

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 1st, 2009. What will this year bring to our Nation, our State, our County, and our Cities? I wish that there would be peace and prosperity. I also wish that money would pour from heaven but then, that would not alleviate all the problems we as a people are facing.

Let's go on to some happier thoughts. Our monthly programs have been well attended starting with the January program which featured Paul Ivazes of Quality Lighting who shared with us the unwritten history of gas lighting and how gas lighting changed our country and its architecture during the 19th century. In exploring the Nevada City area for the eventual trip to the area, Shirley Goldman and I were able to go to Paul's workshop which is way out in the country and is too difficult for a bus to maneuver. Paul welcomes visitors to his shop with advance notice. Our final program was held at the Heidrick Agricultural Museum with special guest Linda Lucchessi, Fred Heidrick's daughter, telling us about growing up with a father who could not pass a rusting tractor resting in a field.

We are planning our future general membership programs for 2009. We also have two trips being planned - one which will be investigating the history of communities down I - 80. The second trip will be a visit to Calaveras County. This one may be an overnight. Time will tell. Suggestions are always welcome.

Lastly, my heart ached when I read that President Elect Obama had invited the surviving Tuskegee Airmen to attend his inauguration. If only our former member and board member, Bob Matthews had survived to attend.

Peace,

B.J.Ford, President

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Mark your calendars now for future programs. All programs are held on the 4th Sunday of the month beginning at 2 p.m. The following programs are already in the "pipeline":

February 22nd: In honor of the 100th Anniversary Celebration going on at the University of California, Rich and Evelyn Rominger will talk about their family's memories of the early years of the "Farm". The meeting will be in Davis. The venue is yet to be decided. It just might be in a "cow barn".

March 22nd: Society members will travel to West Sacramento for the annual joint membership meeting with their Society. The chairman of our joint visit is away for the holidays but she has us on her radar and promises a lively and interesting program. Make sure to make time to visit their Museum while you are in West Sacramento. It is located at 324 Third Street in Broderick.

April 26th: General Membership meeting will include a report of the nominating committee for new officers and members to the Society Board of Directors. Ideas for the program are welcome.

May 24th: Voting on the proposed nominees will take place at the business meeting prior to the program. Again, ideas for the program are welcome.

June: No membership meeting but a joint picnic with the Friends of the Yolo County Archives and the Friends of the Yolo County Historical Museum will be held. There will be a report from each of the current Presidents and introduction of new board officers and members - date to be announced later.

4,000 School buildings built, or repaired, in five month period.

CALIFORNIA'S LIVING NEW DEAL PROJECT

Board member Dennis Dingemans, and Board President BJ, Ford, traveled to Berkeley on Monday, November 10th at the invitation of the California History Society to learn more about California's Living New Deal Project.

"California's Living New Deal Project is a growing collaborative effort to identify, map, interpret, and commemorate the 75th anniversary of the vast public works legacy of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. The New Deal, a series of federal programs that ran between 1933 and 1938, was designed to create jobs and bring the country out of the Great Depression. California's Living New Deal Project documents the cumulative impact of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Public Works Administration (PWA), Works Progress Administration (WPA), and other New Deal programs in the Golden State".

One of the most interesting revelations that we learned was that no records of these projects were kept; not even in the Library of Congress. It is up to this project, of the California History Society, to identify these New Deal Projects and hopefully obtain some information from some of those who were a part of this program to come forward with what they remember.

What is known about these projects:

Works Progress Administration (WPA)

5,900 Schools were built
2,170 Additions to schools completed
31,300 Schools renovated
151 Public libraries built

Civil Works Administration (CWA)

Public Works Administration (PWA)

6,450 Nonfederal primary/secondary
206 Federal primary/secondary school projects completed
662 Nonfederal college and university
105 Public libraries built

Were you or any of your family involved in the building of one or more of these projects? Please take time to fill out the Information form within this newsletter. Also, be observant as you travel in the County. Many of the projects can be identified by small initials placed by the workers many years ago. In the historic area of Woodland there are many sidewalks which bear initials and need to be identified as to location. I am advised that Davis has similar sidewalks.

The California History Society has made a number of suggestions as to ways to highlight this endeavor encouraging citizens to participate. The Society's Board will be reviewing their suggestions. Should you wish to participate in planning an activity around the 75th Anniversary of the New Deal - A Time When Government Helped The People, please let one of our Board Members know of your interest.

Note: The California History Society will soon have a website which will include a searchable online database and digital map which will enable website visitors to discover what the New Deal did for their communities. It would be nice to have Yolo County on that map. They are planning a traveling exhibition, featuring historic and contemporary photographs encapsulating the findings of the Project AND Testimonial histories collected from those who participated in New Deal projects. If you did, please fill out the enclosed

form and add any additional information which you have and the form did not ask. Thank you.

ACTIVITIES AT THE HATTIE WEBER

We had a successful 1898 Christmas Celebration at the Hattie Weber Museum in Davis. First, the artificial tree which we have used before was “upgraded” by 30 plus candles which were made by a third grade class at St. James School. Not only did the make the candles, they brought them to the Museum as a class and put them on the tree. They also “visited” the Museum as a field trip and each member of the class received a “Goodie Bag” containing the traditional: an apple, an orange, hard candy and nuts. The class participation was arranged by volunteer Rachael Walman, who volunteered in the class, assisting a handicapped student.

Then Christmas Eve Day, we had 29 visitors, even though there was no Farmer’s Market. We passed out approximately 14 Goodie Bags to the kids. The left over bags and other fruit were taken to the Davis Community Meal after the Museum closed. Many of the visitors were young parents who have lived in Davis all their lives, but had never been in the Museum before. Some of them expressed an interest in Davis History that they did not even know they had. It was interesting to talk to them.

We had 15 visitors on December 27, almost all of whom came in before 1:00 p.m. when the Farmers Market was running. One of the ones in the afternoon was visiting Davis for the holidays from Illinois, after growing up in the east. She “sorta” scoffed at our history since we have only been at it for 150 years or so. The last visitor came in just as I was putting things away, but was a good example of why

we should not close early (it has happened before). Her family was visiting Davis because a son is being recruited by UC to play football and they had been driving around looking at the campus and the town. She saw the Museum in the pamphlet in the motel when they got back from driving around, so she came over to check it out.

It looks like “Tourism” is becoming a bigger deal in Davis, and the Museum needs to take some steps to make sure it is visible to the tourist.

The Museum closed on New Year’s Eve, December 31. (Even tourists do not check out Museums on New Year’s Eve!) A major exhibit on the Bachelor Girls/Library Club is being developed for the first quarter of 2009 and Jean Jackman and an exhibit about her story tellers will probably be in the second quarter.

Jim Becket, Director
The Hattie Weber Museum of Davis