

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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PRESIDENTS NOTES

This may be my first and last writing because I'm not much for putting my expressions into written words. First of all I would like to thank all of the members past and present for making this a great historical group. Also to thank the past directors who have given our current board the proper tools and guidance to operate effectively. Since taking over as president in January our board is dedicated to carrying on the good work that the previous board has done as well as looking on to making our future even better. Two projects I have presented to the board as my goals for this year are (1) Get our oral history program going strong (2) To complete the work in the resource center so that any researchers looking for information can find it easily. Our thanks are out to Carol Watson and Clarise Jonson for the many hours of staff time they spent in the past collecting and filing the many donations of material received. Carol now has moved south and we had to make some new changes as to how we operate the center. We now have Bobbie Collier and Fran Bates co-chairing the leadership of the center. They have recruited a staff of fine volunteers to work at the center. We do need more volunteer staff so if you can help call them. The oral history program is now being co-chaired by C. J. Jensen and myself. My thanks are out to Dixie Wilson and Jan Goggans who have taken oral histories of some of our senior residents. Jan has presented us with a booklet containing a brief history of some of our senior residents. Awaiting a board decision they probably will be for sale in our future for a minimal donation. As to our program, again we need more help here on volunteers to take these oral histories as well as senior candidates for oral histories.

On April 24 our society hosted the Sac Area Consortium of Historical Societies. We prepared a luncheon and Judy Culbertson spoke to them on Ag in the Classroom program and how it related to our area history. Along with thanks to Judy are Terry and Jane Alchorn, Jim and Fran Bates, Lorraine Croup, Jim Dahlberg and Jamie Noe for their help on this event. The meeting subjects included Dr. Bob LaPerriere's report on the medical museum, cemetery groups, Sac Area Museum Assn., events of the area and the California Preservation Foundation. We discussed issues about promoting

county and state history with school interaction, oral history programs, and finding ways to involve younger adults and students into our historical preservation societies. We also had a short presentation on the "Veteran's Oral History Project" by Paul Ferrell where the ARRP and the Library of Congress are working on getting oral histories on the service war years of veterans. We agreed this is a good program and some of our own society members will get the training and take some of these oral histories of our veterans here.

The Delta Home Tour put on by the Walnut Grove Community Presbyterian Church on June 7 was a real success. I sat at Chris Lee's home (historic Gwerder House) and sold 40 of our historic homes books. Our thanks are out to their church for letting us sell these books at their event. Their tour is a way for other communities as well as ours to see historic homes still here. A great program.

SOCIETY NOTES

Our January potluck was a scrumptious feast, as usual. It has become a reunion of sorts and was well attended by over 100 people. Fran Bates has done a wonderful job as President for the past four years. She located grants to raise money, organized bus tours, ran well organized meetings of the Board of Directors (not always easy), represented us on the Sacramento County History Consortium and has worked in the Resource Center.

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SOCIETY NOTES Continued

Fran ran the election of the following officers: President Tom Herzog, Vice-President C.J. Jensen, Recording Secretary Terry Alcorn, Corresponding Secretary Doris Pylman, Treasurer Linda van Loben Sels, two year Directors Bobbie Collier, Kim Sackett, Marshall Pylman and Joe Enos, Directors with one year Cathy Hemley, Jim Dahlberg and Judy Culbertson. Special Awards were given to: Terry and Jayne Alcorn for the generous use of their time and their home on Historical Society projects, Joanne Carr was recognized for her many years as treasurer--very well done and Clarice Jonson for many hours of research and computer work in the Resource Center and on the Courtland High School records and she has previously served as treasurer. The entertainment for the evening was the movie "Steamboat 'Round the Bend." Will Rogers last movie which was filmed in the Delta and on the Sacramento River. Tom Herzog has done a terrific job as Vice-President and we look forward to his Presidency. We are grateful to the following Dinner committee workers; Mary Fulster and Jerry James, table decorations. Set up and clean up: Jim Dahlberg and Jaime Noe, Terry & Jayne Alcorn, Tom Herzog, Barbara Dahlberg, Gloria Santos, Shirley Hobart, Jim Bates, and Linda and Topper van Loben Sels.

In the interest of historical accuracy we must report that Dean Hall for whom the Courtland VFW Chapter was named, was not killed in the Battle of the Bulge but in the D-Day assault on the Normandy Beaches.

And another name correction. W. Heringer, known to everyone as "Bill" was named Wilford not William.

The November meeting was of great interest to a large audience. Mr. Mas Hatano spoke on the "Japanese Experience." He has contributed videotape of the Japanese-American Experience to the Resource Center. (See P)

Oral history tapes and transcripts of Nelson Eddy, Louis Giovannoni, Louis and Rae Giovannoni, Pan van Loben Sels, Art Jonson, Pete Budnik and Jim Shanks made by Jan Groggins are in the Resource Center. This was a very large undertaking and we are most appreciative of Jan's Work. A real win win situation for us.!

The Westerberg Collection of California books (more about this later) is located in the Courtland Library. Two interesting ones are "The Elephant as They Saw it" and "The Diary of a Forty-

niner". The books are not in general circulation but you may borrow one if you sign your life away, see the librarian.

Our June meeting did not go according to schedule as Mrs. Dutra fell ill and the meeting was rescheduled to the Rio Vista Museum. That Museum is always a delight. Docent Marybell O'Connell weaves wonderful tales and the collection is very broad--there is something for everyone to enjoy.

COURTLAND**Part Two of a Two-Part Hisoriette**

Written by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

In the early 1900's on Riverside at Bates Street a new Masonic Temple was built to replace the original over the school located at Onisbo. The temple is the home of the Franklin Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons, Onisbo Chapter of the Eastern Star and the Rainbow Girls. The building is located on the site of Frank Bate's House. Bates house was built on stilts. A few houses of this construction remain on Bates and Harkness Streets although the lower floors have been enclosed.

The headquarters for the Delta Telephone Company, a successor to Courtland Telephone and Freeport Telephone Companies was built on Riverside at the alley replacing the telephone office on the boardwalk. With broad stairs leading to the business floor the roof was crowned by twin cupolas. In 1937 the Telephone Company moved into the Courtland Bank Building and later, under GTE, to a new building on Washington Avenue. The old office was converted into a boarding house. Mrs. Alicia Buckley Selby ran the County Branch Library from her apartment in the building. She also ran the boarding house which continued to serve telephone operators and in the winter schoolteachers and in the summer pear workers.

Across he alley was Herzog's Garage and Farm Equipment and home appliances owned by Frank Herzog. Opened in 1921 by 1926 they were agents for the California State Auto Tow Service. Frank's son, Jim, took over and after 40 or 50 years it became Jay's auto shop and is now an equipment repair shop owned and operated by Norman Gregg. Also on Riverside Avenue, at Harkness, Eddy Electric relocated its industrial plumbing and electric business, after the 1940's fire, in what was formerly an automobile garage and showroom. Eddy Electric had occupied the lower floor of the Drugstore by the boardwalk. A school bus garage occupied the remainder of the old auto company.

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Across the street on the site of an old packing shed many years later was occupied by Bud's handyman business; 'locksmith and saws sharpened'. Bud previously ran his business from the levee in the old blacksmith shop.

The largest and by far most impressive building in Courtland is the Bank of Courtland Building on Riverside at Primasing Avenue. Resembling a Greek temple the bank moved into the building in 1921. The bank was chartered in 1919 with a capitalization of \$65000. The major stockholders, directors and officers were prominent local businessmen and farmers. In February 1928 the bank was robbed. At the time the bank was managed by Harvey Warren who lived in the Joe White Apartments on Harkness. Doris Fisher and Margaret Wiedmann were tellers and Dewey Arrowsmith was the chief investment officer. The bank closed its doors during the Great Depression. It paid its creditors in full but never reopened.

At the opposite end of Riverside Street at Magnolia (next to the telephone building) was the Isham residence later owned by the Halls and now by the Harris family. Across the street on Magnolia was the Joe Fisher house bought by Nelson Eddy, Sr. and later occupied by the Quesenberry family.

After 1915 when several small school districts were unified, new schools were built on Bates, Smith and Sim's property. Bates Joint Union Elementary School was a two-story building with classrooms and auditorium over a full basement. The Oriental School, built in 1916 to comply with the separate but equal provisions of California's Oriental Exclusion Act, was one story with a belfry and shaped in a U. The school was made up of four classrooms and after 1926 four extra were added. The corridors were open as covered porches. A rope operated the bell in the belfry; the classroom floors were oiled pine and each room had an oil stove heater in a back corner. All the schools shared the vast grass playgrounds and athletic fields. Until the Courtland Union High School was built the high school students met in two classrooms and the basement of the elementary school. The high school (built 1921) was two stories joined by interior ramps; classrooms on each level the roof was tile and the grounds designed by John McLaren the architect of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. After the 1932 earthquake the auditorium was found to be structurally unsafe and abandoned. The "old" auditorium was thereafter used for storage and a new auditorium was added to the west end of the building. About 1925 the gymnasium was built followed by the cafeteria. The cafeteria was built between the main building and the gymnasium with entrance from the lower hall. In 1949 a Shop Building with Mechanical Drawing Room was built

and later a Home Economics Building. The high school colors were green and gold and the mascot was a charger. The Oriental School eventually housed the Bates primary grades. The schools were overseen by boards of trustees. In 1950 a Kindergarten was built near the primary school and classrooms were added nearby. In 1967 the older school buildings were deemed to be not earthquake safe and subsequently razed. The High School was so solidly built that Cleveland Wrecking much underbid the job and had a terrible time knocking it down. The grammar school was rebuilt around the newer buildings and the High School was moved to Clarksburg and combined with Clarksburg High School to form today's Delta High School. The newer high school buildings are now used by the new unified school district.

Courtland was the seat of a local Justice Court, which for many years was presided over by Judge Charles Bunnell. The court was located in the alley behind a small house on Magnolia Avenue next to the one occupied by Judge Bunnell. Bunnell had arrived in the area with his parents in 1873. The local constabulary district was overseen firstly by Chick Elliot, then Charlie Johnson, then Walt Goodman and finally Joe Simoni. Goodman was named Deputy Sheriff in 1919. His obituary noted "he was absolutely fearless and he proved it time and again. Through the years he really made some good arrests. He was often called in to help in the toughest cases. "He was born in Lockford, San Joaquin County and moved to Courtland when he was 10. Goodman also dispensed driver's licenses. His daughter Lucy acted as his secretary. If a resident wanted a license Goodman asked "You know how to drive?" applicant "Yes" Goodman "Lucy type it up". He was also known for coolness under duress. The story runs that with a criminal holding a knife at Goodman's neck he firmly demanded "give me that knife" and evidently he fellow did. Goodman lived a long life and was the local water and well driller besides constable, he was known for keeping meticulous records in a little book he carried with him. In it he recorded all the stratas where sweet water was found, thereby knowing exactly where to drill and how deep.

In the 1880's/90's there was a small church somewhere near Courtland. Traveling Methodist ministers officiated. In 1950 the cornerstone was laid for the present church on Primasing Avenue. It began as a Methodist Church and today is the Courtland /Delta Community Church.

For many years social life centered on the N.S.G.W. The parlor began in 1877. The highlights were the Grand Parade and June Ball and in November the Masquerade Ball. Both events
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were sponsored by the N.S.G.W. and were open to the public. Four to six hundred attended the annual June Ball. Chartered boats arrived from Sacramento and berthed at the wharf. Everyone partied until daybreak or exhaustion which ever came first. Traveling vaudeville troupes performed also at the N.S.G.W. Hall--the hall which had formerly been Houston's Store. Couples often went motorboat courting to these events or to an organized picnic or dancing on the wharf. Courtland fielded a semi-pro baseball team in the Delta League. There was always lots of interest in the "Courtland Nine". In the very early years the Courtland Farmers Club had a large membership. There were also ladies whist groups, the La Perita Garden Club, Eastern Star dances and other Masonic events. After World War II there was the 20-3- Club, Delta Young Woman's Club, Courtland Lions and in Walnut Grove the Rotary Club. Today apart from the grammar school and Dr. Go's Office Courtland is probably best known for its Annual Pear Fair held on the last Sunday in July since 1973.



Courtland Fire Department

The Courtland Volunteer Fire Department was chartered January 26, 1942. Whether wartime or a scarcity of men promoted the department is unknown. At any rate the men volunteered to fight fires--grass, levee and structure. When the hand started siren sounded the men came running. There was of course training in fire fighting, handling equipment and first aid.

The first Chief was Nelson E. Eddy Sr. (1942-47). The next Chief was Don McClain, (1947-50) followed by Frank Herzog (1950-69) and then Clyde Gregg (1970-71). Milo Wetzel was Chief from 1972 to 1993, when the current Chief Stan Eddy, grandson of the first chief, took over.

There has been great extension of service since its founding and a station in Hood was earlier established. The services have extended too. First aid training advanced from artificial respiration to mouth to mouth CPR (Cardio pulmonary respiration.) as well as other newer treatments. The volunteers are now called out for search and rescue, first aid, 911 home emergencies, automobile accidents and drowning to mention a few.

The equipment takes time to purchase and maintain, keeping up to date with training takes time too. The jaws of life was the first major emergency equipment purchases. There are now many other emergency tools available to the volunteer firemen. Communication equipment has advanced from the home phone to radios, plectra alarms, pagers. The siren is now automatic. Equipment has to be repaired and replaced. Fortunately the equipment has gotten beyond the original hand drawn pumper.

A 1977 Sacramento Union article told about the Courtland Volunteer Fire Department which operates the 26 member department on \$22,125 a year. Firemen received \$3 per call. The Commissioners (at that time Galen Whitney, Jim Herzog and Max Hollar) worked for free. There are no elections because they cost money. The directors said if anyone wanted the job they were welcome to it. It was stated that it would be more expensive if the County taxed and ran the fire district. The members were all part of the community: Chief Milo Wetzel was a teacher, Bill Coker a mechanic, Dave Pierson a butcher, Ron Reeves a Mosquito abatement man, Ruben Regallo a school custodian, Bob Visentin worked for Shell Oil, Jack Depew a refrigeration specialist, Stan Eddy an electrician, Kirby Iseri a farmer, Bud Wallace a fix-it man and Jack Wilkins was the Courtland Postmaster. The article stated that the department was asking a small tax to replace the 30 year old pumper and estimated that the tax raise would pay for a new pumper in about five years.

A great deal of credit goes to the Courtland Fire District Board of Commissioners. The first commissioners were John Wheeler Sr., Joe Greene Sr., and James Barnes who owned 60% of Hood. Others who have served over the years include Don McClain, John Wheeler Jr., Joe Greene Jr., Art Jonson, Bill Carr, George Buckley. Al Hemly, Don Heringer, Robert McClain, and Jim Emerson. They are little known but essential to the function of the two firehouses. They are responsible for purchasing and maintaining the equipment as well as taking care of the minutia, financial and other, that surrounds a public service.

Our hat is off to our generous neighbors the Volunteer Firemen who put in a lot of quality time and effort on our behalf.

(Our thanks to former Chief Milo Wetzel who supplied many of the details.)



1979	Rick J. Boyer
1982	Clarice Jonson
1993	Carolyn D. Steele
1997	Jean K. Sawitzsky
2000	Glenda Faye Emerson

Onisbo Postmasters

1854	Charles S. Howell
1858	Alex W. Runyon
1859	Charles Howell
1860	Alvin S. Hutchinson
1864	John F. Bucroft
1868	Armstead Runyon
1872	David B. Runyon

BITS OF HISTORY

The **BEAR FLAG** was first raised over the fort at Sonoma on a June day in 1846.

The flag was sewed together in the front room of the barracks by Benjamin Dewell. Bill Todd painted the bear and star with black ink.

Red, white and blue were used because they were the colors of the U.S. flag. The bear was the strongest animal in this part of the country. The words on the flag express our desire for independence: "A bear stands his ground always, and as long as the stars shine we stand for the cause."

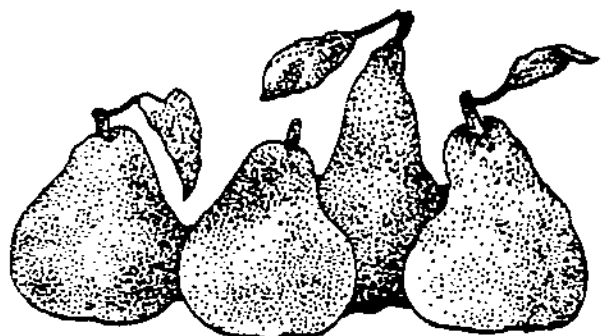
The **BANK OF RIO VISTA** was granted its charter on April 12, 1904. Its assets grew from \$50 thousand in 1904 to over \$78 million today.

The **SACRAMENTO UNION** stopped publishing in early 1994. The newspaper began as a four-page paper March 19, 1851, and continued through financial ups and downs for nearly 143 years. In its early years the paper Paid Mark Twain to write four letters a month from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). He was paid \$20 a letter.

"The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society publishes the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Newsletter twice a year.

Courtland Postmasters

1872 (October)	James V. Sims
1877	Paul Kahn
1880	William B. Myers
1883	Addison J. Bump
1887	Joseph W. Houston
1900	John H. McGaughran
1904	Charles E. Bauer
1914	David C. Simpson
1919	Eva Simpson
1920	Charles Arrasmith
1928	Floyd B. Howard
1958	Leland E. Stewart
1964	Jack W. Wilkins



SRDHS 2003 SCHEDULE

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

January 20	General Meeting/Annual Potluck
February 17	Board Meeting
March 17	General Meeting
April 21	Board Meeting
May 19	General Meeting
June 16	Board Meeting
June Newsletter	
July / August	summer break
September 15	General Meeting
October 20	Board Meeting
November 17	General Meeting
December	Board Meeting
December Newsletter	

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 - 2003 other: _____
 \$25 a year for Individual/Family/Business 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 the SRDHS to:
 SRDHS - Membership
 PO Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690



PEAR FAIR

JULY 27, 2003 - COURTLAND, CA

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society
 P. O. Box 293
 Walnut Grove, CA 95690