

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 2

DECEMBER 2001

A Letter to Our Members

2001 is drawing to a close and as we prepare for 2002, we would like to take this opportunity to share with you the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society's accomplishments over the past year.

The ongoing vitality and success of the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society (SRDHS) is a direct result of your generosity in volunteering your time and efforts, donations, membership dues and your steadfast commitment to our mission:

"To preserve the historical heritage of the Sacramento River Delta,
to promote a greater public awareness of Sacramento River Delta history,
and to educate the public with regard to the importance of the Sacramento River Delta's history."

The success of this mission is more important now than ever before! Our community is transforming before our eyes. A growing percentage of our community members are transplants from outside the immediate area. We find that our community elders with direct generational roots and historical knowledge of the region are an increasing rarity.

In this changing climate, we need your help to ensure that our region's rich heritage will continue to be preserved, protected and appreciated. The SRDHS January 2001 general meeting was an interesting case in point. The program was about the history of our region's post offices. The U.S. Postal Service used the research and presentations compiled for this meeting to fill in some significant gaps in their own historical documentation.

2001 HIGHLIGHTS

Following are highlights of some of the SRDHS' accomplishments for the 2001 year:

Oral Histories Jan Goggins, a PhD candidate at UC Davis, obtained grant money to compile "Oral Histories of the Delta, Preserving Heritage for Better Planning." We helped Jan by providing contact with our respected elders that live in the Delta. We want to thank Louie Giovannoni, Nelson Eddie, Pete Budnik, Art Johnson and Pam Van Loben Sels for their time and support of this project. Their oral histories will now be added to our SRDHS archives.

Resource Center Our Resource Center at the Jean Harvie Community Center has undergone significant changes this year. A number of organizations have donated fire-safe cabinets, along with tables, bookshelves, file cabinets and more. These donations have enabled us to better store and protect our archives. A special note of appreciation goes to Carol Watson, Clarice Jonson and Dorothy Hays for their dedicated service in preserving collections given to the SRDHS.

Membership Update Thanks to Carol Watson, Kim Sackett, Mary Fulster and Tom Herzog, our membership database has been converted to a new Microsoft Access format. Their hard work will enable us to better track and communicate with our members.

General Meeting Programs This year's programs included "Trapping, Fishing and Hunting in the Delta", presented by Pete Budnik; "Mats Shoe Service" and "Carli's General Store" presented by Leonard Souza; and a private tour of the Heidrick Ag Museum in Woodland, organized by Tom Herzog.

SRDHS Newsletter Ryde has been the focus of this year's newsletter. To Carol Watson and Kathie Hutchinson, "hats off to you ladies for a job exceedingly well done." Both ladies continue their expert research and writing despite the fact that they both now live out of the area.

Delta Bus Tour In September, we hosted a bus tour of the Delta in a joint ways and means project with the SacArea History Consortium

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NEWSLETTER STAFF

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SOCIETY NOTES

🦋 The **Pear Fair** was very successful this year. The Pear Fair Committee mounted an interesting historical exhibit. Historical Society Members served as docents and a most pleasant day was enjoyed by all. Picture boards from the Clarksburg collection attracted many people—many about local delta railroads—electric and steam. The old pear equipment brought a lot of questions, especially the pear rings used to measure the size for picking.

🦋 We are planning a series of articles (if we find enough material) about **Delta community organizations**—ie, The Twenty-Thirty Club, Progress Club, Delta Young Women, etc. If you have information about any of these groups or others please write us a note at P.O. Box 293 Walnut Grove, CA 95690. You can send the information or we will arrange an interview. We would sure appreciate the help!

🦋 The **September meeting**, a visit to the Heidrick Ag Museum and Hays antique truck museum, was long overdue. The article on page 4 elaborates on a very special collection.

🦋 **Some background on the new Walnut Grove mural** Marty Stanley's marvelous new mural of the Boondocks Hotel brings back memories of the Walnut Grove Hotel which was started by Mrs. Sharp as a boarding house in the 1850s. In 1879, the then-widow Sharp sold the Walnut Grove Hotel to a newcomer, the widow Brown who moved to town with her son Alex, from Scotland by way of New England. Most of the building pictured was built around 1916. I am not sure who the owners were throughout its history but, when it burned under the name Boondocks Hotel (or was it Boondox?) in 1970, it was to be refurbished and opened as a modern hotel. At that time it was over 100 years old in spirit!

🦋 On September 22nd, **Courtland High School celebrated yet another reunion**. It is amazing that a school that has been closed for over 30 years could engender such spirit and enthusiasm. Bobby Kanegawa masterminded the evening to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of the class of 1951. Everyone who attended the school was invited and 349 guests, including spouses and friends, sat down to a wonderful dinner, enjoyed the music of the 50's and 60's and visited with long-time friends. The Courtland High School Alumni Association will probably sponsor another large scale reunion in two or three years. Be sure they have your current address!

On exhibit at the reunion were the class pictures that hung in the halls of the old high school. Richard Okamoto, Rita Weeks, Verda Weeks, and Mary Andres have been working for months on the pictures, which are kept in the Sacramento River Delta Historical Resource Center in the Jean Harvie Center. They plan to continue organizing and restoring them, adding names, etc. and ultimately, Richard is hoping to get the pictures on the web. If you want to borrow a picture, call a Historical Society Board member. The Courtland Alumni Association has given to the Historical Society two complete sets of La Peritas which are available for reference at the Resource Center and at the Courtland Volunteer Library.

Clarice Jonson is responsible for the complete alphabetical list of Courtland High School graduates whose pictures are in the La Perita. The names are arranged alphabetically and by class - a most handy reference tool! We thank her most sincerely for several years' work. Clarice is trying to complete a family collection of La Peritas and is lacking 1931, 1942, 1955, 1929 and 1945. If you have any spares, please call her at 916-775-1685.

Letter to Our Members...continued from front

members. This highly-successful event was made possible because of the following:

- Carol Watson and Dennis Leary providing vivid, historically-accurate descriptions of the area.
- Terry and Jane Alchorn graciously hosting the luncheon and opening their home for a guided tour, and
- Cathy and Doug Hemly for the wonderful and informative tour of their ranch operation.

2002 OBJECTIVES

We have much more to do in 2002. Our 2002 goals are to continue supporting the programs and services our members have come to expect. This includes those mentioned in the 2001 highlights and the following:

- ✓ Implement a formal Oral History Program. We plan to train member volunteers in the art of oral history taking.
- ✓ Encourage a family and community-oriented approach by reminding our members to invite interested friends, neighbors, parents, children and grandchildren to attend our general meeting programs.
- ✓ Recruit a volunteer staff to continue the vital support of our Resource Center.

We thank each of you that have paid your dues on time, and remind the others that if you have forgotten to pay, please do so. To reduce overhead, and enable the SRDHS to allot a greater percentage of our limited funds toward enhancement of the services and objectives critical to our mission, we will be dropping all non-paying members from our mailing list in 2002. (Unless you're an Honorary Member...see our membership reminder in this newsletter for more information.) If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Fran Bates at 916-776-1012.

On behalf of the SRDHS Officers and Board members, we wish you a happy holiday season and wonderful 2002. Thank you for your past support and continued efforts toward making the SRDHS a vital, active organization for our community.

Fran Bates - President

Kim Sackett - Corresponding Secretary

RYDE: Part Two of a Two-Part Historiette

written by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

Three trucking firms were headquartered in Ryde. Patrick Trucking, run by Joe Patrick, drove model F Ford trucks and then Studebaker trucks. Campos had "quite a few" trucks. He was a contract hauler hauling asparagus for Pratt-Low cannery and operated International trucks. Manuel Viegas and the Katola brothers drove for him. In the mid 1920's-30's Baptista at the Ryde Garage owned Studebaker trucks and hauled sugar beets.



West of town at the corner of Howard Landing Road and Leary Road the Patrick family ran a short-lived store next to their house. The store sold mostly clothes, hats and yardage. In front of the house was a small dance hall. It could be the short-lived store structure. Monthly dances were held with the music provided by a man and his wife: he played the accordion and drums and she played the piano and banjo. Across the road was a nursery of sorts: primarily a grafting and budding operation. Farther west at the junction of Howard Landing Road and Grand Island Road was Carli's Store. Opposite Ryde across the river is Baldwin Beach, known today as Ko-ket Resort.

Today, when viewed from a distance, the hotel and water tower are the two most significant structures in Ryde. The legendary Ryde Hotel was built in 1926 by Lo Giannetti on the site of the WM. Brown house which had burned. Giannetti figured in all three of the "Ryde Hotels". He was with Pio Giusti, then with Joe Miller and finally by himself. This was the era of prohibition in the United States and liquor, except for proscribed amounts of wine, was specifically prohibited by the 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The more remote Delta was a wonderful place to brew bootleg liquor and operate a speakeasy. Bathtub gin was said to be brewed in the thickets of lower Sherman Island. Debate continues today about the location of the still on Merritt Island. Illegal liquor conveniently found its way to the Ryde Hotel. The hotel became renowned as a special spot where thirsty State Legislators congregated for an illegal drink. The bar in the basement was concealed by showers and other bathroom fixtures. From the bar, a tunnel opened onto a small detached building in back of the hotel which housed the stills. It is alleged that bootleg liquor was sold to speakeasy patrons and other customers assembled in the

hotel's private dining rooms. In the late 1920's the hotel was raided several times and the tunnel sealed.

In 1928, Herbert Hoover visited the hotel for a political rally and it is alleged that this was the first place he announced his quest for the Presidency of the United States. Hollywood movie stars also patronized the hotel while on location in the Delta. (Editorial note: The above allegations cannot be proven today—witnesses are too old, and the younger people of those times were kept from knowledge of that kind.)

Ryde was on the Gibson Line and later Greyhound bus line both which operated buses from Sacramento to San Francisco. Tickets were sold in the bar. Permanent residents of the hotel at one time were wharfinger Jack Hughes and his wife. Dee Wise operated a barber shop at the hotel under the stairs, just as one entered the bar, and LaVerne Giannetti operated a beauty shop in corner room #217.

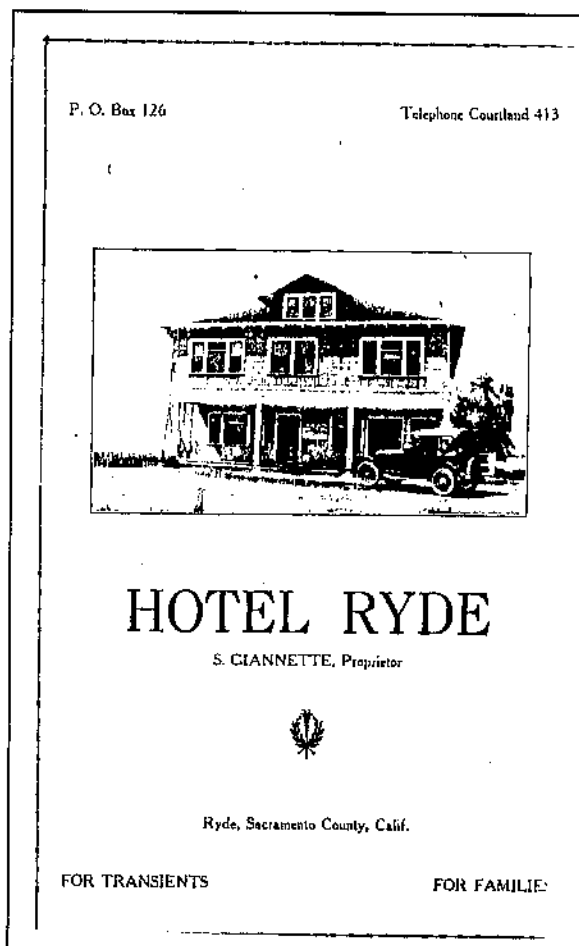
The hotel has played a part in the lives of north Deltans hosting birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's and Father's Day celebrations, receptions, club parties, graduation parties, retirement parties, fashion shows and Sunday dinners. (People even came from Sacramento to have the well-known chicken dinners.) On May 25, 1948 the Ryde Hotel was the site of the Rotary Club of Sacramento's sponsorship for formation of the Walnut Grove Rotary Club. One hundred members attended, coming from clubs located in cities such as Walnut Creek and Sacramento. Dennis Leary noted in his daybook "A very fine

dinner [with] free drinks for \$3.50 per person". The Walnut Grove Rotary Club conducted its 50th anniversary at the Ryde Hotel. Also in the late 1950's, the 20-30 Club met at the hotel usually in what was the bar, and is now the Lounge.

In the late 40's and 50's the waiters wore tuxedos. The menu was renowned for the homemade ravioli and the fritters. The fritters were pineapple or apple and tasted like a freshly baked sugar doughnut. Fried chicken, Italian antipasto and ice cream were also featured. One could even buy ravioli by the coffee can to take home! The dining room occupied the whole area in the front of the house. The bar was located in what is today the lounge. A spring dance floor was later added in the dining room. Patrons came from miles around: Sacramento, Stockton and elsewhere. Cars parallel parked

in front of the hotel and backed out on what was then Highway 4. Lots of parking area was lost in the 1970's when the levee was widened.

After the Giannettis retired, the 1960's were not kind to the Ryde Hotel building. Large pieces of plaster fell from the south



Ryde...continued from page 3

wall. A severe winter froze the pipe which burst sending water cascading down the stairs. At one time, the younger Dennis Leary, who had purchased land adjoining the south wall, planted pear trees near the hotel but found he couldn't irrigate because of the frail wall. The management wanted to use stairs on the south side and he gave them an easement and later leased two acres to the owners. Under the ownership of David Phillips in the 1970's through the early 1980's, the speakeasy was revived. Weekend rock concerts and parties brought so many boaters that the Sacramento River in front was congested. Once purchased by Terrence Black in 1985, the Hotel catered to a more conservative crowd of yacht clubs, private parties, retreats, and weddings. Dennis Leary sold 13 acres to Black, which enabled the hotel to have stairs, parking and eventually a nine-hole executive golf course. Mr. Black sold the hotel in 1997 to concentrate on his business at the Grand Island Mansion (est. 1917) on the west side of Grand Island on Steamboat Slough. The Ryde Hotel continues to thrive under the ownership of Jan LeRoy and Cathy Hartrich and caters to weekend Delta travelers and special events. It has been restored and is billed as "An Art Deco Hotel located in the scenic California Delta".

LeRoy and Hartrich have extensively renovated the hotel, carefully retaining the original style and structure as much as possible. The south wall was replaced, 14 bathrooms added and guest rooms completely refinished and some refigured to accommodate modern lifestyle. The interior design is art deco but the lounge remains unchanged except for the framed photographs chronicling the hotel's past. The dance floor is original, but refinished to bring back its former luster.

Where the hotel swimming pool sits, was a structure with no windows and a tarp for a door. It was used as a bunkhouse and for Portuguese get-to getters, "chermerittas" where there was dancing to accordion music. It was roughly situated where the Leary Ranch owns three rental houses.

Most of the Portuguese around Ryde came from Piadade on the island of Pecos in the Azores. Prominent Portuguese names in the area are Patrick, Rogers, Bettencourt, Silva, Souza, Brun, Borba, Azevedo, Rosa, Cunha, Macheco, Nunez, Porto, Castanho, Marks, Lopez, Mello, Ferreira, Amaro, Gardineira, Silveira, Oliveria, Viegas, Alves, Garcia, Costa, Correia, Gomes, Valinas, Menzos, Neves, Labador, Ferrido, Morris, Terry, Charmuga, Sores, Freitas, and Fevereiro. Also prominent have been Skelly, Jones, Peters, Kesner, Miller, James, Moller, Gwerder, Hollenbeck and Beck.

Today, Ryde is owned upriver of Howard Landing Road by the Moller family and downriver of the road by the Leary Estate, excepting the hotel. Many of the structures have been lost but a few remain, among those the Miller house, the third Ryde Hotel, the Reclamation District garage, office and pumphouse, the post office and the Levee Gallery owned by the renowned Isleton artist Marty Stanley. In the 1970's and 1980's the Jehovah Witness Kingdom Hall occupied premises next to the post office. 🍷

Thanks to all who contributed to this article, including Roger O'Conner who recorded and transcribed the September Meeting remarks, and meeting speakers including Dan Meyer, Leonard Souza, Dennis Leary, Robert James, Jan LeRoy and Cathy Hartrich and participating members of the audience.

The original transcript of Roger O'Conner's recording is on file in the SRDHS Resource Center, as are Leonard Souza's memoirs of Ryde and surrounding area, the oral history of Marion Aldrich Brown, an addenda of her daughter Mildred Brown Wenzel, and remarks made by Robert James on the Ryde General Store and Saloon 1897-1902 at our Jan. 1977 meeting.

Footnote to Ryde Article:

Walter Mansfield Brown

Walter Mansfield Brown the proprietor of the Ryde General Store was born in 1873 in Lake County. He attended school with the local Indians and learned to speak their dialect. In his early twenties he signed on as an accountant with a fur trading company on the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea.

After three years in the frozen north, Walter Brown rejoined his family who had moved to the Delta. He married Kate Harvie, who subsequently died in childbirth. Kate's family emigrated from Nova Scotia, Canada. The family was Scots. Three Harvie siblings married three Brown siblings. Kate's son Walter M. Brown, Jr. was the first cousin of the late Jean Harvie beloved Walnut Grove School Principal and Isleton resident.

Walter married secondly, Marion Aldrich. Marion was the daughter of Emma Ella (Stanley) and John Lyman Aldrich. They had a daughter Mildred. Marion's Aunt was Alice (Stanley) Greene of Randall Island. (The Stanley sisters were born in Point Reyes and raised in Petaluma.) Alice met George Greene when he attended Petaluma Military Academy and Emma Ella met John Lyman Aldrich while visiting her sister and brother-in-law. After Walter remarried, he sold his land in the New Netherlands (Holland) Tract, left the Ryde General Store in the custody of a brother and purchased a green olive import company in San Francisco. His house stood at the site of the present Ryde Hotel. Sometime after he removed to San Francisco the house burned and he sold the land to the Gianetti family. 🍷

Our thanks to Mildred Brown Wenzel for the information on her father and his family. We welcome any stories and information about early Delta families (1850-1930) which members and readers would like to share. Send them to the SRDHS Newsletter, P.O. Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690 Attn. Kathie Hutchinson. We will publish all or part where it fits best with the feature articles. All newsletters are on file at the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley and the California State Library, Sacramento.

2002 RESOLUTION: GET MORE INVOLVED WITH THE SRDHS!

We have lots of staffing needs ... Board and Officer Positions ... Resource Center Staffing ... & More

Please call Fran Bates (916-776-1012) for information.



November Meeting: Carli's Store at Howard's Landing

written by Leonard Souza
edited by Kathie Hutchinson

Leonard Souza delivered another of his charming historical vignettes at the well-attended November meeting.

Traveling the back Grand Island levee road as one approaches Howard's Landing, a small leaning building came into sight. This was Carli's Store. It perched on the inside of the levee across from the landing.

The building housing the store was originally built on Ryer Island. In 1915/16 Edward and Zebe Howard opened the store. Prior to 1923 the Howards moved the store by barge to Grand Island to what became known as Howard's Landing. What a job that must have been!

The store became a beehive of activity as the wharf and docks serviced barges and riverboats both loading and unloading all sorts of supplies.

Meanwhile Mr. Giustine Carli and family came west from New York, first to San Francisco and then to Ryer Island. On Ryer he was a cook. He had married in Italy. He and his wife had three children: two sons and a daughter. They lived in the two-story Howard house just downstream from the store and also on the inside of the levee.

In 1923 Carli rented the store from the Howards and began his grocery business. He called the store "G. Carli Groceries". With all the activity at Howard's Landing he had a bustling and prosperous business. He specialized in foods that the Italian and Portuguese people liked. The aroma inside the store was delicious: cheeses, spices, salmon. An experience!

The Carli boys, Ed and Tito, grew up helping out in the store and when they became adults their father made them partners. The store then became "Carli and Sons". At one time they had a delivery truck which was used to deliver groceries to labor camps on Grand and Ryer Islands.

A big feature at the store was Francis "Jim" Corcoran, a Spanish-American War veteran. Jim was a permanent feature at the store for many years, holding court in an old high-back rocking chair, where he joked and laughed with his many old friends and store customers. His favorite past time was telling stories to children and handing out candy and soda to them. The store was never without Jim, who was pretty sharp until his death at 94. At the time of his death, the Carlis received a letter from President Lyndon Johnson honoring Jim for his service to his country. The American flag used at his burial was presented to the Carlis. Jim was the only Spanish-American War veteran left in this part of the country.

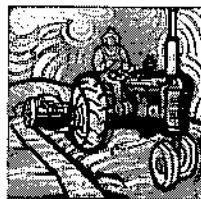
In 1942, Giustine Carli died. His daughter predeceased him and his wife had left him. The store was renamed again: this time "Carli Brothers".

In 1949 the Howard property was bought by the Carli brothers. Included in the sale were both the store and the house. In the early 1950's, Ed Carli built his house between the store and the Howard house. Ed and his wife raised their family in the new house.

Between 1949 and 1953 the Army Corps of Engineers moved the levee along Steamboat Slough back a few feet, as usual, taking a generous chunk of property. In so doing the Corps took the landing, the store and the houses. The Corps built the Carli's a new cement block store at the base of the levee, but the new store lacked the ambiance of the old leaning one-story store with the covered porch out front. Things just weren't the same and people didn't go there to shop as before.

In 1958 Tito Carli, the younger son, decided that the store wasn't enough to support two families. He and his family moved to Sacramento where he worked for a wine distributor. He was there until he retired and has since died.

After Tito left, Ed changed the name again, this time to "Carli's" which it has remained for forty years. Having lost his wife, and slowed by poor health and old age, Ed decided to close the store in 2001. Well, time marches on and Carli's is no more... just like so many of our old stores that have gone by the wayside. ☹



September Meeting: A Tour of the Heidrick Ag Museum

reported by Carol Watson

Our September meeting included a tour of the Heidrick Ag Museum and Hays Antique Truck Museum. These are reputed to be the largest collections of their kind in the world. The vehicles are beautifully displayed—accurately restored and maintained, and a joy to behold. Displays even include the cows, horses, hens and roosters. A barn is featured, complete with nearby outhouse. You can call up the sounds of many of the pieces of equipment. Placards on each piece tell of the name and location of the manufacturer, last owner and when and where it was used. There are tractors, balers, separators, thrashers, reapers etc...you name it and there was at least one example of each. The trucks started with a Model T Ford and included such luxury names as Packard and Pierce Arrow. There were flat beds and even some semis.

This Museum belongs on your must do list! Plenty to do and see for the whole family. To get there take Highway 5 north to the Woodland exit of Highway 102. Go straight across road 102 to Hays Lane and proceed to the museum. Only fifteen minutes from downtown Sacramento. Hours are Monday through Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-6 and Sunday 10-4. We are quoting the museum hype because it really is that good. Everyone will enjoy it even if you don't like to kick tires. I enjoyed it and I can't tell the difference between a disk, harrow, and plow. Call (530) 666-9700 for prices and discounts. ☹



SRDHS 2002 SCHEDULE

Meetings are typically held on third Monday of each month. Tentative schedule - Subject to change.

January 21	General Meeting/Annual Potluck
February 18	Board Meeting
March 18	General Meeting
April 15	Board Meeting
May 20	General Meeting
June 17	Board Meeting
	<i>June Newsletter</i>
July / August	summer break
September 16	General Meeting
October 21	Board Meeting
November 18	General Meeting
December	Board Meeting
	<i>December Newsletter</i>



WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THIS GREAT PUBLICATION???

Then make sure you pay your 2002 dues by mail or at our January General Meeting. Non-current members will be removed from our mailing list after May 2002.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 E-Mail: _____

- I'm paying \$25 ANNUAL dues for each of the following year(s): 2001 2002 other: _____
- 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
 PO Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING & ANNUAL POTLUCK

Monday, January 21st, 2002 at 7:30 pm
 Jean Harvie Community Center

Featured Program:

"The Good Old Days, Sacramento Remembered"

This documentary was developed by Steve LaRosa for Channel 6, and features many historical film clips of the Sacramento area. Schedule permitting, Mr. LaRosa is expected to attend this meeting to discuss his work and the potential of developing a similar historical documentary of the Sacramento Delta Region.

Thank you to our Board Member, CJ Jensen, for his efforts in enabling this wonderful program.

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