

# Yolo County Historical Society



## Prez Says

Rain! We finally have some. Wow, I have missed it. This has been a hot, dry, spring and summer! Hopefully, we will get more rain and relieve some of the pressure for water.

We had a very successful STROLL this year. There were some doubts as to whether it would happen! We seem to be under the control of other outlying sources and issues. The Delta variant has reared its ugly head and caused many individuals to retreat to the Covid rules. What a mess. Anyway, the Stroll did occur. According to Jim Lapsley, the chairperson, they sold 420 tickets. A normal year would be 450 tickets. Everyone who attended was pleased.

The 150th Woodland celebration did not happen. It was postponed until another time. The big celebration at Holy Rosary was also cancelled. It will occur in May. The opening of the Spring Lake School House was cancelled until May. We will only cater to a small group of third grade students. You can't ask students to imagine school in the 1880's and have them wear masks. That just doesn't make sense! Hopefully by May, the mask mandate will be gone.

We have not participated in the First Friday activities. We will probably do that again in the Spring. There is a lot of activity in town with the closing and selling and moving of stores. Main Street in Woodland is again changing.

The Yolo County Fair Museum is moving right along. We are looking to replace the lighting in the building. Ron Burch, from the train depot, is working with us on a plan. Almost all the cabinets have sponsors. The Yolo County map will be repaired. It was nailed to a piece of wood and when we unrolled it, we found that the staples had pulled loose. Regi Gay, Dino Gay's son, is an archivist and he is working with us to put it together. Our plan is to have the museum ready in May so that the students can go to the schoolhouse and then to the museum.

Almost all our past members have sent in their dues. Thank you. If you wish to be on the email list, be sure to contact me.

Again, as always, History Rules!

Kathy Harryman, President

# Early History of St. John's Church

written by previous historians and compiled by Marilyn Mitchell



Back in the 1880's many German people emigrated to the United States and a good number of them settled in Yolo County. To these German people their church meant a great deal and they missed its services. As so often happens, it was the women, the mothers and daughters and sisters, who decided to do something about it. In 1888, a group of these women gathered and formed a *Frauenverein*, or as we know it best, a German Ladies' Aid.

The summer of 1891 saw the first effort to establish a congregation. The Rev. J. A. Schilling had been holding services in a little church on Third Street in Woodland. He called a meeting of all evangelical families and that meeting brought action. A

constitution was drawn up and signed by ten members. On October 26, 1891, the congregation decided to be incorporated under California State law as "The German Evangelical St. John's Church"

At its first annual meeting in January of 1892, the new congregation decided to build a church on a lot on Cleveland Street, donated by Mrs. E. Richie. The cornerstone was laid on May 22nd and in November the church building was dedicated. With members helping in the work of construction, the cost came to approximately \$4,000.

In 1897, Rev. Schilling resigned and Rev. J. Endter was his successor. He stayed for three years and then Rev. J. C. Mangold succeeded him in 1900. His annual salary was \$300.

In 1902 the parsonage was built. The two-story frame house was built for \$3,000. The bell was purchased in 1911.

St. John's church has always had a rich history of singing. In 1927, the old organ was replaced by an electric pipe organ.

On September 8, 1934, both the church and parsonage were destroyed by fire which started about a block away and was fanned by a strong north wind. The brick walls of the new Sunday school stood, but the inside was so damaged that its structure had to be torn down.

The congregation at St. John's immediately began to plan for a new church and parsonage. In January 1935, just four months after the fire, the construction was started by a contractor/church member.

Five months later, on June 2, 1935, it was dedicated. A new organ was purchased, and a new bell was ordered before the building began. Cost of the new church and parsonage came to just over \$33,000. The congregation borrowed \$13,000 which was paid off ten years later.



## Remember When, Part 2 of 2 parts

by Kathy Harryman

This is the remaining article from the book ***A Run Around the Block A Victorian Idyl*** by Vita Griggs, submitted to the *Daily Democrat* to celebrate Woodland's 150 year anniversary.

Remember when Mr. Dingle, was the head of Walnut Street Elementary School and school lasted until 4:00? Mr. Dingle was the only male teacher in Woodland elementary schools in my time. We saw him every other year. He was not concerned with developing our personalities; perhaps he considered we already had enough. But we did mental arithmetic to his snapped numbers: No other teacher had the exciting quality of Mr. Dingle or so encouraged the competitive spirit.

Remember when the proper hour to visit friends was 3:00? Ladies sat erect (not crossing the knees) to gossip.

Remember when everyone was concerned with "What will the neighbors say?" But some of the neighbors were odd enough themselves. One of our wealthiest citizens, whose big, white, two-storied home was on College Street, had in his back yard the only windmill we knew. When a west breeze brought its clank and squeak on two notes across the blocks, the kids said, "There's old screechy-scratchy." But it turned out that this famous fixture was a fake, fastened to the city waterpipes and tapping municipal wells. An indignant council made the owner pay the rates for back years.

Remember when everyone rode a bicycle? Everybody went on wheels – the cripples and the young used tricycles and the women wore gaiters and bloomers. I was determined to ride my father's bicycle. Putting a fat leg through the metal triangle and feeling for the pedal, I managed to hop on the other one. Arms were strained to the high handlebars and the leather seat was on a level with my ear. My father finally bought me a girls' machine, maroon, with a silver gong to alert traffic, no horizontal bar and a guard for skirts. Unfortunately, months of riding on a slant had almost permanently impaired my stance. I had to practice on sidewalks, because the streets, with a rubber-tired rig or delivery wagon passing every twenty minutes, were dangerous. I avoided the rush hour in our neighborhood (two or three persons on the sidewalk at once) by practicing at dusk, when sane people were at dinner.

Remember when 25 cents were all you could spend on each person for Christmas? We didn't go for first editions, we bought no sequins or glitter – those belong in the circus, on the stage – but we did invest heavily in kitchen implements of shining tin from the hardware store. We bought handkerchiefs and pin trays and White Rose perfume, smelling like train oil but a pretty green in the bottle. We created too: calendars, pen wipers, pincushions, potholders and bookmarks. All the relatives and friends got presents. Most of which go promptly into drawers and never see the light of day again. Victorians were great drawer stuffers.

Remember when only males could drive an automobile? The first car openly driven by Woodland women was a roadster owned by the three Garrett girls, Mattie, Ruby, and Pearl. Perhaps because the county roads were so horrible, perhaps to show off, the Garretts rode around and around inside the town, passing our horse perhaps ten times in an evening. The roadster's top was down, and the girls were young and pretty and made pickups.

Although time has marched on, the excerpts from the book are a reminder of what life was like 120 years ago. It also makes us happy that we missed that part of history and are all ready to embark on a new journey for the next 150 years, a journey that has its roots in the past.

## Parlor 30 and Union Church of Dunnigan by Dino Gay

Woodland **Parlor No. 30**, Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW), promotes the history of Woodland and Yolo County through preservation, research and outreach. Founded in 1875, the statewide mission of NSGW is to preserve California's rich history, support local education and serve the community. The NSGW is a 501(c)8 organization – a fraternal society operating under the lodge system that devotes its earnings to charitable, educational, literary and other benevolent purposes. The NSGW includes the Historical Preservation Foundation and the Native Sons Charitable Foundation (Cleft Palate Fund), both 501(c)3 organizations.

Parlor 30 began in 1884. The group first met in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall above the Bank of Woodland at 540 Main Street. For several years it met in the Masonic Hall (on Second and Main above the old Farmers and Merchants Bank), then the Parlor built its own four-story hall in 1905 at 422 Main Street (now a one-story building where Timothy's Bakery is). The Parlor surrendered its charter on May 18, 1944. On September 12, 2013, a team of grand officers led by Grand President Dwight Dutschke, re-instituted Parlor 30.

Parlor 30 has four major ongoing projects: 1) Develop plans for a downtown Woodland museum and historical tourist destination, 2) Dead Cat Alley Nine Lives Project with Woodland Art Center, ancillary/fiscal receiver of Parlor 30, 3) Union Church of Dunnigan Restoration with UCoD Trustees, and 4) Yolo County Fair Museum with Yolo County Historical Society.

Regarding the Union Church of Dunnigan, Dani Schaad of Dunnigan is the new president. Paul Shaner will continue as treasurer and Katie Ball will continue as secretary. As a 501(c)3 public benefit organization (not a religious organization), the Union Church will soon launch major fundraising activities.

In 2018 the Union Church received a generous grant of \$50,000 from the County of Yolo Rural Community Investment Program (made possible by Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation). That funding provided for foundation stabilization work that was necessary before the installation of the restored windows began. We are (more-or-less) two-thirds of the way through on having the large trinitities of colored glass window replaced on the west north sides of the building (minus some finishing work). What's next is the south side that needs a lot of restoration due to decades of exposure to the elements.

There are other colored windows in the church, including a transom on the interior that separates the nave from the sanctuary. Rainbow Glass of Sacramento cleaned up the original glass installed in 1893. They also replaced broken panes with glass from the historical glass foundries on the west coast that are still in operation from the late 1800s. Jim Williams Construction is leading the work on installing the windows and doing the necessary frame repairs.

The glass will be unveiled to the public as soon as an exterior, protective layer can be installed to prevent vandalism. If you are curious, you can get a sneak peek of the work on any Fourth Saturday Free Museum Day at the church, 9 AM to 1 PM, in Dunnigan at 3615 Road 89A.

Other work at the Union Church includes the completion of a perimeter concrete sidewalk, general framing and roofing work (pigeon wars), front door replacement, backside ramp, electricity and security. There is no water (translate as no restrooms) so part of the major fundraising will address those needs. The ultimate goal is to open the church and property for weddings, receptions, religious gatherings and other events (including regular museum hours).

In 2022, Parlor 30 will continue our First Friday Art & History Walks – stay tuned for locations – and is planning on another springtime Woodland History Tours Day in April. For info, contact Dino at [dinogay@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dinogay@sbcglobal.net) or call (530) 383-0772.



## Newspapers of Old

While researching history, I found these descriptions titled "Woodland's Papers" in the *San Francisco Examiner* dated Oct. 20, 1889. I thought they were interesting and might be of interest to others. These two newspapers competed for ads and subscriptions. – KH

### **The Democrat**

Wick B Parsons, editor, and proprietor of the *Woodland Democrat* was born in Alabama in 1836. He came to California in 1856.

He was editor of the *Pacific Methodist*, the organ of the M.E. Church South for 18 years. In 1887, he purchased the *Woodland Democrat*.

The *Democrat* is the oldest newspaper plant in Yolo County. It was first printed in Cacheville in 1887 by Jornagan & Everts. In 1859 it was moved to Knights Landing and was under the management of S.W. Ravelly until 1864, when it was moved to Woodland. W.A. Henry, late Police Judge of Sacramento, was the editor until 1869. The success of the journal in later years was due to William Saunders, who owned and edited the *Democrat* from 1870-1886. Messrs. Raffner & Lee purchased the paper from Mr. Saunders, but, after a brief career, sold it to the present owner. The *Democrat* is a staunch party paper, but above its politics in its devotion to the interests of Yolo County.

He was educated in the schools of Napa City and made his first venture in the newspaper business at Lodi, where he founded the *Sentinel*. He was also connected for a time with the *Napa City Register*. The success of the *Mail* since he assumed control has been phenomenal.

### **The Mail**

The *Yolo Mail* is the Republican rival of the *Democrat* at Woodland. It was established as a weekly in 1869 by C.T. Hammond, who sold his interest to Wagstaff & Jones. A year later, Mr. Wagstaff became sole proprietor, and made the paper a daily. W. Theobolds and Allen T. Bird each had a brief editorial experience with the paper. In 1886 Wilson S. Ellis became the editor and proprietor of the *Mail*. Mr. Ellis is a native Californian by birth having been born in Downieville, Sierra County, in 1859, and though barely thirty years of age has attained a high position in journalism.

He was educated in the schools of Napa City and made his first venture in the newspaper business at Lodi, where he founded the *Sentinel*. He was also connected for a time with the *Napa City Register*. The success of the *Mail* since he assumed control has been phenomenal.



# Do we need Superheroes?

by Kathy Harryman

Last week, my son and I went to the James Bond movie "No Time to Die" starring Daniel Craig. I've loved James Bond since the first 1962 movie, **Dr. No**, starring Sean Connery.

I always look forward to the coming attractions so I can decide whether I want to see the new films. All the coming attractions dealt with Marvel Comic characters. I thought that was strange and then I remembered hearing a news clip regarding changing Superman's character so that he could be more inclusive in his sexual orientation. What a sad situation when we have to take an action comic character that originated in 1938 and change his sexual orientation!<sup>1</sup>



Created by writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster, Superman was the first widely hailed comic superhero. He always fights crime. He saves a lot of people with his special powers. He is the strongest man in the world, and he fights criminals. He is The Man of Steel and the ultimate symbol of truth, justice, and hope.

In 1938, the average cost of a new house was \$3,900. The average monthly rent was \$27 per month and the average wages per year was \$1,730. The cost of gas was 10 cents a gallon, and a loaf of bread was 9 cents. A new car cost \$763. The years of the Great Depression were over, but the memories of the it stayed in the minds of the people. The United States was in a recession and unemployment rose to 19%. Orson Welles' radio adaption of the "War of the Worlds" caused mass panic in the United States. And on the world scene, Hitler began his march into Austria, divided Czechoslovakia, and began the annihilation of the Jews.

When you look at **1938**, one can see why a superhero would be popular. We want someone to fight criminals, someone who can be the ultimate symbol of truth, justice, and hope. And if he originates in a comic, that is so much easier to grasp.

But again, my question – why was Superman so important? And more importantly, what does the influx of Marvel Comic or **DC** characters mean to society today? As of September 2021, there were 25 Marvel movies. According to a **blog** on the internet, when our reality becomes too much for us, we escape into the world of the superhero. The challenges we face in our everyday lives are daunting and stressful, so we escape into the superhero world where we see those who have control over their universe. We like the drama and the fight for good over evil. We also know that the superhero is a work of fiction, so we can safely fantasize about all the maiming and killing. We also like computer-generated imagery (CGI). We marvel at the creativity.

In 2020, the United States has been largely defined by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the country, the economic recession resulting from the pandemic, and the U.S. presidential elections. The average cost of a new house in California according to *Zillow.com* is \$700,000. Again, according to *Zillow.com*, the average rent in California for December 2020 is \$2,800 (apartment size 1,389 sq. ft.) The median wage in California is \$63,783, depending on where you live. The cost of gas is \$4.53 cents a gallon, a loaf of bread is \$3.13, and a new car cost \$37,876. Again, these statistics depend on where you live in the state.

This past year felt so long and so short at the same time. So many things happened yet many of us were stuck in the house, bored and doing nothing. From freak weather to protests, coups and elections, this year was one for the history books. It's a miracle we survived the zoom fatigue and the time distortion, let alone the crazy **world events**. So, I have answered my original question. Do we need Superheroes? Yes, we do. Will I go to the movies to see the new attractions? Probably not. But will you???

<sup>1</sup>DC Comics reveal that latest Superman character is **bisexual**.

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

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## **Submitting letters and articles**

Format articles in Word and send as email attachments to Kathy Harryman [khwoodland@aol.com](mailto:khwoodland@aol.com)

## **Change of Address**

Please notify Kathy Harryman [khwoodland@aol.com](mailto:khwoodland@aol.com) of any address changes (it costs nearly \$1.00 to get your correct address from the Post Office and your newsletter mailing is delayed). Or sign up for delivery as an email PDF attachment (see above email).

## **Vision Statement**

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

We are a 5013c tax deductible organization

Tax id number: **23-7086043**

See our website at [ychs.org](http://ychs.org)

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