

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

Well summer is upon us and maybe we're ahead of the bad virus that shut down America and many societies from doing their normal activities. We finally did the virtual program by Marilyn Sommerdorf on “Dinning on the Rail” along with the Sacramento Renaissance Society in May. It was fabulous. We are looking forward to our program in September at the Jean Harvie Center in person. Possibly we can do our pot luck dinner along with a program on food history. Maryellen will be working on something special.

We need to thank Esther for keeping the resource center alive during the past year. “Thank You Esther”. She did all the correspondence, computer work, filling info, managed to produce the label calendars along with many other projects. She also had the help of Nancy Rutherford through most of the year and now Linda van Loben Sels and Barbara Damion have come back to continue work on the projects they had started before Covid.

Hopefully for our future we can venture into new ideas, get the Delta Homes book printed, work on programs that are both in person and virtual, get some oral histories done and whatever else we can dream up. It seems that since this virus struck I and maybe some of you have gone to sleep at the wheel or just forgot of the many everyday things we did. I'm excited that we're able to be free with

our lives again. Hope all are well and look forward to a great finish to 2021.

Pear Fair is again canceled for this year but we are still moving ahead with producing a label calendar for 2022 filled with 12 new labels from the Jim Dahlberg collection. This will be coming out in late summer and we will let you know when they are available. We are looking for donations to produce it and if you wish to donate as an individual or business please contact John Stutz 530-219-4420 or email/message John at jstutz@ix.netcom.com.

Thank You for all your patience

Tom Herzog, President



2021 has been cancelled

“Agricultural Powerhouse”

**Presented by Kathleen Graham Hutchinson
Reprinted from “Golden Nuggets”
Sacramento City Historical Society
February 2013, No. 2**

By 1900 2 million people lived in California and it was fast becoming an “Agricultural Powerhouse”. Agriculture output was prodigious. The San Francisco Bay Area was known for its orchards, and the citrus crops of Los Angeles were already becoming symbols of California’s true gold. Irrigation and levee improvements in the Central Valley facilitated a transition from cereal grains to fruit and vegetable production, and California’s wine industry was just starting to make a name for itself.

At the 1904 fair, Santa Barbara County built a tower 100 feet tall of olive oil containers. San Francisco’s “California Fruit Cannery Association” created a display of canned fruit, meats and soups, while the city of Redlands provided a display of jams, jellies and marmalades. Los Angeles County, the state’s leading agricultural producer, built a booth resembling a Mission style building of enclosed plate glass counters of crystallized fruits, canned and potted meats. Santa Clara County also built a Mission style display of prunes and apricots, and drew visitors by giving free samples of California prunes, and a pamphlet of prune recipes, to every visitor.

In 1900, representatives of the 12 counties making up the greater Sacramento Valley formed the Sacramento Valley Development Association to market the valley’s agricultural products. Each county sent one director, and Sacramento, the urban center of the region, was always strongly represented. The Sacramento Valley display at the 1904 fair showed the full bounty of the valley’s agricultural products, but its centerpiece was a life-sized model of a grizzly bear reared up on its hind legs, made of prunes. The “Prune Bear” had gleaming teeth and flashing electric eyes, attracting visitors to enter the exhibit. Visitors were given a folder promoting the Sacramento Valley and could enter a contest, guessing the number of prunes used to construct the bear. Winners took home large boxes of choice prunes. This much-maligned fruit already had a bad reputation, and the term “full of prunes” was considered the equivalent of “full of hot air,” but

marketing efforts like the Prune Bear and Santa Clara’s display were intended to popularize the product and their regions.

In 1905, Portland hosted, the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition, a bookend to the 1904 fair commemorating American explorers’ arrival on the west coast. California was well-represented at this fair, subsidized by \$100,000 from the state legislature. A special California building was designed with four entrances, each designed to resemble a different California mission. Many of the 1904 exhibits were duplicated, while others were embellished. Alameda County brought a display of their fruits and vegetables. San Francisco provided displays of Spreckels sugar, a 20-mule team made entirely of borax. Pacific Portland Cement Company built a concrete fountain simulating the Vernal Falls, with running water. Los Angeles sent a display of game ducks, leather and citrus fruit. Santa Clara County recreated their popular Prune Castle, featuring San Jose’s “Fig Prune Cereal Company.” Ventura County sent an elk made of dried beans, and the Southern California Walnut Growers’ Association built a dramatic life-size elephant made entirely of walnuts. A pavilion A temple to Baccus showcased California wineries, including Sacramento’s J.H. Hayden strawberry wine and California Winery’s “Cordova” brand, endorsed in 1905 by President Theodore Roosevelt. Southern Pacific Railroad provided discounted rates for exhibits traveling to Portland, and the California railroad giant had its own display.

According to the final report of California’s participation in the Portland fair, Sacramento County featured more items than any other county display, including a model hop farm constructed of hops by Lovdal Brothers of Sacramento, a pyramid of beer bottles from the Buffalo Brewery in the shape of a giant beer bottle, a 12-foot-high mural of the Great Seal of California made entirely of beans, and a model of the California State Capitol constructed of nuts. Other Sacramento products included pickles, pasta, and pepper sauce. In the California Building’s central rotunda, guarding the Capitol Building model, stood a new Great Prune Bear. In addition to its electric eyes, the 1905 Prune Bear featured a “graphophone” in its jaws (an improved Edison gramophone that played wax recording cylinders.) Reports do not document whether the graphophone played music, spoke a

pre-recorded speech, or simply emitted bear-like growls.

After the Fair, some of the displays, photographs and exhibits were stored at Sutter's Fort for use in future fairs and exhibits. Others were more temporary in nature and either disassembled, discarded, or perhaps eaten. The fate of the Great Prune Bear is unknown, but its legacy remained, as it was one of only a few displays of the 1904 and 1905 fairs photographed for

stereograms and other publications reporting on the Fair. Newspaper reports and later accounts of both Fairs often mentioned the bear, so while its existence was ephemeral, many found its regular presence at both fairs profoundly moving.

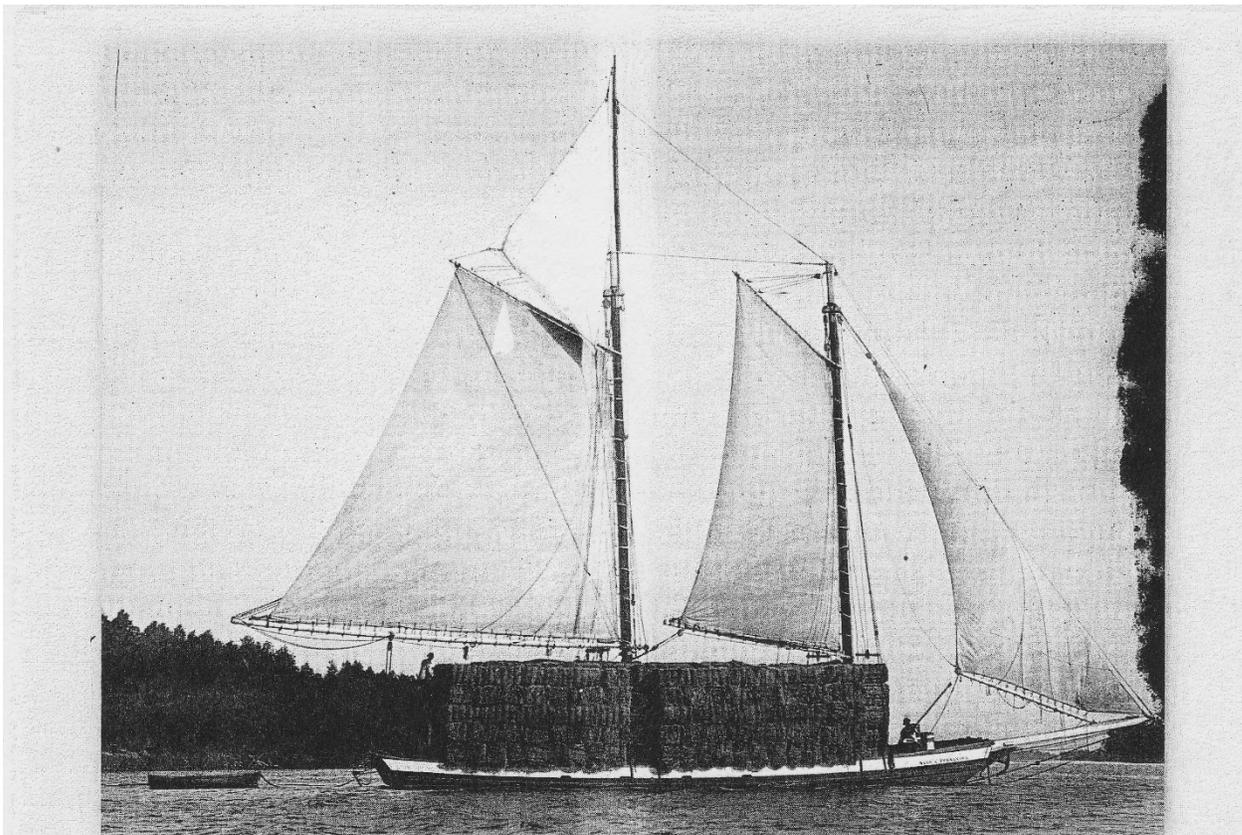
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This is an early model of one of the Holt Manufacturing Company's track-layer tractors. The Holt brothers, natives of Merrimack County, New Hampshire, brought their wagon spoke and hub business to San Francisco. Then in 1883, the Stockton Wheel Company was founded. In 1892, the firm was renamed the Holt Manufacturing Company. Benjamin Holt and his brothers, W. Harrison, A. Frank and Charles H. worked together, but Benjamin was the mechanical genius of the company. He perfected the self-propelled combine harvester, as well as the caterpillar mode of traction. The name "caterpillar" came from photographer Charles Clements who proclaimed that the machine looked like a caterpillar. It was this method of travel which allowed the heavy equipment to be used on the soft peat soils in the Delta islands and around Stockton. This machine was developed about 1910. At the time of this photo, Bank of Stockton was 43 years old. Bank of Stockton Historical Photo Collection

Dorothy Beck Wheeler

We've lost another Deltan of long-standing Dorothy Beck Wheeler, better known as "Becky" died April 2021. She had been in declining health due to age. She was the only child of Dorothy Seymour Beck and William "Billy" McRoberts Beck. Her grandfather Judge Arthur McArthur Seymour of Sacramento brought the family farm around 1910/12. Located on the west of Grand Island on Steamboat Slough near the ferry slip, it had been a portion of the Frank Johnson Estate. Her father who farmed the property hailed from Indiana. Her parents met during World War I when "Billy" was stationed with the Army Air Corps at Mather Field, Sacramento County. Becky, born 1927, attended local schools and the University of California (Berkeley) where she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. After graduation she worked for the "San Francisco News" rising to Society Editor at the time of her marriage to Willard Wall Wheeler, Jr. of Pebble Beach in 1953. They subsequently lived in Pasadena, California where they raised their three daughters Sarah, Caroline and Kate. In retirement and after Becky's parents died, they moved to the Seymour family ranch on Grand Island. She was an active member of the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society as well as with the Dr. Paul Barnes Community Park. She is survived by three daughters and their children, (her grandchildren).



The Mary A. Fernandez, a hay schooner carrying a full load bound for market along the Sacramento River, c. 1905.

SACRAMENTO ARCHIVES & MUSEUM COLLECTION CENTER

George Gudie Collection

2006/080/0040

PEAR COOKBOOK & 2022 CALENDAR

The "Pear Pearfection" cookbook and the new 2022 SRDHS Calendar" will be available after August 1st. You and come by the Resource Center at Jean Harvie School on Tuesdays to purchase them (if we are allowed to be open) from 10:00 to 1:00 every Tuesday. Or send in the order form at the end of this newsletter.

RESOURCE CENTER NEWS

Thank you for your historical donations to our resource center! We are grateful to have Nancy Rutherford, Linda van Lobel Sels and Barbara Damion as volunteers to record our items. We work almost every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and can assist you in finding historical items at that time. Please call 916-398-1088 to make sure we will be there to assist you.

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INFORMATION

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society interesting and informative web site is srdhs.org. If you wish to email the resource center, the email address is srdhshs@gmail.com or you can send a message from our website.

SRDHS 2021 SCHEDULE

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.

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

Then make sure you pay your 2020 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):
2020 2021 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:

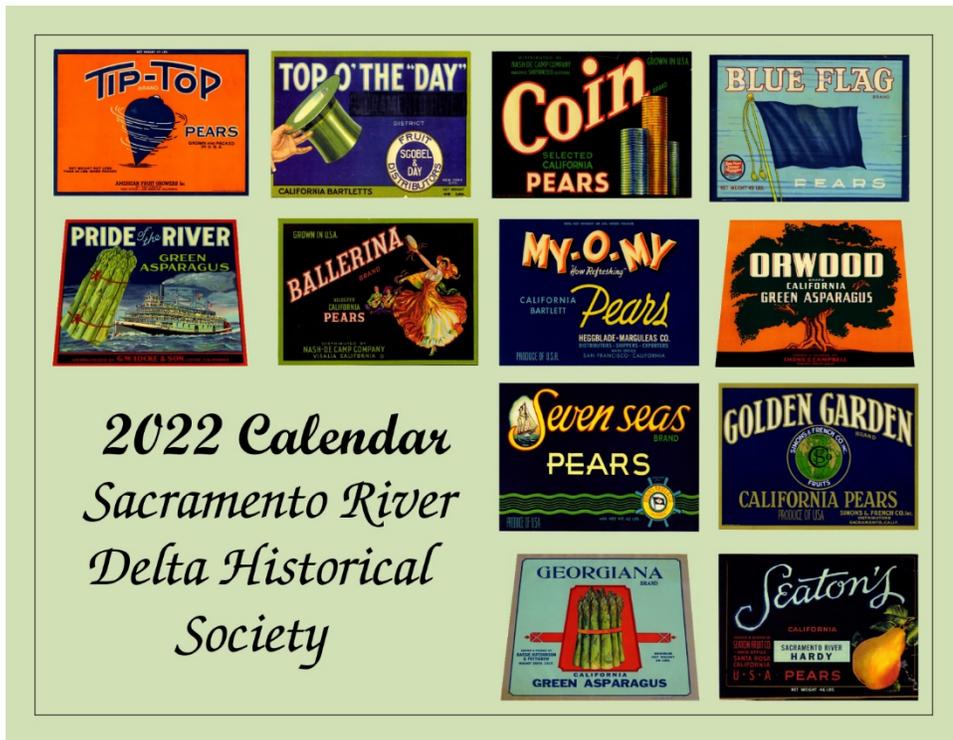
SRDHS Membership
P.O. Box 293
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor.....Kathleen Hutchinson
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The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society publishes the Sacramento River Delta Society Newsletter twice a year.

Here is the cover of the delightful 2022 Calendar representing more Labels from Jim Dahlberg’s Collection. Each month shows a different Label that has not been published before from his wonderful collection. The Sacramento River Delta Historical Society’s Calendar for 2022 will be available at the Resource Center and at the Society Meetings. You may now 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 2022 calendar is \$15.00 plus postage
2012 thru 2021 calendar price is \$5 each plus postage

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

1 Calendar \$2 postage

2 Calendars \$3 postage

3 - 6 calendars \$7.95 for priority mail (2 to 3 day delivery)

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Calendar Order Form

Please send _____ 2022 calendars @ \$15 per calendar

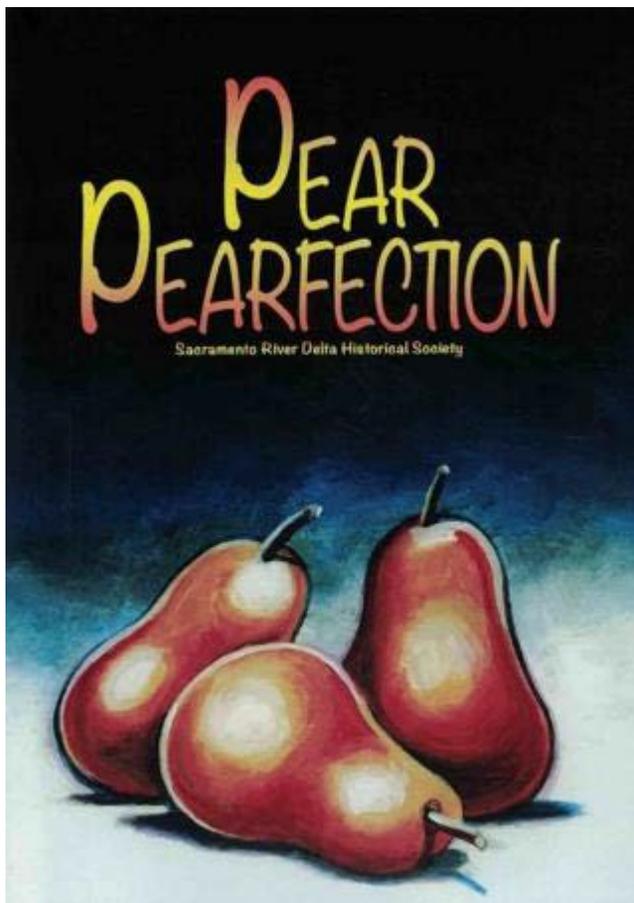
____ 2012 ____ 2013 ____ 2014 ____ 2015 ____ 2016 ____ 2017 ____ 2018 ____ 2019 ____ 2020 ____ 2021
calendars
@ \$5 per calendar

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



PEAR PEARFECTION cookbook full of delightfully tasteful recipes using pears which our Delta is known for producing. It is a revised Pear Cookbook done by Barbara Dahlberg in the 1970's for the Pear Fair with many delicious added recipes

You may purchase the cookbook at the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Resource Center or at the Society Meetings. You may now order the cookbook(s) by filling out the form below and mailing it with your check to:

SRDHS
P O Box 293
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

The price for each cookbook is \$15 plus postage if mailed.

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

1 Cookbook	\$2.89 postage
2 Cookbooks	\$3.45 postage

3 - 5 Cookbooks \$7.95 for priority mail (2 to 3 day delivery)

Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Cookbook Order Form

Please send _____ Pear Pearfection Cookbook(s) @ \$15 each

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____