

# Sacramento River Delta Historical Society NEWSLETTER

*"For what is the present, after all,  
but a growth out of the past."  
— Walt Whitman*

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No. 2

DECEMBER 1991

## SOCIETY NOTES

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The historical exhibit at the Pear Fair was again a popular attraction. Many fair goers spent some time enjoying the pictures and artifacts. Credit for the success of the project goes to Jim and Barbara Dahlberg and their helpers, among them Leonard Souza, Gerry Waterworth, Cathy Hemly, Tom Herzog and The Friends of the Clarksburg Library whose pictures were on the walls. Mary McClain and Harvey Lyman were also instrumental in the success of the day. Many thanks to all who helped.

### THE DAI LOY MUSEUM

The Dai Loy Museum in Locke has been open most of this year. Mr Clarence Chu of Locke Properties is continuing to staff and open the museum on a day-to-day basis. The Historical Society is responsible for the exhibits, artifacts and arrangements. The Dai Loy is in its fourteenth year and a great deal of credit for the success is due to the Museum Committee Robert James, Kathy Hutchinson and Frances Armstrong. Thanks and continued success.

### SEPTEMBER MEETING

The September meeting held in the History Center in Walnut Grove included our president, Bob Augusto, and his cousin, Chris Lauritzen, speaking about "River Rats" or "Transportation Before the Bridges" (see article P. 3).

### PUBLICATION PROJECT

A Committee was formed to explore compiling and publishing a coffee table album to consist of photographs from the Society's collection.

### NOVEMBER MEETING

The November meeting, held in Isleton, was a highly successful joint meeting with the newly formed Isleton, Brannon and Andrus Island Historical Society. The meeting was held in the Del Rio Hotel main dining room. The speaker was "Dr. History" (Jim Rawls), who told stories from California's past. There was a book signing party for Dr. Rawls' new book, "Whizz Bang; Favorite

stories of California's Past." A pleasant evening for all who attended. Dr. Rawls can be heard at 7:20 am on KNBR, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### A JOB WELL DONE!

We must, regrettably, find a new president. Bob Augusto has done a super job for three years--continuously, longer than any previous president. He has had more than his share of interesting challenges dealing with the re-staffing of the Dai Loy Museum and the development of the History Center which was on ice for over a year while the Jean Harvie Center was reconditioned. The Society owes him an enormous debt of gratitude and sincere thanks for his stewardship.

### ISLETON, ADRUS, BRANNON ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A new Historical Society was formed in our area this year. Their first project is the historical preservation and restoration of Main Street in Isleton including the Old Town Tong building. We look forward to working with them--starting with the November Joint Meeting.

### HISTORICAL CENTER UPDATE

Jean Harvie and Jenny Sheehan have started an inventory of the contents of the Center and we will be able to tell everyone what is available for reference use as well as to begin collecting papers, books, photographs and other memorabilia of the Delta. Limited space will curtail collection of artifacts. The committee is still working on the exact collection and operation details. Any ideas would be appreciated. The committee members are chair Jerry Waterworth, Becky Wheeler, Joan Wilcox, Jean Harvie, Jenny Sheehan and Carol Watson.

### MEMBERSHIP

We welcome new members Janet Bond, John Burr and Nella Scatina.

We lament the passing of Phylis Manica our former Vice-President, and her mother, Mildred Wright, a longtime member.

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## ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER

MONDAY

JANUARY 20

6:30 PM

JEAN HARVIE CENTER

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## COLORFUL HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN SACRAMENTO

Sacramento is a city full of rich history: the evolution of Northern California, the Gold Rush, notwithstanding, the medical heritage of Sacramento is equally exciting. This has always been a region in the mainstream of medical practice, from the superb physicians and "men for all seasons" such as Drs. John Morse, Thomas Logan, and dozens of others to the 17 physicians who sacrificed their lives caring for the cholera patients of 1850 to the excellent and advanced medical services provided today by 2300 physicians in all modes of practice in Sacramento and El Dorado Counties. Since the gold seekers arrived, there was always a great need for physicians in the area.

In 1848 Sacramento was described as a healthy environment free from disease. During the Gold Rush, when the population exploded from the original thousand or two to twenty thousand and then one hundred thousand a year for five years, the picture reversed. It became a "collecting point of health tragedy not to be equaled by any other place in the world."

Thus begins the fascinating story of 150 years of medicine in the Sacramento Valley. From diarrhea, cholera, wagon wheel injuries, scurvy and other illnesses and injuries, crowded conditions, filth and lack of sanitation, continuous challenges were presented to our early physicians. All this at a time when antiseptics was unknown, anesthesia was just beginning, antibiotics did not exist and the cause of most disease was unknown. Bleeding, puking, and cupping were mainstays of treatment. Amputations and trephining were the main types of surgery, from which up to 50% of the patients died.

Disease brought in during the settlement period was the primary catalyst in the disappearance of the Native Indian population.

The physician-historian Dr. John Morse typifies the dedicated community leaders who were early doctors in Sacramento, seventeen of whom died in the cholera epidemic of 1850. The surviving M.D.'s served the community as school superintendent, Secretary of State, meteorologist, mayor, Prison Brig Director, public health officials and political leaders.

The constant need for medical care in the Sacramento area has produced quality care and a number of medical firsts such as: first railroad hospital, first building designed and built as a hospital in California, first successful appendectomy in California, first "weather bureau" and collection of mortality data on the Pacific Coast, first woman physician elected president of a local medical society

in California and the first administration of prophylactic diphtheria antitoxin in America.

The low-lying swampy conditions of the river lowlands coupled with the fast-growing, gold-seeking population sparked Sacramento as a medical center as well as a mining center. On April 30, 1853, the Sacramento Medico-Surgical (Chirurgical) Association was formed, eventually consisting of 50 men. It was the first in the far west. It disappeared in 1854.

In 1855 the Sacramento Medical Society was created and called the first convention to form the California Medical Society but dissolved in 1863. In 1858 the Sacramento County Pathological Society was formed--all members were graduates of recognized medical schools. In 1868 12 physicians met at 46 J street to form the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement now the Sacramento-El Dorado Medical Society.

The history of medicine is an integral part of the history of Sacramento, and the surrounding area.

(This article is taken from an article by Dr. Robert LaPerriere in the Sacramento County Historical Society Newsletter.)

### DELTA HISTORICAL VIEW

From the day the first levee was built the delta was changed forever. Before settlement by the "White Man" nature prevailed. The Indians moved in for the season and moved to high ground when the winter or spring floods came. But levees changed the water courses and thereafter the land was used for crops and buildings. The environment was changed. Years of drought and years of flood have also changed the ambiance. Today (1991) the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its management is a major interest to the entire State of California. This "sinking mess" must be used in a way that will provide water, food and recreation to Californians. There are many ideas of how to achieve these ends. It has been considered to turn back Sherman Island to a wet land. The State and County and the Nature Conservancy have taken land to preserve as wetlands and as river land along the Cosumnes River. There are opportunities for land owners to place land in trusts that will keep it for agricultural use. Housing developments are planned for the area. So we are once again aware that "nothing is constant but change." The role of the historian would seem to be to watch, to chronicle and to study the past. It is fascinating to watch history happening.



## RIVER RATS

The history of the Lauritzen family was charmingly told and illustrated with photos, by two great-grandsons, Bob Augusto and Chris Lauritzen, III.

In 1868 Hans Christian and Adelheit Lauritzen and their four children emigrated from Denmark, settling in the Bodega Bay area. They subsequently settled across from Rio Vista on Wood Island in the Sacramento River. The Lauritzens eventually had seven children, the youngest born in 1882.

The Danes have two passions--farming and the sea. The Lauritzens followed them both. They farmed 100 acres and sold milk, and; were rivermen. The oldest son, Harry, born in 1856, hauled freight on the rivers from Stockton to Richmond and later from Richmond to San Francisco. He worked for Santa Fe Railroad, which at the time fiercely competed in both railroad and riverboat traffic with Southern Pacific.

In 1882 Christian (Senior\*) incorporated the Lauritzen Transportation Company. He farsightedly included in its charter the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, the Carquinez Straits, San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The Company operated ferries, tugs and passenger craft up and down and across the Delta waterways, from Sacramento and Clarksburg to Emmaton and west Sherman Island to Stockton and San Francisco Bay. The vessels also carried newspapers and freight. He placed a boat ahead and a boat behind competition and eventually acquired a sizably large business.

In 1900 Christian (Senior) began to operate the "Oceanwave" on San Francisco Bay. In 1905, Christian (Junior) and Fredrick purchased the 32-foot, 16-passenger craft "Doris" to ferry passengers. During the 1906 earthquake aftermath Christian (Senior) in the "Ocean Wave" ferried passengers from San Francisco's Hyde Street Wharf to Oakland.

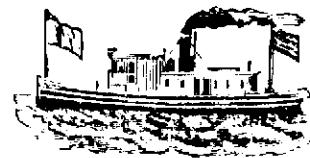
Vessels which the Company owned included "Victory I" and "Victory II," the passenger ferry "Gwendolyn," a tow boat, "Ellen," bought from competitors, the 50-foot, 40-passenger "Princess" and the 70-feet, 150 passenger "Empress" (which also served food on board). Also in the fleet were the sternwheeler "Sentinal" which ran from Colusa to Sacramento and the sidewheeler "Sherman" a car ferry between Antioch and Sherman Island.

As better roads and bridges were built, automobiles began to compete heavily for passenger traffic. Subsequently, in 1918 the Company sold its passenger boats. In 1924 completion of the Antioch Bridge finished car ferry service by the "Sherman". Tugs continued to operate from Napa to Bright Bend and the Company continues to operate ferry routes at Bradford Island and the Webb Tract.

The Company continued to operate from Wood Island until the Army Corps of Engineers determined the island was a navigation hinderance and removed it by dredging. (The island now provides some of the Rio Vista area beaches.) The Company now headquarters its marine business on the Contra Costa County side of the Antioch Bridge. It currently owns a marina and continues to operate tugboats and the two ferry routes.

An Atlas Diesel engine out of a Lauritzen boat now resides in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and another is still operating around Bradford Island.

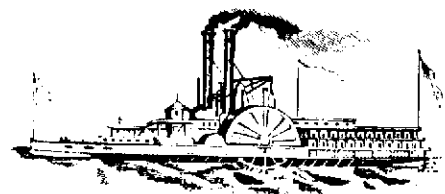
\*According to his great grandsons, Christian Lauritzen (Senior) was "quite an operator." As a boy he sculled across the Sacramento River from Wood Island to attend school. Family tradition relates that he once loaded coal laced with black powder from shotgun shells into the school stove. When the teacher tried to confirm the deed, a rumor has been circulated that high winds would not allow Chris to row the teacher to his parents' home to investigate. At any rate the school heating system was wrecked but the stove remained intact.



## RIVERBOAT TRAVEL

In 1878, when steam-driven riverboats plied the Sacramento River, the Steamer S.M. WHIPPLE left Sacramento every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 9.a.m., from below the "N" Street wharf. It spent the day going down the river and arrived in San Francisco at 5 p.m.

During the trip down-river, the S.M. WHIPPLE stopped at Rio Vista at 12:15 and at Benicia at 3 p.m. It also stopped at all "way landings" for freight and passengers. E.J. Weeks was the agent on board.



## COMMERCIAL BREWING IN YOLO COUNTY

The Pacific Coast of the United States was dotted with small, independent breweries during the early settlement and development of the region. Historical records indicate that during the 1860's no less than 280 individuals, firms or partnerships were independently engaged in producing steam beer, ale and porter on the Pacific Coast (including British Columbia and Alaska). Of this number of breweries, approximately 155 were located in California. Several breweries were well-established in San Francisco by the 1850's and by 1870 at least twelve large commercial breweries were brewing beer in San Francisco. During this time Sacramento boasted five breweries, among them the Borchers and Schartz establishment that eventually became known as the City Brewery, Buffalo Brewery (now the site of the Sacramento Bee) and Sutterville Brewery on Sutterville Road. It is claimed that City Brewery was the first establishment to use mechanical refrigeration in the production of steam beer. (Any SRDHS members remember the names of the other Sacramento breweries?)

The Woodland Brewery was started in 1869 by George L. Wirth who was born in 1838 in Wurtemberg, Germany, and came to California in 1860. The brewery appears on the 1871 map of Woodland and was located on the south side of Lincoln Street near Walnut Street. The Woodland Brewery was described in the "Western Shore Gazetteer of 1870." Plans for expanding the Woodland Brewery apparently never materialized as historical records show the brewery disappearing by the 1890's. The son of George Wirth opened a store on Main Street in Woodland, and today the Wirth family is still involved in business in downtown Woodland.

The second brewery in Woodland was the Yolo Brewery, originally established in 1861 near the community of Yolo by John K. Schuerley and Antone Miller. Schuerley was born in 1832 in Alsace, Germany. These two men immigrated to the U.S. and lived for a time in Cincinnati, where they met. In the early 1860's both Schuerley and Miller came to Yolo County via the Isthmus of Panama. For a short while, Miller was a brewer in Sacramento, but eventually he and Schuerley set up a small brewery on E. Lowe's land, about half way between Woodland and Yolo. In 1862 the Yolo Brewery was moved to Woodland on Main Street near what is now Nugget Market.

In 1868 a larger Yolo Brewery was erected of brick next to the original wooden structure.

In 1879 Antone Miller died, and in 1881 John Schuerley sold the Yolo Brewery to Joseph Germeshausen, who had recently arrived in Woodland. Germeshausen was originally from Prussia, and before purchasing the Yolo Brewery farmed 320 acres of grain near Plainfield. The brewery flourished and was eventually organized into the Yolo Brewing Company of which Germeshausen was President and Manager. Germeshausen was also a Director of the First National Bank of Woodland and a major stockholder. In 1910 Germeshausen retired from the Yolo Brewing Company.

The Yolo Brewery advertised steam and lager beer and supplied local saloons with wooden kegs of brew delivered by horse-drawn carts. The Gazetteer reported in 1870 that:

*"The beer manufactured in Yolo County has long sustained a first-class reputation, it being asserted that the water is peculiarly adapted to the business."*

Local breweries had close access to fresh hops grown mostly in the eastern part of Yolo County near the Sacramento River. Lovedale and Merkley were two families that grew hops locally. The "Daily Democrat" in 1912 reported that:

*"Charles Merkley has just purchased sixty acres on the Yolo side of the Sacramento River for \$525 per acre. The high price is because the soil is rich hop land known for its remarkable producing properties."*

Yolo Beer was also sold locally at sporting events, including the racetrack near College and Kentucky Avenue, and at German social events and dances, such as the "Liederdranz" held just north of Woodland at Coyle's Grove. Here beer was sold for 5 cents a stein.

Prohibition shut down the Yolo Brewery in 1919 and the brewery was used as "a sort of hotel" during this era. In 1933, the Yolo Brewery re-opened as a bottle shop, most likely selling beer brewed elsewhere. On September 8, 1934, the Yolo Brewery caught fire and burned down, thus dramatically ending the era of locally brewed beer in Yolo County until the Dead Cat Alley Brewery opened in 1989 in Woodland, 55 years later.

(This article reprinted from the Yolo County Historical Society Newsletter. It was written by David Wilkinson and other Society members.)

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NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS

JUDY CLEAVER

"I suppose we're all members of this Society because we are all interested in what we call 'history.' It's been said that everyone knows what history is until we begin to think about it, and after that--nobody knows. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary defines history as 'information, inquiry, knowing.' That inclusion of 'inquiry' is interesting --we certainly wouldn't have much 'information' or 'knowing' without it. I'd like to think that our Society is involved in all three of these aspects of history. Webster also talks about history and 'unfolding of interdependent events.' I'm sure that every historian is aware of that sometimes incredible interdependency."

This is a quote from the President's Corner of the Yolo County Historical Society newsletter. Judy Cleaver, currently Yolo County Historical Society President, served three terms as president of the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society.

MARSH HOUSE

John Marsh was the first American settler in Contra Costa. His Ranch Los Meganos was established in 1836 and a Stone House was built in 1856. The East Contra Costa Historical Society is trying to get the House restored, preserved and open for public use. Their crusade has been going on for over twenty years.

John March graduated from Harvard and went west to Minnesota as a tutor in an Army family. He moved to Independence, Missouri, and started a business. Marsh deserted the business and his partner and fled down the Santa Fe Trail to Los Angeles. Trading on experience in treatment of Army medicine, he obtained a Medical Doctor's license. When threatened by the law catching up with him, he bought a ranch in a very sparsely inhabited area--he established Rancho Los Meganos at the foot of Mount Diablo. Marsh is often called the "first man (American) west." He came to California early and wrote wondrous accounts of the life here. These were designed to get Americans to settle here instead of the threatened takeover of Mexican territory by the English, French or Russians. The well-documented Bidwell-Bartleson trip across the country ended at the Marsh ranch.

RIVER ROADS

The 1850's Sacramento City/County Board of Supervisors' Minutes contain the following notes about roads:

3/18/53 Road down river changed. Road south of Sutter Town needed to get produce to market.

5/18/55 Road proposed from Zabuskies Hill to Kadell's Ranch on the Sacramento River (South). Road to continue down river to Georgiana Township considered.

Failed to approve road from 10th and Y to slough below Sutterville. "Not necessary."

11/8/55 Road from Sacramento City to Georgiana Slough. County surveyors to survey via Southwick's and Kadell's ranches.

11/22/55 Georgiana Road surveyor report accepted and route declared a public hiway to wit: "Commence at the intersection of Y and 28th via Southwick and Kadell's ranch (an oak tree on the bank of the Sacramento River) thence down the bank of the River to Sharps at Georgiana Slough. Recommend 80 feet wide at commencement to Kadell's ranch, balance laid out 30 feet wide."

11/27/55 Road district 16 and 17 created down the River. David Lufkin named overseer for 16 and Wm. Johnson for 17. They are to post \$1000 bonds.

1/22/56 Report of D.F. Lufkin as Road overseer. Report accepted and filed.

1/22/56 Overseer instructed to open and improve the road to Georgiana Slough via Kadell's Ranch.

6/6/60 Petition of F.F. Blair and others for a County Road beginning at the mouth of Steamboat Slough and running around Grand Island to place of beginning. Petition Granted.

1/11/61 Road around Grand Island declared open.

ASK A FRIEND TO JOIN

Do you know someone, family or friend, who would enjoy hearing about and supporting the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society? It's fun to be part of preserving and sharing our local history.

Regular .....	\$6.00
Family .....	\$12.00
Sustaining .....	\$20.00
Patron .....	\$50.00
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Make check payable to:  
SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (SRDHS)  
P.O. Box 293, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

BOOKS OF INTEREST

\* To the Land of Bright Promise. Chiyo Shimamoto. Pioneer Japanese truck farmers. San Joaquin Historical Society, 1990.

Cooperating Farmers: 75-Year History of the Yolo County Farm Bureau. Joan Larkey.

\* Battling the Inland Sea: American Political Culture, Public Policy and the Sacramento Valley, 1850-1986. Robert Kelley. University of California Press, 1989.

\* The Bittersweet Soil: Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910. Sucheng Chan. University of California Press, 1989.

From Ohio to the San Joaquin: A Biography of William F. Moss, 1769-1883. Oliver Davis. A central valley pioneer and founder of the San Francisco Chronicle.

\* Cities and Towns of San Joaquin County, Since 1847. Raymond W. Hillman and Leonard A. Covello. 1985.

History of the Lodi Grape Festival. Stephen Mann, Christi Lemmedu and Valdeme Valenti.

California: A Guide to the Golden State. Reprint of WPA Project. Omnigraphics Detroit.

The Other California: The Great Central Valley in Life and Letters. Capra Press, Santa Barbara.

Local History and Genealogical Resources of the California State Library. Gary F. Kurutz, ed. California State Library Foundation.

\* California Highway Patrol . . . Yesterday and Today. Robert Wick. Phase Three Publishing, San Rafael, 1989.

\* So Much to be Done: Women Settlers on the Mining and Ranching Frontier. Susan Armitage and Christiane Fischer Dischamp. University of Nebraska Press, 1990.

\* Available in the Sacramento City-County Library System

THINGS TO DO

Sacramento History Museum

"The Italians of Sacramento," one hundred and forty years of Italian-American history in the Sacramento region. Through January 26.

"The World Rushed In," California-Oregon Emigrant Trails. Through December 29.

Old City Cemetery Tours

January 4, 5, 18, 19

California's Gold

Mondays 7:30 p.m. KVIE, Channel 6

\* **Sacramento River Delta Historical Society \***

**Annual Potluck Dinner**

**Monday • January 20 • 6:30 PM**

**at the**

**Jean Harvie Center**

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