

Yolo County Historical Society



JANUARY 2014

Pres Says:

Another year has passed and as we move forward to the new year, we, at the Yolo County Historical Society, have many wonderful events to anticipate.

First of all is the saving of the WPA building in Davis.....Thanks to our wonderful members that run the Hatti Weber Museum, that building will be preserved. It will take a lot of work and money to renovate it and the city has put stipulations on the project, but all of us are dedicated to saving this symbol of hope for the people of Davis. Yea Team!

Secondly, we are privileged to have wonderful guest speakers during our monthly meeting/lectures. In January, we have Lynne Gough, who will be the speaker at Mary's Chapel on Sunday, January 26. She will share with us her historical research of her great grandfather Asa Morris, who had the famous Holstein cow, Tilly Alcartra. I was so interested in this animal, that there is more information on Tilly in this newsletter. On February 23, we will have our own Jeanette Molson presenting at the Hatti Weber Museum. Jeanette always has interesting information to impart to us. On March 30th, we will meet at the Woodland railroad depot to learn about the progress of that building. These individuals have worked tirelessly to make their dream a reality. All of these meetings/lectures occur at 2:00.

Our own Dennis Dingemans will host a spring trip. There will be more information in the next newsletter.

As most of you know, I am your representative to the Gibson Museum. My role is to oversee the

new exhibits. We are currently discussing a new exhibit entitled "Preservation and Restoration". This will be a great opportunity for all historical groups to share our dreams with the public. More about that later.

Your board continues to meet at scheduled places throughout the county. Our next meeting is at the Yolo County Library on Thursday, January 9 at 10:00. The library is located at 37750 Sacramento St. in Yolo. All are welcome to attend.

Again, thanks to all of you who support this organization. Without your interest and efforts, history would be a 'paved over' parking lot!

History Rules!

Kathy Harryman



Hattie Happenings

Good News! After two weeks in December of appearing before the Davis City Council, which included an eloquent presentation by President Harryman, we have progress to report on the campaign to save the first building in the first park in Davis.

On December 17th, the Davis City Council voted (3-2) to direct staff to offer the cost of demolition (\$14,000) to the Museum if the Museum (i.e. the Society) would bear the cost

of demolishing a post 1937 addition to the Central Park WPA building and bringing the original building up to code, including ADA requirements. Details of the offer are to be brought to the Council in January 2014.

Staff has informed us we will be notified of the details of the offer this month. Given the consistent opposition of staff to retaining the building, we are expecting a costly project projection. However, we have received more than \$12,000 in pledges already and have not yet begun formal fundraising.

If you'd like to make a contribution, send a check made out to YCHS and noted "WPA Building" to the Hattie Weber Museum at 445 C Street, Davis CA 95616. Contributions are tax deductible.

Donors of \$500 or more will be recognized on a plaque on the building.

Initially we want to restore the exterior of the building to something close to its original appearance, expand the memorial rose garden next to it and use the interior for badly needed storage. Later, we envision using the doors, windows and possibly walls of the building as exhibit space.

Meanwhile, our first 2014 Museum exhibit will open on Saturday, January 11th. Partly as a nod to the recent Davis controversy about single use plastic bags, it features bags from defunct Davis retailers, such as State Market, Hull's Jewelers, Weinstock's and others. Retail history in the bag! We anticipate a fundraising kick-off party in February and hope you will join us then. Happy New Year from the Hattie Weber Team!



Tilly the Cow

By Kathy Harryman

This month, the Hattie Webber will host a presentation that centers around "The Purple Circle", an elite group of individuals in Yolo County who raised livestock that won

worldwide recognition. When Lynn Gough, our January lecturer, first talked to me about her great grandfather, Asa Morris, she mentioned Tilly Alcartra. I am not a 'cow' person. I do not collect 'cow' things in my house. I appreciate milk and butter and all dairy products, but really never thought much about the 'cow'. My first thought was "This cow has a first and last name"!

And she was known by both her first and last name! Then I decided to do some research because that is what we historians do. Again, I was pleasantly surprised to find out that Tilly gained worldwide recognition on her own. The following is from a newspaper article housed in the Library of Victoria in Australia:

THE PHENOMENAL DAIRY COW "TILLY ALCARTRA." For some years past it has been the ambition of many 'breeders of Holstein Freisian cattle to be the first to develop a cow that would produce 30,000 lb. of milk in one year. Several breeders have almost reached the goal, only to fall a little short at the finish, but it has remained for a Californian breeder to reach -the coveted position first...November 1914," an officially vouched for report in "Hoard's Dairyman" states: "Tilly Alcartra, a cow in the registered Holstein-Friesian herd owned by A. W. Morris and Sons, California, finished a year of test work with a production of 30,452.6 lb. of milk, containing 951.3 lb. of butter fat, and thereby becomes the world's greatest milk cow...<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page8536497>

And in another article on Ancestry.com... "The name of Morris is inseparably identified with the live stock industry of the Sacramento Valley, the organization known as the A. W. Morris & Sons Corporation herd of Holstein cattle on their ranch in Yolo county, and they are the proud owners of the world's most famous Holstein cow, "Tilly Alcartra," which has been appropriately called "the most wonderful cow (that) dairy history has known."

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~npmelton/yomorr2.htm>

Finally, one last article dated in 1919, on Tilly's retirement,

"Needless to say, her owners will humor Tilly's latest ambition and plan to keep her hard at work until she is called to the bovine happy hunting grounds to browse for ever in luxurious alfalfa pastures, nibble succulent beets, and be served with the ...world's choicest grains."

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article81864132>

So, now I know. Another amazing event occurred in the history of Yolo County. Will I now collect 'cows'? I'll have to think about that one....



Speaker Series

Lynne Gough of Sacramento, Calif. will speak of her great grandfather's adventures on a wagon train from Pennsylvania to Yolo County at the January 26 meeting of the Yolo County Historical Society. Her talk will be entitled "Yolo Pioneers On a Gold Rush Wagon Train."

Lynne was born in Woodland, and is among the fourth generation of the Morris family to call California their home. She is a descendant of two old Yolo County families, Morris and Eddy. Her great grand uncle Asa W Morris was a renowned Holstein cattle breeder in the early twentieth century and owner of the world famous dairy cow, Tilly Alcartra.

Lynn has always loved history. In 2008, she discovered the grave of a second great grand uncle at Mary's Cemetery. This discovery led to a family diary and the story of the "Jefferson California Company" wagon train that came from Waynesburg, Greene County, Pennsylvania, to California for the Gold Rush.

After an unsuccessful two year stint in the California gold mines, Morris settled in Yolo County. He became a successful farmer and paved the way for other family members to follow.

The Society will meet on Sunday, January 26 at 2:00 p.m. at Mary's Chapel located at County Road 98, and Southwest corner of County Road 15. Bring a friend who is a non member and receive a free gift.



Starting a Dairy in Yolo County by Al Plocher

It was 1935, a warm June day on a rural farm near Woodland, California a young boy was preparing to graduate from high school. At 17 years he had spent much of his childhood assisting his Pop with a small 20 acre farm raising grain, alfalfa and hogs. There had always been a team of cross-bred Percherons to pull the wagons and plows and a few cows to keep the younger brothers and sisters with milk, the cream a valued product being purchased by a local dairy for butter etc. It was now time to make a conscious decision on his future endeavors.

Still reeling from the brunt of the Great Depression as so many other of his generation had been dealing with and the lack of stable work in the private sector, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps created just 2 years earlier. The 1930s enrollees or "CCC boys" as they were often called, earned \$30 a month with \$25 sent home to their families. He worked this opportunity for a year in Yolo County spending much of his time visiting all the farms and ranches documenting crop production, water usage and land management. Through these tasks he not only furthered his own skills in farming but began to appreciate the greater need for farm products and what they meant to the American economy.

Upon leaving the CCC he tried his hand a working for other agriculture oriented businesses such as the Spreckels Sugar Company. By 1939 he had come to a conclusion that he was going to have to work for himself. Along with a younger brother who also had come up with the similar idea began to buy a few Holstein-Friesian dairy cows from the noted Morris dairy farm just to the north east of Yolo. The first bull was purchased and shipped from the State of Minnesota in 1947. To fund the operation they started farming tomatoes and sugar beets on rented land. As capital grew so did their herd. As the milk began to flow the tomatoes and beets were left to other farmers.

1942 was a wonderful year. He received an all expenses paid vacation to Europe compliments of his Uncle Sam. On one occasion he was given a 3 day pass while in Belgium to go back to England

where he spent the entire time visiting English farming operations to learn their techniques. Honorably discharged in the fall of 1945, he returned to his family in Woodland and restarted the dairy.

Once asked, "Why did you choose the Dairy business?" he replied, "Because there will always be a need for milk." Whether you drink it, make butter from it or take a bath in it, milk seems to be in evidence everywhere."

And so now you know a little bit more about my dad, Albert J. Plocher, and the Cache Acres Dairy he operated for 44 years. He was a founder of the California Dairymen's Association for the fair pricing of milk within the state. Albert was both state and national president of their respective Dairy Herd Improvement Associations spending 10 years as a national representative between the posts to insure the best production opportunities from the cows he and others around the nation milked. He was a member of the Holstein-Friesian Association of America in efforts to promote the very best in the breed. He retired from the industry he called home for most of his life on his 73rd birthday. The year was 1990. Dad passed away in 2005 still talking about the dairy and Holstein-Friesian cows.



Winters History Project Report

Members of the Winters History Project Committee are planning additional programs in 2014 featuring pioneer families who settle in Buckeye Township between 1855 and 1875, when the town of Winters was founded and the town of Buckeye became a ghost town. In addition, they are working with faculty in the UC Davis Department of Pomology to host the 2014 Agricultural Symposium.



Our members are enjoying reading stories that have been submitted these past few months – SO....**If you have a story** you would like to share that relates to Yolo County, send it to

rbarzo@yahoo.com we can include it as space is available. Photos are also encouraged!

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

If you have a grandchild or know a student who is a sophomore in high school in Yolo County, they can win a monetary prize donated by two of our members. For more information, call Beth Wintergreen at 662-1281 or go on the website www.yolo.net/ychs



BOOKS

The Historical Society has published the following local history books and are available for purchase:

OLD NORTH DAVIS guide to walking a traditional neighborhood. By John Lofland. Yolo County Historical Society, 1999. \$10.95. ISBN 1-892626-05-5

CLARKSBURG DELTA COMMUNITY By Shipley Walters. \$15

CRAFTING A VALLEY JEWEL: ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS OF WOODLAND By David L. Wilkinson. 19.95

HOLLYWOOD COMES TO WOODLAND By David L. Wilkinson \$19.95

KNIGHTS LANDING THE RIVER, THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE. By Shipley Walters. \$16.50

WINTERS A HERITAGE OF HORTICULTURE, A HARMONY OF PURPOSE. By Joann Leach Larkey. \$15.85

WOODLAND CITY OF TREES. By Shipley Walters. \$15.00

BOOKLETS SERIES

These are in limited quantity. Please call Mary Aulman (530-666-0743) for availability

1. 1968 Victorian Homes of Yolo County .

2. 1969 Woodland (Hershey) Opera House.
3. 1970 Three Maps of Yolo County , CA .
4. 1971 Historical Homes, Woodland , CA .
5. 1976 Woodland House Tour.
6. 1992 Narcissa Pena: Her Life and Her Community, by S.J. Truitt.
7. 2000 Davis Heritage Buildings. How Many to Start with, How Many Left? by John Lofland.
8. 2001 Davis City Council Elections, 1917-2000. By John Lofland.
9. 2003 Picture Map Supplement to the Book of Old North Davis, Guide to walking a traditional neighborhood, by John Lofland.
10. 2004 The German Prisoners of War - Farm Labor Branch Camps in Yolo County , by Douglas Brown.

POSTCARDS/NOTE CARDS

Available in four designs: Gable Mansion, Woodland Opera House, Wyatt Pavilion Theater at UCD, and Mary's Chapel. Cost of postcards is 25 cents each.

Spring Lake Schoolhouse note cards and a variety containing: Capay Union Grammar School, Woodland High School, Union School, Canon Union Grammar School, Holy Rosary Academy, Knights Landing School, Davis Grammar School, Hesperian College, Laugenour School, and Spring Lake School are available in packages of (10) note cards and envelopes and sell for \$10.00 a package.

YOLO COUNTY CHURCH RECORDS

Early record books of Yolo County churches are being transcribed by Clare L. Childers. Thirty-one books have been done and others will be appearing. Each volume has an introduction and index. The records date from 1857 and originate from many denominations throughout the county. These records are printed at cost as a service of the Historical Society and are also available for use at the appropriate church office, at the Yolo County Archives, and at the Yolo County Historical Museum. Copies may be purchased from the Yolo County Historical Society, P. O. Box 1447, Woodland, CA, 95776. Please call for a current listing with prices.

Patrons

Thanks to the following for generously supporting the Society for 2013-2014. You too can be a Patron by donating \$100.00 to help us run our projects

- John and Helen Daniels
- John and Kathy Harryman
- Pamela Pearl
- Virginia Schwarzgruber
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- Robert and Lynn Campbell
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- Jon & Barbara Durst
- Dennis Dingemans & Robin Datel
- Jeff & Starr Barrow
- Donald & Pat Campbell
- Albert & Lynn Plocher

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Dated Material

Vision Statement *The Yolo County Historical Society strives to preserve, protect and acknowledge the diverse history of Yolo County through education, communication and advocacy*