

Yolo County Historical Society



Prez Says

What a difference a few weeks make? This time last month I wrote about all the wonderful things that were happening with the Society. When we met for our meeting, we welcomed Seth Albin as our new treasurer. We talked about the upcoming free tour of the business *Serendipity*, and the possibility of the April free tour of the *Chicago Café*. We also talked about the upcoming History Week for the county.

There were several activities in the county including Women’s History Month Luncheon, for which I bought a ticket, and the Gibson House exhibition under the direction of our county curator about women’s fashions. Now, we are all sequestered in our homes and watching the news for any information that would end this virus!

I am a positive individual and usually would just forge through and do what I want. But this virus has me in abeyance. I am just not sure who has it or who is carrying it or how I can get it or ... so

We cancelled the April Board meeting and the April Free Tour of Chicago Café. That gives everyone a month of waiting to see if we return to normal. In the meantime, we forge on.

Jenny Lillge asked me if the YCHS has any activities on local cemeteries that parents could do with their children. I gave her a few ideas, but I am thinking that maybe that is where we should now put our focus. We have lots of parents who are looking for something to keep their children occupied. Let’s give them history excursions that they can do in our communities.

I do have some sad news – Miriam Miller has passed away. She was 100 years old and was a member of the Yolo County Historical Society her entire time in Woodland. Reva Barzo interviewed her in 2009 (see page 3). I am sure when you see her photo you will recognize her. Her enthusiasm and robust personality were remarkable. I want to be like her when I grow up!

Take care, stay healthy. Remember, as always,

History Rules!

Kathy Harryman, President



Business Buddies

Please support these local businesses.
They support the Yolo County Historical Society.

The House Dresser
Corner Drug
Local Inspirations
Simas Family Vineyard

If you are getting a mailed copy of this newsletter, please consider receiving a digital copy instead. It saves us around \$1.50 per person per mailing. Please let me know, Kathy Harryman khwoodland@aol.com.

Yolo County Historical Society Happenings

Items that I think are important and worth noting - KH

1. I met with our county supervisor, Gary Sandy regarding the state of history in this county. You know how hard we fought to keep the Gibson Museum and lost it. We also lost a few other sites in the Capay Valley. I would like to see the county re-establish a **county-wide committee** that would deal with the issues of development and historical importance. I gave Gary some information regarding the past committee. The committee would be composed of individuals all over the county who are interested in preserving the history of their area. Gary was receptive and will talk to the administration. We also talked about the county court house. He was going to set up a tour. If you are interested in being on that tour, please let me know. I will keep a list of individuals and contact you when it occurs.
2. I met with Bart Vanucci, director, of the fair grounds, and Dino Gay, president of the Native Sons of the Golden West, at the Yolo County Fairgrounds. I showed them our schoolhouse and told them that we own the building and take care of its maintenance. I also shared our concerns about parking during the fair and how our docents must walk a long way to open the school for the fair goers. He was very receptive and asked me if I had any documentation about the moving of the building. I since have found some that I will share with him. He is working with his board to bring more history back to the fair. Yay, Bart.
3. The schoolhouse program was going to open in April and May. We had three new docents who were going to join us. I had to cancel the program because of the school dismissals in the county. We will begin again in the fall. Thanks to Martha Brashear and the wonderful docents we have who signed up to teach. We love you!
4. Teri Laugenour and I have been working to close one of our storage units in the IOOF building in Woodland. We succeeded. As of April, we will have only one storage unit. It is beautiful inside. It is organized and the space is used to the maximum. I could not have done it without Teri. She organized all the newsletters (and believe me there were hundreds of them). We now have a file drawer with one newsletter for each publication month. She is now going to alphabetize our Research/History drawer. Thank you, Teri.

The monthly rates did go up – from \$25 per month to \$33 per month.

5. Whenever I receive items from individuals or historical associations, I try to distribute them where I think people will see them. This last month, I received four small pill boxes from the Walnut Creek Historical Society. They were from our doctors in Woodland from the early 1900's. I loaned them to the **Corner Drug** to be added to their collection of historical pharmaceutical supplies. Be sure to go in there and see the collection. It is impressive. One of our members gave me some World War One letters from her uncle when we had the World War One celebration. With her permission, I sent them on to the Hayward Historical Society. They were from the Mt. Eden community. The curator just sent me a note. He was thrilled to get the letters. They will be added to their historical collection.
6. Congratulations to our own **Steve Venables** who has just written a book titled *Woodland and Its Colorful Characters*. It is a fun read and you learn lots of info about some of the individuals who made this county great. It is on sale at **Local Inspirations**, 524 Main Street, Suite 100, next to Scribbler's Coffee Shop.
7. Welcome to our new patron **Cleve Baker**, member **Frank Lemus** and our new company member **Simas Family Vineyard**.

Miriam Miller – One of the Best in our County

by Reva Barzo

Miriam, age 101, died on March 8, 2020. The following account is based on Barzo's interview with Miriam in 2009. An earlier version was published in the newsletter in October 2013.

Miriam's first memories of Woodland start in 1922 when her brother was ill, and her mother drove back and forth between their home in Glenn County and the Woodland Clinic.

She remembers that she did well in math and thought of pursuing a teaching position in that capacity, but women were not hired as math teachers in those days. As a result, one of her teachers gently led her towards a nursing career. After receiving her nursing degree from UC San Francisco, Miriam returned to Woodland and from 1940 to 1941 worked as a nurse at the Woodland Clinic located at Cross and Third Streets. At that time nurses were given room and board in two Victorian homes located next to the clinic. One house was for the day shift, the second for night shift nurses. In addition to room and board, she earned \$90 a month for a six-day work week. Since that was about the same time that Gene Stille was herding cows down Gibson Road, I asked what her memory was of that area. She replied that her mode of transportation then was a borrowed bicycle. Gibson Road area was country and therefore she had no reason to go there.



Miriam Miller

Late 1941 found Miriam in Berkeley as a public health nurse. She married Richard Miller in 1942 and needed transportation as a visiting nurse, so they purchased a used 1938 Chevrolet. In 1946 the car dealership offered to put them on the preferred list for a new car, but Richard felt that their money was better spent on further education.

In 1953 Miriam boarded the Navy transport ship USS Randall at Fort Mason heading to Japan to join her husband. In addition to teaching English to junior high school students, in the evenings she could be found teaching young Japanese businessmen western table manners and English. On a later trip to Japan, for four years she worked as school nurse for the American School in Tokyo.

On August 15, 1947, new flags were raised on official buildings in New Delhi and Karachi, celebrating the birth of two new independent states: India and Pakistan. The partition of Britain's former colony led to a bloodbath, costing thousands, if not millions of people's lives in the following months. Nine years later, conditions were still intolerable and refugee camps were abundant. Beginning in 1956 Miriam worked for two years in a clinic at one of these sites. In 1959 she was further east at a leper colony in Taiwan working with a women's group finding projects that the women could earn income from. One such project was procuring supplies and marketing the beautiful embroidery work created by the colonists.

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Continued from preceding page - Miriam Miller

The late 60's brought the Millers to the University of California, Davis for a one-year sabbatical. By 1971 they had a new Streng home in Davis. But having been raised in Victorian flats in San Francisco, Richard decided that he really wanted a Victorian. As he said, "Historians like Victorians." That precipitated their purchase of their a home in Woodland in 1974. Miriam remembers that when they bought their home, Woodland pretty much ended at Gibson Road although plans were under way for the development south of Gibson. With these expansion efforts continuing by Stanley Davis Homes to develop this area, it was the Historical Society that talked the county into purchasing the Gibson family home along with two adjoining acres. These events lead to the creation of the Yolo County Historical Museum Association which focused on raising funds for the restoration of the home that we now know as the Gibson House Museum. Miriam was part of that group and continued to give her time to the museum.

Replacing her deceased husband as treasurer of the Yolo County Historical Society in 1977, Miriam continued to work diligently for the Society. For many years she helped in running the famous lemonade stand that sold cupcakes and cookies at the Yolo County Fair as a way to raise funds for the organization. Through the Historical Society, Miriam was part of the purchase, restoration and turning over of the Woodland Opera House to the State of California.

From 1978 through 1984, as a member of a five-church coalition, Miriam opened her home to the relocation effort for refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Iran. Many of these refugees are still a part of her life.

Of her past years, Miriam says these efforts were never a burden but were fun years in her life. Quoting her, she says, "There are so many things to do – don't just sit home and clean house!"

This woman is truly a gem in our community. The countless lives that Miriam has touched should inspire all of us to give of ourselves where and when we can.



NOTE: On July 21, 1998, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 98-117 commending Miriam Miller.

She was recognized by Representative John Garamendi as one of Yolo County's **10 Congressional Women of the Year**, entered into the Congressional Record on November 6, 2017.

Miriam Miller, who has spent many years serving Woodland, working to revitalize the downtown area and facilitate renovations to the Woodland Opera House State Historic Park. While bringing the city's facilities into the future, she also has worked to ensure that her community never lost sight of its history, serving as a docent at the Yolo County Historical Museum and at the Opera House.

Davis Enterprise

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The following is a list of folders in our History drawer. If you would like to look at any of them, just let me know. You can make copies.

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Churches of Yolo County	Briggs/Ashley/Bigelow Residence
Quilt Show 1983	Billard/Beeman Residence/Ranch
Yolo Town Exhibit	Capay Valley Cemeteries
Knights Landing	Christian Science Church
Cacheville Exhibit	Clowe/Bradshaw Building
Winters	Credwick Building (Winters)
Harriet Lee	Cranstons
Women in Yolo County	Culver/Coil Hoppin Residence
Index to Merhoffs – Capay Valley	Davis
2 Calendar Folders	Diggs/Adams Residence
History Sites Inventory	Dunnigan Area
Irrigation Display	Farmers & Merchants Bank/Elliott Building
California Symposium Plans 2003	1st National Bank of Dixon
YCHS History 1948 – 3 folders	Gable/McWhirk Residence
Donner Party	Fremont
Nelson Hacket	Gibson House
	Guinda Hotel
Plaques	Harlan Home & Ranch
Buckeye Plaque	Harrett Ranch
Clover School Plaque	Hesperian College
Capay Cemetery	History of Brewing
Gordon Ranch	100F Building
Blue Ridge Trail & Merhoff Marker (Stone)	Johnson/Orrick Herbst Residence
Old 78 Toll Road Plaque	Julian Hotel
Hesperian College Plaque	Knell/Fairley Residence
Anderson/Hamel Residence	Knights Landing – Cemetery Survey
Abele/Bemmerly Ranch	Knights Landing Flood
J.R. Anderson Building – Bank of Davis	Lowe/Marks Residence
Arlington Farms	Main Street Woodland
Armstrong & Algae Building	Morris Reiff Residence
Bank of Woodland	Memgge/Native Daughters
Bank of Yolo (Davis)	Minis-Lambert Building Woodland
Beamer/Schell/Robinson Home	Mitchell/Long Residence Dunnigan
Bemmerly Wagon	Moore/Storz Residence
Ball/Young Residence (Winters)	Morris/Kidder Residence (Winters)
Bertholet Building (Winters)	Native Sons of the Golden West
Borach House Yolo	

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- Nelson Ranch
- Orleans Hill Vineyard
- Peek/Fisher Residence
- Plant Residence- Daphne’s Roost (Davis)
- Porter Building
- Physicians Building
- Railroads of Yolo County
- Richie Residence
- Robbery & prostitution
- Silver Lake Railroadh
- Stephens-Basil W. Residence
- Stephens/Doering Residence
- Schmeiser House – Davis
- Schools
- Scott/Marco Residence
- Springlake Schoolhouse
- Snowball Mansion
- Union Church (Dunnigan)
- Woodland Elks
- Woodland Sanitarian
- Woodland Opera House (at the Opera House)
- Woodland Public Yolo County Library
- Woodland Main Street
- Winters
- Yolo County Savings Bank
- Yolanda
- Yolo County-Cities
- Yolo Court House
- Yolo (Cacheville)

Newspaper accounts

- Harold Peck Columns – 1950s (*Record of Yolo County*)
- Charles Paynton 1950 – *Daily Democrat*
- Crossing the Plains* by Rumsey

Patrons

Thanks so much to the following for supporting the Yolo County Historical Society. We could not run this organization without your additional help.

- Cleve Baker
- Starr and Jeff Barrow
- Don and Pat Campbell
- Odette & Dan Christenson
- Katherine Ashley Cobb
- Rob Coman
- Tom Crisp
- Carol Danke
- Delta Commission
- Jon and Barbara Durst
- Marc & Gerda Faye
- Barbara Graham
- John and Kathy Harryman
- Dan & Sarah Hrdy
- Geraldine Hunter
- Steve and Teri Laugenour
- Sandy and Bill Marble
- Nancy Hatcher McCullough
- Jane Niehaus
- Claudia and Chuck Owens
- Marsha Reemts
- Meg and Tom Stallard
- Mike Truitt Family
- Phil & Kris Turner
- Ramon & Karen Urbano
- Lydia and Steve Venables
- David Wilkinson
- Peggy Witham
- Ryan Baum & Alice Wong

Become a patron by contributing \$100 or more.

Donation Page

This page is devoted to a donation that the Yolo County Historical Society received from the estate of **Betty Bigelow**. The following items were repaired by her husband who taught furniture repair at Woodland Adult School. All the items are in great condition. The online auction is **April 20-23** at sacvalleyauctions.com. These items were dear to Betty and her family, and she wanted the historical society to benefit from the sale. I have looked up the items and have found a reasonable value for each. If you are interested, please contact me at khwoodland@aol.com, or if you know of someone who is interested, have them contact me. We are a 501 3(c) so it is tax deductible.



Pump Organ - \$350



Eastlake organ stool - \$100



Eastlake bedroom chair - \$250



English Victorian sofa - \$1,500



Maple sewing rocker with unusual cane seat/back \$300