

# 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 2005

### PRESIDENTS NOTES

Well here we are again and another year almost in history. We've had an exciting year. We heard about Locke and it's origins, an old tool collection, Chinese workers and their employment on the Trans-Continental Railroad, a visit and lecture on the replica shrimp fishing junk and on writings of the history of the Rancho Murieta area. We sponsored two of our local schools for field trips to tour the Chinese junk with great success. The students are still talking about this adventure. The building of the museum in Locke has been purchased by the state and is in the planning stages for construction. In the Resource Center many more pictures, documents and oral histories have been cataloged. We have received a number of donated items for the Resource Center. Thanks to all for the donations. A number of oral histories have been taken this year. We need your help to capture more of these oral histories because these voices of history are precious treasures, not to be lost to the hands of time. We again hosted the Sacramento Consortium meeting this summer (a coalition of all the history societies and agencies in the Sac area). We also outreached our society with a display table at the Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center for their open house this fall. We can be proud of all the volunteers who have made this year a success.

On a sad note, we lost our friend and historian Bob Heringer a few weeks ago. I worked with Bob when we hosted the Pear Fair history display in Courtland using the old picture plates from the Friends of the Clarksburg Library. Bob had spent many hours developing and working with these plates of pictures so we all could enjoy their historic treasures. His expertise of our area history will be greatly missed. I hope we can come up to the plate and continue on with his dreams and goals.

As time has moved on the early years for many have become historical. Those born in the 10's, 20's, 30's and 40's are now on a historical list. Your pictures, documents, books, and collectibles from these years have become important stuff. Yes, we have computer and modern technology but having an original is a treasure. It kind of scares me to the fact that one day our own Resource Center is going to be full. The Sacramento Archives or State Library may run out of room. Our

museums may be overflowing. Storing all these items requires space, good cataloging, humidity control and certain maintenance. I guess we as collectors have created a goal for our further historians. Have a Merry Christmas Season. Tom

### SOCIETY NOTES

The combination of free lunch, the Delta and an interest in history brought out a large representation of the County area historical societies for a meeting in Walnut Grove. The Sacramento Area Consortium brings together the people interested in history and all its phases. There are museums, ranches, cemeteries, archives, libraries and lunch at Jean Harvie Senior and Community Center.

The last Sunday in July Courtland continued its traditional Pear Fair. All manners of pear concoctions were sold for community benefit. Slightly subdued but lively everyone seemed to have a good time. There was a parade, pear juice, and a history exhibit and crafts booths. All this put together by Sonia Huestis, Keri Stump and their helpers. The library had a book sale and the town council had a booth selling pears and pear juice.

The Annual Potluck Dinner in January will feature, besides good food, Jim Dahlberg and his fabulous Pear Label collection. Some of the early ones are real works of art. Save Tuesday, January 17th!

The Resource Center has a number of projects going along well. Gathering and transcribing oral histories, getting donations accessed, entering everything into the computer for easy access and collecting newspaper and magazine articles.

Congratulations to whomever arranged the programs this past year. They were all most interesting and fun to attend. We started the year with Ping Lee telling some of Locke's hidden secrets, followed by Bruce Crawford's "Images of America Isleton," Jim Kuykendall and his antique bottle collection, followed by Jerry Waterworth and his antique tools, the The Grace Quan with John Muir and finally authoress Naida West and her books "Eye of the Bear" and "River of Red Gold." It was a year to remember.

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

### JANUARY GENERAL MEETING & ANNUAL POTLUCK

Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm

Jean Harvie Community Center 14273 River Road, Walnut Grove

**Jim Dahlberg**

will present a program showing his 40 year plus collection of Delta Labels

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

NL VOL 25 # 002 RB

**WALNUT GROVE 1850-1970**

Written by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

This is the continuation of our Towns along the River series. We have completed Ryde, Vorden and Courtland. This is a multi part history of 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. Many thanks in advance to Art Brown, Fran Brown, Barbara Brooks, Marilyn Dye Fisher, "Terry" Salisbury, John Salisbury, Katherine Oda, Russ Graham, Jr. and to some who are no longer with us, Bill Berry and Bill Hutchinson among others.--Ed.

**PART FIVE**

By 1888 Walnut Grove had spanned the river. A ferry connected the east and west banks. The ferry slip was approximately located at the site of the present bridge. Around 1888 there was a scattering of buildings on the west bank: The Vollman House roughly opposite "Dagmar's Landing", a cannery on the inside levee upstream a short way from the ferry and a little later, the ferryman's house which once was at the levee (on the vacant lot next to the service station). The house was moved off the levee and behind what were car agency premises. It still stands. The other notable structure was the Robert L. Kercheval house at the north corner of 1st Ave. and the levee road. After the Kerchevals, "Old Dad" Eldred a carpenter/contractor for the Brown Estate Co. lived in the house. Youngsters labeled it the "haunted house."

As time progressed other businesses located on the west bank. Jack Veteren opened "Veterens Garage." (This is the building in which "Deckhands" is located.) The family lived in back and the front was a Ford Motor Agency called the Walnut Grove Motor Co. Ford Motor cars, Lincoln Motor cars and Fords on Tractors were sold. Veterens, sometime after 1925 switched to Studebaker. The Studebaker show room shared the front premises with a "Red and White Store" (Groceries). The Butchy brothers when they first arrived in Walnut Grove from Oklahoma pumped gas at Veterens Garage. Later they opened their own garage and Blacksmith machine shop opposite the Texaco wharf. They developed a power buck rake at their shop. Carr brothers, Bob and Frank, (his daughter Nedra was Jack Brown's second wife.) followed Veteren in ownership. They were electrical and mechanical "engineers." The brothers' houses stood next to each other between what was the Gilmore Gas station and the garage. One of the houses became the convent associated with St. Anthony's Church. Only one house remains. Below the garage was a separate business, a Blacksmith shop, where horses were shod and general blacksmithing undertaken. During Carr Brothers

ownership Hughie Haines operated the blacksmith shop. Haines also was a plumber who in the course of general plumbing laid spray lines in the orchards and installed industrial pumps.

The "Red Lion" Gilmore gas station "Roar with Gilmore," later became Komoorian's Cleaners followed, in the ???/??? '60's by Wall's "Ideal Cleaners, Ideal Cleaners later moved across the river to the building, which is currently "The Pumphouse".

The "new" Ford agency was housed in the building opposite the old Bridge. It had both showroom and garage and was first owned by a Mr. Marsh followed by Frank Judy and then by Fran Awalt (who was married to Kathryn Brown daughter of Art and Amy Brown) and lastly Bob Coates. The Chevrolet Agency was housed on Vollman property in a white art deco structure. Owned by Jack Molino the agency also had both a showroom and a garage among the employees was Rico Mello. Red Gleason was the service man. Molino also sold and serviced large household appliances. Between the two car agencies was Cunha's Mobil Service Station "Moblegas" operated by John Cunha.

Next to Molino's was the Central Market. It was built by and operated for many years by the Morias family, followed by the Ferreira family. Dee Wise operated a barbershop in the small addition on the left until moving to the lower level of the new Post Office building across the river. Above the barbershop an office area was used by at one time a dentist and at another time by an accountant.

Across from these buildings and next to the old bridge was the Grove Inn. Painted green with white trim the cafe overhung the river. The Grove Inn was a sit-down restaurant serving a three course dinner. Bee was the head waitress or manager. All the other restaurants had oriental help. The Grove Inn, is also remembered for its wonderful milkshakes and at one time located near the Central Market and roughly oppose the ferry slip was a bakery.

In the mid-1920's the west bank became a sought after residential area. Above the Robert Kercheval house six new houses were built. Those of: Stanford Brown, John Brown's "Orchard Gables," Russell Durbin, Myron Brown, William Hutchinson and lastly Stewart Brown whose house had no square corners having a partial circle design. The marshland which became Clampett Tract was purchased about the same time from Robert Kercheval by Bob Clampett. At first called Clampetville it soon became known as Clampett Tract. It is in Clampett Tract that the Walnut Grove Fire Station #1 is located on Second Avenue near the levee.

Three churches were established on the west side. The first was St. Anthony's Catholic Church on

Walnut Avenue. The church designed by Harry J. Devine of Sacramento was dedicated December 1931. The lot was purchased from the local builder Max Hannum for \$1650. The parish combined two much older and smaller parishes of Vorden/Courtland and Ryde. Those on the building committee who raised money to build the church were: J. E. Bu, Joseph C. Freitas, Karl Herzog, Joe Machado, Norbert Mosher, Michael D. Riordan, Joe Thomas, Dr. John Drew, Frank Gwerder, Jack McGrath, Joseph Miller, Dr. Raymond Primasing, S. Mercer Runyon and Frank Tenente. Father Healy was pastor at the time.

The Walnut Grove Community Presbyterian Church on Grand Avenue was founded in 1951. The second Mrs. John Brown (Zella), who was architectural chairman, was a major force in advancing construction. The land was purchased from Myron Brown. Darrell Mealer chaired the fund raising committee. The building committee consisted of Russell Graham Sr., Wm. P. Darsie, and Wm. Schauer. The Board of Trustees were; Chairman, Wm. P. Darsie, Hubert Brown, James Moser, Ralph Smith, Wm. R. Darsie, B.F. Hodges, Ed Lyons, Lee Hanson and Russell Graham, Sr., Vice Chairman. Dean and Dean of Sacramento were the architects.

The third church in Clampett Tract was the Christian Science Church at the corner of 1st Avenue and Walnut Avenue. By 1940 it had an active congregation which slowly dwindled over the years. The church was closed and the building converted to a home.

Also on Grove Street, but later also converted to houses were the two successive medical offices of Dr. Paul Barnes. And on Third Avenue a new convent was constructed. Near the levee at Fourth Avenue are two apartment buildings “The Schauer Apartments,” constructed by local contractor Bill Schauer, Jr. The Schauer Construction Company located on the Walnut Grove-Thornton Road is a third generation Walnut Grove business.

Walnut Grove continues to thrive. On the West Side house construction continues with the opening of a new tract on Towne property thereby expanding Clampett Tract. On the East Side of the river old buildings are being slowly rehabilitated. Walnut Grove remains the major market town on the river between Sacramento and Rio Vista.

This concludes our article on Walnut Grove. Next issue we will start the history of another of the towns of the Delta.

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

**SRDHS 2006 SCHEDULE**

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

**January 17.....General Meeting/Annual Potluck**  
**February 21.....Board Meeting**  
**March 21.....General Meeting**  
**April 18.....Board Meeting**  
**May 16.....General Meeting**  
**June 20.....Board Meeting**

**June Newsletter**

**July/August.....Summer Break**  
**September 19.....General Meeting**  
**October 17.....Board Meeting**  
**November 21.....General Meeting**  
**December.....Board Meeting**

**December Newsletter**

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

*Then make sure you pay your 2006 dues!  
Use this form, or one of our handy dues envelopes...*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

- I'm paying ANNUAL dues for the following year(s):  
 2006  other \_\_\_\_\_  
\$25 a year for Individual/Family/Business 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 the SRDHS to:

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

**BROWN FAMILY**

A short outline of the Brown Family. John Brown son of Alex Brown of Lanarkshire, Scotland married Agnus Robertson, emigrated to Canada and then to Portsmouth, New Hampshire where their son Alex was born in 1849. There were six children, but only Alex and his sister Christine survived.

Christine married A. J. Drury of Oakland. He died young and she moved to Newcastle, Placer County. Alex married Kate Stanford in San Francisco and they also had six children of which five survived John Stanford, Arthur Alexander, Frank Emmons, Agnes Helen, Alexander R. "Allie," and Lottie who died an infant. Alex died in 1923 and Kate in 1925.

Of their children, John Stanford married (1st) Florence Bowie who was the school teacher. There were four children: Stanford married Marian McCreary and had 2 daughters Florence and Jane; Jack married (1st) Peggy Moore from Maxwell Colusa County and had four children two who died young.(2nd) Nedra Carr daughter of Frank Carr; Jeanette married (1st) Dr. Frank Gorman and had four children and (2nd) Kjell Rostaad; Hubert married Frances Meredith and had four children 2 who died young and by his second wife Zella McCreary, one child Alexandra "Sandra" who married Janes Stice and had one child.

Arthur Alexander married Amy Dye daughter of Sperry Dye and Elizabeth Sharp. They had two children: Kathryn who married Fran Awalt and had 2 daughters Kathryn and Stephanie; Myron who married Helen Cole and had two sons Arthur W. and Thomas.

Helen married Russell Durbin and had two children Robert who married Ruth and had three children and Jean who married Burt Walsch and they had no children. Helen died of influenza in the 30's. Russell Durbin married (2nd) Edna Costello of Elk Grove.

Frank married Ardella "Dell" who was postmaster. WHERE? They had one son Frank Jr. who died a young man in an apparent homicide in Oakland. Frank died in his 30's.

Alex R. (Allie) married Christine Shields. They had four children: Josephine, who married (1st) George Barnes and (2nd) Roy Riegels "Wrong Way Roy," who became Roy Riegels Ag Chemicals of Woodland. They had two daughters (3rd) Ted Meyers and had one son. Christine who married (1st) Victor von Hagen from Germany and (2nd) Ed Powell from the Isle of Man. Sandy married Doris Daniels and had four children and who died crop dusting in Arizona. Nora, who married a Colton of Elk Grove and had three children. Allie died of influenza in his thirties. His widow Christine married Joe Brooks a New Englander and had one daughter Barbara.

**LOCKE BOARDING HOUSE**

California State Parks is organizing a Historic Structure Report for the building which was formerly a boarding house at the far north end of Locke, just across from the Joe Shoong Chinese School. The building will be re-used as a museum and visitor center in the future. The boarding house was run by the Kuramoto family from 1921 to 1942. For historical background, we seek people who lived in the house as boarders at any time or who have any other specific information about the building or the people who lived there. Please contact Jay Galloway, Park Superintendent Delta Sector, CA State Parks at (916)777.7702 or Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group (415)421.1680.

**BITS OF HISTORY**

Bayside Canning Co. was opened in 1906 in Alviso, Santa Clara County by Thomas Chew. By 1921 it was the third largest cannery in the United States. There was a branch in Isleton.

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