

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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

NEWSLETTER

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President's Notes

What a great start to the summer! Thank you all who attended the Annual Meeting in January, we had a nice turnout and a lively presentation by Mary Ellen Burns on “We are What We Eat”. It’s always great to see a great showing, and visit with community and friends.

We have had some interesting presentations at our Board meetings this year. In February, members of the Delta Protection Commission, along with the Delta Conservancy sought SRDHS guidance on the Delta Voice Newsletter asking what we might like to add to it. They also solicited our ideas on branding of the Delta as a destination and national recognition. They presented five theme ideas: Natural Geography, Marshland to Farmland, Immigrant Groups, Agriculture, and Water Resources. It was an informational meeting and no motions or votes were taken. They gave a presentation about branding in the Delta at our March General Meeting. In June, representatives of the Planning and Review department shared the current Special Planning Area criteria for Walnut Grove, Cortland and Locke. They will be returning in a future meeting to discuss the proposed changes and solicit input.

Another interesting General Meetings this year in May was a tour of the Miyazaki Japanese Bath House.

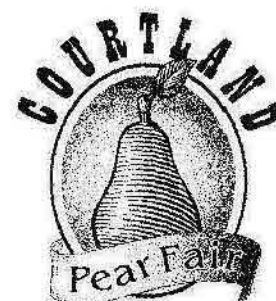
Barbara Damion has been finely representing us Bi-monthly at the Sacramento Consortium of Historical Societies, thank you Barbara! Our current membership stands at 231 members. The resources center is open on Tuesday mornings from 10 to 1 for the public viewing of treasures in our archives. It is located in the Jean Harvie Community Center, 14273 River Road in Walnut Grove. Thank you and welcome to our latest volunteer, Barbara Damion, Board Vice-President, who has joined the resource center staff! Thank you always, to Esther Koopman, whose energy knows no bounds.

We are again presenting a SRDHS monthly calendar celebrating and depicting pear packing labels of local families in the Delta from the collection of Jim Dahlberg. Thank you again this year Jim. The production of the calendar is supplemented by contributions from members of the Delta community who get their names listed on the back cover of the calendar. We gained many new Community Contributor members this year, as well as many repeat contributors! Thank you all for your interest! We will be stationed at a table in the air-conditioned main building at the Pear Fair this year, on Sunday, July 27th. We will be selling our calendars there, in addition to the annual Pear Fair poster. Hopefully the poster artist Dan Harris will be on hand to autograph your posters. If you would like to volunteer to run the table for a bit, please contact Tom Herzog, Program Chair at 916-871-4060 to reserve a time slot.

We welcome two new Board members of the Historical Society this year: John Stutz and Kathleen Hutchinson. John has brought us many ideas for Society promotion and has been a great participant in the Calendar Community Contributor membership drive! Kathleen has been the editor of our Newsletter for many years and has written wonderful articles for our membership to read in our publication published twice a year.

We welcome seeing all of you at the Pear Fair this year, and please come to the general meetings, every other month, resuming the third Tuesday of September, 2014.

Cathy O'Connor, President



42nd Annual - July 27, 2014

Letters from Bill Hutchinson, Sr. Presented by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

In 1938 Bill Hutchinson, Sr. on two trips East and to the Northwest investigated the Delta crop on its arrival at the auction markets as well as the farming methods of his competitors. Last newsletter (December 2013) was the first of a series of seven letters of various lengths which he sent back to the Delta growers at Walnut Grove.

The following is the second letter:

May 2, 1938.

California Asparagus Growers Association,
Walnut Grove, Calif.

I have been checking some more, as I told you in my last letter, on the tonnage that the Jersey asparagus growers produce. I find that the top production is about forty-eight hundred pounds, with the average about twenty-five. I also find that in various sections in Jersey labor is paid at a very much lower rate than I quoted in my last letter. One large operator, who is a jobber in New York, whom I met last night, tried to impress me with the high wages he was paying on his ranch of six hundred acres and said he was paying a dollar and seventy-five cents per day and furnishing his help with a house to live in, fuel and light. This ranch is composed of six hundred acres but this grower only has forty acres of asparagus.

I spent last night on the market again and inspected every car of asparagus that was unloaded. The stench from some of the arrivals was terrible and although they were all sold for some price, I don't know what they did with some of them after they took them off the street. The market this morning was what I would call "absolutely demoralized." A lot of the jobbers were not figuring how much they could get for the asparagus but whether they could get anything for it. I can't see any chance for improvement; in fact, I think it will probably be worse before the week is out. The hot weather we had in California around the 18th on to the 23rd and 24th probably injured the asparagus to a point where it would not carry very well. There were a number of cars with minor difficulties, as far as quality, and, had it been on a good market, there would have been very little said about them, but on a market like we had this morning they were of major importance. The jobbers in Boston and Philadelphia were all calling New York this morning, wanting them to handle cars for them which they had on track

and, of course, the New York handlers said, "No, thank you."

Since writing my last letter, I have decided to go over to Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania asparagus fields. I have a letter of introduction to a very large operator in Pennsylvania and from all descriptions, they are the last word in farming and have statistics available which they say they will let me have. I have a lot of information about the Maryland grower and canner which I have obtained in New York but I think it best to go there and check up and see how authentic this information is. Will write you later about my findings.

Sincerely,
Wm. N. L. Hutchinson.



Cultivating Asparagus, Ryer Island 1926

The Fresno Scraper By Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

The Fresno Scraper was invented in 1883 by James Porteous. "Working with farmers in Fresno, California, he had recognized the dependence of the Central San Joaquin Valley on irrigation and the need for a more efficient means of constructing canals and ditches in the sandy soil. Porteous made several revisions on his own."

According to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, it was one of the most important agricultural and civil engineering machines ever made. In 1991, the Fresno Scraper was designated as an International Historic Engineering Landmark by ASME.



“The design of the Fresno Scraper forms the basis of most modern earthmoving scrapers, having the ability to scrape and move a quantity of soil, and also discharge it at a controlled depth, thus quadrupling the volume which could be handled manually.”

How does it operate? The Fresno Scraper (unlike prior earth movers) did not push the soil. It lifted the soil into a C-shaped bowl where it could be dragged along with much less friction. The operator who walks at the rear of the machine lifts the handle to control the depth of the bite and then raises it very high when he comes to a low spot that he wants to fill in with soil.

“Between 1884 and 1910, thousands of Fresno scrapers were produced at the Fresno Agricultural Works which had been formed by Porteous, and used in agriculture and land leveling, as well as road and railroad grading and the construction industry. They played a vital role in the construction of the Panama Canal and later served the US Army in World War I.”



Grading a levee with Fresno Scraper

Picture from “Locke & The Sacramento Delta Chinatowns” by Lawrence Tom

Fresno scrapers were used to level as well as to build roads and to contour levees. It was pulled by a team of mules or horses. It was a tool in great demand.

In part, republished from the River News Herald from a Rio Vista Museum article written by Jim Metcalf.

Tidbits of Interest By Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

Riverboats

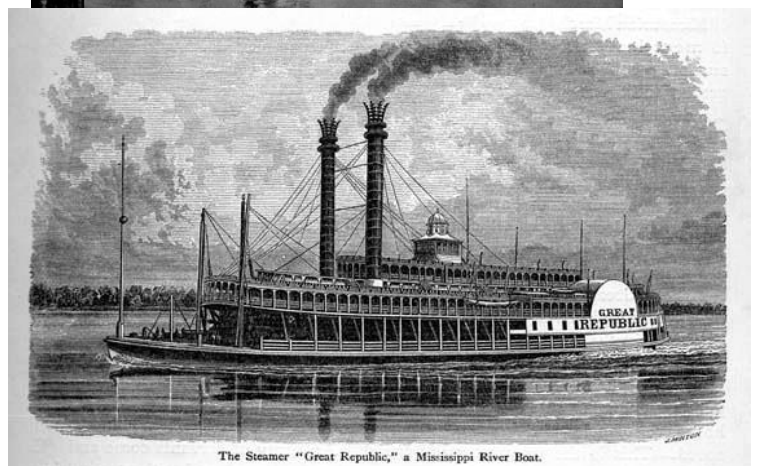
The difference between Sacramento / San Joaquin riverboats and those which plied the Ohio and Mississippi rivers were noticeably two:

California river boats had a single smokestack aft of the wheelhouse; in the Midwest there were two smokestacks aft of the wheelhouse.

In California the boats docked alongside a wharf or landing and freight was off-loaded or brought aboard from the side. The Midwestern boats usually went prow first into the shoreline, a gangway was lowered from the bow and freight and passengers were off-loaded and loaded prow first. The natural, lower levee made prow-first docking easy.



The Navajo – A Delta Riverboat



The Steamer "Great Republic," a Mississippi River Boat.

--Hawaiians in Late Mexican and Early American California—

Hubert Howe Bancroft in his "History of California" included a 'pioneer register' of men who came to California before the Gold Rush. In the nineteenth century fashion he overlooked pioneering Hawaiians who came to live in California during the Mexican-American transition. Scores of Hawaiians arrived in California during this interregnum. Many worked with the French Canadian and American fur traders. And, unhappily, the Hawaiians brought with them disease which wiped out huge swatches of indigenous Indians. Some of the Hawaiians later found work as snag untanglers on snagboats roaming the waterways of the Delta and the middle and lower Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. Called locally "Kanakas" they were prized for their swimming and diving abilities which entailed staying under water for periods of time to locate and dislodge snags.



An old snagboat

Fancy Food

Oysters were a culinary delight to early Californians. These were probably local to the Bay Area, north. But earlier, ships transported oysters in barrels from the East Coast.

"Special 'oyster trains' crossing the nation to satisfy ever-growing demand stopped in towns large and small, their arrivals listed in daily papers. A few with extra cars for passengers, might stop long enough for people to eat. The Sacramento Daily Union reported on May 10, 1875:

The oyster train arrived last evening and continued on to San Francisco. Arriving in Courtland at 11 o'clock, boats were secured and a row was taken on the river as an extra appetizer for the chicken dinner that was being prepared for them. At 12 o'clock at the sound of the bell, all lined up "Oyster soup?" "Certainly." "Will you have roast chicken, fricassee chicken or roast beef?" One answer from all: "A little of both, with plenty of chicken on the side." "Strawberry shortcake?" "Yes, but make it as long as possible." And then, "Black coffee" and then, "Yes" as usual.

Another new book—

A slim volume "A Taste of History" Vintage Recipes from Sacramento Regional Cookbooks by Maryellen Burns, editor. There are several very tasty looking Delta recipes included. The book can be purchased for \$10.00 plus tax at Strange Cargo in Locke.



Photo from Kathleen of the old Walnut Grove School House in the background which was replaced by the Brick School.

It had a big potbelly stove in the middle, slate blackboards on three walls and two bathrooms. The desks were front to back bolted to runners which were in turn bolted to the floor.

The building was demolished about 2000? After falling into disrepair.

Jerry Waterworth

March 12, 2014

Galen Kusic
Editor



Photos By Galen Kusic

This 2010 photo of Jerry Waterworth in Locke showcases his diverse musical talent. Waterworth, dubbed the "Rembrandt of the River" was an inspirational figure in the Delta. He passed away on Feb. 22.

Gerald "Jerry" Waterworth, known far and wide throughout the Delta as the "Rembrandt of the River" passed away peacefully on February 22 at the ripe old age of 96.

To those that knew Jerry, not only was he an inspiration - but his dedication and love for the Delta was unsurpassed. A scholar, artist and highly skilled musician, the self-taught Waterworth was the modern-day definition of a renaissance man.

His friendly smile and positive attitude was always a joy to be around.

While Jerry may be gone in a physical sense, his spirit lives on through all of those that were fortunate enough to know him over the years. His unmatched knowledge of the area, unbridled affinity for classy humor and storytelling made his presence welcomed wherever he went.

Above is an excerpt from the River News Herald & Isleton Journal published March 12, 2014.

Jerry was a Past President of our organization – Sacramento River Delta Historical Society – and helped us in so many different ways. He volunteered his time in the resource center, recorded many oral histories from our membership and was a joy to talk to at our meetings and other Delta functions. He also was a founder of the Pear Fair. He was a wonderful person and we will miss him!

RESOURCE CENTER NEWS

“2015 Calendars” produced by SRDHS are soon to be printed. They feature “another” 12 pear labels from Jim Dahlberg’s collection in frameable sizes. They will be available for sale at Courtland’s Pear Fair and at the center beginning in August. See sample of our new labels and order form on next page.

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 or Bobbie at 777-6792 to make sure we will be there and join us.

SRDHS 2014 SCHEDULE

July/August.....	Summer Break
September 16.....	General Meeting
October 21.....	Board Meeting
November 18.....	General Meeting
December.....	Board Meeting
	December Newsletter
January 20, 2015.....	Annual Potluck

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INFORMATION

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society web site is srdhs.org. Please view and enjoy the information. If you wish to email the resource center, the email address is srdhs@riverdeltawireless.com.

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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

Then make sure you pay your 2014 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):
 2014 2015 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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS FOR 2014

- Alane Alchorn from Wilton
- Mark Alchorn from Wilton
- Maryellen Dabaghian from Sacramento
- Mark & Elizabeth Edwards from Walnut Grove
- Robert Globus from Walnut Grove
- Loree Saberin from Hood
- Warren D. Smith from Isleton
- Roy & Yuriki Yokoi from Ryde

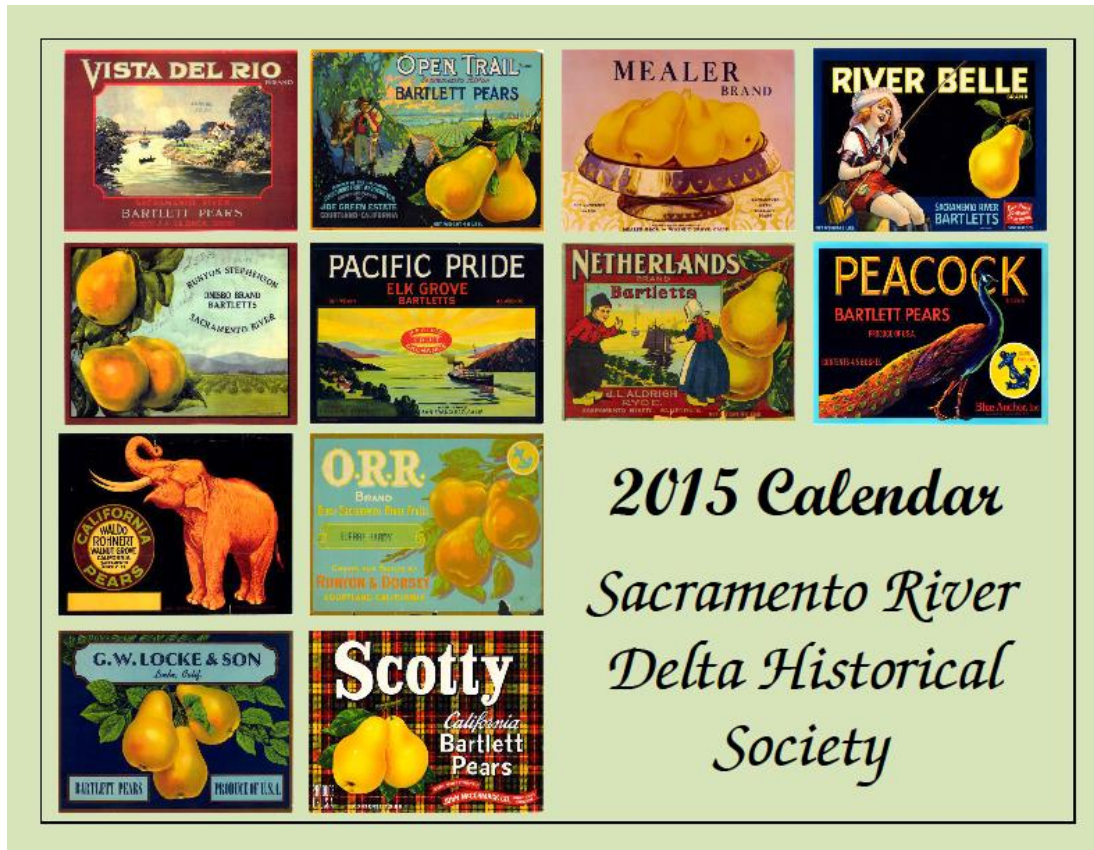
NEWSLETTER STAFF

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

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

NEW “2015” SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR AVAILABLE AT PEAR FAIR OR AFTER AUGUST 1st

Here is a preview of the cover of the delightful 2015 Calendar representing more Pear Labels from Jim Dahlberg’s Collection. Each month shows a different Pear Label and there is one page with explanations of each of the labels shown.



The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society’s “Pear Label” Calendar for 2015 may be purchased at the Courtland Pear Fair July 27th 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 calendar is \$15.00 (plus postage if applicable)

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

1 Calendar \$15 plus \$2 postage

2 - 6 calendars \$15 each plus \$3.00 postage for media mail (7-12 day delivery)

Or

2 - 6 calendars \$15 each plus \$5.25 for priority mail (2 to 3 day delivery)

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Calendar Order Form

Please send _____ calendars @ \$15 per calendar

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____