and a horse trough stood in front. Bump's store changed hands many times. When Daniel Grant Webber (Webber Wagons) purchased the store in 1873, a potbelly stove was installed around which locals gossiped. Besides the saloon and general merchandize store, Webber managed the local Wells Fargo Freight office out of the store. In 1880, Webber moved to Clarksburg. The store was sold to Philip G. Riehl, his brother-in-law. Riehl then associated himself with his son, George Philip Riehl and the store was renamed P. Riehl & Son. In 1895 Oscar L. Heiser rented the premises and opened the Freeport Cash Store, advertising for sale dry goods, groceries, general merchandise, wines, liquor, cigars, ammunition, drugs and patent medicines. A butcher's wagon visited town a few times a week providing fresh meat. The store was sold again in 1904. Between 1910 and 1940, John Souza operated the store and added a service station adjacent to the south. A pole shed attached to the porch which shielded horses from the weather was demolished in the 1950's.

The Post Office was on the right-hand side of the store's plank porch. In early years, the mail was delivered once a week. Later, delivery was stepped up to twice a week. George P. Riehl was the Postmaster by 1880. In 1920 the Freeport Post Office was closed and incorporated into the Clarksburg postal district.

Erskine Greer built the first hotel, a small, two-story structure in 1863. Greer sold the hotel to Thomas O'Toole. It was permanently closed by 1890. However, Mrs. Eilbach, otherwise known as "Auntie" Eilbach, ran a small hostelry called the "Freeport Hotel." It was located just north of the store and featured a long front veranda on both floors.

Tom Kirtlan operated a blacksmith shop next to the ferry ramp. In the 1890's Kirtlan acquired a partner, Garner, and the premises went under the name Kirtlan and Garner. Kirtlan also employed the town dandy, James W. Lee. Known as a jack-of-all-trades, Lee, a trained cabinetmaker, did carriage work in the rear of the blacksmith shop and lived at "the hotel." Andy Greer was

the boot maker and his shop was across the street (near the hotel) from Kirtlan and Garner.

During early days of Hollywood, Buster Keaton used the wharf and railroad depot as well as locals as extras for a scene in one of his silent movies.

In more recent times the same area was used for a beet dump below the railroad tracks. There was a bulkhead and conveyor belt to load gondolas full of sugar beets.

The Freeport Ferry was an important link between the town and the farming district to the west, the Lisbon District. It was an essential part of daily life and crossed from approximately St. Joseph's Church to Kirtlan's blacksmith shop. Today, it appears that the ramp runs between the old blacksmith shop building and what was the Chevron Gas Station, now Oto's Garage. The ferry had a bell on the east bank to call it in fog or at night. Ferry service was begun by George C. Jackson in 1852, 10 years before the town was platted. It was a toll ferry with established rates: teams \$2-\$3, buggies \$1.50, loose stock \$.50 each, sacks and bales \$1.00 per ton, pedestrians \$.25. A skiff or rowboat was lashed to the ferry for foot passengers. Only vehicles and their occupants or animals rode on the deck. Jackson was followed by Stan Myers as owner and operator. In 1876 John Soto purchased the ferry. The ferrymen and tenders were usually Portuguese. At the west-bank slip owned by the Soto family, Antone Soto kept a saloon and a barbershop. Behind the saloon sat the Catholic Church and various Soto family buildings. Youngsters sat on the slip pilings to await the ferry for transport to Freeport School. Soto kept the ferry slip grades smooth by using a horse to drag a timber over the grade. When Soto's franchise expired, the ferry was sold by his widow to Sacramento County in either 1913 or 1921 and the county operated it until the Freeport Bridge was completed in 1929.

Other ferries with ancillary connections to Freeport included the Dubois Ferry established in 1894 and the Hadley Ferry established in 1897. Both crossed from the Lisbon District to the Pocket area north of town. The Hadley Ferry, about three miles upstream from Freeport, passed to J. H. Glide and became known as the Glide Ferry. It docked at Garcia Landing in the Pocket. In 1903 Glide sold his ferry to Sacramento and Yolo counties. It then became a free ferry and people went out of their way to use it, putting a crimp in the Freeport Ferry business.

As noted in the Clarksburg article, the 1929 bridge was a narrow cantilever bascule bridge with counter weights. Originally constructed with a wooden deck, it was converted to a steel mesh deck in the mid-1950's. The approaches to the bridge were illuminated at night by two standing light standards one at each end of the concrete abutments.

The first school was established in 1883. The one-room West Union School was built near the mouth of Willow Slough a mile north of town on the road to Sacramento (Freeport Boulevard). The school site was near the culvert just south of the intersection of Meadowview/Pocket Road and Freeport Boulevard. Willow Slough (which drained Beach Lake) today both floods and drains Bing Maloney Municipal Golf Course.

Miss Mary E. McCaine was the first teacher, followed by Miss Mary Evans, and then Benjamin Howard. Other teachers were George H. Tuck, Albert Leimbach, and Mr. Simond who, because he was stern and strict, was known among his students by the epithet "Grizzly Bear." A new school at Freeport was built in the 1920's. Many years later after it was abandoned and life as a Sportsman's Club and then fell into disuse. Joseph Miller, a Portuguese, established the first school in the Lisbon District, opposite the Glide Ferry Landing.

Protestant church services were held at West Union School and conducted by a minister traveling the Methodist circuit. Sunday School was held weekly and church services twice a month. Joe Gosling was the Sunday School superintendent and among the early circuit ministers were the Rev. H. J. Bland and the Rev. J. A. Bruner. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, dedicated in 1924, sits opposite Freeport across the river. The first St. Joseph's Church, a wooden structure, was built in 1886 and the second, built of brick, was built in 1923 and dedicated in 1924. The first church was built on Soto family property and the second church was built on property bought in 1923 from Peter Dwyer for a \$10.00 gold coin. Dwyer furnished the brick for the church from his Sacramento brickyard. A cement retaining wall on the levee remains from the wooden 1886 structure. When the levee was raised in 1918, the retaining wall prevented the structure from collapsing into the river.

Some townsmen and nearby residents belonged to the Freeport Lodge #261, I.O.G.T. (International Order of Grand Templars). Counted among its members at the turn of the century were Frank, Fred, Thomas Kirtlan,

Julius H. Beach and Nellie Beach.

The I.D.E.S. Lodge, an Azorean Portuguese fraternal society (Irmandade do Divino Espirito Santo), is one mile upriver on the west-bank. Today, the I.D.E.S. sponsored "Festa," is one of the oldest Portuguese Holy Ghost Festivals in the U.S. The "Festa do Espirito Santo", first celebrated in 1893, is celebrated in Freeport and across the river at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Participants parade from Freeport to the church, walking over the bridge. The Holy Ghost religious festival is unique to the Azore Islands from where most local Delta Portuguese emigrated. The festival is celebrated six to seven weeks after Easter during Pentecost to Trinity Sundays. The festival commemorates St. Isabel, the 13th century Portuguese queen who sold her jewels to help feed the poor thereby uniting her people through her dedication and belief in the Holy Ghost.

The town landmarks were "The Grove" and "The Flagpole." "The Grove" of large oak trees was on the south end of town. Several remain. The 135 feet flagpole was on the corner of Freeport Boulevard and the ferry ramp (Freeport Road and Ferry Road). It was topped by a red rooster. The flagpole was erected at the time of U. S. Grant's presidential campaign.

The George Hack house stands at the far south end of the town just beyond the oak grove. It is now the administrative office for the City's Cavanaugh Golf Course. The railroad levee cuts off its view of the river and the state highway slices through what was the front garden, separating the two California palm trees from the remaining garden. George Hack's son, Stan, was a major league baseball player beginning in 1931 for the Chicago Cubs. Nearby were homes of other farm families: Hunt, Jackson, Beach, Moore, Baliol, Klotz, Hite, Silva, Julian, Rodgers and Heringer.

There was a steady stream of social activities in Freeport. At the May Picnic held in Beach Grove a mile south of town and sponsored by the Patrons of Husbandry, otherwise known as the Grange, farmers from all directions came together. There was a merry-go-round, ice cream, lemonade, dancing, brass band music, footraces, greased pole climbing and greased pig chasing. The Holy Ghost Festival was celebrated in April/May. On Independence Day guns shot off and fire crackers popped. A town thrill was to "fire the anvil" -- a long red-hot iron rod touched off an extra large charge of powder. The explosion sounded like a cannon shot.

Christmas Eve found townsmen gathered at the West Union School where Joe Gosling and the Sunday School provided entertainment. There was a tree, candy, and nuts and George Hack's son, "Doc", played Santa Claus and distributed gifts to the youngsters. A simple tableau was presented sometimes and the program included singing, Bible reading, prayer, recitations and dialogues. To welcome the New Year, townsmen fired revolvers and double barrel shotguns and the hotelkeeper dispensed alcoholic eggnog.

Over the many years Freeport has declined in importance to a sleepy stretch on both sides, of State Highway 160 at the Freeport Bridge. The City of Sacramento built Cavanaugh Public Golf Course in the field in back of the little town. Several restaurants have opened; some have closed. A bar has been open as has the bait shop for years and a bed and breakfast is a new business in town. Oto's Chevron Station was converted to an automotive garage. The city itself creeps ever closer, nearly surrounding it. Interstate 5 is only a quarter mile to the east. For over 144 years Freeport has been rural. In 2005 Freeport voted against annexation to the City of Sacramento and to remain a separate town in Sacramento County.

Corrections Clarksburg Article

Dick Marshall has kindly sent some corrections, please note. Thank you Dick. We always welcome corrections so that history will be correctly recorded. Additions are also welcomed. The Editor

Page 2

Paragraph 1, last sentence:

Bill Merwin, Crutcher Huntley, Gus Olson, Jr.

Paragraph 2, third sentence

Winchester Lake

Paragraph 2, sixth sentence

Clarksburgers "rim-farmers"

Paragraph 3, fourth sentence

...cultivating peaches and pears.

Page 5

Paragraph 1, eighth sentence

With the closing of the west levee in 1921, the privately financed...

Paragraph 3, third sentence

John Cleeves

Paragraph 3, sixth sentence

...three oil company bulk plants:...Standard Oil Company of California, The Union Oil Company, and Richfield Oil. Richfield Oil was located at the intersection of the Sacramento Northern Railroad and the Clarksburg Road.

Page 8

Paragraph 1, sixth sentence

...for promotional purposes to promote land sales in the district. Prospective buyers were transported by riverboat to the Clarksburg landing and taken to Hinsdale Grove (similar to today's time share promotion).

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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Co-Editor.....Carol Watson
Design/Layout.....Doris Pylman

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SRDHS – Membership

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

TROY DYE "A Melancholy Episode"

Troy Dye was personable and well liked- he lived in Sacramento with his wife and small children. A Civil war veteran of the Sixth Kansas Regiment, he ran the New York Meat market and later a saloon. In 1870 he was elected as County Administrator (interstate estates). He joked "he would have to kill a few rich people without heirs to make the job pay." Joking aside, Dye really meant it. He had in mind a Grand Island fruit grower A.M. Tullis. The plan was to administer the estate and fix it with the Judge. During probate they'd market the fruit; in Dye's words "steal the place bare."

He enlisted accomplices, Anderson a rough swearing bearded Swedish sailor who held various jobs in the city and a young local hood Tom Lawton. Together they assembled a duck boat which the accomplices rowed to Grand Island and overnigheted near the A. M. Tullis ranch. The next day they found Tullis budding his 650 acre orchard. They asked him where they might overnight and Tullis suggested neighbors. They then clubbed him, Tullis grappled, a pistol was pressed to his spine and fired. As Tullis died they shot him in the head. Neighbors thought it was a coon hunt when they heard the dogs barking. Dye drove his buggy and met his accomplices as they walked back on the road to Sacramento. They had in Dye's words "killed the rich son of a bitch."

A Chinese hand found the body and summoned a neighbor L. G. Hall who reported the murder. Dye and his accomplices desperately tried to cover their tracks, and returned to Grand Island to break up the boat. The

Sheriff was baffled by the crime. Several witnesses, one A. J. Bump, saw the rowboat going downstream. Clarksburg friends of Tullis put up a \$1000 dollar reward. The state offered rewards of \$500 for each person involved. But, a break in the case came when penciled instructions to deliver lumber to Dye from the lumberyard were found on a piece of the rowboat lumber. Meanwhile Dye had filed to administer the estate.

Ten days after the murder, Dye was arrested. His friends and supporters were stunned. The trial was in January 1879. The defense attorney waxed eloquently but the jury took 270 minutes to convict him. At that moment he overplayed his hand perhaps in feigning insanity: fainting, throwing fits, staring into space and babbling incoherently. His parents and wife appealed to Governor Irwin for clemency. Two days before the hanging date his brother Sperry, from Walnut Grove, pled again with the Governor. He had a wrenching tearful farewell with his 12 year old daughter and bid his father farewell. He spent his last few minutes with his brother Sperry and asked that he accompany him to the gallows.

After the hanging "Dye's body was taken to the City/County dispensary where doctors removed his brain, examined it for evidence of insanity and pronounced it normal."

Interestingly, Dye had earlier tried to improve on his county office salary by attempting several botched poisonings. Troy Dye is buried in Franklin Cemetery on the Hood-Franklin Road. His grave is a few feet from his victim Aaron Moses Tullis.

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society
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