

Yolo County Historical Society



Prez Says

Lots of history happening this month.

Big Day of Giving—Thursday, May 5. Please consider giving to the **Yolo County Historical Society**. We are using the funds to continue to refurbish the Yolo County Fair Museum. We are now working on our security system and if we receive enough funds, we can begin to work on our media system.

Welcome new patrons: Carol Rose and Paul & Leila Crist. Also thank you to Roz Stone who sponsored her daughter, Leila and son-in-law.

Dennis Dahlin is working on signage for the "Baby" School in Woodland on Walnut Ave. It is now **Empower Yolo**, the Dowling Building. He would like information about Rhoda Maxwell. If you have any information, please contact him at 530-753-3315.

The **Winters Museum's** next exhibit is **Remembering Monticello**. Should be interesting and knowledgeable.

The **Hattie Weber Museum** has a new exhibit. Please see their report on page 6. Thank you, Hattie Weber. You are a small but powerful!

Woodland's **150-year celebration** is on Friday, April 8, from 5-9:30 p.m.. We will be setting up a table in front of Cranston's and David Wilkinson will be signing his books. Come out and enjoy the celebration and, if you haven't purchased a copy of his book, now is your chance to get that. He will be there from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

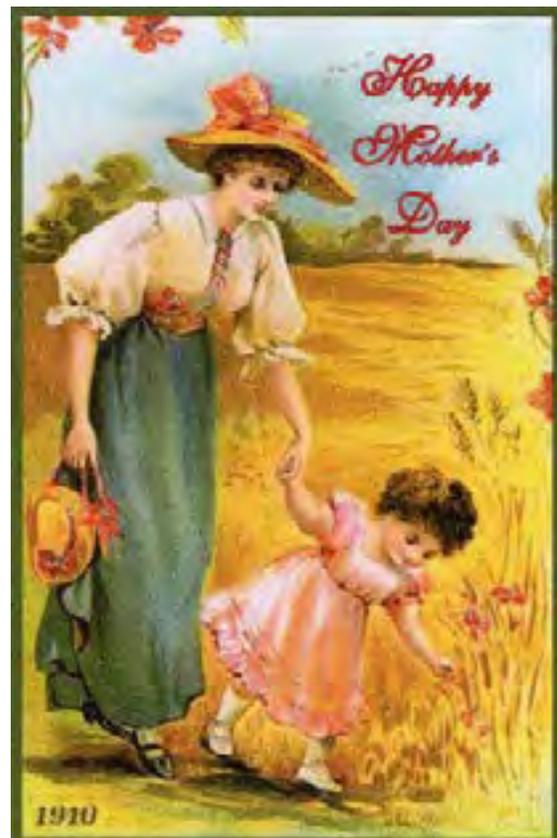
On Saturday, May 7, the **Honey Festival** is returning to Woodland. The hours are 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Lots of fun activities for all. David will again be there signing books in front of **Local Inspirations** on Main Street.

We will **not** be touring a building on First Friday, May 6.

Save the date – Saturday, June 18, for our **Annual Meeting**. There will be more information in the next newsletter about the place, time, and speaker. Kiwanis has volunteered to serve hot dogs and hamburgers.

Again, as always, remember, History Rules!

Kathy Harryman,
President, Yolo County Historical Society



Read about Mother's Day on page 5.

405 Main Street, Woodland

by Kathy Harryman

The following is a historical view of 405 Main Street in Woodland. The Yolo County Historical Society gave its first building tour on *First Friday* in Woodland. The following is the information that Mardi Bagan and I used when we gave the tours. Thank you to the **Yolo County Archives** for gathering the facts on the property and **Dino Gay** for providing some of the Daily Democrat articles.

John Garrette was a rice farmer in Colusa and then moved to Woodland and involved himself in real estate development. He built the buildings on the corner of Elm and Main Streets, one on the north side and one on the south side. He leased his building on the south corner of Elm and Main to W. Stuart Webster who developed the Webster-Granada Theater on that site. He then leased the building on the north side to a garage and other businesses.

In 1908, the **Sunrise Laundry** was the first business to inhabit 405 Main Street. It was a Japanese laundry and was established by K. Takamakn a Japanese immigrant listed in the 1910 Census, who immigrated here in 1905. In 1911, Takamakn partnered with a gentleman named Hanaki, who was 27 years old, married and had immigrated here in 1905 and originally listed his occupation as a wagon driver. Sunrise Laundry advertised Dry Cleaning, a Specialty. "Wagons will call for work daily. Work delivered to all parts of this city. And of course, they had the lowest prices." (*Daily Democrat*, June 16, 1909, September 27, 1911)

In 1921, Pete and Birdie Knudsen bought the Sunrise Laundry, one of the shops in the Garrette Building. The Knudsens were familiar with the laundry business as they had previously owned Woodland Steam Laundry. They remodeled and updated equipment and named it Modern Laundry & Cleaning Works. Apparently, the Japanese laundry had been losing money because of the prejudices against the Japanese. (*Daily Democrat*, Sept. 14, 1921) The Knudsens were there only a few years.

In 1923, Mrs. Annie Kerr opened a cafeteria and delicatessen shop. "It is Woodland's first cafeteria and will unquestionably meet a popular demand for an institution of this kind." (*Daily Democrat*, Feb. 23, 1923.) It is at this point that this address has some unanticipated police action.

Sometime late last night (Jan 29, 1925) or early this morning the "West End" Cafeteria, conducted by Mrs. Anna Ken*, at 405 Main Street, was entered and robbed. As far as has been learned, the loot taken consisted principally of foodstuffs, tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, and candy. Constable Roy Hillhouse, who investigated the matter, is of the opinion that the robbery was committed by boys. Entry to the cafeteria was gained through the rear. There are double doors there and these doors were forced. The locks on the doors had been ripped partly off in forcing the entrance. Mrs. John Market, who conducts the Cafeteria for Mrs. Kerr, discovered the robbery when she opened at 9 o'clock this morning.

Evidence of entry were plain as soon as she had opened, as the interior was in a state of great disorder. It was evident from conditions found that there must have



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been several in the group which entered the cafeteria. It also appeared that after first entering they had gone to the cigar counter at the front of the establishment and had cleaned out the cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, etc. After taking all smoking materials the robbers had opened the cash register. It was unnecessary to force the register, as it is always left open, however, there was no money in it.

After opening the cash register the robbers appeared to have attacked the stock of candy and cleaned that out. From there they went to the kitchen, according to the evidence found. In the storeroom, off the kitchen, they found pies, cakes, home-made cookies, potato chips, etc., which were appropriated. The daring of the thieves was shown in the fact that they had built a fire in the kitchen stove. Evidence that they had prepared a meal, including coffee, was indisputable. It was also quite evident that after they had prepared the meal, the thieves proceeded boldly to the tables in the main part of the cafeteria. The fact that these tables are visible from the street did not cause them to hasten, as is evidenced by the numerous cigar and cigarette stubs lying about and showing that they had sat at the tables after eating and smoked as they chose.

Constable Roy Hillhouse investigated the matter closely. He endeavored to obtain fingerprints which might lead to identification of the culprits but is said to have been unsuccessful. However, he has several clues. One of the clues found by Hillhouse is a fountain pen. It was evident that the fountain pin had been dropped by one of the thieves and evident that he did not know of his loss until sometime later as it is a pen of some value. Hillhouse may be able to run the prints down through the fountain pen and other clues obtained. (*Daily Democrat*, Jan 30, 1925)

Two years later, Annie sold her business to Skaggs Cash Store, a well-known chain of grocery stores in the Western United States. Skaggs had 300 stores and was the largest retail food distributors in the United States. (54 were in Northern California) They advertised "clean, new merchandise. Everything is New and Strictly Fresh." (*Daily Democrat*, Dec. 11, 1925)



In November of 1926, Skaggs Cash Store merged with Safeway to form a consolidation of the two largest grocery firms in the western United States comprising 900 stores: 784 retail grocery stores, 122 meat markets, 6 bakeries. The store would be known as Skaggs-Safeway.

"It is our honest conviction that, in perfecting this consolidation, we have performed a real service to the consumer. It gives us a volume which can make possible the operation of our own sources of supply and the owning of our merchandise without paying tribute to the single unnecessary middleman. It enables us to affect operating economies never possible in our former separate plans of merchandising and will attract to us the highest type of earnest, ambitious men who will recognize, in this concern, opportunity for the maximum of growth and accomplishment through sincere service."

(*Daily Democrat*, November 11, 1926)

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In 1929, the property became Woodland Produce Company under the ownership of Gee Hing. According to the census, Gee immigrated from China in 1915. He lived in Sacramento with his wife and children. He founded Woodland Produce, the Big Boy Food Town in Sacramento, and the State Markets in Davis.

This is where police action occurs again. The first incident occurred when the Woodland Produce Company was burglarized by a vegetable deliveryman. Apparently, the deliveryman was hired in the morning in Sacramento to deliver produce to the store. He came in the back and saw money lying on the desk. With no one visible, he picked it up and ran out the door. Gee Hing pursued him out the rear exit. The man threw some of the money down and then took off. The police were summoned, but it was too late. The robber got away with \$70.00. (Daily Democrat, May 29, 1939)

The next incident happened in 1930. Tai Sing was a truck driver for the Woodland Produce market. He left Woodland for Sacramento and lost control of the truck he was driving. It tipped over on its side. And all the produce was strewn over the ground. The wrecking crew righted the vehicle, and a good part of the cargo was saved. The Daily Democrat's article made fun of the incident and published "Rare Salads Made a la Bulk...Auto Truck Aids in Mixing". (Daily Democrat, April 18, 1930)



Another incident occurred in November of 1935. Gee Hing had a turkey in his hands, but it escaped. Some Chinese boys were playing in the alley and heard all the commotion. They tried to catch it. But the turkey flew over the Chicago Café, the Canton Cafe, and landed on the roof of the Columbia Market. One boy ran to get his gun. He shot the bird and it fell dead on the sidewalk. The boys returned the dead bird to Gee Hing. "The Hing Family will have roast turkey Thanksgiving Day at 2:00." reported the Daily Democrat. (November 27, 1935)

Another bit of information came from Maryanne Marshall who shared that her aunt used to trade eggs for staples in Gee's shop. She said she remembers him sitting on a 50# bag of onions and talking to her aunt. Another memory came from Louise Dumars who remembers Gee always having a bit of candy for her when she came into his store. And Doug Souza remembered Gee coming out to his father's dairy farm and questioning Doug's father about why Doug (age 5) wasn't working! Gee then said, I am sure in a joking manner, that in China they ate little boys who didn't work! Next time, Gee came to the farm, Doug hid!. Couldn't blame him.

In 1972, the next business to inhabit this spot was the Fir Bar. After that, various business made 405 their home. The current store, Blue Wing Gallery, occupied the building in 2003 and remains there today.



Mother's Day and One Daughter of the Golden West

by Kathie Newton, Jacque Vaughters, and Shipley Walters

Harriet Stoddard Lee was born in 1859 in Nicolaus, California. She was from a pioneering family of 13 children. Her parents, Millroy¹ Griffith Lee and Abigail Stoddard Lee, met in Nicolaus where they married. After moving to Woodland to provide better school facilities for his children, Millroy died in 1877, leaving Abigail alone to raise the children.

Harriet always admired her mother's dedication to the family and her pioneer values. Her mother was left with a brood of ten children, the youngest being 2½-years old. In rearing them, the widow manifested the wisdom and strength of character which were her heritage from pioneer forebears. During that period, she found time to engage actively in community affairs. She died in Woodland in 1917.

Harriett was educated in the Woodland public schools, Hesperian College, and the Teachers' Preparatory school in Sacramento. In 1892, she was the first woman ever appointed to the Yolo County Board of Education, and from 1898 to 1914 she was vice-president of the Woodland schools.

The idea of honoring mothers was first conveyed when, at the turn of the century, she was discussing women's suffrage with a class of boys and girls in Woodland. One lad stated emphatically that he was against the idea. Miss Lee asked if he didn't think his mother should have as much voice in the government, as the 'bums on the street' to which he replied, "No, she hasn't sense enough."

In the weeks that followed, Miss Lee had the students decorate a chair to serve as a throne for the mother chosen as "Queen of the Day." She invited all the ladies of the town to come, and "we put on the best banquet we could," she said. "Some of them said they couldn't come because they didn't have nice enough clothes. They were all pioneer women. But we told them we were giving the party for them, not their clothes, and they came in everything from calico to satin." When the mother was chosen by vote, it remained only for Miss Lee to select her escort. She chose the boy who felt his mother didn't have sense enough.

He was so proud that it gave her the idea about setting a day aside to revere mothers.

In 1903 Harriet introduced a resolution to her Native Daughters of the Golden West Parlor meeting in Redding, California, requesting that 'mothers' receive suitable recognition by devoting one day per year to this purpose. This idea caught on quickly and six years later, Governor Gillette of California proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. The California observance was followed throughout the rest of the states and in 1914 President Wilson proclaimed Mother's Day as a national holiday.

In 1914 Miss Lee was elected County Superintendent of Schools, a position which she held until 1927. After she retired, she rented a room in the Gable Mansion and lived there for 20 years. She then moved to Pacific Grove to be with family, and died in 1951.



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In 1968 Governor Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation recognizing Lee as the state's official founder of Mother's Day.

¹ There were two spellings of Mr. Lee's name – Millroy and Milroy.

All information for this article is from The Daily Democrat, May, 11, 1974, "Mother's Day Founder: Was she a 'libber'?" by Kathie Newton, "One Who Made a Difference" April 24, 2000, by Jacque (Reimer) Vaughters, and "Woodland City of Trees: A History" by Shipley Walters, 1995.

Report to Yolo County Historical Society, March 2022 by Merrily Dupree

This month, we, the Hattie Weber team, put up our new exhibit, "Three Students and Civilian Exclusion Order No. 78." It focuses on the three Japanese American students at Davis High School during school year 1940-41 – the year before Japanese American residents of Washington, Oregon, and California were sent to "relocation camps" in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor. We also announced the exhibit on our website, Facebook page, and in the *Davis Enterprise*. We were pleased to learn that it will be presented on Davis Media's television program "Studio" in May.

We continued to analyze our Native American exhibit for revision. Dennis Dingemans brought in several of his own books on Native American history, which we've been eagerly reading. At this point, we'd like to find at least two more artifacts to display (and remove several which aren't from Yolo County), make new captions, and update our description of the Patwin tribe. We hope to get input from them.



Much of the three weeks since the last YCHS meeting has been spent on housekeeping chores, such as weeding the rose garden, removing new graffiti from the WPA Building, repairing the leaky kitchen faucet, arranging for the city to reset the building's thermostat, and learning from Dennis how to open the permanent cases. Now that the weather is warmer, we'll soon turn to washing old bottles to display at the County Fair Museum this summer.

Our visitor count was 25 on March 5th, 22 on the 12th, 21 on the 19th, and 9 on the 26th.

Patrons

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

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

Starr and Jeff Barrow
Ryan Baum and Alice Wong
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Lynn Wilen
David Wilkinson
Peggy & Suellen Witham

Business Buddies

Please support these local businesses.

They support the *Yolo County Historical Society*.

Corner Drug

Local Inspirations

Simas Family Vineyard



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

Change of Address

Please notify Kathy Harryman 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

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