

**Sacramento River Delta
Historical Society**

P. O. Box 209
Walnut Grove, CA. 95690

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SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society's spring meeting on Monday evening, March 16, at the elementary school in Walnut Grove, is to feature Daniel Visnich, head of the California Historic Capitol Commission. He has headed the "Resoration of the State Capitol" which story with pictures will be presented.

Bob Moore of Orchard Supply in Sacramento will speak about his father, "Spray" Moore at the May 18 general meeting in Courtland. Other membership meetings will be on September 21 and November 23. Over the years, the largest turn-outs for meetings have been in Walnut Grove and Courtland, and, therefore, the Board has decided to schedule more meetings at these central locations.

Officers for the 1987 year are as follows: Don Quesenberry, President; Phyllis Manica, Vice President; Becky Wheeler, Recording Secretary; Yvonne Pylman, Corresponding Secretary; JoAnne Carr, Treasurer, and Directors Jim Dahlberg, Curzon Kay, Carol Watson, Chris Giovannoni, Carol Gwerder and Harry Rasmussen. Judy Cleaver, past president serves as a de facto member; Clarence Pratt is Director Emeritus, and Kathie Graham serves the Board as a consultant.

The members of the Budget and Finance Committee, chaired by Treasurer, JoAnn Carr are Don Quesenberry and Curzon Kay. The Membership Committee, Becky Wheeler, Chairman, which is planning a special drive, includes Jan Quesenberry, Carol Gwerder, Yvonne Pylman, Carol Watson, and Chris Giovannoni. The Newsletter, after a year's hiatus, will be written by Kathie Graham and edited, printed, and mailed by Yvonne Pylman. Kathie Graham shall oversee library acquisitions, and placement.

OLD BUSINESS

The 1987 "River Re-views" Calendar was a big success. The Society not only broke even, which was the goal, but made a small profit. The few remaining pictorials are now on sale at the Museum at the reduced price of \$3.90. A 1988 Calendar is now being discussed.

"Historic Houses...", SRDHS's book, continues to sell well and be recognized for its outstanding material. Among the latest institutions purchasing copies are Southern Methodist University in Dallas; CSUS Stanislaus; and Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

NEW PROJECTS

In September, 1986, the Board of Directors voted to apply for a local history grant through the County of Sacramento to renovate the yellow school house in Walnut Grove (more recently known as the "Scout Hut") located next to the Jean Harvie School Community Center. This is the last year such federal grants, to be allocated by the county, will be available. The school house drew the interest and attention of Gene Irogawa of the State Department of Parks and Recreation History division. The Walnut Grove Community Center and Parks Committee approached the Historical Society and asked that it consider being the sponsoring organization. The grant request, written by Irogawa, was submitted in October; the Society should know in July, 1987, if the request was accepted and the grant allocated.

If the monies are received, the Society proposes to establish its office and headquarters at the building as well as a small library focusing on Sacramento River Delta history. The Society projects the two large schoolrooms as both museum and meeting area. The Board envisions that the museum would interpret the social and economic history of the area. It would likely be open on a limited basis until a sense of public interest is assessed. There is no financial outlay for the Society to submit the grant request nor for the renovation of the building.

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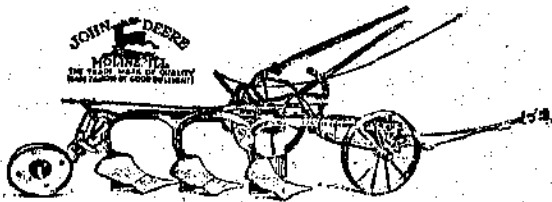
MORE ACTIVITIES

Jan Quesenberry has volunteered to oversee the Oral History Program instituted long ago by the Society, but which, after the initial stages of interest in the mid-1970's, has badly lagged. She will look into various ways and means to transcribe, edit, and type the histories which we have and into ways in which we can collect further material. One suggestion is "reminiscence writing." This method is beginning to be used widely for gathering fascinating nuggets of history which otherwise wouldn't be preserved. Anyone interested in writing his or her reminiscences should call Jan at 775-1048. One needn't worry about composition; the important thing is to put your recollections down in some written or preservable form. We are foremostly interested in collecting your stories and facts which can be edited at a later date. It need not be a narrative, but instead can be a series of informal recollections.

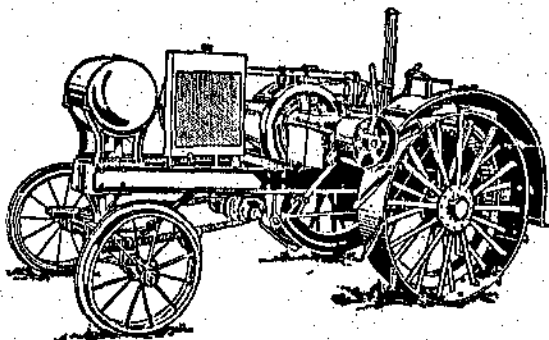
Daphne Millhauser has generously offered to transcribe and type some of the tapes the Society has in storage. Anyone wishing to assist Daphne should let Jan know.

The Society will participate in the Locke Blossom Festival March 29th. The Museum will be open, and Bill and Becky Wheeler will staff that day with some added from other members. Anyone interested in helping is asked to call Don Quesenberry at 775-1048.

There are plans to install a fire escape in the museum by the building's owner to comply with regulations. Plans also call for refurbishing the displays by replacing torn plastic covers and yellowed photo captions and cleaning the plexiglass photograph covers.



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MUSEUM NEWS

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The Dai Loy Museum in Locke will celebrate its 10th year of operation during 1987. It is an extremely popular attraction with over 11,000 visitors in 1986. (This compares favorably to the other local museum which registered 1200 guests.)

The museum's income topped \$5,000 in donations and sales—all which help the Society further promote and compile the history of the Delta.

The museum is staffed each weekend from March to October by member volunteers. HOWEVER, this year the museum is confronted with a serious staffing shortage. Chairman, Jan Quesenberry, reports that the postcard response for sitters is far below last year. Over 50 slots remain unfilled, making it impossible to assign these dates by a drawing.

If more people do not volunteer, it will be necessary to close the museum on those vacant staffing days. It is unfortunate that so many members are unable to staff for half a day once a year; it is impossible for a small group to carry the entire load. Closing the museum during the months of the highest tourist interest will weaken the Dai Loy's position as a prestigious museum of its size and nature.

Exploration Cruise Lines continue to place Locke and the Dai Loy on its itinerary. Clarence Pratt will once again undertake docent duties in connection with all special museum visits. This month Clarence will welcome students and faculty from San Jose State University.

Three new postcards have been added to items for sale at the museum. The postcards, which retail for 25¢, feature a view of the interior of the Dai Loy; the steamboat "Apache" laying by Andrus Island; and the packetboat "Fort Sutter." Pictures of the latter two may also be found in the calendar.

The 5 booklets have been renamed: "Discovering the Sacramento River Delta," "Discovering Locke," "Discovering Walnut Grove," "Discovering Courtland," and "Discovering the Dai Loy Museum." If anyone would like to gather information on the towns of Clarksburg, Isleton, Rio Vista, or any of the smaller villages (Paintersville, Ryde, Vorden, etc.) for future publications, contact Kathie Graham at 775-1041.

We now have printed self-adhesive sticker (green & white) to affix to the paper bags at the museum—to dress up the bags and to advertise.

New exhibits include memorabilia donated in 1986: the Locke Fire Wagon, which is chained out the side door; an Atlas globe from the Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church; and a beaver trap used by John and Clifford Smith in 1921/22 while working on a trap line in the West Cut for the Holland Land Company. Many thanks to all these contributors.

"But what is the present, after all,
but a growth out of the past."

-Walt Whitman

THINGS TO DO

PLACES TO SEE

PROJECTS TO JOIN

Study of Gold Rush Era Ships Underway



The State Lands Commission has been requested by the Legislature to locate, document, and investigate significant Gold Rush Era ships and artifacts along the Sacramento River from the westerly tip of Sherman Island to Sacramento. The Commission will research historical records, inventory, catalog, document, and map significant locations along and in the river, including ports, landings, wharves, villages, and locations of ship sinkings. Upon completion of the task, a cost estimate will be prepared to locate likely artifact sites both in and along the river. Planning for this project has begun. If anyone is interested in assisting in this project, contact Roy Minnick, Project Director, at (916) 323-7266.

There are three US Air Force Museums in the surrounding area: Silver Wings Aviation Museum at Mather Air Force Base, which among other exhibits, features a hands-on display for children; McClellan Aviation Museum, at McClellan AFB, which places special emphasis on the development of uniforms; Travis Air Force Museum at Travis AFB, which just opened January 17, 1987, and which features exhibits including the Gonzales bi-plane, constructed of wood with nails flown in California 75 years ago and one of the eight engines from Howard Hughes' "Spruce-Goose." All the museums exhibit US Air Force planes from the past.

The most elaborate traditional statuary found in Sacramento is in City Cemetery at Riverside and Broadway. The west side of the cemetery sits atop a bluff, and this is where one finds the most grandiose statuary. If you don't mind driving through a cemetery--it can not be seen from the city streets--it is really a treat to see.

THE PRIVATE GARDENS OF SAN FRANCISCO

The Adult Education department and the Activities Council of the California Historical Society are sponsoring two exclusive showings of private gardens in San Francisco. On Saturdays, April 4 from 1-4 and April 11 from 1-4, five different gardens will be highlighted. The tour will include gardens by well-known landscape architects such as Thomas Church and John McLaren. Refreshments will be served in one of the gardens. Tickets for single day are \$12 (members) and \$15 (general); both programs are \$22 CHS members and \$25 general.

Near Dixon off Hwy 113 is the Jepson Prairie, a 1500 acre patch of land which remains as the Central Valley existed before it fell under the plow and harrow. Its most striking feature is a chain of shallow seasonal water pools, locally referred to as "hog wallows," where exist 4 species--Solano grass, fairy shrimp, Delta green ground beetle, and California tiger salamander--which are found nowhere else in the world. Spring is the best time to visit the Jepson Prairie, and from February to May, docents from the California Native Plant Society and the Nature Conservancy offer guided tours. For more information contact Pat Hale, Institute of Ecology, UCD, Davis, 95616; 916-752-6977.

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Weekly Union.....1 50	The Sunday Union (alone), by carrier, per month..... 25
Sunday Union (alone)..... 1 00	

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TIDBITS OF HISTORY

Don't forget that one of the areas finest collections of historical information and artifacts can be found at the Sacramento History Center's Museum in Old Sacramento. It is housed next to the Railroad Museum in a replica of the first City Waterworks Building, which also tripled as City Offices and Police Headquarters. The displays are very interesting coupled with the newest in computer and electronic information retrieval systems, and everyone should find something of special interest.

DID YOU KNOW???? Seamas Avenue in the Greenhaven area is named for the Azoran Portuguese, Manuel Simas (pronounced shay-muss) who with his wife bought 100 acres in the area in 1883 and established Granger's Dairy?...Hiram Johnson was the only Sacramentan to become Governor of California? In 1915, Gov. Johnson arrived in his motor yacht at the grand opening of the Walnut Grove drawbridge where he cut the ceremonial ribbon. ...Elton Rule, the retired president of ABC is a Sacramento High School graduate, whose first job was with KROY Radio, Sacramento?...It was Boston's Paul Revere whose grandson first raised the American flag over Sutter's Fort in 1847?...The Liberty Iron Works in North Sacramento built the famous Curtiss JN4D bi-plane, affectionately known as the "Jenny," during World War I? Donald Douglas who was employed by the firm went on to bigger and better aircraft design, and the successor to the firm he founded, Douglas Aircraft, is now McDonnell-Douglas. ...The rush to the goldfields was part of the largest mass migrations in the history of the world? During this vast movement of population, which spanned the 2nd half of the 19th century, 37,000,000 people emigrated to the United States. ...By 1850, Sacramento was the largest population center west of Chicago?...75% of its population was transient males here to "get rich quick"? ...Sacramento's waterfront could provide anchorage for 75-80 sea-going sailing vessels, in addition to the several dozen steamboats making regular runs from San Francisco?... WHO CAN TELL US: what is the origin of the name "Twin Cities" road???

A FEW BOOKS OF INTEREST

Iron Will, The Life and Letters of Jane Stanford by Gunther Nagel, available from the Stanford Alumni Assn., Stanford, CA (\$24.15); Vanished Waters, A History of San Francisco's Mission Bay [this is a fascinating picture book] available from Mission Creek Conservancy, 300 Channel St., #21, Attn: Nancy Olmstead, San Francisco, 94107 (\$15.00) supply UPS address; "Murder on Grand Island" by Willard Thompson, Sacramento County Historical Society booklet "Golden Notes" [about Troy Dye's murder of A.M. Tullis a mile from Walnut Grove in 1879] available at the History Center Museum Gift Shop, Sacramento; The Legend of the Delta Queen by Bern Keating, available from the Delta Queen Steamboat Company, 30 Robin Street Wharf, New Orleans, LA 70130 (\$10.00); and---two new books, part of a project trilogy: Americans and the California Dream 1850-1915 and Inventing the Dream which focuses on the Progressive Era of California politics in the late teens and early '20's are both available from any bookseller; Weinstock-Lubin & Co. Spring 1891 Catalog reprint, available at the History Center Museum Gift Shop.

WORTH REPEATING
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Many thanks to Kathie Graham for compiling and preparing the the information in this spring issue of the SRDHS newsletter.

You can help your Society by 1) checking to see that your dues are paid. 2) Volunteering to serve one or more days as a sitter for the Dai Loy. 3) Inviting your friends to attend the interesting membership meetings. 4) Helping to expand our mailing list--if you have access to a community mailing list, please contact Becky Wheeler.

Kudos too go to Jan Quesenberry for all her work as Chairman of the Museum Staffing Committee; to Clarence Pratt for his super docent duties; to Chris Giovannoni and Alice Turner for planning the outstanding Annual Meeting; and to Jennie Sheehan for transferring PERFECT books!

Memorials and honorariums are accepted by the Society. Cut out the attached form and sent to: SRDHS, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690. Your tax deductible gift will help support the Society in its aim to compile and preserve the Delta's history, as well as commemorating friends, loved ones or even, special events. Each gift is acknowledged to both donor and recipient.

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

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