

# Yolo County Historical Society



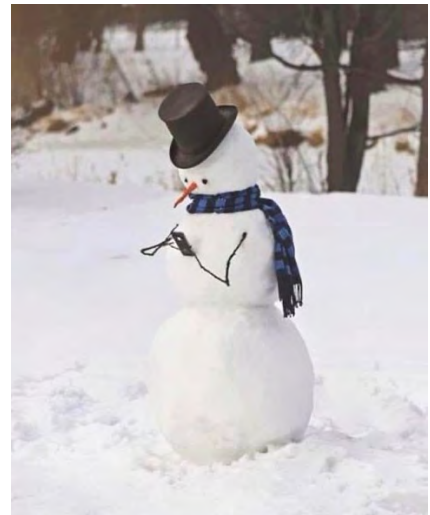
## Prez Says

Well, it is that time of year again. Here are a few quotes that I like. The first is by Melody Beattie, an American author. She says "The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written..." This is a very optimistic view of the year. The next quote is from Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American essayist. He said, "Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Emerson gives us permission to go beyond our normal average self and expand to other areas of life. And isn't that what historians do? When we study history and ask questions, we challenge ourselves to go beyond the common, factual presentations and seek answers in the realm of "why not." We then allow ourselves to come to an understanding that perhaps we had not recognized before.

I know this all sounds philosophical. But sometimes it is productive for each of us to ponder our role in the universe or the city/county in which we live.

This past year has been a whirlwind of activity for the Yolo County Historical Society. With our involvement in the County Fair Museum, we have added another layer to our complexity. We are now dealing with a new fair management.

As we all know, with the new management, we all have to get to know each other. Right now, that is what we are doing. We have met Sarah Pelle, and she has expressed concern regarding the amount of electricity that is being used in our building. We must keep the heat and electricity on during the cold winter months because we have a lot of paper products that can curl with the cold weather. I met with a group of other museums last week to draft a letter to the Fair Board. It is impossible for us to pay monthly for usage of the building when we are not using it. As this year progresses, there will be more information about the new relationship between the museums of Yolo County and the Fair Board.



Stay tuned. I am sure there is more to come.

We are again going to request funds from the Big Day of Giving. This time, we will continue to request funds to help with security at the Fair Museum and to begin the video presentations during the fair. We are also requesting monies to help schools pay for busing for our field trips to the schoolhouse.

The board has decided to give the schoolhouse a new look. In March, the board will work on it. We are all excited. You will too when you see it.

On behalf of the Society, we all welcome you to a very Happy New Year filled with promises of great things to come.

As always, History Rules!

Kathy Harryman, President

# An Inquiry's Journey

by Kathy Harryman

Do you ever wonder what happens to historical inquiries asked of the Yolo County Historical Society? How do I deal with them? Do I know everything (impossible)! Can I answer all the questions correctly? If I don't know, who do I go to for assistance? Or do I just ignore the inquiry and go on with life!

I thought it might be interesting to take you on an e mail journey from the original question to the final answer.

I receive anywhere from 10-15 inquiries per month – sometimes more and sometimes less. Most individuals are asking me if the historical society wants information that they (the inquirers) feel is historical. All history is important to an historian, but my first decision must be, is it important to the history of this county? If the matter pertains to individuals, I ask "Have they resided in the county? Have they added something significant to the understanding of history in the county?" When the answer is yes, I ask more questions of the inquirer. If the query is an offer of a physical item, I forward the offers to the Hattie Weber Museum and the Winters History Museum. I receive very few offers from Clarksburg and West Sacramento. In those instances, I connect the prospective donor to my contacts, and I am done. If the items are from other areas of California or other states, I encourage the prospective donor to contact the historical societies in those areas.

If the item pertains to Yolo County and is paper, for example, genealogy information, I encourage the donor to send it to the Yolo County archives. If the item refers to schools in the county, I accept it. We put these donations in the Spring Lake School House on the fairgrounds. That is how we have accumulated classroom photos from the various schools within the county. We now have a few schoolteacher photos.

The following is the journey of an inquiry. I am using the information sent to me with permission of the people involved.

## Original e mail

From: BRUCE METZLER <metzmotorsports@sbcglobal.net>  
To: "khwoodland@aol.com" <khwoodland@aol.com>  
Sent: Monday, October 9, 2023 at 03:27:08 PM PDT  
Subject: Yolo County Historical Society

Hi, can anyone share some knowledge regarding this embosser that I acquired in an estate sale?

Thank you, Bruce

## My response

On Monday, October 9, 2023 at 04:22:37 PM PDT, Kathy Harryman > wrote: to **Dino Gay**

Do you know about Capay Land and Stock Company? Could you answer this? Kathy

## Dino's response

From: Dino Gay <dinogay@sbcglobal.net>  
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:36 AM  
To: Kathy Harryman <khwoodland@aol.com>; metzmotorsports@sbcglobal.net <metzmotorsports@sbcglobal.net>  
Cc: Rachel Poutasse <Rachel.Poutasse@yolocounty.org>  
Subject: Re: Yolo County Historical Society

I don't know anything about that company.

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## Journey - continued

Info from David Herbst, Yolo County collector: "I forget Mr Gray's first name but what I do remember is that his company had 2 Rolls Royce V16 engines that were used on wind machines north of Esparto. I was about a week late in trying to acquire them. It was about 1970."

I suggest trying the Yolo County Archives, Rachel is copied here.

## Next item to Rachel at the Archives

On Oct 10, 2023, at 9:12 AM, Rachel Poutasse <Rachel.Poutasse@yolocounty.org> wrote:

Hello Bruce,

Thank you for reaching out! (Dino, thanks for forwarding this.) The Archives can certainly look into this. I am wondering if there was a photo originally attached to this email? Would you be able to send it again so I can see what the object and logo look like?

## Bruce's response

From: BRUCE METZLER <metzmotorsports@sbcglobal.net>  
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 10:18 AM  
To: Rachel Poutasse <Rachel.Poutasse@yolocounty.org>  
Subject: Re: Yolo County Historical Society

Yes, here you go



## Rachael's response and research

On Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 12:59:30 PM PDT, Rachel Poutasse <rachel.poutasse@yolocounty.org> wrote:

Hello Bruce,

Thanks for the pictures! That is a neat item. The Capay Land and Stock Company was incorporated in 1897 as you can see from the stamp; we have the Articles of Incorporation here at the Yolo County Archives. I do want to note that this is separate from the similarly named "Capay Valley Land Company," which had a connection to the Southern Pacific Railroad and was based out of San Francisco. According to the Articles of Incorporation, the purpose of the Capay Land and Stock Company was "to buy and sell real estate, to buy, sell and deal in sheep, cattle, horses, swine and livestock of all kinds and to conduct and carry on a general farm and ranch business, including horticulture in all its branches, in the County of Yolo." The first five directors were Charles Q. Nelson, L. D. Stephens, J. S. Craig, J. W. Duncan, and G. D. Stephens. They were active for the next couple decades buying and selling land in and around the

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**Journey - continued**

Capay Valley. You can get an idea of the extent of their holdings from the [1900 Yolo County map](#) – they owned lots of property north of Rumsey and on the east side of the Capay Valley:

They also were active in Woodland real estate; most notably, they provided the lot that the Woodland Public Library now sits on to the city (*Woodland Daily Democrat*, October 21, 1903).

The company sold off their holdings in the early 1910s and I could find no further mention of it in the newspapers by the 1920s, so it was only active for about 20 years or so.

If you are interested in seeing the Articles of Incorporation, we have appointments available at the Archives on Tuesdays from 9-11 and 11-1 and on Thursdays from 12-2 and 2-4. We are located at 226 Buckeye Street in Woodland. Right now, our appointment calendar for next week is open. Alternatively, we can also scan the document for you for \$4/page. The document is 3 pages so the total would be \$12. You can pay by credit card by calling us at 530-666-8010.

Please let me know if you'd like to make an appointment, get scans, or have any questions. Thank you!

Rachel Poutasse  
 Library Assistant II  
 Yolo County Library  
 226 Buckeye Street  
 Woodland, CA 95695  
 Archives: (530) 666-8010  
 Record Center: (530) 666-8003  
 Rachel.Poutasse@yolocounty.org

As you can see, finding out about historical items is not a simple matter of opening a book and voila! There it is! It takes time and people who are willing to lend a hand and help find answers to the questions that we are asked. In the above journey, the following people were involved in the answer: Kathy Harryman, Dino Gay, David Herbst and Rachel Poutasse.

Why do we do it? Well, we find history fascinating and now we all know a little more about an entity than we did before. Who knew that the information connected to the Carnegie Library in Woodland? Fascinating stuff. That's why we are here.

Whereas, Andrew Carnegie has agreed and now agrees to donate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to the city of Woodland for the erection of a public library building, within said city on the express condition that said city shall guarantee to raise annually and devote to the maintenance of its public library the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000); and

Whereas, The Capay Land and Stock Company, by deed duly made, executed and recorded, have granted to the city of Woodland that certain lot or parcel of land situated within the said city and particularly described as follows, to-wit: Bounded on the north by an alley, on the east by First street, on the south by Court street and on the west by Diggs; having a frontage of 190 feet on First street and 232 feet on Court street; and

Whereas, The city of Woodland by and through its Board of Trustees, did on the 2nd day of October, 1903, by Resolution No. 15, accept the aforesaid parcel of land hereinbefore described and granted to it by the said Capay Land and Stock Company; therefore,

The Board of Trustees of the City of Woodland do ordain as follows:

Section 1. That the said donation by the said Andrew Carnegie of the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for the erection of a public library building within the city of Woodland, upon the terms and conditions by him proposed, as aforesaid, be and the same is hereby accepted.

Section 2. That the said library building shall be erected on that lot or parcel of land hereinbefore described and granted to the city of Woodland by the Capay Land and Stock Company.



# Where there is a will, there is a way!

by Kathy Harryman

How many times have we heard that sentence? Or said that sentence? That sentence has been used since the 17th Century and is attributed to the English writer, George Herbert. This statement applies to someone in our county who decided he wanted his grandparents' contributions recognized. And by gosh, he pursued, and we have a new street named after them.

John Morelli is a retired teacher in Woodland, whose grandparents established a boarding house on Main Street in the early 1900's. John talks fondly about his grandparents and the children they raised there, including his father. The house was located at 24 Main Street, next to Pugh Memorials where the current Midas Muffler shop is located.

John visited the Yolo County archives and received many documents relating to his grandparents, including a Naturalization form signed by his grandmother Eugenia in 1944 (shown at end). He also discovered evidence of Prohibition violations. According to the article in The Archives Ledger, "The boarding house was raided in 1926 and the defendants were accused of selling wine and brandy."

Eugenia married Carlo Morelli. At the age of 38, he died of a bleeding ulcer (hemorrhage of the stomach), leaving her with seven small children ranging from 7 years of age to 16 days. In 1922, she married Sostenio Sanducci.



Nonni and Nonno Morelli, Eugenia and Carlo Morelli



The two-story house on Main, (seen in the photo) was also home to the family restaurant located in the basement. At *Mama Morelli's* restaurant she served "Special Chicken and Ravioli Dinners on Saturday and Sunday." You could order dinner during the week on a takeout basis only. (Take-out food is not a new concept!)

The top floor was rented out to workers, mostly Italians who came from the San Francisco area to work on construction projects in the county. The most notable

were the Yolo County Courthouse on Court Street and the third Holy Rosary Catholic Church on Main Street. They also worked on other construction projects, notably Motroni houses.

John recalls hearing the story about his twin aunts, Eva Osborne and Clara Landucci, who, at the age of 8, visited the top of the courthouse at the invitation of the working crew who rented rooms at the boarding house. The girls never forgot that experience. They could see all the Woodland area.

John remembered that there were stairs at the rear of the house for access to the 2nd floor. He said as a child visiting his grandma, no one played on the stairs. Mama Morelli meant business!

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Morelli - continued

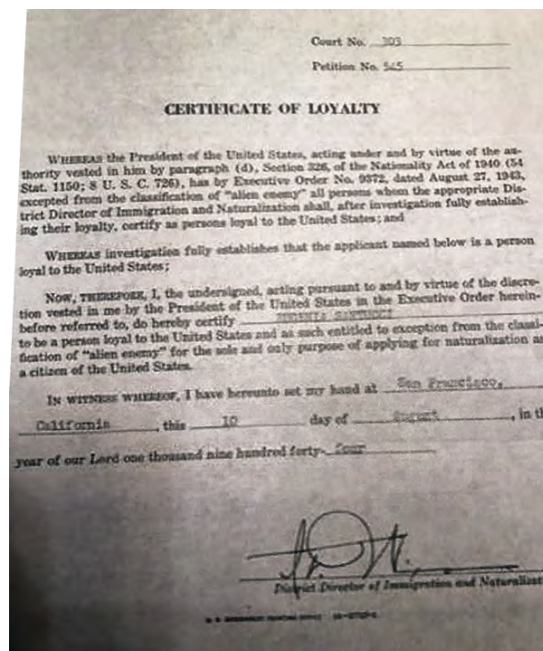
Eugenia and Sostenio closed the boarding house in 1933. The house was finally razed to make room for commercial businesses.



Nelson’s Grove Reunion. 1983-4. Left to right: Erma Ricci Morelli, Mary Hughes Morelli, Clara Landucci Morelli, Ralph Morelli, Lena Chamberlain Morelli, Eva Osborn Morelli.

John was a determined grandson. He wanted his grandmother and grandfather remembered in the annuals of the history of Woodland. So, he talked to some friends about renaming the alley behind the house. It took John about seven years, working with the Fire Department and the city, to finally receive the status that his grandparents deserved. The sign Morelli Way was installed at the end of 2023.

Kudos to John for pursuing his history. His history is our history. He reminds us that Woodland had a significant Italian population who added to the culture and beauty of this town.



## Patrons

The following folks support the *Yolo County Historical Society*. We could not run this organization without their help. Thank you very much!

You, also, can be a patron by **contributing** \$100 or more.

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# YCHS Newsletter

Yolo County Historical Society

P O Box 1447

Woodland, CA 95776

Dated Material

## **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)

**Editor:** Barbara Sommer  
[basommer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:basommer@ucdavis.edu)