

CAPAY VALLEY

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Volume Ten

greatercapayvalley.org

The Greater Capay Valley Historical
Society
PO Box 442
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95627



*Focusing on the
Greater Capay
Valley, including
towns and areas
surrounding and
leading to Cache
Creek and up the
Capay Valley*

Pictures, Stories and Research to reveal and celebrate a very special place.

In this issue, the article on Mockingbirds mentions that the Scrub Jay is only in this area rarely and for a short time, so I asked my ornithology-author Jim Hiatt why I recall them so plentiful and often on the Monroe Ranch in my youth. He explained that the unique nature of that magical Valley Oak Grove creates the perfect habitat for them, unlike the rest of Hungry Hollow. This made me wonder more about this “magical oak grove” with which the early native people had such a symbiotic relationship, and that the later Spanish-speaking pioneers called Los Robles and later English-speaking pioneers called Thousand Oaks--and my own Scots ancestors dubbed Duncan Grove, such a large part of it being on the ranch pieced together by the plentiful Duncan family. I had already written about the Scrub Jay’s symbiotic relationship with the oaks in volume 3--as well as the delightful magpies and the botany of our native Valley Oaks--but I have found much more on them since then. So I will be celebrating this grove, along with other features of this valley, in this issue.



Above, an old tractor today sits in the “Duncan Grove” on the old Duncan-Monroe Ranch in Hungry Hollow.

At the turn of the last century, this grove was the site of many a social gathering of the Capay families: picnics, reunions--even rodeos! But more than that, it fed and sheltered people for thousands of years--and wildlife for even longer! Having grown up in its shade, I can tell you it imparts a magical or spiritual pull on you--like many places around the world, often places surrounded by groves of trees and close to a high water table as we have here. Simply and scientifically *magnetic*? Or something more? Who knows, but it is *special*...

Continued on Page 3





Contents:

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PAGE 1 -- CONTENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CITATIONS

Special thanks to: John Gallardo; article-contributors Jim Hiatt and Bill Rominger; Dudley Craig; Faye Mast Brannan --and all the faithful subscribers, donors and advertisers!

- Page Cover-1 = Introduction by Editor, Elizabeth Monroe
- Page1-5 = Contents/Works Cited; Valley Oaks
- Page 6- = Mary Elizabeth Franklin Duncan speaks
- Page 7-9 = Doc Thornton Craig part 2
- Page 11-13 = Hungry Hollow Phone Company
- Page 14-16 = Farming and Giving
- Page 17 = Freddie Lantz
- Page 18-19 = Mary Gaither
- Page 20 = Sheriffs Monroe
- Page 21-23 = Mockingbirds
- Page 24--Subscription Info/Ad

At right and below: an ancient Valley Oak towers over the Gibson Mansion Museum in Woodland--thought to be well over 300 years old, it was there long before the Gibson family built the house in the late 1850s.



Below that is Duncan Grove today with antique farming equipment, collected by current owner Paul Smith.

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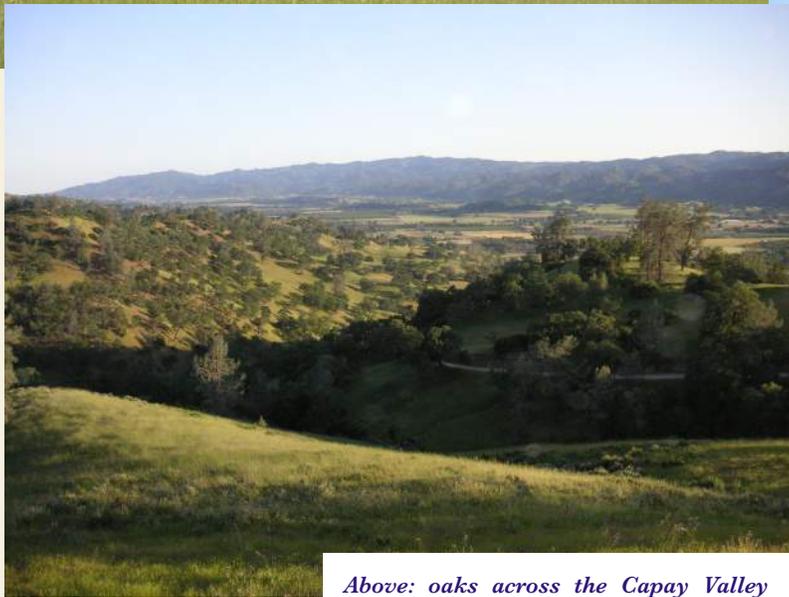


Our Living, Breathing Valley Oak Groves of Capay Valley!

Sustaining the lives of people in this valley for thousands of years--and wildlife for millions! The Valley Oaks of California, the giants second only to our redwoods, have historically

diminished by farming and city growth, but are beginning to win a fan base that seeks to restore and protect them.

Seen at left in the Hungry Hollow Hills looking east, they often fill the crotches and valleys of our rolling hills--avoiding the powerful winds and seeking high water tables. Since we only have rain 4 months of the year in the Sacramento Valley, they



are perfectly adapted by their long tap roots to tap into water held underground, and have the ability to hold huge amounts of water in their cistern-like root systems. Pioneers knew to settle near these groves because that is where

the high water table would be—thus, a most likely good supply of ground water, not to mention shade for our very hot, long summers!

Above: oaks across the Capay Valley Hills looking southeast.



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The newest event venue at the gateway to the beautiful Capay Valley.



California Valley Oaks are evolved from the White Oak line, which is officially known as the subgenus *Lepidobalanus*. This subgenus includes numerous oaks from California and elsewhere, which share similar leaves, acorns, pewter-colored rippled bark and wood pulp. Early settlers had a variety of common names for the Valley oak including: White oak, bottom oak, swamp oak, water oak and mush oak. The Spanish-speaking settlers called the tree "roble" because the tree looked like the white oaks they knew in Europe, thus they called the huge grove in Capay Valley *Los Robles*; later dubbed *Thousand Oaks* and eventually *Duncans Grove*.

According to wikipedia, *Quercus lobata*, commonly called the Valley oak, is the largest of North American oaks. It is perfectly suited to this part of California, growing mostly in the hot interior valleys and foothills. Known to attain the age of up to 600 years [other sources claim 300 to 400 years], this deciduous oak requires year-round access to groundwater.

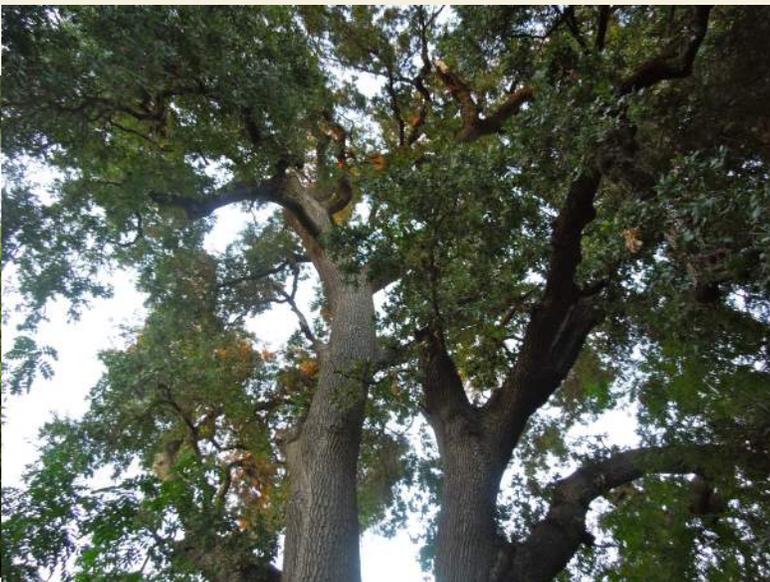
"The sturdy trunk of the Valley Oak may exceed two to three meters in diameter and its stature may surpass 30 meters in height. The branches have an irregular, spreading and arching appearance that produce a profound leafless silhouette in the clear winter sky"--as seen at upper right on the Duncan-Monroe Ranch in November, 1960s.

"During Autumn leaves turn a yellow to light orange color but become brown during mid to late fall. In advancing age the branches assume a drooping characteristic."



In the picture directly below, the leaves are beginning to turn golden-red.

Valley oak tolerates cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers, but requires abundant water. It is most abundant in rich deep soils of valley floors below 600 meters in elevation. Valley oak is found in dense riparian forests, open foothill woodlands and valley savannas. Commonly associated trees are Coast Live Oak, Interior Live Oak, Blue Oak, Black Walnut, California Sycamore and Digger Pine. In the Capay Valley, we have three designated *groves*: Duncan Grove in Capay and north across Cache Creek; CR 82B (one of its giants seen at bottom left); and near the Canon School in Brooks.





Because of the farming practices in the Central Valley for over 100 years, our Valley Oaks--especially the groves--are endangered. Since they depend upon the scattering of acorns to grow replacement trees, when the ancient trees of 300 (to 600?) years die, their replacement trees have often been plowed under. According to the "Yolo County Historic Resources Survey 1986," courtesy of The Yolo County Archives, our Capay Valley groves are unique today in that "At one time these oak groves were widespread throughout the county, but now are to be found in only a relatively few isolated locations....groves in either pure stands or as*

riparian vegetation in mixed stands with various other native species including California Black Walnut, Cottonwood, Willow [seen along Cache Creek], Live Oak, Digger Pine, Sycamore, Blue Oak, etc." [like those still covering many of our rolling hills]. In spite of the two on-line sites I found that claim they can grow to 600 years, this survey claims "the extreme age of Valley Oak is 300-400* years," but in either case, they will not be replaced by other oaks if we do not nurture their offspring. "The original pioneers located their farms where they found stands of Valley Oaks, because this is where the highest water table was to be found. They promptly cut down many of the trees and undertook farming there." One of the reasons Capay Valley still has significant groves is that the valley population valued these groves and left them remarkably intact. *It also helped that the wood, "dull brown approaching yellow," was soft and not "used extensively for milling."* While the practice of "mowing, scraping and using the ground beneath the groves diminishes the acorn seedlings' ability to survive," the Survey lists 13 historic groves between Rumsey and Putah Creek in Winters--3 in Capay Valley, alone!

Throughout the Capay Valley, many farms include orchards and vineyards, but often a few acres tucked in and around the oak stands. And then you will see a rarer, massive planting as on this page on the old Duncan Ranch--sadly, many old-growth oaks were removed rather than incorporated...

Acorn and leaves--and wasp-created galls:

Over most of the range, acorns fall in October. A variety of mammals and birds eat them, including the Acorn Woodpecker, Western Scrub Jay, Yellow-billed Magpie, and California ground squirrel. The acorns are also attacked by bruchid beetles, but can survive moderate levels of infestation. Surviving acorns all germinate in their first winter, and none remain by mid-winter. The acorns are medium to dark brown and range from two to three centimeters in length. The caps have deep stippling and are found most often as singlets, but occasionally as doublets.

*Globular galls up to several cm. in diameter are frequently attached to twigs of mature specimens of Valley Oak. These house the larval stage of small indigenous wasps *Andricus californicus*. A related wasp species, *A. kingi*, produces small galls shaped like Hershey's Kisses*

*on leaf surfaces. The valley oak is the only known food plant of *Chionodes petalumensis* caterpillars.*

Like many oaks, Valley Oaks can tolerate wild fires.

Although smaller individuals may be top-killed, most re-sprout from the root crown.

http://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=7001

and:

<http://>

www.californiaoaks.org/

[index.html](#) and

<http://www.wikipedia.com>





Life at the turn of the last century in the Valley Oak grove called *Thousand Oaks* of Capay Valley, recalled in a pioneer's own words...

Quotes from Mary Elizabeth Franklin Duncan to *The Esparto Exponent* in 1931:

The reporter wrote, “Mrs. Mary E. Duncan lives in one of the fine old homes of Western Yolo, *Thousand Oaks*, as it was named years ago because of the grove of oaks that dot the farm. Several of them are within the yard, making a welcome shade there and offering a happy home for birds throughout the summer time,” then goes on to quote “Mother Dunc” in her later years:

“My father, Benjamin Franklin, [probably not a direct descendant of the more famous Ben Franklin—though family lore always claimed he was...] came to California when a very young man in 1850, coming from Missouri with Dr. Lane, who settled on what is now [in 1931] the Archer place just north of Madison...My father, together with several other young men [including one who would become her husband in 1879—Wyatt Godfrey “Doc” Duncan] had come from [Barry County] Missouri, working in the mines for a time. I have a ‘letterbook’ in which my father wrote to my grandmother during that time. These ‘letterbooks’ were small pamphlets, the size fitting an envelope and containing just enough writing paper to be carried by a two-cent stamp. They were issued by a firm in San Francisco that had charge of mail and express carriage throughout the States at that time. This letter was written in September, and my father makes note of the fact that no rain had fallen for several months, which seemed strange to him after the frequent summer rains in his Missouri home.”

“1864 was one of the hard years I remember; there was no rain that year and people were hard put to get along...That was the year that my father and his brother drove oxen and the covered wagon up into the mountains to get food for the stock—rain had been more plentiful in the mountains and there was hay for the oxen and work for the men in haying. Grandmother and I made the trip home by stage. Farmers in Yolo County drove their stock into Lake County that year for feed over along the coast. I remember them telling that the Lake county folks didn’t mind them driving in their stock, if only they would leave their squirrels at home—but then squirrels were hungry, too, and they, too, had to move to other pastures.” --were our Valley Oak acorns scarce, too, then, I wonder? It would have caused squirrels to move their habitat, too...

“In 1879 [March 13] I married [Doc Duncan] and came to Capay to make my home [in the brand new house he had just built north of Capay in Hungry Hollow]; only it was not called Capay then, but Langville or Langtown, after John Lang, one of the early settlers. We drove from Woodland in a fine buggy, behind two beautiful horses, the main traveled road being then due west to the turn where the Bill Orchard now stands, and we forded the creek to the ranch, for there was no bridge. Dave Levi then conducted a store in the lower part of the Odd Fellows Building while his brother, Wolf Levi, had a store at Madison. Other than the stores, there were mostly saloons. Esparto was a grain field. Freeman & Grimes and C & B Orengo also had stores in Capay.”



Mother Dunc at home in her typical attire: self-made gingham dress, with a beloved book in hand. Mary's mother, Elvira Wright Franklin, died at 25 years old, after crossing the plains in an oxen drawn wagon in 1857 with a toddler and in her last trimester of her second pregnancy. She delivered a month later in Cache Creek Township and also had Mary and another son before dying and leaving her children to be raised by her husband and mother-in-law, Mary H. Franklin. Life was rough on women!

At left: Doc and Mary Duncan with toddler-daughter Elvira Grey and some cousins, resting en route home from some journey by horse and buggy. [Circa 1887 from Sheryl Arendt]

Mary said, “Dr. Craig came to Capay [1876] a year or so before I did; he was a young doctor then, riding on horseback to see his patients, fording the creek, for there were no bridges, and many times he was forced to cross back and forth across Cache Creek when he was obliged to swim his horse to make it.” One such day in June 1883 he was going to Hungry Hollow to deliver her first child, a girl they always called “Grey”—who would go on to marry James William Monroe, future 28-year sheriff of Yolo County. Doc Craig would also deliver the first three of this couple's 7 children in Capay between 1904 and 1908—one of them Forrest Duncan Monroe, a future 32-year sheriff of Yolo County!

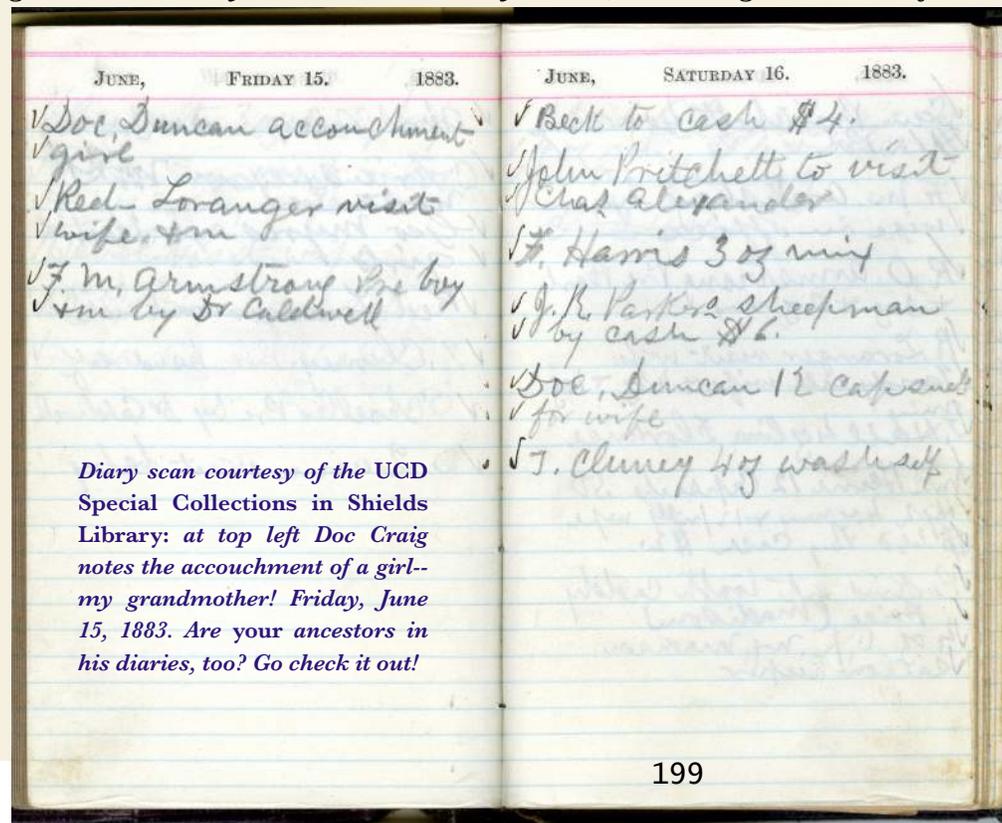


97° *The Doctor's Buggy, circa 1870-1910*



This turn-of-the-century carriage of Dr. Lawhead now sits in the Gibson Museum in Woodland, and is very much like the one Doc Thornton Craig used to make his rounds in the Capay Valley beginning in the 1870s--when he was not on his big, black horse, *Black Hornet*, that is! (see last issue for more of that!)

I introduced Ol' Doc Thornton Craig in the last issue, but when his great grandson Dudley Craig told me his medical diaries were donated to UC Davis--and then loaned me his inherited box of personal letters the doctor had written to his sons--I put off finishing the feature on this charming and intriguing country doctor until I could go research the diaries and read the letters. In this issue I will share some of what I discovered. Sitting in the Special Collections room in the Shields Library, I typed out any interesting entries from the medical diaries--but after 5.5 hours I had not even made it through one of the many boxes of little handwritten books! I stopped when I finally got to his delivery of my grandmother "Grey" Duncan in 1883--very excited, but vowing to come back for



Diary scan courtesy of the UCD Special Collections in Shields Library: at top left Doc Craig notes the accouchment of a girl--my grandmother! Friday, June 15, 1883. Are your ancestors in his diaries, too? Go check it out!

more! Though his penciled notes are brief, even the short notations he made string together to paint an interesting picture of what the country doctor's life would have been like--and touches on many familiar names of early settlers in and around Capay! One of the most interesting things in the diaries is his sense of discretion and Victorian values--he wrote as though he knew someone would someday read his notes! If he treated someone for "clap" or an injured scrotum, he left off the name. When he "delivered" babies, he made no mention of that "graphic" detail--not even in the polite terms of the day, like "her confinement" or "laying in."

Instead, he used the French term "accouchment"--and since he did his medical training in Montreal, Canada, his use of the Quebec-French language is no surprise, but the UCD Library staff had to help me figure this out. It also took me awhile to figure out his shorthand: "v." meant visit and "pre." meant prescribed. It became quickly obvious that he was making his own prescriptions on the spot. Great Grandson Dudley Craig is having his drug scale repaired and that much-written-about black bag is on display at UC Davis Health Science Carlson Library with some of his instruments and homeopathic remedies!

Wally Summ's loaned the buggy seen above to the Gibson Museum; much like the one used by Doc Craig delivering babies and treating the sick--even his own great grandfather, Andrew Summ, in the Capay Valley!



Doctor Thornton Craig, continued...

UCDavis Special Collections: Doctor Thornton Craig's Medical Diaries:

The following are samples of notes (in quote marks) of early pioneer families he visited beginning in 1876--my notes to myself are in italics and/or brackets:

Sept 1 1877 - "v. [does this mean visit?] Goodnow" [and everyday for some time...] as well as mentions of: John Alexander, Cadanassau [his sp]; Wm Black; "Reid to call per J Low \$30"

Sept 3 1877 - "CC Clark By hoes ["horse," maybe—did he pay by horse?]? \$12.50"

Sept 8 - "Savage pre [meaning what? It appears before several things...prescribed?] baby"

Sept Sun) 9 - "Lecturer at Aldredges"

Sept 16- "Pre clap \$5 pd" [-no name! meaning prescribed for the clap?!]

Sept 17 "John Alex [I assume Alexander] call wife" and "Tabor [his sp] Pre wife" [Prescribe, maybe? For the wife...?]

Sept 19 - "Mrs. Prichard Pre self" and "John Alexander v wife"

Sept 21 - "Ext two teeth Pd \$2.00"

Sept 24- "Chas Black to take oat out of ear \$1.50" [?? an oat in his ear??]

Sept 26 - "Indian Sam Pre self 1.50"

Sept 28- "To reduce dislocation of shoulder joint \$28 pd"

Oct 3- "Brooks to Accouchment [French for a woman's lying in—delivered a baby] girl \$25"

Oct 12- "Chas Kirkum to accouchment girl \$25"

Oct 13- "Chas Kirkum call wife" and "Wm Duncan Pre 2nd girl 1.50"

Oct 15 - "Wm Duncan v May 3.50" [-and the next 3 days and more...]

Oct 19- "John Lowe v. mother & stay all night"

Oct 20 - "Went to Cacheville" [now Yolo--some distance for him!]

Oct 23 - "...Cadanasso to accouchment boy \$25 -and then visited for several days...

Oct 26- "Indian Sam Pre self"

Oct 27—a very busy day and night: "EK Barns v. boy Ext-tooth Pd \$1; J Alex call wife; J Henry Pre. Wife; Savage v girl night; Hennine v. boy night \$7; Indian Sam, by cash 25cts?"

Oct 30- "v Brays baby; Savage v, girl; Bill Duncan v May; Will Duncan Pre baby 1.50"

Dec 8 1877 - "Patterson ext tooth \$1; "Schoeller to accouchment boy Dr Ross assisted with & turned... child dead... Did not deliver till Sunday near noon" -then he visited for the next 8 days straight and often for several weeks after...including xmas day!

Dec 26- "John Pritchett of Colusa Co. to set fractured leg"

Jan 22 1878 - "Stay all night at Jas Bandies" [The Bandy Ranch in Hungry Hollow?] Mentions "heavyset rains" and then takes Feb 26 & 27 off...

Feb 28 Thursday- many visits and "RF Hamilton By ferry twice across creek"

Book skips to July 1: and thus began a lot of visits to Wm Willard's home and staying over several nights...looks like it was the wife...

Lots of tooth extractions...dentist? No wonder he encouraged 2 sons to become dentists!

July 18 "Extract tooth for Wm Campbell pd 50cts"

July 23 Sunday- "Dressed wounded scrotum pd \$1.50" [-no name!]

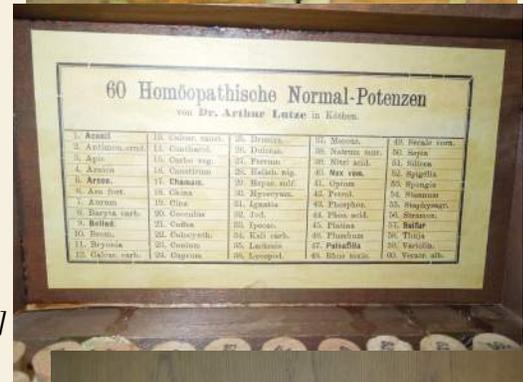
Vaccinated several people on several days in July...for what? Smallpox?

Aug 16- several things including "Auscultation pd \$3" the word = listening to sounds in the body usually using a stethoscope --an entire auditory internal exam??

Mar 14 1883- "Indian Johnie Bandie visit \$8"

MY NOTES: several times he notes a visit to "Indian..." re to the rancheria? Several mentions of "Indian Sam" thru-out late 1870s and several days in a row Apr 1883...

Also, being paid by items like: John Alexander by one load wood" and "FM Armstrong by ½ cord wood and "Beck by pair shoes"



Above photos taken at UCDavis Health Sciences Carlson Library display--that is Doc Craig's actual medical bag!! Diaries and bag donated by Craig Family to UCD

And several mentions in 1883 of going to "Chosen Friends" to v. someone...: Apr 17 "exam Townsend" there...and May 9 "exam Chas Stoll" May 19 Mrs. N Scharidin...I need find out about "Chosen Friends"...

I skipped ahead to 1883:

Apr 29, 1883- "visited Chas Scott's boy and Geo Stephens"
 May 5, 1883 "Wm Duncan 2 oz mix for Marshe" [sic--Doc's spelling]
 May 11 1883- "Chinaman ext tooth"
 May 15 1883-"Olley Chin [sic] pd by cash .75" [Chinn, he probably means?]

I had come searching for the birth of my grandmother and after 5 hours I found it--Eureka!!!:

June 15, 1883- "Doc Duncan accouchment girl" = Elvira Grey Duncan is born!

June 16—12 capsules for wife" [—but that was it, no more visits! Usually he visited for a full week after a birth...healthy mother and baby?]

June 19-"Wm Duncan 2 oz syrup of Ipecac" [again on Nov, Ipecac for Ben Duncan or family--Doc Duncan's brother Bill had many children, lots of visit!]

Dec 1&2 1883- "Doc Duncan visit baby" [2 visits to a sick 6 month old Grey Duncan?]

Skipping ahead to 1893--looking for Wyatt Godfrey Jr's accouchment, but found:

Jan 27, 1893—"Wanshop to visit + med boy (girl died at 10AM) \$10"

Feb 5-"Wm A. Summ to visit son Andy at C. Stolls & 3 oz rx \$6.00"

Feb 7—"Mateo to accouchment girl + had to use instruments \$25"

Feb 8-"Chas Stoll to visit boy & no. 3 family syringe 8.50"

Feb 10-"Johnson to accouchement girl 20.00"

Feb 15, 1893-"Wanshop to visit & 5g rx baby"

Feb 16-"Wanshop baby died" [check headstones in Capay Cemetery]

Feb 28 "Yolo Co. to visit the remains of Henry Smith at request of Coroner + ascertain cause of death \$15"

Mar 1893—NOTE: JP Goodnow baby visited several days in a row...Daisie? Some days he made 2 visits and he stayed all night on Apr 7--it's a long buggy or horseback ride out to their Hungry Hollow ranch and the April creek level would have been high!

Mar 6, 1893-"Chas Pierce to visit baby \$12 pd by ham + 4 gallons lard"

Apr 2-"NSGW to exam Jesse Campbell 2.00pd" [NSGW?--Native Sons of the Golden West, the fraternal group?]

NOTE: numerous visits to JP Goodnow for Daisy and kids throughout Winter-Spring 1893

May 5, 1893-"S. Pritchett by load of stove wood one cord"

NOTE: interesting meds—lots of plasters and liniments and on May 8: "Winter to visit Joe + 4oz rx + Petroleum Emulsion \$9"

May 14, 1893-"NSGW to examine Frank Wm Duncan \$2 pd"

NOTE: often called to examine and prescribe for a horse: sample on May 22, 1893-"GL Duncan to 6g rx for horse .75 + to dose of horse med .25 + 2oz for assolfed [*] .25" [--before we had Doctor Scott, large animal vet in Woodland, Doc Craig did it all!]

May 23, 1893-"Joel Wood 8oz rx for Irene \$1" --then went daily for over a week...

June 30, 1893-"Ben Duncan to 5oz carbolic acid .50pd"

July 1893-"Wm Aldrich died..."

July 31, 1893's—"Month's work \$403.80"

Aug 25, 1893-"Yolo county to view remains of unknown Chinawoman \$10"

Nov 1—"GL Duncan to visit wife + 2oz herbs \$2" and "Adol Wright to visit girl at Rumsey by train \$5"—and every day by train for over a week, then every other day for a week...after the arrival of the train in 1888 he was able to reach many more outlying areas much easier--giving Black Hornet and his trusty buggy a break!

Skipped ahead to 1906--looking for Uncle Forrest Duncan Monroe, future Yolo County 32-year sheriff:

July 18, 1906 - "Jas. Munro to accouchment boy, born at 3:45 \$20" --Uncle Forrest Duncan Monroe!! Then he visited 19th and 20th James pd him \$20 cash; NOTE: he was also "dressing Frank Duncan's thumb" for several days at the same time—for over a week!

July 23-31 -"Ed Mast to visit in town \$2" and "to dress leg" [and several visits to Ed Mast after that--serious leg injury?]

Curious, so skipped ahead to 1908 to see if he delivered my Uncle Jim, too:

July 25, 1908-"Jas. Munro to accouchement boy at 6:15AM \$20 pd" --Uncle Jim!! He and Lucile Nurse would marry and live on the Duncan-Monroe Ranch for most of their adult lives, raising 3 children in the 1879 home that still stands on CR85.

July 26, 1908-"Ed Gaither to C/? + med \$2" [NOTE: first mention of the Gaither family I found...]

I am going back for more for my personal family search--it is really worth a visit to the Shields Library on UC Davis campus, The Special Collections room--make an appointment first so they can pull out what you are looking for!

Contacts: (530) 752-2112 Fax: (530) 754-5758 dmorrison@ucdavis.edu www.lib.ucdavis.edu/specol Also go see the display of old-time doctor's and nurses at the Health Sciences Carlson Library--that's Doc Craig's black bag!!

Lots of familiar names appear in the diaries, such as: Wood and Woods, Mefford, McGlothlin, Walters, Schoeller, Armstrong, DF Clark, Wm Aaron, Lee Hambleton, Christ Smith, Bandy, Robinson, Jas Everett, GW Tandy, Bianchi, Hugh Chinn, SS Gibbs, JR Parker, N Sous, Pierce, Harrison, Stitt, Miles, Bill Moore, Mac Nurse, Stephens, Scott, Taber, Wanshop, Steele...and Hank Rhodes--Doc Craig would marry Lizzy Rhodes in 1884!

Below: the actual instruments used by Doc Craig in difficult births--see them at UCD Health Sciences



* assolfed -- John Gallardo thinks it may refer to the antispasmodic plant Asafetida; a stinking plant giving us "fetid"



Important reminders: here we go into winter hibernation, but *Almond Festival* and *Black History Day* will be here before you know it--both in February!

Beginning on September 4, 1915, the greater Capay Valley began celebrating itself with the Almond Festival. On and off from time to time, it came back with a bang in 1965. After one 22-year hiatus, beginning during WWII in 1943, the Esparto District Chamber of Commerce voted to "reactivate" the celebration in 1964, but due to severe weather conditions, postponed the grand rebirth until February 1965--its 50th Birthday! Originally a fall festival,



INVITATION

The Esparto District Chamber of Commerce cordially invites you and your family to attend the first revival of the old Capay Almond Festival held over 40 years ago. In those days families and friends of the valley came from miles around to enjoy the beautiful scenery and the scent of almond blossoms in the air. At no time of the year are the hills greener or the trees as pink as they are right now during almond season. Everyone in the Capay valley is proud of their land and the product it produces, they are proud of the fertile green valley bordered on either side with majestic green hills, it is because of this pride that they extend this invitation to you to join them this coming Sunday, February 21st.

celebrating harvest, the chamber decided that the spring blossoms were the real draw for the valley, so the festival was moved to late February. In later years it was moved again to mid-March, due to a series of heavy rain years and late blossoms. BUT it has moved back to FEBRUARY!! Don't miss the festivities from Madison to Rumsey!



Picture to left is of the the historic Almond Growers' Exchange shed in

Rumsey--see it while dancing and dining at the Rumsey end of the valley at Rumsey Hall! Picture to right is of the 1915 Parade in Esparto--courtesy of John Gallardo, historian and EHS graduate.



FEBRUARY 24, 2013 this year--Don't miss it!! See volume 6 of this journal for the full history or go to our website: greatercapayvalley.org

AND DON'T FORGET BLACK HISTORY DAY IN CAPAY VALLEY! Guinda celebrates its unique Black/African American History--as well as that of the national Black History Month in February--on the second Saturday each February. The 12th annual celebration is this February 2013 at Guinda Grange Hall. The brainchild of local musician Clarence Van Hook and local Black Historian Bill Petty, it draws people from all over the country. Before statehood and even after, since California was a free state, there are enclaves throughout with sizable early pioneers of African descent. One such area is the Guinda area in the Capay Valley. Bill Petty explains that the Guinda area has a rich history of being well integrated from the beginning of early settlements. Many of the blacks settling in the area were never slaves, while others were freed after settling in the area. Come learn about this unique history, listen to the music led by musician Clarence Van Hook, and enjoy the booths and presentation--and the great food! Pot Luck--while it is not necessary, you are welcome bring something to share!

For more information, check out volume 1 of this journal and our website at greatercapayvalley.org--be sure and watch the videos!



THE HUNGRY HOLLOW TELEPHONE COMPANY

Many people know about *Capay Valley Telephone System, Inc.*, and the success Andy Smith had providing communications to people in the valley from 1948-88--it was featured in volume 7 of this journal, after all! However, there was another obscure, yet nonetheless important telephone company that provided telephone service to farmers and country folk along County Road 19 up into what is called Hungry Hollow from the 1940's to 1970. It was called the *Hungry Hollow Telephone Company* and Bill Rominger remembers it for us:

The company's "service area" began about a half mile north of the Stevens Bridge over Cache Creek on Road 94B, about a mile north of what is now the Fliers Club. Utilizing 4 x 4 poles for the telephone poles about 100 feet apart along the county roads, a cross arm on each pole with two glass insulators, and two steel wires attached to the insulators and running parallel to each other about 16 feet off the ground, the telephone line snaked its way out to the Hungry Hollow area. It was a thirteen-party "party line."

The route was about 24 miles long, stretching north on Road 94B to County Road 19, then west across [now] State Highway 505 to County Road 88B, north to County Road 17, west to County Road 87, then north to County Road 12, but also branching off onto County Road 14, west to County Road 85, then both north and south on Road 85 to County Road Road 11 on the north and County Road 84B on the south.

There were three officers that ran the company, although ran the company was a pretty loose term because I don't ever remember a meeting being held, expenses being reimbursed or fees being levied on its subscribers. The officers were Oscar Durst, Jr. president; Lloyd Rominger, vice president and troubleshooter; and Floris Mast, secretary treasurer. In the late 1960's Lloyd's son [and author of this article] Bill took over the trouble shooting until 1970.

The company's troubleshooting "equipment" consisted of one set of pole climbing spikes, a safety belt, a telephone test set, and an aluminum extension ladder. If the phone was out of order, which in retrospect was pretty often, Lloyd and Bill would set out in their pick-up, driving portions of the 24 mile line to see if they could find the trouble. At certain points along the 24 miles, there was a spot at a certain pole where Lloyd or Bill could disconnect the wires, attach the telephone test set and see if there was a dial tone back toward Woodland where the main telephone office was located, and if there was a dial tone, call the main office repair service. Often the person at the main office would say "You have a 100,000 ohm short" which meant absolutely



This is the telephone that served our family during the *Hungry Hollow Telephone Company* existence. The green insulator is one used to hold the wires up on the pole. Circa 1940's.

Bill Rominger

nothing to us except we have a problem on the line. We would re-connect the wires then start working our way back to west to the next wire disconnect test spot.

If finally we found a test spot that did not have a dial tone then we knew the trouble was between that spot and the last test spot that had a dial tone. At that point we would drive back along the line until usually we could spot a problem visually, possibly a twisted or broken wire.

The winter of 1969-70 was the beginning of the end of the Hungry Hollow Telephone Company. One stormy day the phone was out of order and Lloyd and Bill went to troubleshoot the problem. Finding a downed wire between two poles, Lloyd put the wire over his shoulder and began climbing a pole to re-install the wire while Bill worked on the other pole. A combination of the weight and tension of the wire and a gust of wind pulled Lloyd off the pole and he fell to the ground. Though unhurt, he knew his days as a lineman troubleshooter were over.

Soon after, the company entered into negotiations with the main telephone company, at that time being Pacific Bell, and in the spring of 1970 an underground telephone line was installed and the Hungry Hollow Telephone Company was no more.

Continued on next page

Hungry Hollow was served on the east side of CR 85 by the Hungry Hollow Telephone Company while many on the west side were served by Andy Smith of Capay Valley.

“As a point of historical reference the following people and/or ranches were subscribers of the Hungry Hollow Telephone Company:

George and Dorothy Rominger; Charles and Blanche Rominger; Erna Jenness; Floris and Ruth Mast; William and Helene Rominger; Lloyd and Elsie Rominger; Karl and Mildred Giguere; Roth Ranch/County Road 14 & 85; Oscar and Jean Durst; Bandy Ranch/Road 85; Bill and Hazel Hayes; Leonard and Mabel Jose; The Lawhead House/Road 84B. This being a thirteen-party line, every household had its own distinctive ring sound and everyone else heard the ring too. Thinking about that, either we got used to hearing all the rings or we just heard our own, but I don't remember that many disturbances from ringing phones. On the other hand, anyone could pick up a receiver while others were talking and listen in and that happened pretty often!! You knew other people were listening because each time someone lifted a receiver the volume decreased. Just for spite, if I was talking to someone and I knew others were listening, I would say “Hello everyone on the line. Enjoying the conversation?” Click. Click. Click. Great fun.

So from wires strung between poles and multi-subscriber party lines we have come to wireless cell phones smaller than the palm of our hand that we can use to talk to people on the other side of the world. Yes, that is progress for sure, but there is something quite comforting to have experienced a small country telephone company that served a place we call Hungry Hollow. Ah, memories, and history, are made of this.”

By Bill Rominger

After I had shared this information I'd just gotten from Bill Rominger with a descendant from the Masts of Hungry Hollow, Faye (Mast) Brannan, she informed me that even before that, her great uncle John, living with his father Gotleib Mast off CR 13-86, had had a phone line strung out from Woodland to his homestead in the 1920s--along the fence lines! She said that he was executive at the *Bank of Italy* (before it became *Bank of America*) in Woodland and needed to stay in touch from the ranch in the Hungry Hollow-Dunnigan Hills in western Yolo County, so they used the existing fence lines, just putting up poles when they needed to go over the dirt roads. When I then shared this with Bill Rominger, he agreed there was a Woodland phone company [perhaps *Woodland Phone Exchange*, which was established in 1884, per historian Shipley Walters?] that might have reaching out here, too. Also adding:

The phone company has changed its name many times over the years. Prior to the Pacific Bell name I mentioned before it was known as American Telephone & Telegraph. That was back in the days when "monopoly" was never heard of and the service was so much better than it is today, even with antiquated equipment. AT&T of course is a take-off of American Telephone & Telegraph.

So, apparently the Woodland telephone company strung lines out to us, too--and they used the existing fence lines to do it! And the phones were the old crank models--like the one I recall still in the house my family lived in in western Hungry Hollow in the early 1950s!

The Bank of Italy was founded in San Francisco, California, USA, in 1904 by Amadeo Giannini. It grew by a branch banking strategy to become the Bank of America, the world's largest commercial bank with 493 branches in California and assets of \$5 billion in 1945.

The bank was established to serve working class citizens of the area, especially Italian Americans living in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood. The bank survived the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 and was one of the first to offer loans to businesses to help rebuild the city. In 1909, the bank began opening branches in other cities and had 24 branches by 1918...The Bank of Italy merged with the smaller Bank of America, Los Angeles in the 1928. In 1930, Giannini changed the name "Bank of Italy" to "Bank of America." As Chairman of the new, larger Bank of America, Giannini expanded the bank throughout his tenure, which ended with his death in 1949.

www.wikipedia.com

Woodland Businesses, including a telephone company: Freeman, filed a town plat in 1863...Families began moving into the new city, and they built homes, schools, churches and a cemetery. In 1861, a private secondary school, Hesperian College, opened on what is now Bush Street for the teenage children of the town's prosperous farmers and business people. By the mid-1860's, Woodland...its business district boasted two county buildings, the courthouse and county hospital, a steam flour mill, brewery, livery stable, two blacksmith shops, wagon shop, two hotels, drugstore and six other stores. There was also a newspaper, the *Woodland News*, the ancestor of today's *Daily Democrat*. What literally put Woodland on the map was the arrival of the railroad in 1869. Connected to the outside world by regular train and telegraph service, Woodland residents soon enjoyed a full range of city services: gas, water electricity and **telephones**, streetlights and graveled streets. **by Shipley Walters**
www.strollthroughhistory.com/history.html



On CR14 at CR87--Photo below, circa 1940s, courtesy of Bill Rominger, whose father Lloyd grew up here, then built across CR 87, and with the help of his son Bill ran the Hungry Hollow Phone company, 1940-70.



The Rominger homestead in Hungry Hollow above was built by William Rominger (3rd from right in family photo below, wife Helene standing behind him to left). Their children would include Helen (Mrs. Herb Campbell) and Lloyd Rominger.



Charles and Elizabeth Rominger had eleven children together: Lena (who died at age 12 of meningitis), William, Charles, Carrie, Herman, Edwin "Todd," Albert, Lena "Suse," Lydia, Elmer (who died at age 24 from pneumonia), and George "Mick." In this picture taken in front of the Rominger home, Suse, Mick, Lydia and Todd are in front, left to right. Standing are Elmer, Al, Herm, Charles, Blanche (Charles' wife), Helene (Bill's wife), Elizabeth, and Charles. This picture was taken before Elizabeth's death in 1920. Charles and all of his sons were farmers. Both Todd and Herm served in WWI.



Holiday Time--Harvest is done, families join hands to eat...but what if there is not enough to feed a family? Food Banks and local farmers, restauranters and churches, concerned neighbors step in to help.

I have been traveling this continent a lot lately and noticing the vast acreage of corn and soybeans across the middle states...last year I was simply surprised at the fact that this was all I saw, just those two crops laid out side by side as though we had no need for any other crops...and then I took to reading the local papers' crop reports and research on this global trend to have farmers all grow the same vast crops instead of a variety of crops meant for the local markets...and the negative affect this "monoculture" is having in third world countries--and even in this one. Now, I am not a farmer's daughter, but a rancher's daughter, so I have a lot to learn about farming, I know. But coming from the Capay Valley, I have a natural curiosity about people working the land and feeding the planet, so I am doing my homework--and am delighted when I learn that others are not only wondering about the wisdom of this trend but are actually doing something about it! Most of this corn and soy is livestock feed, an important cog in a vast process, of course, one that attempts to feed the world...but is often problematic.

Recently, I received a letter--the rare and wonderful hand-written kind in beautiful and endangered cursive--from Hungry Hollow cowgirl Candy Lopez-Hatanaka. She knew I was watching the corn fields in the midwest shrivel and rot in the harsh sun at the time, so she made sure I would not miss an article in the *Daily Democrat*, November 10, 2012, featuring our own Jim Durst and his donation of food to the Sacramento Food Bank. The article explains, "Durst has been donating food for 20 years, and has helped to found a new donation program in Yolo County. It's one example of efforts under way to provide fresh produce to food banks around California. The California Association of Food Banks operates a statewide program called Farm to Family, which has been around for a decade now. It gives growers and shippers a way to provide fresh produce to food banks and people in need.. The Yolo County program, spearheaded by Durst and fellow farmer *Tom Muller, has been named 'Shared Harvest,'" through which farmers have a choice of ways they might "share" their bounty with local people in need. www.durstorganicgrowers.com

Other local farmers are doing something similar: *Capay Organic - FarmFreshToYou* donates boxes for the holidays to various Food Banks including Sacramento Food Bank--over 100,000 lbs of produce; they sponsored the food bank *Race to Feed the Hungry*; and are a sponsor of the Yolo County food summit, *Yolo Connect*, "addressing issues of hunger and food deserts in our county," according to spokesperson Barbara Archer.

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Making farm fresh meals possible by delivering local, organic produce to your door

Farming in the Capay Valley since 1976

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Those interested can go to the following sites: California Assoc. of Food Banks at 510-272-4435 or www.cafoodbanks.org or Food Bank of Yolo County at 530-668-0690 or www.foodbankyc.org or www.foodpool.org and soon: www.flashfoodrecovery.com is being developed by Arizona State students, an app that allows restaurants, hotels and caterers to donate surplus food to local agencies helping people in need.

NOTE: don't forget to support your local farmers by ordering farm fresh CSA deliveries to your door: www.farmfreshtoyou.com and www.fullbellyfarm.com

NOTE: *Tom Muller and brothers Frank and Louie own Yolo Vineyards and Olive Oil Co. and Muller Farms on Co. Rd. 19.



“...this land is your land, this land is my land, from California to the New York Island...” As I have traveled across this land and visited many cities and towns, including walking miles through the areas of towns that few tourists will ever visit, I have noticed that the “soup kitchens and bread lines” no longer serve only those who look as though they have lived on the streets for some time, but more and more I see young families and older couples, clean and sober and looking embarrassed to be there...but I also notice that everyone in the line seems to be congenial and accepting that they are “in the same boat”...it is a sight too few of our politicians ever see, I am sorry to say--these are tough times that the insulation of money masks for too many and tough times that are touching far too many lives.

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

words and music by Woody Guthrie

Chorus:

*This land is your land, this land is my land
From California, to the New York Island
From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters*

*This land was made for you and me
As I was walking a ribbon of highway
I saw above me an endless skyway*

*I saw below me a golden valley
This land was made for you and me*

Chorus

*I've roamed and rambled and I've followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts
And all around me a voice was sounding*

This land was made for you and me

Chorus

*The sun comes shining as I was strolling
The wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling
The fog was lifting a voice come chanting*

This land was made for you and me

Chorus

*As I was walkin' - I saw a sign there
And that sign said - no tress passin'
But on the other side it didn't say nothin!
Now that side was made for you and me!*

Chorus

*In the squares of the city - In the shadow of the steeple
Near the relief office - I see my people
And some are grumblin' and some are wonderin'
If this land's still made for you and me.*

Happily, more and more people are trying to do something about it. But just like the little boy on the beach throwing the starfish back into the water, you have to start with one starfish at a time...

Sometimes it is local farmers, sometimes it is a small business owner or a little boy with a caring heart--and sometimes it is a wealthy 57 year old philanthropist. In the *Parade Magazine* that came with my *Sacramento Bee* today, December 2, 2012, there is an interesting feature about philanthropist Howard G. Buffet, son of Warren Buffett. He became a farmer in Decatur, Illinois in order to feed the world--one person at a time! The article, by Joe Kita, is worth reading. He started the Howard G. Buffett Foundation to give away “tens of millions of dollars annually to improve the living standards in impoverished communities worldwide. Lately, though, the foundation has also been focusing on the home front, working with *Feeding America* on a problem that some might be surprised to find in the world’s richest country--hunger.” The article touches on the “hidden” nature of hunger in this nation--suggesting that it is because we as a nation are ashamed of it. And we ought to be! One of his foundation’s projects is researching the problem in America and trying to educate the nation about it, working with “Feeding America, the nations’s largest charity focused on hunger relief...” Check out: *Map the Meal Gap* www.feedingamerica.org/--and little efforts by big hearts like www.joshuasheart.org started by a 5 year old!

I wish you all Happy Holidays--Hunger-free!

What would my Christmas be without bittersweet heritage oranges from the old Duncan-Monroe Ranch savored with my daughter Sami alongside local walnuts and local honey to dip them in? What would it be without Dolores Stephens making us all gifts of Grammy Wyatt's Almond Rocha? And then there is my signature garlic chicken cooked in a clay pot with local olive oil and wine and organic chard--yum! Whatever your own traditions are, I hope you will find everything you need right here in the greater Capay Valley!!



*GRAMMY WYATT'S ALMOND ROCHA**

Ingredients:

- 1 cup broken almonds
- 1 cup white granulated sugar
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup oleomargarine
- 2 cups almond meal (finely ground almonds)

Procedure:

Use a cast iron frying pan or an automatic deepfryer of 1500 watt capacity. Frying pan should only be used on an 8" burner with well-distributed heat, otherwise the deepfryer is recommended.

Melt butter and oleo at low temperature (below 250 degrees) and add sugar. When butter and sugar are well blended, add broken almonds and increase heat to 325 degrees within about seven minutes. The sugar mixture will first take on a creamy color and will not cling to the nuts and oil may separate from the mixture. As the heat is increased the mixture will turn slightly tan. The heat is further increased to 350 degrees and held at that temperature for a few minutes, stirring constantly. More tan color will appear; the almonds will begin to crack with an audible popping sound and will turn very slightly tan. The mixture will become more fluid, will cling to the nuts and there will be a slight burned smell with some smoking. It is now time to remove from the heat. Total time is ten minutes since adding the broken almonds.

Before starting this recipe, spread the almond meal on a large sheet cake pan (or cookie pan) to a thickness of about ¼ inch. Upon removing above mixture from the heat, allow to cool slightly to avoid scorching (10 seconds) then pour mixture onto the prepared pan. Additional almond meal should be added to the top of the mixture and the candy pressed down to a thickness of about 3/8 inch or less. Allow to cool, and then break to desired size for serving. Surplus almond meal which does not cling to the candy may be reused. When cool, the candy should be brittle and should shatter when struck. If it is sugary and not brittle it was not cooked long enough or hot enough. If it is too dark and has too much burnt flavor it was too hot or cooked too long.

**Original recipe of Ruth (Mrs. Roy) Wyatt; borrowed from Dolores Stephens--who personally substitutes all butter for the oleomargarine!! shhhhhh--YUM!!*

Olive Oil Mayonnaise

[try it with CopperHill's Meyer Lemon olive oil]

- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 whole egg
- juice of 1 lemon (min. of 2 tbsp to taste)
- salt.

Combine 1/4 cup of the oil with other ingredients in a blender at top speed for 5 seconds. Turn speed to low and slowly add the rest of the oil, blending until thick.

Now, enjoy those left-over turkey sandwiches!!



Samantha Waterman wears her annual Christmas flannel gown, hand-stitched her mother, Betsy Monroe



Celebrating someone special to the Capay Valley, someone who helps give us our special *character*--Freddie Lantz. When I ran into "Freddie" recently in Rumsey for the Almond Festival and then posted the picture below on my Facebook business page for *The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society*, many readers came back with special, fond



Judy Hayes, Freddie Lantz, Betsy Monroe in Rumsey 2012

after: campus custodian and maintenance, and bus driver; he often drove the team bus to away-games for the sports events--a big sports fan, himself!

Retired in 2000, Fred stayed in the Esparto area where he was born. When young, he worked with his father Lee bailing hay for Don Warren, another old-time local. Freddie's son Jerry Lazaro says, "I have never seen him happier than he was behind the wheel of a school bus or tractor." Freddie is happily retired on his small ranch in Lamb Valley, surrounded by loving children and grandchildren--and frequenting valley events!



Family album photos and information from Jerry Lazaro and family. None of us knew the name of the dog in the Dawn picture top right, and as this is a surprise for Freddie we couldn't ask--can one of my readers let me know! emonroe353@gmail.com



Pictured above in the dedication in the 1970 EHS yearbook, *The Dawn*, Freddie is seen as many of us remember him best--caring for the EHS campus.

When I came home to research and write, my brother Tom Monroe was concerned about me being out in the country alone, so he insisted I buy a shotgun. Well, we all grew up with them out here, but I had not shot one in decades, so I asked around and found out Freddie was selling some from his collection. When Tommy heard this he said, "I used to hunt with Freddie and if he has a gun to sell BUY IT! It will be in excellent shape! Not only was he a great hunter, but he knew how to take care of his equipment! Whatever he wants for it, pay it, I'll pay you back!" So, Tommy bought me one of Freddie's shotguns and I got a refresher lesson from neighbor Jim Hiatt--the pheasant are safe, but I feel well protected!

Patrick Scribner

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Country Doctors often worked with other Doctors and nurse-midwives, such as Capay Valley's own Mary Gaither: nurse, mid-wife, care-giver.

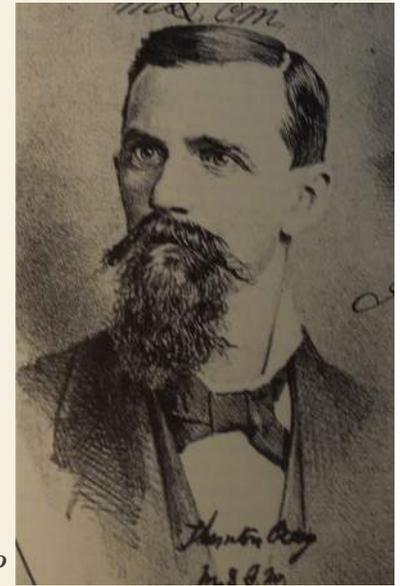


Above: Mary with her three sons, left to right: Leland, Elmer and Eddie, born and raised in Esparto by Mary and her husband Augustus.

Many local histories and newspapers have covered Mary Gaither, so we happily have her biography--and her own narrative!

Mary was born in May 4, 1865 in Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri to Willis and Marcia Brisco. Her mother died when Mary was 10 and Mary was taken in by a Dr. Evans to care for his only son. The good doctor decided Mary was a gifted nurse and placed her in training to that profession, nursing under his supervision for nine years.

Mary's husband Augustus Gaither had a sister and her husband living in California, Elijah and Sarah Jennings. Elijah was a half-brother of Basil



Etching of young Doctor Thornton Craig from the De Pue Collection 1879. Below, McGill University in Montreal, Canada today--I took this photo on a visit! Doc Craig graduated in 1876 with a degree of MDCM and came to the Capay Valley that same year.



Campbell, the largest Black land owner in Yolo County, and they both settled in the Dunnigan Hills-to-Fairview area. Through them, Mary and Gus came to California to find work in 1886. They began working out in Hungry Hollow on Jenning's land off what is now

County Road 85, and later became the Merritt Ranch. Mary describes the pre-paved roads in Hungry Hollow thus: "We hear lots of talk today [1931] about good roads, but those days we lived in Hungry Hollow we certainly knew what it meant to have good roads. It took

continued next page...

Mary Gaither, left, courtesy of Yolo County Archives

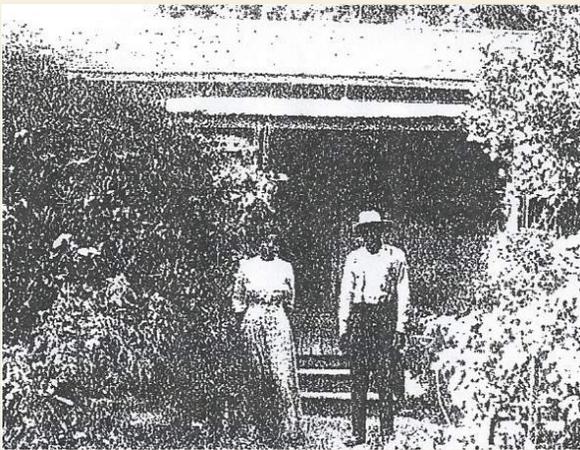


In 1884 he married a Capay Valley girl, Lizzie Rhodes, whose father John Milton and his wife Mary Jane Beall Christmas owned 16,000 acres in upper Capay Valley and three flour mills in Madison, Knights Landing and Woodland. Thornton and Lizzie would have three sons and live in Capay for the rest of their lives.



Mary Gaither, Turn-of-the-Century Capay Valley Mid-wife and Nurse, continued

us five hours to go to Madison in the winter time. Of course, there was no bridge this side of Madison, and we had to stop every little while and get out and scrape the mud off the wheels--that old adobe stuck until the wheels got so heavy the horses could hardly pull the load. Esparto at that time was only a wheat field. It took us two days to go to Woodland, and especially during the winter months, we never attempted to make the trip to town unless for emergency; we laid in supplies in the fall...Sometimes the farmers went to Sacramento in the fall to get their winter's supply, going in a sort of covered wagon and camping along the way and making a family outing of it. That trip would take a week. I can remember Mrs. Roth telling me they laid in their supplies in that way and she said they always took along some hens to lay eggs on the trip." This narrative is taken from the *Esparto Exponent* dated October 16, 1931, vol.15 no. 52. I did not have a copy, so John Gallardo hand-copied it out for me from his old, faded copy--his to me was in beautiful cursive! I very much appreciate all the great support I get in this endeavor!



In this narrative, Mary goes on to say: "When the town of Esparto was laid out, there was much excitement; the railroad ran an excursion and there was a big crowd of people here...we located on Capay Street, with nothing there but some white sticks driven into the ground to mark the streets, where now towering walnut trees stand. I have seen the town grow and have witnessed all the buildings and improvements through the years...The brick for the Esparto Hotel and the other brick buildings in town was burned in a kiln just back of where the C.P. Ingram house now stands [in 1931]. One of the first houses to be built here was a two-story house that stood where the Durward Parker home now stands. It belonged to a Mr. Craig who worked at carpenter work with Mr. J.J. Smith [who

built the first high school and a church in Esparto, as well as in the white house great-grandson Charlie Schaupp is completely restoring to its original state on Esparto's main street: Yolo Ave/Highway 16; about 1889-1900]. After he left here, Mr. Rice Woods, a brother of Mrs. D.Q.Adams, lived there with his family and I served them many years in that house. The house afterwards burned.

I raised three boys here and they all attended both grammar and high schools. Elmer graduated in 1908 and was the first colored boy to graduate in Esparto and the second in the county...During all my years of life here I have followed nursing, and have served many, many homes. Oftentimes I have taken care of babies born to women whom I had cared for at their birth. It is much easier to take care of sick people here now than it was in the pioneer days. Dr. Craig who served the people here through all those early days, rode and drove over those terrible roads, swimming his horses across the creek, to care for the sick and to usher in the new generation that is now raising families of its own."



Mary and her husband Gus first bought their two Esparto lots in 1892, where they built a large home. Mary tended to the nursing needs of many people of all races in the Capay Valley. They also took in boarders in Esparto. She "traveled all around the Esparto area to treat the sick, first by horse and buggy and later in a Ford Motel T," according to the narrative for the *Stroll Through History* reenactment script created for the Yolo County Historical Society. Mary's husband Gus died in 1930 and she died on July 3, 1938. Along with Doc Thornton Craig, she was one of the Capay Valley's "best known and most respected people in the area."

Photos courtesy of Yolo County Archives: above left, Mary with Gus at their Esparto home; Gus, above.



Laying Wild West Sheriff "Sunny Jim" Monroe to rest--gone but not forgotten!

The Mail of Woodland, Friday, November 10, 1939, page 2

Tribute Paid J. W. Monroe At Last Rites

Huge Crowd Attends Funeral; Flags At Half-Mast

California today paid tribute to a native son and beloved resident of Yolo county at simple funeral services for James W. "Sunny Jim" Monroe, held at Kraft Brothers chapel.

As requested in his will, services were brief. More than 500 separate floral offerings, from friends from all California, rich and poor, banked the casket wall of the chapel.

So large was the funeral that it was necessary to install a public address system outside of the chapel in order that Rev. Neal K. McGowan's fitting tribute might be heard.

Large Floral Offering

Approximately 350 persons sat inside the chapel and in the halls of the mortuary while a group estimated at more than 1500 persons, many from Sacramento and the bay region, stood in respect outside.

The organ prelude was played by Mrs. Howard H. Brown.

Flowers, many from southern California, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento and other communities in the Sacramento Valley were sent and brought to the chapel by persons who loved and admired "Sunny Jim" for all of his fine qualities and thoughtfulness of others.

Floral offerings included costly and beautifully designed pieces to simple, small bouquets that "Sunny Jim's" friends selected from their own gardens.

Orchids, gardenias and other flowers were so numerous that it was necessary to place some of them outside in front of the chapel while others were distributed in the halls and other rooms in the mortuary.

One floral piece was a large seven-point star. Many carried the names of friends while others were sent by organizations whose membership is made up of persons of all nationalities, races and creeds.

News clipping courtesy of the Yolo County Archives. What I noticed while reading this was a mention of flower arrangements from places in the Bay Area, like Oakland. Now I know he was a popular sheriff among California Sheriffs...but Oakland? It made me wonder if there had been any truth to the Fed's indictment [later dropped for lack of evidence] that he must

Elks Pallbearers

Peace officers from the entire state, including city police, county sheriffs, detective agencies and the state highway patrol, remembered their friend with flowers.

Pallbearers, all past exalted rulers of the local lodge of Elks, included: Harry S. Summers, J. L. Harlan, C. C. McDonald, John I. Stephens, Charles L. Eddy and Emmett C. Cooper.

At Woodland cemetery, the Elks lodge directed the ritual.

Flags At Half-Mast

City police and the state highway patrol directed traffic in the vicinity of the chapel and a special police escort led the funeral procession.

Flags on public buildings were at half-mast all day Saturday and

in many instances stores closed during the funeral.

Mr. Monroe, former Yolo county sheriff for 28 years, died late Wednesday night from injuries sustained in an automobile accident while he was enroute home from his ranch near Capay.

have known about that bootlegging operation up in Guinda in 1926--with links to Emeryville and Oakland! Jack London's Barbary Coast came to mind--there is a good story in here somewhere!

See volume 4 of this journal for full story on the largest Bootlegging Bust in the nation in 1926--in our own Guinda!

Since I started publishing the journal in 2011, one of the most popular regular features has been the one on my Wild West Sheriff grandfather, "Sunny Jim" Monroe. I drew heavily from his memoirs, published by the Daily Democrat Newspaper the year the sheriff retired in 1938. I found more in the Yolo County Archives--a real treasure trove, there! From those sources I have come to know this legend of my youth much better. I have also found news articles and the Sheriff Department Scrapbooks, much of it kept meticulously by my Uncle Forrest D. Monroe--who ran and was elected when his father Jim retired in 1938. Since he served for 32 consecutive and interesting years, it is time to lay my beloved grandfather to rest and research the adventures of Sheriff Forrest Duncan Monroe--sharing a regular feature with you in this journal beginning in the next issue.

I am simultaneously writing their book, which I hope to publish by 2014-15:

MONROE FOR SHERIFF

† JAMES WM. AND FORREST D.,

60 CONSECUTIVE YEARS

SERVING YOLO COUNTY 1911 TO 1971†



READS LIKE A WILD WEST
NOVEL!

COMPILED FROM THE MEMOIRS OF "SUNNY JIM"
NEWS ARCHIVES
AND THE SHERIFFS' SCRAP BOOKS

IT'S A SIN TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD!



...so said author Harper Lee--and Atticus Finch, her ideal father figure: "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy . . . but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."



When I first got back to live in the Capay Valley, I enjoyed sitting in the warm summer evenings listening to all the various bird songs. One such evening I sat enjoying this with neighbor Jim Hiatt and said, "I love hearing all the different birds we have here--I wish I knew what they all were!" Well, he chuckled and said, "Right now you are hearing only one--a mocking bird!" And then he proceeded to explain--whereupon I came to realize he was actually a hobby ornithologist in disguise! So, since that day, I have not only



learned to tell when I am being "mocked" by a crafty bird, but I have learned a great deal about all the birds we have



here'bouts--and am enjoying sharing Jim's knowledge with my readers. Recently, Jim has been finding baby birds in his ranch nests while doing yard work and
Con't on pages 22 and 23

The Mockingbirds of Capay Valley

Con't from page 21
chores and got busy with his camera in order to better share them with all of us.

To Kill a Mockingbird is one of my favorite books--and movies--so, of course, it gave me a special love for Mockingbirds. And one of my favorite childhood memories was finding a baby bird on the ground and running to Mom with it--she could rescue anything! Soft boiled egg and poached millet or bread soaked in milk pushed down the gullet eventually led to a fully-fledged bird that would then hop around the house and yard until it took wing one day! Sam, our magpie, was just such a rescued bird--and he never did leave! We found baby owls so ugly "only a



Above: Mockingbird nest in the crotch of a Eucalyptus tree in Hungry Hollow. Bottom left: baby Mockingbirds just feathering out--fledglings!



mother could love," but Mom taught us to care for them until they became beautiful and free--and back in the barn rafters they had fallen from. And since then, I have rescued many, myself--along with a few opossums and many a near-death feral kitten! It's the family tradition!



Photos and text by Jim Hiatt, bird-man of Hungry Hollow:

The Mockingbird, *Mimus polyglottis*, is one of our more common and better known birds. According to *Birds of North America* (page 519), during the 1700s and 1800s it was such a popular thing to have a caged Mockingbird for the singing, that the Mockingbird wasn't too far from extinction. Thankfully that's behind us.

These are known for being able to imitate--or mock--over 100 different species, insect sounds, such as crickets and frogs, and mechanical sounds, such as a squeaky gate, and so on. What I've found interesting here at the ranch, is that sometimes juveniles-turned-adults are heard imitating species that are partially migratory in their traveling habits, and are imitating birds not even in this area at the time--or even imitating birds, such as the Acorn Woodpecker, which are simply not here at all, but are a bird of higher elevations. I've heard them imitate Scrub Jays, which are here for only a short duration and usually on their way elsewhere. Not sure just how they "know" the song of a bird not normally here, or not here at all, during the first year or two of the Mockingbird's life. I've heard new Mockingbirds, hatched just about the time of the Western Kingbird's departure (in late August-early September for Central America Mexico, and who won't be back until early April), and yet are imitating their calls before their return. 'Tis one of those sweet mysteries of avian life.

Mockingbirds have an impressive life-span for a bird of this size, and can live up to 20 years--which does give them an opportunity to "remember" lots of different sounds! The calls can be so accurate that at times a beginning "birder" has trouble telling if they're hearing a Scrub Jay or a Mockingbird imitating one! They do seem to have a "call" of their own, which is most closely described as simply a loud "Chirp!" My mother and Grandmother used to say, "Oh, listen, Jimmy, the Mockingbird is 'blowing you a kiss'"--'cause I guess it did kinda sound like that. I did the same with my own kids and they loved it--especially my girls.

At times, these will call for most of the night, and it's amazing the litany of different sounds you'll hear. One night when I was in college, I was staying the night at Grandma's out here and in the old olive tree just outside the porch window one was singing. I happened to have my old portable reel-to-reel tape recorder with me, and put the microphone on the windowsill with a one-hour tape--got nothing but lovely singing to sleep by. Later, I submitted a copy of the tape to my old Ornithology Professor at CSUS as part of my semester project on "The nocturnal singing behavior of the Mockingbird"--and it was part of what got me an "A" on the project!

Our Mockingbirds don't migrate; they're here year-round. At times they'll be perched atop a high object, and will fly up several feet, and then straight back down to the same perch again, slowly flapping their wings so as to show off the conspicuous white patch on each wing. I believe, though don't know for sure, that this is more of a "territorial" activity, but could also be part of the courtship. Food-wise, they are very omnivorous--insects of all sorts, fruits and berries depending on the seasonality of everything. Another part of the courtship is fun to watch--they'll perch on the ground, facing each other so closely that their beaks nearly touch, and hop up and down either in unison or separately, and just keep doing it for a time, with a flap or two of the wings.

Their nest is in a branch-crotch, as the photos show, and have a stick and twig nest lined with very soft stuffs, holding 3-4 eggs at a time, looking a good deal like Brewer's Blackbird eggs, but are a bit darker aqua-blue, with the same dark brownish spots. They have 2-3 broods during the warmer times of the year.



'Tis a wonderful thing that Nature has done with a bird that is pretty drab in its coloration--as everything about this little friend is varying shades of white-to-gray! Yet for all its lack of "impressiveness" in its plumage, the singing by far makes up for it. The singing itself, and the imitative "mocking" nature of it, may also be a part of its territoriality. Hopefully this little sharing of mine will help the reader love and appreciate these lovely friends of ours just a little more.

Jim



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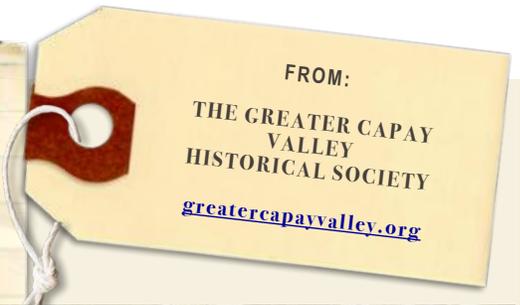
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At right: a mature Valley Oak

Below: Capay Townsfolk at a picnic on the Duncan Ranch in the Oak Grove called *Thousand Oaks* or *Duncan's Grove* about 1900. Photo courtesy of Claire Mefford Mabry, whose Mefford ancestors settled in Capay in the late 1800s and became fast friends with my great-grandparents "Doc" and Mary Duncan—all of whom are in the photo, along with her father Clarence Mefford, my great uncle Wyatt (his best friend), and my grandmother Elvira Grey Duncan.

