

# Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

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

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 1

JUNE 2001

### Society Notes

December 2000 brought another wonderful annual Potluck Dinner. The food was excellent and the company matched it. Postmasters from up and down the river told us about the history of their offices. We will be including the details in later issues as we write about their town or village. As part of the celebration of California's 150th anniversary all the Postmasters were required to prepare the history of their office and we are fortunate to inherit this information. June Werhan headed the kitchen detail and Fran and Jim Bates, Terry and Jane Alchorn, Clarisse Jonson, Gloria Santos, Leonard Souza and Mary Fulster set up and decorated tables. Tom Herzog was in charge of the program. Many thanks to all of them all for a tremendous job well done.

The following officers for the 2001 year were elected at a brief meeting before the program. President, Fran Bates; Vice President, Tom Herzog; Recording Secretary, June Werhan; Corresponding Secretary, Kim Sackett; Treasurer, Joann Carr; Directors, C.J. Jensen, Carol Watson, Marshall Pylman, Gene Wisemann, Dennis Leary and Cathy Hemly.

On Wednesday, March 14, a work day was held at the Resource Center. Fran Bates, Terry Alchorn, Clarisse Jonson, Carol Watson, Marshall Pylman, Jim Bates and June Werhan participated. Much furniture shuffling and reshuffling has resulted in an inviting room. The next step is to identify and assess all these fascinating holdings. Please come help - no special knowledge is needed; just an enjoyment of local history. Call Fran Bates at 916.776.1012 if you're interested.

The March meeting was another big success. Pete Budnik told us about "Trapping, Fishing and Hunting in the Delta". Many chuckles and lots of laughs. We also owe thanks to Tom Herzog for the introduction and arrangements and to

C.J. Jensen, and Fran Bates for delicious refreshments. Gene Wisemann added a very interesting postscript by showing a marketing bill from Boisson and Pichon of San Francisco for birds shipped to San Francisco by John Crawford of Walnut Grove in 1882 (a little before Pete's time). A grand time was had by a large number of attendees.

Courtland Alumni Association is having a Courtland High School Reunion (1921-1968) on September 22, 2001. If you are interested in attending, contact your class representative. Members Verda and Mary Weeks and Richard Okamoto have been working on getting the class pictures that hung in the High School halls together and perhaps putting them on the internet. We hope to show some of the pictures at the Pear Fair in Courtland in July. The Historical Society is custodian of the pictures and would like to have the remaining two, which have been borrowed for a few years, returned. Perhaps copies could be made to replace them? At any rate before we start naming names and classes please contact us. They can be reborrowed; we just need to have the complete set to put on the internet and to show at the Pear Fair and reunions.

The May meeting was held at the Jean Harvie Center and told the wonderful story of Matt's Shoe Service. Supported by an interested audience, Leonard Souza and Tim Wilson related tales of the shoe shop located, for seventy years, on Market Street in Walnut Grove. Leonard gathered information from Matt's wife, Lillian, information from our Resource Center and Matt's friends and family. A good time was had by all as they viewed some of the tools and articles from the shop. We are again indebted to Fran Bates for refreshments. Many thanks.

We are beginning a series of articles about the cities, towns and villages along the Sacramento River Delta. The first historiette, about Ryde and its colorful past, begins in this issue. Enjoy it! *(The historical ads in this issue are from the La Perita.)*

### DELTA PEAR FAIR



July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
Courtland, CA

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Sacramento River Delta  
Historical Society

### GENERAL MEETING

Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

7:30 pm

Jean Harvie Community Center

An exciting program is planned,  
so mark your calendar now!

## March Meeting: "Trapping, Fishing & Hunting in the Delta"

reported by Carol Watson

Tom Herzog has provided some marvelous meetings. The latest was Pete Budnik speaking on "Trapping, Fishing and Hunting in the Delta". Pete's daughter, grandchildren and sister-in-law were present for his fascinating presentation.

Pete was born near Locke and grew up in the Delta with a father who lived off the land (they kept bees and harvested wild mushrooms). He was taught the ways of animals, the good fishing holes, and where the birds were. At 83 years young, Pete attests to the benefits of an outdoor life. He attended Walnut Grove Elementary School and was a 1936 graduate of Delta High School. He volunteered for one year of army duty in 1940, which turned into four years.

At six years of age, Pete was taken to 'magic' places in his father's 23 x 6 foot boat. Pete's various documents testified to many years of fishing, hunting and trapping: boat registrations and licenses, pilot licenses, hunting licenses (duck, beaver, muskrat, etc.), fishing licenses. Pete has duck hunting licenses dating from 1933 to 1993. He also shared his collection of duck pictures from Arm and Hammer Soda boxes.

Pete described the river as a cesspool! Garbage was dumped in the river and lots of rats populated the banks. In the late '20's and early '30's there were bodies dumped in the river, too. Trouble among the Hindus contributed to this problem. Libby McNeil and Libby and Locke Pear Packers dumped waste into the river. Swimming was common in spite of the contamination, however, a couple of deaths from typhoid cooled off the swimming. Chinese, Japanese and white people had their individual swimming holes. The thick brush which covered the levees provided the fish with food and prevented accidents from ending up in the water. When the levees were cleared and rocked, some species of fish disappeared. When dams were built the water cooled, killing the tules where the fish hung out. All these events affected the fish and fishing.

Jack Mello shared many of Pete's exploits. They used to fish after working at the Pratt-Low Cannery. Catfish were saleable, as were black bass, but river perch were rare. Cans of minnows were used to locate the black bass which sold for \$1 a pound. At high tide a small hole in the levee would trap crowdads when the tide went down. Today, black bass are still a major catch, but sturgeon are popular, too.

Pete's hunting career began at age 6 with ducks. They used to hunt and sell ducks at \$1 a piece to the local bars and hotels for alibis for the men who left their wives home to go "duck hunting". Miscreants paid \$3 per duck - twelve times the typical price of \$3 for a dozen. He recounted a story of a camp on Liberty Island where three hunters got off three shots each and then had to hide their guns due to approaching game wardens. After denying hearing any shots they collected 90 birds. Pete says he was caught hunting illegally only once - on Lambert Road in 1932. Judge Bunnell took away his gun but returned it for deer season. He also recalled a story of a hunter who was stopped with two ducks and a rifle - he claimed the rifle was for bear, but the warden then asked for his bear license.

Trapping was a lucrative activity as there was a market for mink, beaver and muskrat. Permits were needed to trap. The trappers used a floating box with a catfish in it to locate mink which sold for \$15 each. To locate beaver they found their slide and lured them with cottonwood and cinnamon. They trapped on the islands, Lambert Road, and the Lisbon District. They found that if they left the traps, then the mink drowned and then they had to skin and dry them for shipment to St. Louis, which was the best market. Shipments were kept under \$200 because that was all that was insured. Cedar planking was used to cure the mink to keep out the moths. Muskrat was stretched to dry and beaver was also stretched to cure. Raccoons were occasionally trapped. Some animal scent bags were used for medicine - there was an element of danger in 'harvesting' these bags - similar to the skunks. There were amusing tales of accidentally-trapped skunks. One trapper once rode home on the fender of the truck. Pete showed a number of different traps for coyotes, muskrat and mink. Animals were not the only things trapped, however; geese were coned with silhouettes carefully placed in the sloughs. When shotgun shells were more expensive to buy than the profit made on selling ducks, the hunters lured the ducks with milo maize (leftover from harvest) into string traps that held them down until they drowned.

The last story of the evening was about duck hunters who had fishermen interfering with their blind. One hunter grabbed his gun and headed toward the fishermen and gunshots were heard. No one knew exactly what happened, but the fishermen left. 🍷

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## NOW'S THE TIME TO JOIN OR RENEW... (dues are increasing in 2002!)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form with a check payable to the SRDHS to:  
 SRDHS - Membership PO Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

- I'm paying ANNUAL dues for the following year(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 My annual membership type is:
- |  |      |
|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual      | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Business | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron          | \$50 |
- I've enclosed \$150 to become a LIFETIME member.

The SRDHS hosts five lectures a year on local history, sponsors the Dai Loy Museum in Locke and operates a Resource Center at the Jean Harvie Center in Walnut Grove. Membership includes a newsletter published twice a year by the SRDHS.

## RYDE: Part One of a Two-Part Historiette

written by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

Ryde, located on Grand Island about 32 miles southwest of the State Capitol Sacramento and 1.5 miles downriver of Walnut Grove, was settled by 1877. Julian Dana in his book, *The Sacramento, River of Gold*, mentions the unnamed settlement in a description of the 1878 flood. Dana wrote, "nothing showed on Grand Island, except the hotel and dock". Beginning in 1886, Pio Giusti and his brothers operated a hotel just downstream of the present Ryde Hotel. This is probably the hotel mentioned by Julian Dana in his book.

As reclamation proceeded on Grand Island, "General" Thomas Williams, former Attorney General of the State of California and his partner, David Bixler, acquired vast acreages on middle and lower Grand Island, including the land on which Ryde sits. Williams alone owned 17,000 acres of the island. He benefitted from a lucrative San Francisco law practice whose clients included many Comstock mining barons who made fortunes in Virginia City, Nevada but who resided in San Francisco. (Fair, Mackay, etc.)

In the 1880's relations strained between Williams and the Grand Island landowners. Williams had engaged in contract reclamation work for the district. When the levee work was not timely completed, some residents considered Williams' arrangement for the contract work to be devious. He was charged with misuse of funds and with fabricating the existence of a fictitious and malevolently laggard subcontractor. His alleged motive was to acquire land by breaking his neighbors through floods resulting from the subcontractor's alleged slowness in completing the levee system. Williams died in 1885 and his administrators were compelled by his will to continue to oppose levee completion. The estate was settled in 1890.

In 1891 the Williams Estate sold 40 acres at the site of Ryde to William Kesner. On June 4, 1892 the U.S. Post office was established and the name Ryde chosen. It was said that Williams was born in Ryde on the Isle of Wight off the southern coast of England. His son, story tells us, suggested the name because both were "important watering places". Dan Meyer the current postmaster at Ryde noted several other theories: Kesner named Ryde after a Norwegian village; Ryde was named by early residents after a village in Wales; there is a settlement in Australia named Ryde. The writer feels that the first story about Ryde, Isle of Wight fits best.

The 40 acre parcel at the upriver side of Howard Landing Road contained a store and "McAdam" Hotel/Saloon which the Kesner family operated for many years. On the upriver side in the early 20th century (beginning at the far end of town, listed in order) was a shack housing shoe, saddle and harness makers and on the Leary Ranch were two houses built with walkways from the top floor over to the levee. A wing dam was built opposite the Leary Ranch to deflect water at the end of the long bend during flood periods. (A wing dam is an underwater wall of piling or rock extending from the bank. Some piles are exposed and others are broken off just below the surface. Its purpose is to control currents. Wing dams are

visible, usually only when the river is low and may, on the surface, be indicated by eddies, ripples, or swirls.) The Kesner house, with its three story tank house (the only remaining feature) followed.

The next building of significance was the General Store operated by Walter Mansfield Brown. Brown ran the store from around the turn of the century until 1924. His patrons came from as far away as Walnut Grove, because it was easier to ride or drive to Ryde on the same side of the river, than to cross the river on the Walnut Grove ferry. The store sold general merchandise, groceries, dry goods, hardware, tack and building materials. The accounts for both the store and saloon list many old Grand Island names: Stuart, Thisby, Kesner, Meyers, Cowing, Green, Kercheval, Smith, Aldrich, Jones Miller, Shelly, Leary, Gwerder, Wickstrum, Goldman, Hollenbeck. If a last name was unknown, a nickname was used to identify the patron on the books. Typical nicknames of the era listed in the account record books were Dick China [sic] Cook, Charlie Jap [sic], Billy the Cook, Frenchy, Cowboy, Frank Portuguese [sic], Chore Boy, Sheep Ranch Hand, Sato Jap [sic] Wood-chopper, and even Stranger.

Buyers of Beans and Grain	Postmaster American Railway Express Fire Insurance
<b>WALTER M. BROWN CO.</b>	
GENERAL MERCHANDISE Hardware and Farm Implements a Specialty	
Telephone Courtland 402	RHYDE, CALIF.

A wide range of items and services were offered by the Ryde General Store, as illustrated by the list on page 4. Cash advances were also offered and a worker could have the advance charged to his employer's account. Cash, food and liquor also were occasionally charged to an employer's account. An example: A customer bought 8 lbs of bacon for \$1.50, withdrew \$40.00 cash and was charged \$41.50 on the books. Another example: A farmer was advanced \$580.00 for payment to Holt Tractor Company in Stockton. Some charges were strictly cash withdrawals for \$1.00, \$3.00, \$7.00 etc. Most customers paid their bills in August or September, after the farming season more or less finished. Some of the credits received by the store were in labor, produce, cords of wood, and one customer turned in this guitar for \$7.50 credit to his account.

Brown also handled clothing, accessories, and all sorts of farm and pump equipment for sale. The reclamation district had eight different accounts which give the history of the district. He sold his business in 1924 and moved to San Francisco where he purchased a business which imported and packed Spanish green olives.

The Post Office was originally situated in the front of the store and has always served the residents of mid-Grand Island and west Ryer Island. It was later moved to its present site. A sec-

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Ryde...continued from page 3

ond story, since removed served as a rooming house. A service station was situated directly in front of the present Post Office

The McAdam Hotel, which was evidently included in the 40 acre parcel Kesner purchased, was located on the corner of the River Road (Highway 160) and Howard Landing Road (Route 220). The saloon records begin in 1897, and show drinks were a dime, beer 20 cents, a pint of whiskey or brandy 50 cents, oysters 25 cents and a gallon of gin \$4.00. The saloon offered cash advances, too. It also did a big miscellaneous business as witnessed by cigars \$2.00; bed breakfast and horse feed 75 cents; meal 25 cents; laundry 20 cents; house rent \$6.00; insurance on beans \$20.00; freight on lumber \$6.00; load of hay \$8.00; pasturing a horse per month \$20.00; horse hire \$1.00; boiler wharfage \$1.50. Customers were also charged for games played: dice 20 cents; pedro 10 cents; billiard and pool 20 cents; whist 20 cents. One entry showed 10 games of casino at \$2.50 or 25 cents per game. Again anything was received as credit: drafts, notes, labor, a horse for \$40.00; a colt for \$20.00. Some put up cash ahead, such as a \$40.00 ring placed on deposit. A watch chain might be added, if the bill exceeded the advance credit.

One name appeared often on the books at the turn of the century; Charley "Jap" [sic], a cook. He charged regularly at both the saloon and store. Although he never charged a lot, the books show he enjoyed playing pedro and whist and purchased small amounts of wine. On December 24, 1899 Charlie did his Christmas shopping at the store: one handkerchief, four ladies handkerchiefs, two bottles of cologne, one Windsor tie and a pocket knife.

The Hotel featured a saloon and dining room on the ground floor, and an upstairs room which extended over the general store. The hotel, like the Giusti Hotel, catered to the men who worked the dredges building and repairing levees. During prohibition scouts used a second story window as a lookout to spot law enforcement officers and revenue men who might be traveling the levee roads on the west and east river banks. It

appears that during the Mission Revival architecture craze, the three structures - the post office, store, and saloon - were united by an arcade.

Behind the new post office the Kesners built the Kesner Hotel Apartments. Mr. Hughes, the wharfinger, and his wife lived at the Kesner. The Hotel Apartments also housed, at one time, a beauty shop operated by Mrs. Giannetti and Mary Jane Silva.

At the foot of the levee facing Howard Landing Road was a barber shop run by John Tripo. He sold out to Stanley McCoy who ran the shop for many years. Later McCoy put in a fix-it shop in the old general store and turned part of the McAdams Hotel structure into a "fix-it" shop.

Across Howard Landing Road was a grocery store operated by the Joe Novo. When the Novo grocery moved, Mr. Bedel ran the meat market. It burned in the late 1930's, the same day the Kesner Hotel Apartments burned.

Downstream of Howard Landing Road is Grand Island Reclamation District # 3 headquarters and pumphouse. The next structure is the garage operated by Joe Picard who sold the Star Car and Fordson Tractors. He was succeeded by the Bushnell Bros. and then a Portuguese named Baptista who introduced Studebaker Trucks to the region. After World War II the garage was operated by Earl Osborne, then Ralph Smith and finally by Frank Menzes.

Between the present Ryde Hotel and garage was the Gus Hollender house. Hollender owned a blacksmith shop which he bought while in his 20's from Joe Miller. Miller bought the shop about 1910 and had intended for his son to succeed him. His son wasn't a good businessman, however, and the shop was sold to Hollender, who ran it until after World War II. Located in back of the current hotel site, it closed when he retired. The driveway between the garage and present hotel accessed the blacksmith shop. Hollender employed a welder named Charlie Wilson. The shop was known throughout the north delta for its asparagus knives and celery, bean and asparagus equipment.

...continued on page 5

RYDE GENERAL STORE - A Sampling of Pricing for Items / Services (around 1900)

dozen whale bones .....	\$ .10	sack needle (bodkin) .....	.05	(The wash tub, wash boiler, washboard and
bottle Pierce's Discovery .....	1.00	violin, strings & bow FOB .....	1.85	washing machine were all necessary to washing
bottle King's Discovery .....	1.00	crock .....	.35	clothes: the boiler was a tall oval tub used for
harmonica .....	.40	curry comb .....	.25	boiling clothes and the washing machine meant
roll of harness leather .....	7.50	bean sack .....	.06	only the paddles which agitated the water and
horse pads .....	1.00	buggy shaft & poles .....	68.50	clothes in the wash tub. The washboard was
wash tub .....	1.00	cultivator .....	29.00	used to scrub dirty clothes.)
hoof nippers .....	1.90	hog ring .....	.15	
sheep skin .....	1.25	wheel barrow .....	7.50	Additional items / services included:
sawdust & spittoon .....	.25	money bag .....	.15	shoeing a horse .....
oar lock .....	.45	lap robe .....	2.00	\$ 1.00
wash boiler .....	1.75	curling iron .....	.20	half interest in a hay tedder .....
mounted grind stone .....	4.50	bath tub .....	2.50	22.00
washing machine .....	3.75	flat iron set .....	1.35	service of one bull .....
buck saw .....	.75	water closet (toilet) .....	15.00	2.00
tent .....	5.50	corn cob pipe .....	.10	poll tax .....
washboard .....	.30	stove .....	34.45	4.00
candle .....	.02			road tax .....
				2.00
				phone call to Isleton .....
				.40
				phone call to San Francisco .....
				.60

Ryde...continued from page 4

Opposite, on the riverside was the Ryde Wharf superintended by Wharfinger Hughes. After the advent of the automobile, Furtados Chevron Service Station perched above the wharf. The little station was a landmark, until snagged in a heavy tule fog in 1957. The impact threw the station onto the barge and they both floated down the river. LaVerne Gianetti said she heard the noise and felt the shaking from the impact in the corner second story beauty shop she ran (room 217) in the hotel. Herman Furtado, on his way to work at the station, met his destination floating down the river toward him. Strangely enough the Standard Station was carried away by a Standard Oil barge!

The old Ryde Hotel site was right next to the present hotel site but on the downstream side. After the first structure burned in 1918 Pio Guisti moved to Miller's Ferry (no relation to Joe Miller) on the Mokolumne River near Walnut Grove. Joe Miller rebuilt the hotel on the same site and leased it to Lo Giannetti. After it ceased to be run as a hotel the building housed the Joe Novo Grocery Store (moved from Howard Landing Road) and Sonny Wright's "Ryde Electric" shop which he operated with sons-in-law Henry Partick and Bud Manica. Sonny was the Delta linesman for Great Western Electric and its successor Pacific Gas and Electric. The second hotel building was eventually razed and the "Ryde Electric" shop moved to Walnut Grove and renamed "Grove Electric".

<p><b>RYDE ELECTRIC SHOP</b>  <b>APPLIANCE SALES AND SERVICE</b>  <b>RYDE, CALIFORNIA</b>          Phone — Walnut Grove 3024</p>
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Between the Miller Ranch and the hotel was the "little yellow house", St. Anthony's Church and The Good Hope School. Mr. and Mrs. Rose lived in the "little yellow house" which was torn down when the levee was widened in the 1960's.

Downriver of the hotel St. Anthony's Church stood at levee level. It was the second Catholic church on the river and the only one between Rio Vista and Freeport. A circuit priest visited the Catholic church to celebrate mass until St. Anthony's Church was built in Walnut Grove. From 1897 until 1901 the Reverend A.L. Paul offered Methodist-Episcopal church services at Ryde. He rode the mail boat to Ryde from Isleton and caught a homeward bound boat either in the evening or the following morning.

The Good Hope School, often called Ryde School, was between Mrs. Miller's mother's house and St. Anthony's Church. The Miller Ranch was a part of "General" Williams' property. After he died, his widow married a Cardoza and her daughter by Williams married Joe Miller. The Millers gave the land for both the church and school. In 1921, Beaver Union School replaced both the Good Hope and the Walker Landing School located on the back of Grand Island on Steamboat Slough below Walker Landing Road. Beaver Union was located midway between the two smaller schools on Howard Landing Road.

Its name came from Beaver Lake, a marsh lake and Beaver Slough both nearby on Grand Island. The school district joined Isleton Elementary School District in 1967 and the River Delta Unified School District in 1968. The Good Hope school house was later known as the "Malacias house" and was removed downstream beyond the Morias/Rosa/Fevereiro store. It had shingle sides.

The Miller house is next. Today it is painted white with a red door and it and its outbuildings are surrounded by a white fence. The front of the house is original. The back portion was added later. At a later date Joe Miller and his wife Rose lived in a house in back of the present hotel. Rose was the Avon Lady and wore lots of rouge. Children thought that was how she acquired her name.

Continuing downstream on the levee was Bill's Store. He sold general merchandise. Near the front of the store Mrs. Miller built a storage unit for Morias. This structure which stood on stilts was later occupied by an old Portuguese tailor. Morias' store also operated as a labor center. Laborers gathered at the store waiting for nearby farmers to employ them. Underneath the store was a bunkhouse where fifty/sixty men lived. The store passed into the hands of Ed Peters then to Mr. Rosa and lastly to Arthur Fevereiro. The store, which included a Richfield Service Station was razed when the levee was widened. Its lumber was used to build St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Isleton.

Libby McNeil, Libby Cannery and later, Pratt-Low Cannery was located a few miles downstream from Morias' store. The cannery for many years only canned asparagus, but later canned other products. Behind the cannery was housing (cottages) for the workers.

At what today is called Tunnel Park, was California Conserving CHB, Hunts and finally Heinz pickle works. The works, built in 1922-23, was a large warehouse-like building with huge vats inside. The tunnel was built by Joe Terry and his father using a team of horses to drag a Fresno scraper. This was before the cement highway was laid. The tunnel was used for loading river freighters. The tunnel is still used today to connect the trailer park to the dock. Griffin & Scully another nearby cannery was absorbed into California Packing Corporation (CPC) in 1918/19.

During World War II a prisoner of war camp was located just below and a quarter of a mile behind the pickle works. The camp was first used for prisoners from Folsom Prison and San Quentin Prison who were employed as farm laborers. Then it became a POW camp for German Soldiers. Owned by Joe Green, after the war it became a labor camp for Mexican workers and rented to labor contractors Clem Llano and his father-in-law, Blaise.

...To be continued next issue!

## May Meeting: "Matt's Shoe Service"

reported by Carol Watson

At the May meeting, Leonard Souza and Tim Wilson told the story of a Walnut Grove institution - Matt's Shoe Service - which, through father and son, existed for 73 years (except during WWII). Leonard talked with Matt Matsuoka's wife, Lillian, and many of his friends and came up with a wonderful history.

Matt's father was born in 1884 in Japan. He finished school and with an older brother moved to Hawaii. Then he moved on to San Francisco and to Sacramento where he worked at Mercy Hospital and was nicknamed "Harry". In 1918 Mr. Matsuoka moved to Walnut Grove and opened a shoe store "H. B. Matsuoka", in a building on Market Street. The shop sold only hand made leather goods - shoes, boots, saddles, harnesses, etc. He married a lady from Japan and they had five sons and two daughters.

During world War II, the family was interned in Colorado. The contents of the store were stored in their house which was occupied by the Tony Enos Sr. family and returned to the Matsuoka's after the war. "Harry" reopened his shop but soon reached 65 and wanted to retire. None of the boys were interested in the taking over the business.

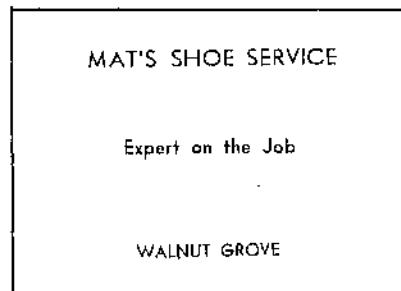
After the war, Matt Matsuoka worked for Westinghouse in New York. In 1947 when his father retired, as the oldest boy, Matt dutifully returned to Walnut Grove to establish "Matt's Shoe Service". There was some hand leather work that his father could help with, but work clothes, work items and leather work done by machinery represented the bulk of the business. One could even order Florsheim and other brands of dress shoes.

Matt spotted Lillian Mizutani playing basketball on her church team and offered to help transport the team...as long as Lillian was in his car! In 1952 they married and later had a son and three daughters. Matt supplemented their income with packing shed and cannery work while the shoe service was developing.

Tim Wilson told of how he, Matt, Bill Shelton, Jack Oda, Frank Uda and others decided to organize Judo classes for the young people of Walnut Grove. In 1961, these fellows converted the adjacent grocery into a Judo studio, of sorts, complete with soft sawdust floor. They even helped in the instruction, after they, themselves, had been taught by Matt! At its peak, twenty or more local children participated in the popular classes, which emphasized discipline and respect. One thing they remembered: "get in a fight - get out of sight".

Matt Matsuoka was a man of many hobbies - painting, wood carving and trout fishing, to name a few. He always had a few minutes to chat and the shop was a place to "hang out", yet work was always done on time and the shop was always well-organized and neat. Leonard remembers his children being fascinated by watching the termites eat the shoe store building each summer!

One day in 1991, when Matt was cleaning out the shop prior to his retirement (after 44 years!), a lady came by and bought the boot that hung in front and all the posters inside the store. Some of the remaining artifacts were given to the Historical Society. At the end of the meeting Leonard identified the tools on exhibit: boot hook, shoe forms, sewing machine, press (to hold glued materials), shoe stretchers, cutting tools, anvils of different sizes, and thread. These artifacts are to be placed on loan, by the Matsuoka family, to the Sacramento City County Archives. Look for an old fashioned shoe store display at a museum soon. 🦿



### PLACES TO VISIT...FOR THE HISTORY BUFF!

- 🦿 The Discovery Museum, 101 I Street in Sacramento
- 🦿 The Rae House on Oak Street in Galt
- 🦿 The Rio Vista Museum
- 🦿 The Folsom Museum, 823 Sutter Street in Folsom
- 🦿 Yolo County - Davis and Woodland offer many historical sites
- 🦿 The Rail Museum on Highway 12, west of Rio Vista

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society  
PO Box 293  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE

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