

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

“Those Who Do Not Learn History Are Doomed to Repeat It.”

Attributed to Philosopher George Santayana

Often this quote seems rather trite to those who hear or repeat it, but after our presentation in May of the movie “The Ito Sisters: An American Story”, those of you who attended may have a better understanding of why this quote still holds great meaning. This excellent documentary by Antonia Glenn really brought home the history of the Japanese internment in World War II and the relevance to our local communities. Following the presentation, I was proud of the stories of local residents in the Delta who stood up for their Japanese friends and neighbors, in some cases protecting their farms and possessions until their return. Sadly, many did not return home to their communities because they were not welcomed back. It was a difficult time for many who lost loved ones in the savage war in the South Pacific.

The documentary also illustrates that our History survives and thrives because of the pictures, writings, and oral stories that many have collected and are willing to pass on to those with an interest. While many of us shun Facebook due to the mindless drivel, fake news, personal security issues, and the attacks and criticisms vented by users, I have found that it is an excellent platform for historical groups. You can find and join a “Group” related to almost any area of historical interest that holds your curiosity. Groups on farming, steamboats, railroads, or even specific ethnic groups can be found. Facebook groups, such as California History, Old Photos of the Napa Valley, California's Historic Highways, or San Francisco History offer a wealth of information and often can help solve historical questions you might have or allow you to share your specific knowledge and historical materials with others. All of these groups have moderators who filter both the content and tone of the discussion.

One of the few redeeming qualities of Facebook is that you can interact with only those Groups you are interested in. If you ignore the sponsored content and goofy quizzes, these History Groups can open up a whole new world of access to our history in both pictures and story.

That said, we have created a Facebook Group called; Sacramento River Delta Historical Society. It is our hope that this venue will be used to share photos, stories, etc. The SRDHS archives contain a wealth of digitized photos that we will strive to make available to group members and share amongst other relevant historical groups. The Facebook Group will also be utilized to promote our presentations to others outside our membership. Please, join the Group, submit pictures and relevant stories. Enjoy a unique window to historical content!

In closing, I encourage all members to attend the Pear Fair on July 29th and visit the SRDHS exhibit in the auditorium. There will be a display of antique pear farming equipment, photographs from the collection of the Clarksburg library, and sales of our calendar and Pear cookbook. If you are inclined, please volunteer to assist board members at the Pear Fair. It is very rewarding to answer questions for visitors to our wonderful area and the board could really use your help. Please call or email me if you are interested.

John Stutz, President
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46th Annual July 29, 2018

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

With the finish of the asparagus season, we publish another letter written from the East, from Wm N.L. Hutchinson's 1938 informative inspection trip East for the Tyler-Pac growers of Walnut Grove.

Walnut Grove, California
 May 23, 1938.

California Asparagus Growers Association,
 Walnut Grove, California.

The last letter I wrote you was written in Chicago, and was about my trip through the State of Michigan. I arrived in Chicago on Saturday and stayed over Sunday, and had an appointment on Monday with a large canning broker in the city of Chicago.

I checked with him the spread between the F.O.B. sale of asparagus, and up to the time it got on the grocer's shelf. Trying to use the same yard-stick which I wrote you about in New York, this is the way it works. If a jobber buys at \$1.70 a dozen f. o. b., California, his freight would be about 13¢ which would make about \$1.83 delivered in Chicago. The jobber tries to get 15% for his profit and the retailer tries to make from 20% to 25%. The retailer figures that it costs him from 14% to 18% to do business. The variance between those two percentages is on account of his location and the rent which he may have to pay for his store. Of course, competition might vary these percentages but those are the figures which they try and shoot at. The buyer on a 20¢ can sale doesn't like to pay more than \$1.90; on a 15¢ sale, not more than \$1.40; and on a 10¢ sale, not more than 90¢ or 95¢; and on a 25¢ sale, not more than \$2.40.

I will give you below from quotations that this man had for Illinois canned asparagus showing the number of spears per can and their quotation:

<u>Size</u>	<u>No. of Spears</u>	<u>Price</u>
#1 Large	16-21	\$1.65
#1 Medium	18-24	1.42
#1 Small	25-32	1.35
#300	18-24	2.00
#300	25-32	1.90
#300	33-50	1.75
#300	51-70	1.65
#2	25-32	2.55
#2	33-50	2.35
#2	51-70	2.30
#2	71-95	2.20
#10—soup cuts		6.45

From Chicago, I went down to Anna, Illinois, which is in the Southern part of Illinois and is situated right where the Ohio River comes into the Mississippi and is just a few miles from Cairo., which we read so much about in the papers during the last floods. In fact, a lot of the land in this territory was flooded and was under 16 feet of water this last winter.

The top price of land values in this district was \$40.00 an acre but any amount of land can be bought for \$25.00 an acre. They plant the Mary Washington asparagus altogether. The sizes of the holdings are very small. 1, 2 and 3 acres and up to 5 acres predominate. The average life, they figure, is from 10 to 15 years, but I saw one bed that was 25 years old and it was still producing some asparagus. The cutting is done by Negroes and local help, all of it on an hour, basis and they receive 12½¢ an hour working in the fields, and in the canneries the women get 17½¢ an hour and the men 25¢. The length of the season runs up to July 1st. They only cut their fields once a day and from the cutting I saw they were very well up with their cutting because the heads were very tight.

Practically all of the asparagus grown in the State of Illinois is canned at the present time. A very small percentage of it is sent to the market. The canner buys the asparagus in little bunches held together with elastic and placed in a lug box with the tips in the center of the box. These bunches are cut to 5 1/2" although the spears vary from 5" to 6" and the canner makes no deduction for overlength.

This asparagus in the Southern Illinois district is bought at 7½¢ a pound, field run. This district around Anna does not produce enough asparagus to keep a plant running so they buy asparagus at Godfree, Illinois, which is 180 miles away, and in this district the grower bunches it just as he does in the Anna district but he grades it in sizes and the price paid is as follows:

1/4 to 3/8" spears	6¢ lb.
3/8 to 1/2" spears	8½¢ lb.
1/2" and larger	10¢ lb.

The grower delivers this asparagus to a central receiving station and it is graded by the canner's own employees and then the canner hauls this asparagus to his cannery from this receiving station. This canner, estimated that the hauling from the Godfree district costs him 25¢ a hundred. This canner is using every influence he possesses to get the growers to plant more asparagus adjacent to his own cannery so that he can eliminate this hauling. As in other districts, the grower is making more money on his asparagus than he is on any other crop that he raises. The canner furnishes the boxes which the grower delivers his asparagus in at no cost. I expressed one of these

crates to California so that you can see the container that they use. The grading that is done by these canners is negligible and they say that they are trying to get in good favor with the growers in this district, and they kind of wink at flowered. heads or any defect.

This asparagus down in Southern Illinois is cut with no ridge on the ground and it is all, full green, and even though it was quite cold weather when I was there and the production was quite small, you could not find an iota of white on the spear. This cannery was the only cannery which I visited on my trip that packed his asparagus with the tips up in the can, which I think is a very good practice because the other canners were packing the tip, down and pushed in the can. I think the tips were bruised

The planting of asparagus in his district is undoubtedly going to increase because most of the plantings are old at the present time, and this canner who has just come into the picture in the last few years has turned their deal from a non-profitable deal into a very profitable one.

When these growers ship to the market, they use a crate that is about one-half as wide as ours and it is all bunched and held together with elastic. In the district close to Chicago they use every kind of container imaginable; orange boxes, tomato boxes or any kind they can get hold of, but it is all bunched and held together with elastic instead of ribbon.

They use very little commercial fertilizer in this district but they use an enormous amount of manure. Some of them when they plant make their furrow very deep, then put manure in the bottom, throw dirt on it and then plant their root, and they continue the addition of fertilizer all during the life of the asparagus.

I then returned to Chicago and the next day went out to Rochelle, Illinois, which is about 75 miles from the city, and went over the asparagus fields and through the canning plant, The Rochelle Canning Company is one of the oldest canneries in the Middle West or the Eastern district and they started conning asparagus in 1926. They own 1500 acres of land which is adjacent to their plant, and they have about one-half of this acreage planted to asparagus at the present time. There are very few growers outside of their own production and they expect to complete the planting of their 1500 acres in the next few years.

Their land values are around \$75.00 to \$100 an acre and they are planting all Mary Washington asparagus. They do not know what the life of their beds will be because their plantings started in 1923 and these

plantings are still producing well. They have the same cutting season that they have in other districts, and they take the asparagus from the field in lug boxes and they use the same container that beer is shipped in. In fact, they buy these lugs from the beer manufacturer to use in their asparagus. They try to get a 7½" spear and they keep very accurate account of their production. The grader puts it in cutting boxes and cuts it to a point where it is all green spear and then that is weighed, and that is the production given to that individual field.

This canning plant was full, of machinery, and the asparagus was out and sized by machinery. Asparagus is the only commodity that they can in this plant.

They pay the highest wages of any district I was in. The cutters receive 40¢ an hour, and the manager of this plant told me that the cost per hundred pounds last year amounted to \$1.02 per hundred. He was running some experiments on piece work when I was there and he guaranteed these cutters 40¢ an hour and told them at ¾ a lb. if they made more than 40¢, he would give it to them. In the two days at the ¾ a pound, they made 45¢ an hour.

They cut the asparagus and put it in baskets and carry it to the ends of the rows and there it is put in these beer boxes and hauled by truck to the cannery, They are not interested in any asparagus unless it is absolutely full green, and if it has any, white on it at all, they don't want it, The production that they are getting is 4000 pounds to the acre. They think in their plantings that they are putting in now, with what they know now about asparagus, that they are going to increase their production. This is on heavy land around Rochelle with a very high water table and it has drainage ditches and tile under the ground.

Now, I forgot to tell you about their production in Southern Illinois. The production in that area is very much lower than around Rochelle. They figure an average production in Southern Illinois of about 2000 pounds per acre.

I have the grades that they pack at Rochelle and they are as follows:

<u>Size</u>		<u>No. of Spears</u>
# 1	Medium	18 - 24
#1	Small	25 - 32
#300	Mammoth	12 - 17
#300	Large	18 - 24
#300	Medium	25 - 32
#300	Small	33 - 50

#2	Mammoth	16-24
#2	Large	25-32
#2	Medium	33-50
#2	Small	55-70

The manager of this plant seems to think that they are making a lot of money and he pointed out a ranch to me saying that if this man had followed our instructions and our advice and planted asparagus, he would not have lost his farm.

These people do not ship any asparagus at all to the fresh market. It is all canned. They use very little commercial fertilizer but an enormous amount of manure, putting on ten to fifteen tons to the acre every year. They plant with the same methods that we do in California with the exception that the rows are from four to five feet apart, and this is true of all the asparagus in Illinois.

In trying to sum up a little bit the information I have received I find that the housewives do not know whether they are buying California asparagus, Illinois asparagus or Jersey asparagus, but in the same quality of production you have to have the same price. The big swing is toward green asparagus, and when I mean green, I mean all green.. The only reason for it is that the people seem to like green asparagus better than they do white. The canners are all worried a little bit about the effect of the quick freeze, not knowing just how far it is going to go. The increase of the canning of asparagus in the Middle West and the East is not caused so much by the increase of plantings but is due to the fact that canneries have come in in the last two to three years and are buying this asparagus that formerly went to the market, and the canner coming in and taking this asparagus that in former years sold very cheap on the fresh market, has turned the asparagus business in these sections from a very mediocre profit into a very profitable deal. In fact, all of these districts claim that they are making more money on asparagus than any other crop thus they are raising and it is obvious that with this situation that there is going to be large plantings.

Outside of the Rochelle cannery in Illinois and the Cannon Cannery in Delaware, I found no processors who own their own production and I found no canners at the present time who were advancing money to growers for planting. For this reason, your increase in plantings, I do not think are going to be as rapid as they have been in California where you have large canneries planting large acreages and you have commission merchants and canneries advancing money to growers for planting. However, you are going to see increased plantings in all of these districts and they seem to think they can finance their deals without the aid of commission merchants or canneries.

I am attaching a sheet showing the percentage of old and new asparagus in the various districts, which is as accurate as I can possibly get this information. I am also attaching a consolidated

sheet showing the tonnage, wage scale, and prices paid in the different sections.

State	New Jersey	South Carolina	Delaware	Michigan	Illinois	
Total Acreage	12490 ac.	8000 ac.	1100 ac.	1550 ac.	3600 ac.	
% less 5 yrs.	5000 ac.	Practical-ly none	550 ac.	775 ac.	1/3 acreage	
% betw. 5 & 10 years	5000 ac.	2/3 of acreage is 5 yrs. or over. No further information.	Balance older than 5 years	Balance older than 5 years.	Balance over 5 years. Mostly old.	
% older than 10 years.	2500 ac.					
General Field Wage	25¢ Hr.	Blk M 6¢ H Blk F 5¢ H White M 75¢ day	17 1/2¢ Hr.	W 20¢ Hr. M 25¢ Hr.	South North 12 1/2¢ H 40¢ H.	
Cannery Wage	W 35¢ H. M 40¢ H.	Wh W 15¢ Wh M 20-30¢ Blks 6-12¢	W 22 1/2¢ Hr M 25 1/2¢ Hr	W 30¢ Hr M 40¢ Hr	W 17 1/2¢ M 25¢	30¢ H. 40¢ H.
Prod. per acre	4000 lbs.	1500 to 1800 lbs.	100-125 crates per acre	4000 lbs. Up to 5000 lbs.	1500 lbs.	4000 lbs.
Value of land	\$100-150 acre	\$20-40 acre	\$75-100 acre	\$60-100 acre	\$25-40 acre	\$100-150 acre
Fertilizer Expense	\$30-35 acre	\$16-17 ac.	\$33 ac.	Heavy manure	Heavy manure	Heavy manure 10-12 tons.
Container used for Cannery Delivery.	Lug box as per sample and fresh shipping crate	Eastern shipping crate	*Market crate Lug Box	Lug Box	Lug Box as per sample	Beer box
Length of spear sold to cannery	9" spear 8 1/2" green *6" spear *4 1/2" gr.	10 1/2" spear	*9" spear 6" spear 4 1/2" green	Any length as long as it is gr.	5-6" spear	Any length up to 7 1/2" if green
Cannery Price	1/2-3/8" 2¢ 3/8-5/8 7 1/2¢ 5/8" up 8¢ *1/2-3/8" 2¢ *3/8 up 8¢	3/8" 90¢ crate Larger \$1.50 a crate	*\$1.25-1.50 crate 1/2-3/8" 2 1/2¢ 3/8-5/8 6¢ 5/8" up 8¢	5¢ lb.	7 1/2¢ field run 1/2-3/8" 6¢ lb. 3/8-1/2" 8 1/2¢ lb 1 1/2" up 10¢ lb	Can- nery owned
Type of Cannery Delivery	Loose in lug box. Some bought on market in crate	Bunch	*Bunch Loose	Loose	Bunch with elastic.	Loose
Contract Labor	1-1 1/4¢ lb. for all ages of asparagus	None	Bunching, cutting & lidding 42¢ crate	None	None	None

* Different type of cannery deal in same state.

I probably overlooked a lot of things that you growers will want to know and I will probably be able to answer a lot of these questions if I have forgotten them in these letters. This will be my last letter and I hope that the information that I have received is what the California grower wants to know.

Wm. N. L. Hutchinson.

(More on Gas Stations)

(Article from The Rio Vista Museum Newsletter - January 2018)

The Edgewater Service Station

by Phil Pezzaglia

In 1923 Lewis Ruble McKinnon had the idea to erect a service station on his property, just across from the Rio Vista Bridge. McKinnon hired Victor Kafenberg to construct the station. And a fine station it was, with the most modern equipment and architecture.

The idea for a service station was born out of necessity, for at that point in time, the only place that you could purchase gasoline in town was at one of the two garages. Mr. McKinnon's grandfather, Lewis Cass Ruble, had purchased the land on which the station was built in the late 1800s. Note that at this time, the old Rio Vista Bridge was located just to the south of the existing bridge.

The Edgewater Service Station started operations with Mr. McKinnon and Mr. Elliott running the business. After a short time, Mr. Elliott removed himself from the partnership. It was then that Mr. Campbell became involved in the operation. Campbell and McKinnon continued to operate the business until 1927, at which time it was purchased by Herman Fisher. Mr. Fisher purchased the business, but Mr. McKinnon retained ownership of the structure and the property.

During Mr. Fisher's years as proprietor of the Edgewater Service Station, there were some changes made. On the south side of the building a grease rack was added. Cars would drive onto the rack, which was level with the levee, while the mechanic worked on the vehicle from a platform approximately five feet below the rack.

On the north side of the building a porch was constructed with a canopy over the top. A large window was placed in the north wall of the Service Station, to be able to look onto the porch. While patrons waited for their cars to be worked on, they could purchase and enjoy a variety of refreshments such as soda pop, milkshakes, ice cream cones, gum and an assortment of candy. There were even times when a few slot machines were placed at the station, to entertain customers while they waited.

Mr. Fisher stocked both batteries and tires. This was a new convenience as the former proprietors would special order tires or batteries when requested by a customer, but they had not carried any inventory. Mr. Fisher would often be at work until midnight, if someone had an emergency. However, regular business hours were 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

When the Antioch Bridge was constructed and the river road was experiencing more traffic, many people stopped in for directions to the Antioch Bridge. After a time, he made arrangements to place a sign above the soft drink stand which read: "ANTIOCH BRIDGE Straight Ahead." In appreciation of the Edgewater Service Station, Herman Fisher could cross the Antioch Bridge without having to pay *any* tolls.

In 1933 Elmer Bushnell purchased the service station from Mr. Fisher. Mr. Bushnell only operated the station for a very short time before selling it to Bob Bruce.

Through the years, the station was subject to a few robberies. These robberies were blamed partially on the fact that the station was so isolated. Since money was never left in the building overnight, inventory such as tires and batteries were usually taken.

Because the location of the station was in direct line with the east end of the Rio Vista Bridge, there were several times when cars skidded on the ice and ran into the pumps. The station was also used by some of the local high school drivers to show off their driving precision, as they would race across the bridge, circle the pumps, and race back across the bridge.

A plan was being developed for both a new Rio Vista Bridge and a road to be constructed, which would go across Brannan Island, after the new Rio Vista Bridge was erected. The State of California contacted Mr. McKinnon regarding the property on which the Edgewater Service Station was situated, since he had retained ownership of the land, only leasing the station to the various owners.

On January 8, 1945, Lewis McKinnon's son Malcolm signed over a bill of sale, which conveyed the service station building and all the equipment therein, to the State of California. The station was torn down and a "new" Rio Vista Bridge was constructed.



The Edgewater Service Station, c. 1927-1933. Note the Antioch Bridge sign.

Historic Society Will Meet

The Historical Society of the Sacramento River Delta will hold its first membership meeting on Monday, May 17 at 8 p.m. at Kinonia Hall in Walnut Grove.

The public is invited to attend and provide input to formulate goals and ideas which may be developed by the Historical Society.

The committee appointed at Isleton in March has met regularly to write the by-laws. Articles of Incorporation which are necessary to the Society in order to function as a tax-free organization have been acquired.

Judge James Gualco has given free time to help with the legalities, according to Mrs. Libby Gordon of Courtland.

Representatives on the committee include Judy Merwin, Jane Olson, Jane Wheeler, Kay Wheeler, Frances Armstrong, Clarence Pratt, Ping Lee, Robert James, Al Amerman, Jean Harvie, Jennie Sheehan, secretary; and Mrs. Gordon, temporary chairman.

5/12/1976

NEW REVISED “PEAR COOKBOOK”

The “Pear Cookbook” and “2019 Calendar” will be available at the Pear Fair on July 29th. The Pear Cookbook is a one of a kind, as very few pear cookbooks have been produced nationally. The new 2019 Label Calendar will also be available.

RESOURCE CENTER NEWS

Thank you for your historical donations to our resource center! We are grateful to have Connie Salzwedel and Nancy Rutherford as volunteers to record our items. **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 or to record new items. Please call Esther at 916-777-2227 to make sure she will be there and join the fun.

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INFORMATION

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society interesting and informative web site is srdhs.org. If you wish to email the resource center, the new email address is srdhshs@gmail.com.

SRDHS 2018 SCHEDULE

July/August.....	Summer Break
September 19.....	General Meeting
October 18.....	Board Meeting
November 20.....	General Meeting
December.....	Board Meeting
	December Newsletter

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- David Ballard from Concord
- Stephen & Cecille Giacomina from Isleton
- Sam Nakaoka from Sacramento
- Nancy & Bill Rutherford from Walnut Grove
- Dan & Kathy Salazar from Walnut Grove

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

Then make sure you pay your 2017 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):
 2018 2019 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

NEWSLETTER STAFF

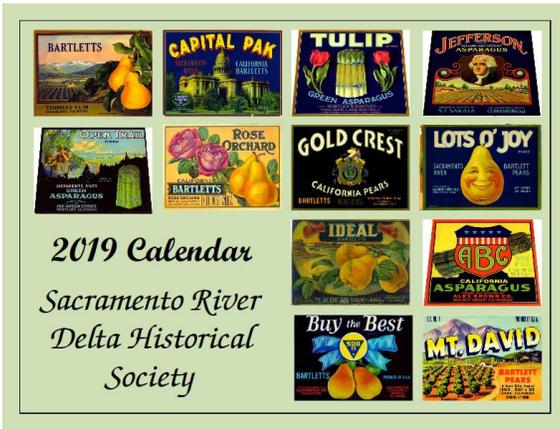
Editor.....Kathleen Hutchinson
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*The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society publishes the Sacramento River Delta Society Newsletter twice a year.

NEW “2019” SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR & PEAR PEARFECTION COOKBOOK AVAILABLE AT PEAR FAIR OR AFTER AUGUST 1st

The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society’s Calendar for 2019 or Pear Cookbook may be purchased at the Courtland Pear Fair July 29th or at the Resource Center and at the Society Meetings after August 1st. You may also purchase the calendar or cookbook by filling out the appropriate form below and mailing it with your check to: SRDHS, P O Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95695

Here is a preview of the cover of the delightful 2019 Calendar representing more Labels from Jim Dahlberg’s Collection. Each month shows a different Label that has not been published before from his wonderful collection.



The price for each 2019 calendar is \$15.00 plus postage; 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 calendar price is \$10 each plus postage

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

- 1 Calendar \$2.05 postage
- 2 Calendars \$2.70 postage
- 3 - 6 calendars \$6.70 for priority mail (2 to 3 day delivery)

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society **Calendar** Order Form

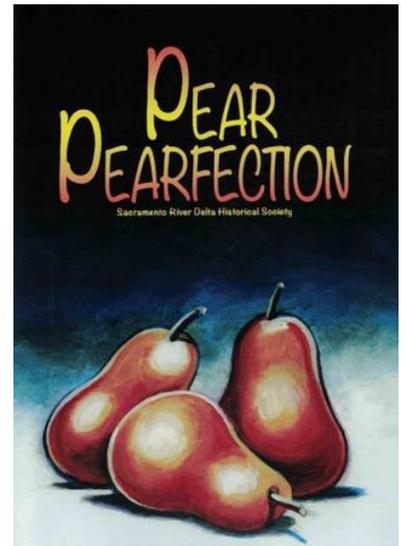
Please send _____ 2019 calendars @ \$15 per calendar
 ___2012 ___2013 ___2014 ___2015 ___2016 ___2017___2018
 calendars @ \$10 per calendar

Enclosed is payment in the amount of
 \$_____ **(include postage in total)**
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The price for each cookbook is \$15 plus postage if mailed.

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

- 1 – 2 Cookbooks
\$3.20 postage
- 3 - 6 Cookbooks
\$6.70 for priority mail (2 to 3 day delivery)



Sacramento River Delta Historical Society **Cookbook** Order Form

Please send _____ Pear Pearfection Cookbook(s) @ \$15 each

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

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____