

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

“For what is the present, after all, but a growth out of the past.” – Walt Whitman

NEWSLETTER

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President's Notes

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It's hard to believe that we're already beginning a new decade. Wonder what the “twenty-teens” will bring?

In 2009, your SRDHS saw many changes—some good, some sad. We lost a number of our dearest member-friends, among them, John Wheeler, Connie King, Tim Wilson, Herman Fisher, and Patrick Urquidez. They may be gone, but their devotion and contributions to the culture and history of the delta live.

After our summer break, our September general meeting was wonderful! One of our board members, Jeff Hart, operates Hartland Nursery on Grand Island with his wife, Toni. As part of their mission, they offer a cruise on the “Tule Queen” to visitors. For our meeting, we enjoyed a three-hour sunset wine cruise of Sutter Slough. Jeff is an amazingly knowledgeable captain and shared stories and history of our waterways, peoples, civilization and thoughts for the future. Because of the rave reviews and because this trip was limited to the first forty-six passengers who signed up, we'll be looking into doing it again for those of you who missed it. Thanks, again, Jeff!

In November, we had another interactive-type meeting where six local hobbyists shared their collections for a “show and tell”. After a brief talk by each, we were encouraged to move around and browse through their collections. Jerry Waterworth brought in a selection of antique tools and toys, Topper van Loben Sels displayed a number of very old and marvelous area maps; Jim Dixon shared stories of his years as a game warden and

his compilation of duck stamps. Tom Herzog lugged in a load of books—just a few of the tens of thousands he says he has! Jim Kuykendall brought in some wonderful specimens from his bottle collection (and if you were listening, he shared some bird calls as well), and Jim Dahlberg brought in a few of the many binders he has in his library of fruit (mostly pear) labels.

As this letter goes to the printer, I'm working on a plan to get to sunny Southern California for a very special purpose. The San Diego Maritime Museum recently contacted us to see if we'd be interested in a half-hull model of a paddle wheeler, named “Modoc and Apache”. It really isn't pertinent to their collection, but it certainly is to ours! The Modoc and Apache vessels sailed our waterways a hundred years ago, so this model is going to be a terrific acquisition! I'm assured that it'll fit in my SUV, so perhaps if I time it right, we can display it at our upcoming January General Meeting and Potluck Dinner!

Put it on your calendars: Tuesday, January 19, 2010. 6 p.m. You'll be receiving a postcard soon listing the type of dish you should bring to share (or look below and don't forget serving utensils!)—we usually have upwards of 100 people, so please be generous. Tom Herzog promises a dandy program for us and our business meeting will be brief, but important. We're looking at open seats on the board—interested, anyone? Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Debbie Chan

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING & ANNUAL POTLUCK

Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 6:00 pm

Jean Harvie community Center 14273 River Road, Walnut Grove

Please bring food for 10: A—N Hot Dish O—S Salad T—Z Dessert

Please call Debbie Chan 916-776-1502 if you have any questions

EARLY DELTANS: THE KERCHEVALS

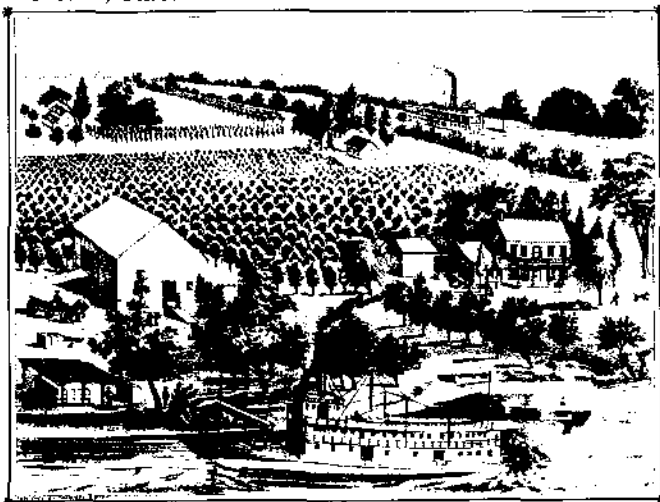
By Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

The Kerchevals were an old northern Virginia family. The progenitor of the family, Lewis, arrived in the colony in 1699. It is believed he came from Orston, Nottinghamshire in the east midland of England. This area provided a substantial number of emigrants to the colonies. The name "Kercheval" itself is likely of French origin. Lewis's son John was born in Virginia in 1736 and died in 1788, likely in Frederick County, Virginia. In 1761 he married Frances Gholson and their son James was born in Virginia and died in Ohio. On his way west in 1785 he married Mary Pottinger from a prominent Maryland family. Their son Lewis was born in 1796, perhaps in Frederick County (now Clarke County), Virginia. It is from Lewis that the Grand Island Kerchevals descend.

Lewis was one of eight children. His brother Reuben married Mary Crume, a niece of President Lincoln. Another brother, Samuel, was the renowned Winchester, Virginia historian and author of the "History of the Valley of Virginia" published in 1833. He was also a correspondent of Thomas Jefferson – notably in 1810 on Quakerism and in 1816 on thoughts on government. His name pops up regularly in colonial and early American Virginia in regard to legal and business matters in the Northern Neck.

Lewis joined the western migration from Virginia into Kentucky. Lewis married Mary Runyon who was born in Kentucky. They moved to Ohio about 1818 and then to Will County, Illinois in 1830. (Sol Runyon lived in Will County.)

Their son Reuben was born in Ohio, December 1820, perhaps near Hamilton, Butler County. In 1850 Reuben left Will County, Illinois and joined the wave of migration to California where he mined for about six weeks. Shortly thereafter he arrived in the Delta in the company of Albert Foster (later of Courtland) and settled on Ryer Island. He was joined by his brother Lewis and together they bought 334 acres at the head of Grand Island. After a few years Reuben bought out his brother. In 1856 he returned to Will County, Illinois to marry Margaret Brodie who was born in Urbana, Ohio.



REUBEN KERCHEVAL'S HOUSE
ON GRAND ISLAND, CALIFORNIA
1856

The couple returned to the Grand Island property where Reuben became a prosperous farmer and one of the first landowners to attempt building a levee to corral the river system during winter and spring high water. He was a member of the California Legislature in 1872-'73 and again in 1877-'88. He was a Mason and an early member of Franklin Lodge in Courtland. He also was Fourth Officer and 32nd Degree Scottish Rite. He died in 1881.

Reuben and Margaret had four children: James Louis born 1858; Howard Douglas born 1860; Josephine born 1865 and Hartley born 1868.

James Louis attended the California Military Academy. He married Nellie Kelly of San Francisco in 1885. He was a freight clerk on the riverboat "J. D. Peters".



Images by Sharing History.com

Howard Douglas also attended the California Military Academy and the Berkeley Gymnasium. In 1882 he married Mattie Stewart Barkley of Sacramento. Their residence was a "handsome two story" Italianate house which today would stand at the corner of Highway 160 and First in Walnut Grove.

Howard Douglas Residence



He became a stockholder in the California Transportation Company, perhaps through his sister's husband, W. H. Metson, the company attorney. He also was the Deputy District Attorney of Sacramento County 1889 and a trustee of the Grand Island Reclamation District #3. Howard and Mattie had three children: Reuben born in 1883; Elbert born in 1885; Howard Gholson born in 1888 (who carried his great-great grandmother Frances Ghotsen's maiden name).

Josephine born in 1865 attended the Irving Institute in San Francisco and studied art with tutors. She married W. H. Metson of San Francisco. Metson was an attorney. The Metson's Delta house was on the point of Grand Island next to the Steamboat Slough Bridge. Built of brick it burned and was never rebuilt.

Hartley was born in 1868 and attended Sackett's Academy in Oakland. Hartley's house on Grand Island was described as "one story with basement cottage". He married Mamie Hall in 1889 who likely was the niece of Rudolphus Bukey Hall of Grand Island (near Leary Road).

Of the three children of Howard and Mattie it appears Reuben and Howard survived. Reuben married "Dell" and became, like his grandfather, a prominent Delta farmer. He was a trustee of Grand Island Reclamation District #3 and he was a large stockholder of the California Transportation Company (riverboats) through his father. He had one daughter and two granddaughters.

Reuben's brother Howard Ghotsen married Juanita Lauppe (pronounced loo' pee) of Sacramento. Her family had settled the Antelope district of northeastern Sacramento county as well as the Sylvan Corners district of Citrus Heights. Her father was John D. Lauppe an early Sacramento autodealer. They had two sons Robert and John Howard, 5 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Sources:

Kercheval Jewelers, Sheridan Ind.

1894 Sacramento County and its Resources

Reminiscences

Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World: An Illustrated History of Sacramento County 1890

CHINESE -POWER TONGS- By Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

From Central California and north to Canada, The Bing Kung Tong controlled most Chinese Gambling houses which were syndicated tong operations. An off-shoot of the Bing Kung was the powerful Chee Kung Tong. It was almost impossible for another tong to establish in Bing Kung/Chee Kung territory.

Arguments between tong members were resolved by single-minded pursuit which offered awards for elimination. Between 1914 and 1920 the rate was \$500 per head. A leader with a price on his head could command \$2000. Notices in Cantonese "chun-hung" were tacked on tong bulletin boards. If a member agreed to be a hit-man, he posted a note, not identifying himself, but noting acceptance of the assignment. After completion of the hit the award money was placed in an envelope and tacked to the bulletin board where it was discretely accepted.

The intended victim if he saw his name on the bulletin board went into "retreat" (hiding). The Chinese code of silence hampered police investigation. Caucasians called the vicious tongs "the fighting tongs" and the hit-men "highbinders". Several of these "tong wars" spread to the Delta. In the 1930's armed tong guards patrolled a half mile around Courtland where a war spread into the Delta from San Francisco.

From "Samflow" and other sources

Correction for June 2009 Newsletter Sources: *Recollections: John Stanford Brown*

TIDBITS OF INTEREST

Orin R. Runyon –
developed the "Tragedy Prune"

John Miller of Walnut Grove –
developed the Miller Orange Cling Peach

George A. Smith 1888–
grew 75 Washington navel oranges
grew Mediterranean sweet oranges
grew Valencia late oranges

Alex Brown bred pacers

Senator William Johnston bred trotters

Item from "Sacramento County and Its Resources" A Souvenir of the BEE – "Our Capitol City Past and Present" – lists "Elegant Residences":

Senator William Johnston
Dwight Hollister
Solomon Runyon
Mrs. Kercheval
George A. Smith
O. R. Runyon
Wm N. Runyon
Charles V. Talmage
John Crofton
Joseph Greene, Jr.
Thomas W. Dean

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wally Baumgartner from Clarksburg
Mary Ledbetter from Sacramento
Tim Neuharth from Courtland
Lori Costa Paumer Amy from Sacramento
Rich Richard from Sacramento
Marybeth Ryden from Walnut Grove

Also, **THANKS** to all those who have renewed their memberships for 2010!

“Canned in Sacramento” Sacramento Canning Companies

By Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

In 1958 California canning celebrated 100 years. At that time the State was the country’s largest canned food producer. Sacramento played an important role.

The first product canned was Salmon in 1864. Soon after, however canned fresh produce became dominant. Sacramento proved to be an ideal location situated to the northeast of the Delta and at the foot of the Sacramento Valley and near the head of the San Joaquin Valley. The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad opened huge markets for California produce. The railroad also helped the canneries become economic mainstays in the region, transporting produce to the canneries and distributing the finished product. In the 1880’s and 1890’s California began to produce huge harvests of fruits and vegetables. By the early 1900’s over fifty canneries operated in the Sacramento valley area.

By 1920, Sacramento was the canning center of the West, packing and shipping over 75% of the regional produce. In 1924 CPC (California Packing Corporation) opened the largest cannery in the world at Sacramento. The canneries became important seasonal employers. During the Season the hours were long. Sacramento canneries continued to contribute economically to the region through the 1950’s. But when the San Joaquin Valley west side and its other extremities began to be developed for agriculture as a result of State water deliveries, the fruit and vegetable producers moved south and the canneries with them. No longer does one find, with the exception of the odd one here or there, canneries in the Sacramento Valley, the Delta, Southern Alameda County, Santa Clara County or even San Francisco.

Prominent Sacramento canneries were: The California Packing Corporation (1949 picture),



DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation, Central California Canning Company, Bercut-Richards Packing Company



Bercut-Richards Packing Co. employees show off some of the business’ canned goods. (Photo courtesy of Sacramento Public Library, Sacramento Room)

and Libby, McNeill and Libby. The Libby plant at Alhambra Boulevard and T Street in 1913 was ranked as the city’s second largest employer. The largest was the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Excerpted from “Golden Nuggets” – the newsletter of the “Sacramento County Historical Society.”

Northern California Industrial Survey Series
THE PHOTO THE PLANT THE PRODUCT
Libby, McNeill & Libby
LOBLOX APPEARANCE PLANT
One of Fifty Canned Tuna



EXTRA THE SACRAMENTO BEE EXTRA

VOL. 112 - NO. 11155 SACRAMENTO, CALIF., TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 14, 1928

COURTLAND BANK HOLDUP NETS \$7000

COURTLAND BANK ROBBERY

as told to Carol Watson by Margaret Wiedmann Smith

Margaret Smith (nee, Wiedmann) graduated from Courtland High School in June of 1925. (The Class of '25 started high school in September of 1921 in the Bates School basement and moved to the brand new Courtland High School building in the middle of their freshman year.) A month after her graduation, Margaret went to work as a bookkeeper at the Bank of Courtland which had been established in 1920.

Doris Fisher was the teller; Dewey Arrasmith was bank investment officer, and the bank was managed by Mr. Warren, who lived in Joe White apartments, just south of the bank, on Harkness.

The Wiedmann family took a trip to the mountains Sunday, February 12, 1928, to celebrate several family birthdays. Margaret

returned with the family, worked as usual on Monday, and then came Valentine's Day--Tuesday, February 14, 1928.

About 2:45 in the afternoon, Margaret and Doris were working on the ledgers at their desks--facing one another. Dewey Arrasmith was away on business. Mr. Warren was in an office making a regular phone call to the Wells Fargo Bank to tell them what cash would be needed for the next day.

"This is a hold up! Put up your hands!" was the first thing the girls heard. A man was standing in the bank lobby just outside the cashier's cage. There was also a man standing inside the bank door keeping lookout. The girls put up their hands. Margaret felt tears running down her face although she was not crying. "No use crying," she was told. (She couldn't have stopped the tears if he had shot her.)

Mr. Warren came out of the office and startled the would-be robber; Doris took the opportunity to move to her teller window and press the alarm button on the floor. (No one knows why she did not press the one near her desk in the first place.)

The alarm caused the phone to ring in Mr. Warren's nearby apartment. His wife, as previously instructed, phoned the bank. She received the code indicating that yes, there was in fact a robbery in progress. She lost some time as the phone lines were not immediately clear but, finally got the operator. (Perhaps she had to run the two or three blocks to the telephone office.) The operator suggested that they call the men playing cards in one of the local saloons

on the other side of the levee where Joe Fisher, Doris' father was proprietor. However, Mrs.

Warren persisted in her instructions and phoned the sheriff's office in Sacramento.

Meanwhile, back at the bank: when the phone rang, the men had Doris answer it. The first man vaulted over the counter gate into the back area of the bank. He had Mr. Warren open thy, vault. He proceeded inside, grabbed the rusty old gun kept there and said, "I've got your gat." Everyone was herded into the vault; Mr. Warren was required to open a special section and turn over all the greenbacks--\$13,000 worth. The gunman backed out, closed the vault grill, vaulted the counter gate again and, with his partner, left through the front door. Mr. Warren drew his gun and shot once inside the bank and once through the window--missing both times. The bandits fled in their waiting car driven by a third participant, who was waiting with the motor running.

No one seemed to notice anything. Telephone troubleshooters working nearby remarked that the shots sounded like a bank robbery, but simply smiled and went about their business. Georgia Williams (nee, Colby) came in to deposit her check from the telephone company. Doris and Margaret started to leave for fear that the bandits would return but decided to remain. Then everyone began to show up. Margaret got a nervous chill and the next day broke out with poison oak from the mountain trip. She spent the next ten days in bed and so missed the local excitement.

Things quieted down. In April, Oakland police thought they had the culprits. Doris, Margaret, and Mr. Warren went down to identify them, but they were not the ones. Mr. Warren felt he would recognize his walk, and the girls were sure they would never forget what the man looked like.

It developed later that the robbers had been seen, at different times, the morning of the robbery in the Bank of Alex Brown in Walnut Grove, but found too many people in the lobby. Posses from Sacramento County, Solano County and San Joaquin County combed the area but the thieves were never apprehended.

Cashier And One Other Employee Locked In Vault

The Bank of Courtland was...
afternoon by two masked men...
mobile with cash amounting...
\$5,000.

The cashier and another...
the vault.

Connie King kept Locke spirit alive

By ROBERT D. DAVILA (bdavila@sacbee.com)

Connie King, a Locke community leader who fought to improve and preserve the historic Delta town as a tribute to the indomitable spirit of its Chinese pioneers died Friday at age 86.

She died in her sleep of natural causes, said her daughter, Regina "Ginny" Gee.

Mrs. King was known as the honorary mayor of Locke, which was built along the Sacramento River and settled by the Chinese in 1915. Forbidden by state law from owning real property, residents paid rent to landowner George Locke.

During its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s, the town boomed with restaurants, markets, businesses, brothels, speakeasies and an opera. The population later dwindled as most residents abandoned rural living for cities or moved to places where they could own land. But Mrs. King stayed.

"I born here. I am (an) American citizen," she told The Bee in 2004. "I should be qualified to own the land?"

As buildings deteriorated, she opposed plans to condemn Locke, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. She helped win public improvements, including paved roads and a new sewer system.

She was vice chairwoman of a citizens panel that worked on gaining property ownership for residents. Sacramento County eventually bought the land and sold parcels to her and other residents in 2004.

After achieving the American dream, Mrs. King turned her efforts to creating a memorial to the Chinese who came to California for the Gold Rush. She wanted to honor the immigrants, who suffered discrimination while laboring in harsh conditions to lay railroad tracks and build the Sacramento Valley's river levees.

She wept two years ago as a monument to the Chinese pioneers was dedicated at Locke Memorial Park. The event vindicated her perseverance on behalf of the community she called home for 60 years.

"She was comfortable there, and she had a mission to own her own land," Gee said. "After that, she wanted to make sure all the Chinese men who came here and worked would be remembered."

Mrs. King was born to Chinese immigrants in Isleton in 1923. The moon was out, and her father named her Yet Ho, which means full moon, she said in a 2004 interview.

"I didn't have an American name until I went to school," the former Constance Tom said.

She had a daughter from a brief early marriage when she married Tom J. King in 1949 and moved to Locke. She had a son with King, a radio technician at the Sacramento Army Depot who died in 1997.

Mrs. King was an artistic painter who managed the River Road Art Gallery. She was on the board of the Locke Foundation and volunteered at the town museum.

Besides her civic contributions, she was revered in the community for many personal kindnesses. She translated for Chinese who didn't speak English. She looked after laborers, mostly single, when they fell ill and pledged to contact their

families if they should die alone and far from home. "She was a very giving person who never thought about herself," Gee said. "She was the town mom?"

Connie King

Born: March 16, 1923; Died Sept. 25, 2009

Survived by: Daughter, Regina "Ginny" Gee of Sacramento; son, Kim King of Sacramento; brother, William Tom of San Francisco; sister, Mae Chan of Oakland; three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Services: None

In memory: Donations may be made to the Locke Foundation, PO Box 1850, Walnut Grove, CA 95690.



FLORENCE LOW Sacramento Bee file, 2004

Connie King fought to repeal a state law from the early 1900s that banned Chinese from owning property. She bought her land in 2004.



Connie's Garden

SRDHS 2010 SCHEDULE

January 19.....	General Meeting/Annual Potluck
February 16.....	Board Meeting
March 16.....	General Meeting
April 20.....	Board Meeting
May 18.....	General Meeting
June 15.....	Board Meeting
	June Newsletter
July/August.....	Summer Break
September 21.....	General Meeting
October 19.....	Board Meeting
November 16.....	General Meeting
December.....	Board Meeting
	December Newsletter

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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 \$25.00 a year for Annual Membership

I’ve enclosed \$150 to become a Lifetime Member

I’d like to register as an Honorary Member – Free to members 80 years and older

Please mail this form with a check payable to SRDHS to:

SRDHS Membership
 P.O. Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

INFORMATION

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society web site is srdhs.org. Please view and enjoy the information. If you wish to email the resource center, the email address is srdhs@riverdeltawireless.com.

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