

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 36, NUMBER 1

JUNE 2016

President's Notes

Summer greetings to you all!

I hope you will have a chance to enjoy some of the pleasures the warmer weather brings. Aren't we lucky to have our cooling Delta breeze almost every evening?

It was so good that so many of you were able to attend our Annual Potluck General Meeting in January, 2016. We all enjoyed a delicious dinner and a very entertaining program by Phil Pezzaglia, curator and director of the Rio Vista Museum, who has been researching and writing about the Delta region for many years. His latest book, "True Tales of the Sacramento Delta," has an abundance of interesting stories which Phil shared with us at his presentation at the Annual Dinner.

At the Annual Dinner, we also had the pleasure of voting on and welcoming to our Board of Directors the newest members, Maryellen Dabaghian and Jack Carmany.

The next program that we enjoyed in March was "Railroading in the California Delta," presented by Marilyn Sommerdorf. Having worked as a researcher and photographer at the California State Railroad Museum for many years, Marilyn had a wealth of fascinating information and photos about the history of railroads (and waterway transportation) in the Delta to talk to us about, all so very interesting.

The most recent general meeting presentation in May was by Jackie Boor, author of "Logan: The Honorable Life and Scandalous Death of a Western Lawman." Jackie spent thirty years researching the very full and significant life of Sheriff Tom Logan, her great grandfather. She shared his life story with us, and also told us how she did her research, which will be very helpful to know if we wish to do research on our own some day.

No doubt Tom Herzog, Program Coordinator Extraordinaire, will line up interesting and informative programs for future general meetings, and I hope you can come to them, also.

The Resource Center, located in the Jean Harvie Community Center, needs a mention. This is where Esther Koopman, Corresponding Secretary for the Board of Directors, spends almost every Tuesday morning. She can help anyone interested in Delta history, family history, etc. locate materials for research. I would like to give both Esther and Douglas Hsia, Sacramento River Delta Historical Society member and volunteer at the Research Center, a special thanks for being there on a Saturday to accommodate a group of Monterey Trail High School

students who needed to research Locke for their entry (The Locke of Life) in the Sacramento History Day and California History Day competitions. Their entry won awards and accolades, and we are very pleased that we had a part in helping them toward their goal.

If anyone would like to volunteer at the Resource Center, please let Esther know (srdhs@riverdeltawireless.com). Currently, Connie Salzwedel, Douglas Hsia, and Robin Brown are volunteering at the Resource Center, which gives them a chance to do their own research on what interests them, and also work on other general projects.

The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society will participate in the Sacramento Archives Crawl on Oct. 8, 2016, between 8AM and 4PM. I highly recommend coming to this event, which is a chance for people of all ages to view collections, speak with archivists, and go on special behind the scene tours. The display at our table is an opportunity for the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society to present itself to the general public and raise awareness of your organization and the history of the unique Sacramento Delta, which is "off the radar" to many Sacramento residents. Please find more information at www.archivescrawl.com. (continued on page 6)



44th Annual July 31, 2016

Letters from Bill Hutchinson, Sr.
Presented by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson

With the finish of the asparagus season, we publish another letter from Wm. N.L. Hutchinson's 1938 informative inspection trip east for the Tyler-Pac growers of Walnut Grove

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
May 11, 1938.

California Asparagus Growers Association,
Walnut Grove, California.

Since writing my last letter I spent a day in New York talking to brokers and trying to find out how they make their mark up from the wholesale price to the retail price in the stores.

In going around to several stores and trying to pick the price of the various cans I found it very hard to analyze the situation because so many stores did not have a corresponding size of California Asparagus with that of any of these Eastern States. Then you would go to some other district and find they were having a special on certain grades or that the hauling charge to that store was more than in a store where you had seen the same size can. However, I think I have a yardstick to measure the mark up that a retailer takes on the commodity that he is selling. And this hold true not only with asparagus but any canned article.

Now, we take for instance, a quotation on Del Monte Green Garden, we will say quoted at \$1.70 per dozen F.O.B. California. The freight will figure out 12¢ per case, which makes it \$1.82 per dozen laid down on Atlantic Seaboard. Then the jobber's profit is generally, 12% to 15% and the retailer would try to get 20% to 25%. Now, that is about the mark up that is made on all canned goods regardless of where it comes from, and I find that the housewife does not know whether the asparagus comes from Jersey, Delaware or California. In fact, I found in one store in Jersey, asparagus with a label on it from a distributor in Minneapolis.

The freight rate from Swedesboro, New Jersey to New York is 18¢ per 100 in 30,000 pound lots. So you can see that the California packer has a great disadvantage in freight rates.

You can see from the quotations that I have sent you that all of this asparagus in the East is quoted on an F.O.B. price at the cannery.

I have a lot, of canned samples from Jersey, Carolina, and Delaware, and after opening these cans you can judge for yourself the texture, color and taste, and I will talk to you about that later and the impression I have gained here, when I arrive.

The sales are practically all made through brokers.

I am enclosing a price list of H. P. Cannon & Son at Bridgeville, Delaware, and I think he is the outstanding canner in Delaware.

I stayed in New York over the week-end and took an automobile early Monday morning and drove to the Starkey Farms at Morrisville, Pa. These gentlemen farm about 2000 acres, and they have 400 acres of asparagus. The adjoining ranch is also a large holding, and they farm approximately the same acreage with approximately the same acreage of asparagus.

As far as I could find out, none of this Pennsylvania asparagus is canned and all is shipped to the market. Pennsylvania asparagus commands a premium in the market, and it is very obvious, after looking, at it, why. They pack their stuff better, use label crates and grow it full green, and for the length of green the heads are quite tight. Their production is about 90 crates to the acre, or 2700 pound's. They are very much disappointed in the yields they are getting, and are making a study of the asparagus business, and at the present time, they are following Hanna's Bulletin from the University of California Extension Service. Their plantings are mostly 5 feet, with some 4 feet. They use about one ton of fertilizer to the acre. Their wage scale is 25¢ per hour, and they cut all of their asparagus by the hour. On one field of 200 acres they have 45 cutters. And the day I was there, which was a fairly warm day, about 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon they were all through. Their packing house was the most modern of any I have seen. They sort over a sorting belt, and after it is cut it is passed through a sprinkler very similar, to the type used in California.

They are planting more asparagus and from the earnestness with which they are going into the study of asparagus, I feel sure they will increase their yield.

In his packing house the girls were getting 12¢ per crate for bunching. And the foreman told me they were averaging about 30¢ per hour on their present work. They use no moss in their crates, but use wax containers as they pour water in, just as it is done in Jersey.

The land values vary from \$100.00 per acre to \$150.00 per acre for bare land. And they have large acreages on which they can plant asparagus if they so desire.

That night I went on to Philadelphia and the representative of the American Fruit Growers had made appointments for me with the Campbell Soup Company and with two large growers and packers of asparagus in the Southern part of the State.

The Campbell Soup Company buy all of their asparagus on the market or direct from growers in the field, but make all their purchases in the standard shipping crate. They have a buyer who inspects the asparagus and buys it, trying to purchase as near all green as possible, and, of course, after they make such a purchase the grower or the jobber has no grading. They have no standard of what they will pay and, naturally, buy at the time they figure they can make the most advantageous purchases. They buy quite a large percentage of small sizes. They do not allow anybody in their plants, so I could not see the method they use to chop it up.

From there we drove down through the State of Delaware to Clayton where the Wheatley Canning Company operates. The Wheatley Canning Company contract with growers for the asparagus in the standard shipping crate, and, as in other places, it is all bunched. The asparagus is taken out of these crates and canned, and the crate is returned to the grower. He has various contracts, depending on the type of asparagus, that varies from \$1.25 per crate to \$1.55 per crate delivered at the cannery. He had a very slip-shod method in his plant, and so far as I could see, there was no grading done at all. These growers selling to Wheatley paid 42¢ per crate for cutting and bunching.

From this plant I went on to Bridgeville where the H. P. Cannon Company are growers and cannery. Cannon also buys from other growers in addition to his own production. I spent most of the afternoon

with Mr. Cannon, and he was very nice. He took me over his fields and through his plant.

The cost of the land in this district varies from \$75.00 per acre to \$100.00 per acre. Practically all of them are planting the Mary Washington asparagus.

Mr. Cannon is one of the large growers of the district and has about 400 acres and he owns a lot of land on which he could plant asparagus and is planting more every year. The life of the beds are about the same as in other districts, running 10 to 12 years.

Mr. Cannon employs Negroes to do his cutting, and he pays them 17½¢ per hour. He pays 22½¢ for women in the cannery and 25½¢ for men. He feels that with the 17½¢ an hour cutting wage, he gets his asparagus cut for 22¢ a crate, the asparagus being cut 9 inches long.

The cutting season is the same in Jersey, running to about July 1st. The beds are cut once a day, and the canning season starts from the first of May and runs along to the first of July.

The asparagus that Mr. Cannon buys, he pays for as follows:

For asparagus from 1/4 to 3/8 inch he pays 2½¢ per pound
 For asparagus from 3/8 to 5/8 inch he pays 6¢ per pound
 For asparagus from 5/8 & larger he pays 8¢ per pound

This is weighed on a 6 inch basis and is supposed to be 4½ inches green.

Mr. Cannon hires a grader and this man makes the grade to the grower. He certainly does not bear down very heavily. In fact, it was a very liberal grading. The day I was in his plant it was a very cool day and a very light production, and they brought in 2932 pounds of asparagus and this graded out as follows:

In the 5/8 and larger grade he had 1057 pounds
 In the 3/8 to 5/8 grade he had 875 pounds
 In the 1/4 to 3/8 grade he had 7 pounds
 And he had 3 pounds of culls.

The day before he had a much larger pack, and although I did not see the exact figures, he told me the asparagus graded into 48% of the first size.

This price at this plant is based on the asparagus delivered at the cannery in lug boxes supplied by the cannery and paid for after the canners trim them to a 6 inch length. You can see from the list that I am sending you the grades he packs it into.

I purchased 2 cases of asparagus from him which he promised to express to California today.

Mr. Cannon thought the increase in his district in new plantings would be very slight.

At the prices they received this year for asparagus, he feels that the grower can make a good return on 125 crates to the acre, which is about the average yield in the district.

The growers in Delaware are shipping their stuff practically 100% to the cannery at the present time.

I expressed you an empty crate used in Jersey, and they use the identical container in both Delaware and Pennsylvania.

When this asparagus is sent to the fresh market it is all hauled by trucks; in fact, they don't know anything about shipping in cars.

In going through these various markets, I find that California is the only shipper who packs any loose pack at all. They do not have the drying winds which make so many crooked spheres in our fields. They never cultivate down the rows where the asparagus is sprouting for the reason that they have practically no weeds, and practically the only cultivation that is used in the asparagus rows itself is a little dirt thrown up to cover any small weeds that might be coming. They keep the ground well cultivated in between the rows and do this only for the conservation of moisture. They depend wholly on rainfall for their moisture, and if they go a week or 10 days without a rain, the land gets quite dry and their production falls off tremendously. A large part of their land is so uneven that it would be impossible to irrigate it. They have a plentiful supply of water if they wish to drill for it, and in a number of cases their ranches adjoin quite large streams. They also use about a ton of fertilizer to the acre, and all of these growers say that if they do not fertilize they get practically no production. I saw one lot of asparagus in the cannery which was very poor and I asked Mr. Cannon what caused this poor quality. He said this man does not

"put on", and this is the expression used for putting on fertilizer.

When this asparagus goes to the market it is consigned to jobbers, just exactly the way the Sacramento River growers would consign to jobbers in San Francisco.

Most of these fields are very close to the canneries, but some isolated places, haul as far as 60 to 75 miles to the cannery.

This plant generally takes two cuts for their center cut pack. Then these cuts are put over a sorting bolt and any that show white on them are culled. About 10% of his total pack goes into center cuts.

I checked up, after I got Mr. Brown's wire, and found that most of the canners, including Jersey, their center cuts will run 10 to 15% of their total pack.

The weight of the bunch of his Delaware pack averaged about 2 ¼ pounds per bunch.

Outside of Mr. Cannon's own production, the growers who are delivering to him have acreages of 2 to 5 acres apiece.

I suppose you have seen the quotations of California asparagus because they are out back here at the present time. I cut a piece out of the Journal of Commerce this morning showing the quotation of the California Packing Corporation and Libby, McNeill & Libby.

In this district it has been the general practice to cut their asparagus tops up in the fall, and they use a disk and run over the tops of the rows and throw dirt on top of them and they all decompose before the spring, because there is no sign of brush anywhere in the ground.

Mr. Cannon feels it costs him \$150.00 per acre to bring a bed into commercial production, which he figures the third year.

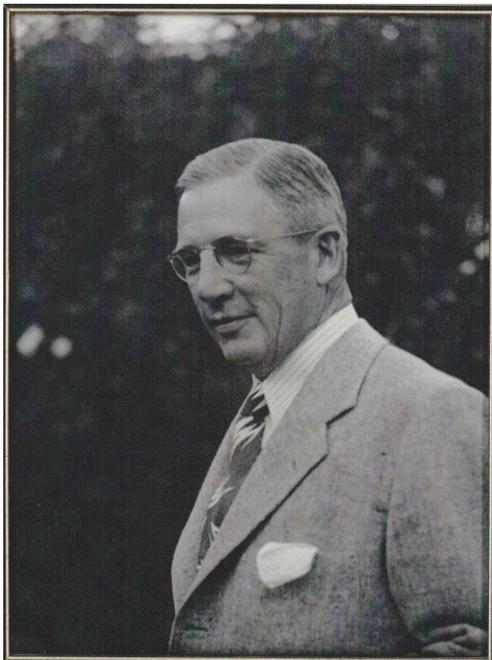
In Maryland the canneries have bought asparagus in the crate for \$1.00 per crate for the small size, which runs about 1/4 to 3/8, and \$1.50 per crate for asparagus larger than 3/8. The average net will figure out about \$1.36 per, crate. The bunches vary in weight from 2 1/4 to 2 1/2-pounds, with twelve bunches to a crate.

I did not go into any canneries in the State of Maryland, but I found the same methods were used in those canneries as are used in other canneries who buy asparagus in the shipping crate.

I expect to leave here tonight or tomorrow morning, stopping in Detroit and then going on to Chicago, and have made arrangements to go to the asparagus fields in Southern Illinois, and then will return to Chicago, then on home. If you wish to reach me by wire, please wire the American Fruit Growers at Chicago.

I expect to leave here tonight or tomorrow morning, stopping in Detroit and then going on to Chicago, and have made arrangements to go to the asparagus fields in Southern Illinois, and then will return to Chicago, then on home. If you wish to reach me by wire, please wire the American Fruit Growers at Chicago.

Wm. N. L. Hutchinson.



William N. L. Hutchinson, Sr.

Was Crime Ever Solved?

Newspaper Articles circa 1955

Alex Brown's son Frank died under unusual circumstances. The following two newspaper articles give differing reports.

Frank Brown Found Dead in Apartment

OAKLAND — Frank Emmons Brown, 37, grandson of the late Alex Brown of Walnut Grove, apparently died from natural causes, the Alameda County Coroner said yesterday.

Brown's body was found late Friday night in his lake-front apartment house. The room was splattered with blood.

County autopsy surgeon E. M. Lundegaard reported that Brown died of a fractured rib which punctured his lung, causing hemorrhages.

Police theorized he had suffered a dizzy spell and fallen.

Brown was the grandson of Alex Brown, prominent and wealthy Walnut Grove banker. In his own right Brown had put together a handsome fortune as a radio director and as a motion picture writer. He served in the war as an Air Force lieutenant and civilian flight instructor.

His death was discovered, police said, when a former University of California roommate, Dr. Ulrich Fritsh of Sacramento, and Fritsh's wife called at Brown's apartment to attend a reunion of the class of 1933 at the Claremont Hotel with Brown.

Sacramento Union Article

Unable to arouse Brown by the doorbell and seeing lights on in his apartment, the Fritshs called the manager, who opened the apartment door with a passkey, police said.

Inside, they found Brown's body slumped over an open oven door in the kitchen. He was sitting on a small cabinet, police said.

A small laceration was found over his left eye and bruises covered his forehead and body, police said.

Broken furniture was found in a closet and blood covered all the rooms except the kitchen, in which Brown's body was found. Police said heavy blood stains on the bed indicated that Brown had suffered a hemorrhage there.

They believed he suffered the bruises while collapsing during attempts to move about.

Brown apparently had rinsed the blood off his face and from the bathtub, police said.

Inspector Leo Wells reported he was unable to find any evidence of another person being present in the room or any trace of foul play.

Frank Brown Rites Will Be Tomorrow

Frank Emmons Brown, 37, a grandson of the late Alex Brown who founded the Bank of Alex Brown in Walnut Grove, will be buried in East Lawn Cemetery tomorrow, following funeral services at 10:30 AM in the East Lawn Chapel.

Press dispatches from Oakland, where Brown died, quoted the Alameda County coroner as saying his death apparently was due to natural causes.

Dr. Ulrich A. Fritsch, a Sacramento physician and a classmate of Brown at the University of California, found the body Friday night when he called at Brown's Oakland apartment to take him to a class reunion.

Cause Of Death
The dispatches quoted Alameda County Autopsy Surgeon Dr. E. M. Lundegaard as reporting Brown died of a fractured rib which punctured his lung, causing hemorrhages. The report stated the police theorized he had suffered a dizzy spell and fallen.

An inquest is scheduled for Friday.

A native of Walnut Grove, Brown was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brown. After attending Walnut Grove schools and Sacramento High School, he was graduated from the University of California in 1933 with a bachelor of arts degree in letters and

Sacramento Bee Article

science and history.

He was an author of and actor in campus dramatic productions at California. He also was a staff member of the Daily Californian.

He was a member of Theta Delta Chi, Phi Phi, Mask And Dagger and Alpha Delta Sigma.

Attended Yale
He took graduate work in the Yale University dramatics school.

During World War II, he became a civilian pilot instructor.

After the war, he went to New York as an author and producer of radio shows. He left the network job about a year ago and went to Oakland to help care for his aunt, Miss Gertrude Jackson, who is ill.

In addition to his aunt, his survivors include his uncles, John S. Brown, president of the Bank of Alex Brown, and Arthur A. Brown of Walnut Grove, and several cousins, in the Sacramento, Walnut Grove and San Francisco Bay areas.

(President's Notes continued from page 1)

And last but certainly not least, we have a new 2017 Pear Label calendar in the works! A new selection of the old historic pear labels from the wonderful Jim Dahlberg collection has been chosen, and you won't be disappointed! Each label is a little work of art with historic connection to the Sacramento River Delta. As always, these beautiful calendars will go on sale at our table in the auditorium at the Pear Fair in Courtland, last Sunday in July. Hope you can come to the Pear Fair, enjoy the food, music, historic photos and displays, and of course stop at the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society table to see the newest calendar (and also the past years' calendars, if you wish). The 2017 calendars will also be available at every General Meeting and also at some local businesses. Perfect for yourself and gifts! We are so grateful to all you Sacramento River Delta Historical Society members for your support and interest. Thanks to you, your organization is thriving and always ready to share the history of this wonderful, unique Sacramento Delta.

Wishing you all the very best this summer!
 Warm Regards,
 Barbara Damion, President
 Sacramento River Delta Historical Society

RESOURCE CENTER NEWS

Thank you for your historical donations to our resource center! We are recording each item in our data base – many collections are done, but many still need to be entered. **Would you like to help?** We work almost every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and need people to enter data (it's already handwritten and just needs to be entered into the computer.) Please call Esther at 777-2227 to make sure she will be there and join the fun.

SRDHS 2016 SCHEDULE

July/August.....	Summer Break
September 20.....	General Meeting
October 18.....	Board Meeting
November 15.....	General Meeting
December.....	Board Meeting
	December Newsletter
January 17, 2017.....	Annual Potluck

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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.

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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

DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THIS GREAT PUBLICATION???

Then make sure you pay your 2016 dues – Use this form or one of our handy dues envelopes

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

- I'm paying Annual dues for the following year(s):
 2016 2017 Other _____
 \$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 those 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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Michael Campbell from Clarksburg
 Doug & Jane Dickson from Walnut Grove
 “Hemley Cider” from Courtland
 Sue Huffman from Fair Oaks
 Nancy Ruyon from Monterey

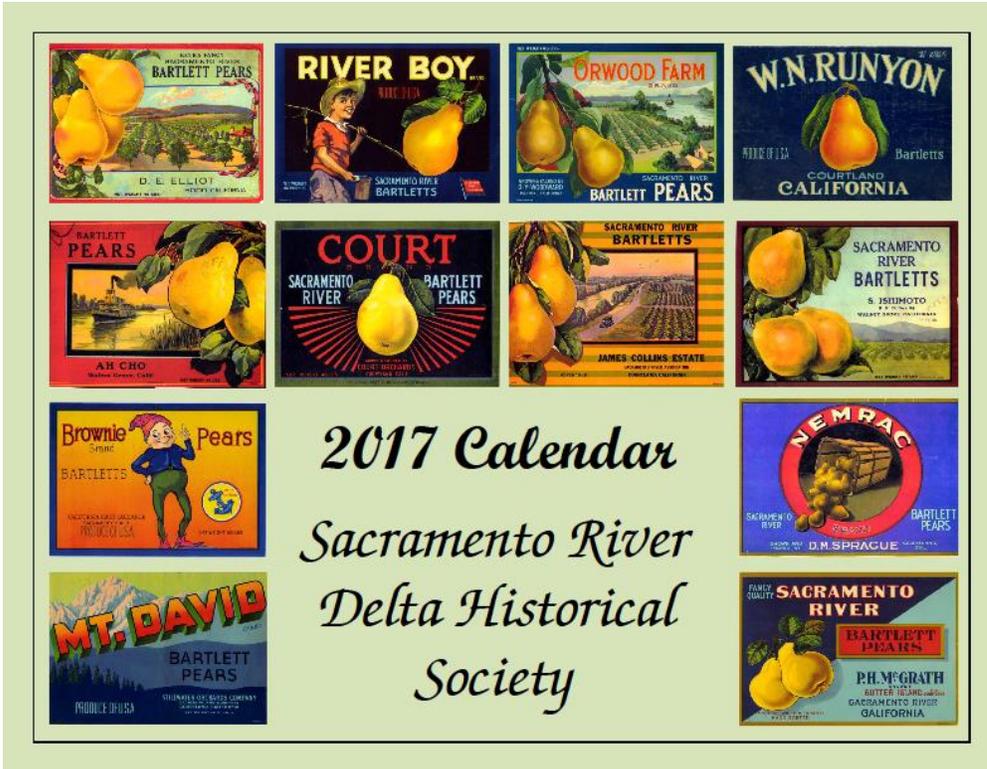
NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor.....Kathleen Hutchinson
 Design/Layout.....Esther Koopman

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

NEW “2017” SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR AVAILABLE AT PEAR FAIR OR AFTER AUGUST 1st

Here is a preview of the cover of the delightful 2017 Calendar representing more Pear Labels from Jim Dahlberg’s Collection. Each month shows a different Pear Label that has not been published before from his wonderful collection.



The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society’s “Pear Label” Calendar for 2017 may be purchased at the Courtland Pear Fair July 31st or at the Resource Center and at the Society Meetings after August 1st. You may also purchase the calendar by filling out the form below and mailing it with your check to:

SRDHS
P O Box 293
Walnut Grove, CA 95695

The price for each 2017 calendar is \$15.00 plus postage
2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 calendar price is \$10 each plus postage

If you wish to have the calendar(s) mailed please add the following postage:

- 1 Calendar \$2.00 postage
- 2 Calendars \$3.05 postage
- 3 - 6 calendars \$6.45 for priority mail (2 to 3 day delivery)

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Calendar Order Form

Please send _____ 2017 calendars @ \$15 per calendar
____2012 ____2013 ____2014 ____2015____2016 calendars @ \$10 per calendar

Enclosed is payment in the amount of \$ _____ (include postage in total)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____