

SRDHS

SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 293  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Volume III Issue 1

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MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 1981

# ANNUAL MEETING

The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society cordially invites all members and friends to the fifth annual meeting and the third gala dinner to be held on Monday evening, January 19, 1981. Invitations have been mailed listing details of the pot luck meal which Chairmen Barbara Dahlberg and Ella Nielsen are organizing. All those attending are asked PLEASE to respond promptly by calling their community representative listed on the invitation; these committee members include Doris Waterworth, 775-1583; Louise Craven, 374-2997; Barbara Dahlberg, 776-1923; Yvonne Pylman, 744-1354 and Jean Harvie, 777-6219. Each family is asked to provide a main dish, salad, or dessert and to indicate their selection when calling to RSVP. Wine, bread, coffee, and beverage will be furnished.

The evening's festivities will begin at 6:30 p.m. at St. Anthony's Parish Hall in Walnut Grove. Entertainment will again be provided by the Clarksburg musical ensemble, The New Holland Combine. Down-home guest violinist Lynn Reeves of Reno has been invited to join the group for this performance. A slide show program of vintage photos will test the mettle of history buff's recall. A short business meeting will include the election of officers, museum reports, and recognition of outstanding volunteers.

Antique door prizes will be awarded to winners in several categories. A memorabilia exhibition is planned, and a display table will be provided for any historical objects guests might wish to share.

Invitations list highlights of the evening as Fun, Food, Door Prizes, Music, and Good Company. Plan now to attend by calling one of the numbers noted above; a response no later than January 15 will be helpful in arranging seating and serving preparations.

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## ONE MAN'S STORY

"Man's Story as Told by Man", presented by Philip Elhert, delighted members at the November 17th meeting of the SRDHS. From his youth in "Carville", the Village or Outer Sunset District of San Francisco, he brought stories of the people and their homes, activities, pleasures, tragedies, accomplishments, foibles, and industry during the decade of the 20's. Mr. Elhert, a member of the local society, teaches in Sacramento and is the past president of the Sacramento Historical Society.

In the business meeting a report by the nominating committee suggested officer positions for the coming year; plans for the annual dinner were announced, and compliments were extended to those who faithfully staffed the museum. A display of books containing rare pictures of the early Delta were available following the meeting and drew many points of additional information from members. Refreshments were provided by Chairman Alice Quick and committee members Millie Nikula, Isabell Wilson, and Daisy Merwin.

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# DID YOU KNOW ?

From "Sacramento, A Mini History" by Lou and Phyllis Zauner come the following notes:

During the flamboyant years of the Gold Rush, there was never enough wheat to provide bread for the advancing army of prospectors, and flour became preposterously speculative in Sacramento. But by 1856, California was raising enough for its own needs, and in 1873 it was the largest wheat-producing state in the nation. Those were the days when Sacramento River barges, or shallow-draft "dew skinning" steamers, took the golden grain down the river to the Bay, which led to the world beyond.

But in the 1880's Australia and Canada began to pour their crops onto the world market, and the price of wheat dropped drastically. That's when Sacramento farmers decided to look into the profits of raising fruits and vegetables. For the small farmer it proved a wise move, for it was difficult for a man owning less than a thousand acres to compete with the wheat barons. Whereas raising grain required a \$20,000 investment in land, machinery and teams, \$5,000 would produce an orchard or vineyard to yield at least a moderate living. Thus began the sprawling orchards of plums, pears, and peaches that proliferated Sacramento's outlying reaches--

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The first successful commercial fruit cannery in Sacramento was the Capitol Packing Company at Front and K Streets. As early as 1882 they were advertising themselves as "packers of hermetically sealed goods." In the first year of business, 400 workers canned 40,000 cases of fruit, honey, asparagus and salmon-- "without a single can spoiling."

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An unusual item of freight on the early steamer runs was cats--common cats. Rats were such a plague at the diggings that their feline enemies sold for twenty-five dollars

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(During the Gold Rush era) Gambling wasn't confined to standard games like monte, faro, and fantan. An entrepreneur in Sacramento who purchased a herd of camels he thought might be useful as pack animals in Nevada, decided to pick up a little extra money by staging a Dromedary Race.

Sacramentans were enchanted. The beasts were taken to a fenced oval race track, and after heavy betting by spectators, were prodded into running. There were no jockeys. Each camel carried a placard bearing a number.

The race started out well enough, the camels humping right along. But at the first turn every camel elected to sink to its knees. More prodding. More cussing. The camels reluctantly resumed the silly race. At the second turn they all sank to their knees once again. And this time no amount of cussing or bullwhipping would make them change their minds. Arguments over settlement of bets lasted for years.

# NOMINATIONS MADE

At the November meeting of the SRDHS Galen Whitney, Chairman, presented the recommendations of the Nominating Committee for officers to serve for the 1981 year. He placed the following slate in nomination and announced that further nominations from the floor would also be accepted. Voting will take place at the January 19, 1981, annual meeting of the society. The proposed list includes

- President-Kathie Graham
- Vice Presidents-Ed and Linda Dutra
- Recording Secretary-Sarah Wings
- Corresponding Secretary-Jennie Sheehan
- Treasurer-Chris Giovannoni
- Board Members (81 & 82)
  - Carel van Loben Sels
  - Frank Wilcox
  - Yvonne Pylman
  - Robert James
- Continuing Board Terms (79 & 80)
  - Doris Waterworth
  - Frances Armstrong
  - Clarence Pratt
  - Maryn Whitney
- Past President
  - Judy Nerwin

It is the responsibility of the board and officers to oversee the operations of the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society, including the Dai Loy museum, to make policy, and to propose and facilitate new projects which would help to preserve the history of the Delta.

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February is the month of dues and membership renewals for the society. Everyone who sends his payment in before notices arrive will save the society postage. (Every little bit certainly helps!)

Membership categories follow:

- Regular.....\$ 6
- Senior Citizen... 3
- Student..... 3
- Family..... 12
- Sustaining..... 20
- Patron..... 50
- Life.....150

Checks may be made payable to the SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY and mailed to the treasurer at P.O. Box 293 Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Please enclose your name and address.

New enrollments are welcome at all times. Each current member is encouraged to invite a friend to join. The SRDHS seeks members who are interested in gathering and preserving the history of the area and in becoming more informed about the lore and personalities of the Delta's colorful past.

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THE DAI LOY MUSEUM OPENS IN MARCH !!