

**NOVEMBER 12, 2009  
VACAVILLE, SUISUN CITY, PENA ADOBE**

**YOLO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
VISITS  
SOLANO HILLS AND WATERFRONTS**

With retired Professor of Geography, Dennis Dingemans, as our guide, members of the Yolo County Historical Society and their guests will take a bus trip to Eastern Solano County's scenic and historical highlights. We will drive south from Winters through the lovely English Hills and Pleasants Valley which were part of the "early fruit district" of the 1870s and 1880s. Then to downtown Vacaville where we will see their recently completed River Walk along the creek, visit one of their two impressive museums/archives, and stroll along their thriving historic commercial "main street". Vacaville has numerous restaurants in their downtown area; something to satisfy everyone so you will be on your own for the lunch hour. Next, we will travel to Suisun City and visit their rejuvenated waterfront which used to be a major port for the water route linking the Bay Area with the Sacramento Valley. Afterwards, we will visit part of the route of the California Pacific Railroad which, in 1868, carved an amazing 300 foot long tunnel near Elmira that is still used today.

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Woodland residents will board the bus at 8:15 A.M. at the County Fair Mall (in front of the former Gottschalk's) and leave promptly at 8:30 A.M. returning about 5 P.M.

Davis resident will board the bus at 8:50 A.M. at the Veteran's Memorial parking lot and leave promptly at 9 A.M. returning at about 4:30 P.M.

Winters residents will board the bus at 9:30 A.M. at the Winters Community Center returning at about 4 P.M.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This newsletter is full of information about what has been happening and is going to happen in the "life" of the Society. What it doesn't have is information about the next General Membership meeting which will be held on the 4th Sunday in October which is the 25th at 2 P.M. We are still awaiting confirmation that we can have our meeting in the soon to be dedicated Arthur F. Turner West Sacramento Library. The program will be on the History of the West Capitol Speedway which was a fixture in West Sacramento for many, many years. In November, we will be meeting in Winters at the soon to be dedicated Winters Library. Our speaker will be Dorothy O'Neil who has written a book on the history of Winters which has just been released by Arcadia Press in their "Images of America" series.

### **LOOK FOR A POSTCARD IN THE MAIL CONFIRMING THESE TWO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS.**

I had the privilege of traveling with Professor Dingemans as he planned the Society trip herein. Dennis has unbelievable knowledgeable about the areas we will be visiting. I am sure he got tired of hearing me say, "I didn't know that". Don't miss this trip. Our next will be in the Spring to Colusa/Glenn Counties with Ann Scheuring as our guide.

We are still in need of three members to join us on the Board of Directors. We meet the 2nd Monday, 7 P.M. alternating between Woodland and Davis. Don't be shy.

Peace,

BJ Ford, President

## GIBSON HOUSE FESTIVAL OF TREES

The Gibson House is hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Festival of Trees on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, and Historical Society members are encouraged to join in the holiday festivities! The Gibson House will also be one of the featured homes on the annual Meals on Wheels, "Dickens in the Valley" home tour, also on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>.

Saturday night the Gibson House will be filled with decorated trees, wreaths and centerpieces available for sale at a silent and live auction for the Festival of Trees Gala. Created by local decorators and groups, these holiday decorations get more beautiful (and fun) every year. Complimentary hors d'ouvres and wine will be served, and there will be musical entertainment. Tickets are \$35 or \$60/couple. The event is from 6:30 - 9 p.m. Proceeds from the Festival will support the Museum's educational programs.

If you would like to decorate a tree (on your own or with friends), wreath or centerpiece, or if you want to be mailed an invitation to the Gala, please contact Dotty Huber at 666-8230 or Meg Stallard at 666-0154.

On Santa Sunday, the Gibson House will be open from 1 - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Santa will be on hand to greet children, who will also be able to make a Christmas craft. There will be holiday items for sale, as well as any trees that weren't auctioned off on Saturday. Refreshments will be served and docents will be on hand to give tours of the museum.

Plan to get an historical perspective to the holidays this year! Please join us for holiday fun and a closer look at your Yolo County museum. We'll look forward to seeing you!

## School Controversy Not New to Davis

Before 1924, Davis had no high school. Most students who completed eighth grade and wished to continue their education went to Woodland for high school, a few went to Dixon or Sacramento.

The impetus for change came in 1923 when Woodland proposed that Davis join the Woodland High School District. Then, as now, Davis residents were committed to autonomy and the invitation was declined. Davis began to plan for its own high school district, to be composed of four elementary school districts: Davis, Montgomery, Fairfield, and Plainfield. A group of 34 public spirited citizens donated enough money to purchase the square block bordered by 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, (now 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>), B and C streets to be held in trust for a new High School District.

During February 1924, petitions were circulated in all four elementary districts to hold an election on forming the new high school district. The only district not overwhelmingly in favor of the proposal was Plainfield, where sentiment was closely divided.

In March, E. S. McBride and Calvin Covell filed a petition with the Yolo County Superintendent of Schools, Harriet Lee. A majority of electors in each district then favored creating the new High School District centered in Davis.

When the petition was filed, 30 of the 54 electors in Plainfield approved the formation of the new district. However, three of the signers later requested their

names be removed from the petition. The Superintendent removed those names and denied the petition because there was no longer a majority in the Plainfield district.

Outraged, Davis petitioners took the matter to court, challenging the Superintendent's authority to remove names for the petition. They lost in the trial, appellate and Supreme courts.

Meanwhile, 22 Davis students began high school courses in August 1924 in an enlarged portion of Davis Central Grammar School. Plainfield unsuccessfully attempted to annex itself to the Woodland High School District. Later it failed to maintain the necessary school attendance and its district was split between Woodland and Davis.

New petitions were prepared and approved for a three district (Davis, Fairfield, and Montgomery elementary districts) Union high school. A June 1, 1925 election resulted in overwhelming approval of a Davis Union High School District. In February of 1926 a bond issued of \$115,000 (more than the school trustees originally proposed) was approved, 467 to 40. However, the omission of a clause in the public notice of the election resulted in its nullification. A new election was set for May 18, 1926; the new District and bonds were approved, 367 to 52.

Meanwhile, a controversy arose over the site of the new high school because of the proximity of the Zeta Xi Fraternity House to the proposed site. The Board approved the site on the condition that the Fraternity House be moved. The mortgage holder for the Fraternity House refused to move it and a stalemate developed. After a joint meeting of the City Trustees, the City Planning Commission, and the High School

Board, the Board and the City Trustees pledged the funds to move the Fraternity House, the lender agreed. The House was moved and construction of the Davis High School began. The first class graduated in 1928.\*

To learn more about Davis Public Schools, both early and current, visit the Hattie Weber Museum of Davis to view the new Schools exhibit.

\*Source: Davis Public Schools, History. May 1931. Hattie Weber Museum of Davis

Mary Lee  
Thomson

## WANT AD

### **1980 YCHS CALENDAR**

Teri Laugenour is looking for copies and is willing to purchase. Contact her at: (916) 263-3750 Tues – Friday.

## **SPRING LAKE SCHOOLHOUSE**

The Spring Lake Schoolhouse was a resounding success during the Fair. We had over 600 visitors to the museum (400 signed in) and we were only open Wednesday evening, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 12 – 10 p.m. Thank you to Dennis Dingemans for scheduling the workers and thank you to the following for being there and sharing with the visitors: Lynn and Bob Campbell, Dennis Dingemans, Franklin Dingemans, Julie Kulman, Norm Callaway, Carol Rose, Virginia Schwartzengruber, Pat Turner, Marion Tuttle, Carol Conley, Pat Piper, Jane Griffith, Margaret Nicholson, Frieda Hanke, Bob Sommer, John Hoover, Amy Thompson, Martha Breshear, Teri and

Steve Laugenour, Theodore Dingemans, Robin Dattel, Bronte Chan and Cecilia Qwan. My job was to open every day and fill into absentee slots. There was never a dull moment in the schoolhouse. One of the highlights was the number of young people who came in and gave their parents a tour showing them where they sat and then finding their schoolmarm on the board. A big thank you to Marilyn Kregel, and the dedicated group of schoolmarms and schoolmaster, who share their talents in the fall and spring of the school year. History has become real because of the efforts of these individuals.

As you know, we have an increase in school numbers in the third grade. Therefore, we had to bring in seven desks and rearrange the schoolhouse to accommodate the increased class size. Two of the desks were bright yellow. Jackie Scott solved that issue and repainted the desks to look old and antiques. Thank you, Jackie.

Kathy Cobb donated the monies for the additional 12 McGuffey Readers. Thank you, Kathy. Marilyn Kregel donated the monies for the additional slates. Thank you, Marilyn.

Martha Breshear is beginning to schedule classes for the fall. We have two new schoolmarms who will observe and then teach in the spring. They are Kathy Cobb and Karen Mercante. Welcome ladies. Gentlemen, where are you???

I am looking for a map of the United States in the late 1800s.....I would like to have one up for the students to see the geographical changes. I would like it to be approximately 4 X 5 feet. If you have one, or know where one is, please let me know.

acknowledge the diverse history of Yolo County through education, communication and advocacy.”

### **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DEADLINE:**

Articles for the newsletter will be accepted until the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please either e-mail Jeannette Molson at: JLMolson@aol.com or mail to the Yolo County Historical Society, P. O. Box 1447, Woodland CA 95