

# CAPAY VALLEY

March 2013

Volume Eleven

greatercapayvalley.org

The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society  
PO Box 442  
Esparto, CA  
95627

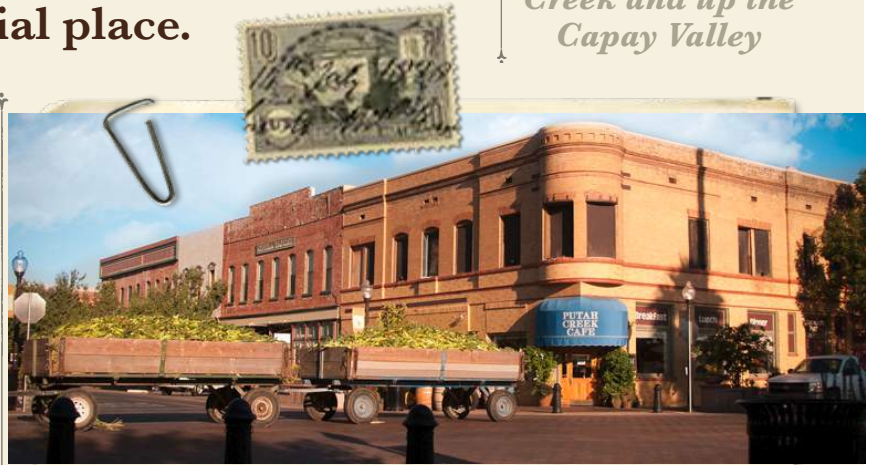


*Focusing on the Greater Capay Valley, including towns and areas surrounding and leading to Cache Creek and up the Capay Valley*

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

*Meadowlarks, Almond Festival, Black History Day Celebration, blooms and calves and lambs in the Capay hills--ah, the end of winter and coming of spring in the beautiful Capay Valley!*

*As I look out my office window on new blossoms and hear the lovely songs of the Meadowlarks, I have a hard time staying at my writer's desk--spring is beckoning! The farms are coming back to life all around me and the festivities in the Valley are beginning in force: wine tastings and festivals. New green shoots and massive flocks of birds swooping in and out of the fields and flooded by-ways make my frequent road trips in this area a moving canvas no painter can do justice--though many a local artist comes close! Soon the painters' easels will be spotted around the valley en plein air and their glorious depictions of our beautiful area will appear in the local galleries and various wineries and other establishments--such as Putah Creek Cafe in Winters, supporting our local artists! Check them out--and while you are*



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*checking out their gallery of local artists in the dining room, try the delicious Chicken Tortilla Soup!! To die for--talk about "art"!! Breakfast is served at 6 am daily, "the aroma of Applewood bacon and freshly brewed roasted coffee fill the air as farmers and early morning folks enter the cafe...Putah Creek Cafe is a family owned restaurant that takes pride in offering a great dining experience in a friendly casual atmosphere. The owners, John & Melanie Pickerel are actively involved in its day-to-day operations with Chef Fred Reyes and Manager Rosi Martinez, a cheerful staff ready to take care of your meal either breakfast, lunch or dinner." [taken from their website]*

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*Special thanks to: historians Douglas Nareau and John Gallardo; article-contributor Jim Hiatt; Dudley Craig; the generous Gene Rominger daughters --and all the faithful subscribers, donors and advertisers! I couldn't do this without you!*

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*It's that time of year again, for Almond Blossoms--and rattle snakes! Get out and enjoy the beauty, but remember to stay out of the tall grass and be wary in shady spots--such as under this Capay Valley porch at right: notice the well-hidden rattler, his green appearance due to having just shed his skin in April.*

**Elizabeth "Betsy" Monroe,**  
**writer-editor-publisher**



*The Flowers think Spring has Sprung--even if the Calendar is still holding out...* our Jim Hiatt is not only a birder, but a gardner and collector of things historic, like these lovely ladies he found locally and dressed up in his Hungry Hollow garden, of which he says:

*Washers like these lasted indefinitely, and when we were younger and used clotheslines instead of dryers, the washer came with an upper "wringer" attachment to wring the clothes out*



*before hanging outside. These models shown here date back from the 1940s to the early 50s. They were turned in at the Transfer Station outside of Esparto, and I took them home, not just for a piece of History, but they make lovely flower planters. Growing up on Court St. in Woodland we used the first old one we had for a parsley barrel out by the corner of the garage. Out here in Hungry Hollow, Grandma had an old Maytag older than any of these shown, and as with these, there was no "spin cycle," only filling the tub, either making your own "wash cycle" with powdered detergent, or do like Grandma did during the 1940s (after electricity finally came here in 1945), used old "chips" of soap bars. You drained that water out and refilled for the rinse cycle. The "soap chips" were saved from taking baths and the soap bar got small enough where it wasn't practical for bathing any more, so they went for "chips" for clothes washing. Of course, before that time there was another marvel: the "washboard." Grandma's was in the old tank-house at her Hungry Hollow home, where she still had a couple of those left over from earlier times that I recall seeing while I was a kid running around there on our frequent visits.*

*Fun to reminisce, but even though those seem like such fun memories, at THAT time it was WORK! At the ranch, Monday was "wash day," Tuesday was "mend day," and so on. Couldn't afford new clothes then so the old ones were endlessly "mended." Ohhhh, the things we take so for granted today!!!*

*Our first washer after that was an old Sears front-loader. Spin Cycles now!! Wow! Oh, but wait. Other drawbacks occurred. Like the drum tumbled the same direction all the cycle, and what you pulled out at the end was an absolute "ball-knot" of clothing so tightly wound that Mother--and I, when it was a REAL mess--would have to sit on the floor and spend 10-20 minutes just pulling it all apart so she COULD put it into our first dryer. And then, eventually the rubber seal between the door and washer body would wear, and one day when you went to pull the clothes out, you'd have water covering the entire porch floor! More than once, Mother told Dad, "Poppy, in the future, when we graduate to another washer, I'm NEVERRRR going to have another front-loader!!!" And it WAS top-loaders from then until today. Everything we've had at the ranch in the 33 years I've been here has been a "top." I can only hope that today's popular front-loaders have improved over the old nightmares we used to know--because I won't own one to find out!*

*Photos, gardening and memories courtesy of Jim Hiatt*



*Far Left photo: the building housing the expanded pharmacy, and later other businesses, was built in 1889-90, then renovated by investor Alonzo Fredson in early 1900s, and Wm. Harris in 1938. Near Left photo: Historically the Esparto Bank, later doctor's office, now hair salon, with the late "Wyatt's Store" to its right.*

### ***Bill Harris again reminisces about growing up in Esparto in the 1920s through***

***1940s.*** In 1927, the year he was born, his father bought the pharmacy business in Esparto from his employer, a Woodland pharmacist named Leithold. In 1937 Mr. Harris, Sr. bought a building in downtown Esparto and moved the pharmacy there in 1938, building it up considerably. I thoroughly enjoy Mr. Harris, Jr's very visual and humorous memories of Capay Valley's "big town" of Esparto. I asked him if he knew anything about the local doctors, even though Doc Craig was before his time, and got this in response:

*Dr. Thornton Craig was gone by the 1930s and his practice was taken by Dr Paul McManus with an office in the building that was the Wyatt-owned bank that eventually failed [see photo at top right: adobe-style bank/doctors-office/now-hair-salon at left of Wyatt's Store]. Dr. McManus was interesting: although he had an office lady, he could be located most any day playing poker across the street at Lindberg's Pool Hall. In spite of his poker talent, he was a pretty good physician for the time.*

*Esparto in the 1930s fared well--there were at the peek 2 gas stations, 2 barber shops, a dress shop, a grocery store, hardware store, dry goods store, 2 garages (auto repair), a blacksmith's shop, a lumber yard, and a Ford auto dealership. Southern Pacific train service three times a week. Folks came from all directions to pick up goods and seek services.*

*Along about 1937-8 my father bought the building adjacent to the drug store from Mrs. Alonzo Fredson and moved the store from what became today's Post Office to the re-modeled garage operated by "Dutch" Medley (directly across from Lindberg's Pool Hall).*

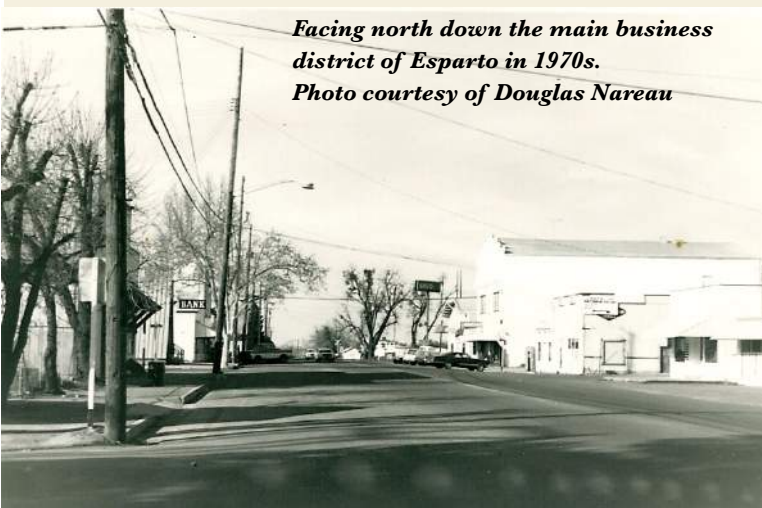
*Along came the 1940's and Dr. Garcelon replaced Dr. McManus for a while, but soon found greener grass. The S.P. Depot in Esparto was managed by Alonzo P. Cole, an alcoholic with a large family. Almost once a month he would wind up jailed or charged in Woodland for some drunken behavior. He belonged to the local Masonic Lodge and the good Masons would get him out of jail often because his family needed him. A.P., jr, and I were the best of friends. Southern Pacific eventually replaced Cole with another agent. I can't recall his name, but around town he was known as "Depot." There was a fire that started in the office of the depot that was quickly extinguished by the volunteer fire dept. The only damage was to the office where the fire had burned off several layers of old paint. Problem was that "Depot" could no longer open the safe, so for 3 days exact cash was required until the Company sent some one from San Francisco to open the safe. Seems the combination was written on the wall and "Depot" was locked out!*

*Happened to think of the McCloud Bros. Don't know first names, but the younger was tall & slender, called "Snake" [Elwood, according to John Gallardo] hung out at times in the saloon in Esparto. His older brother did not show up in town very often, but I recall that he was missing a right ear lobe from a wagon accident. The older brother was one of the drivers of the horse drawn freight wagons hauling from the train depot in Rumsey to Lower Lake. On a Sunday drive up Cache Creek canyon we could look across the creek and still see parts of that road before it washed away--very scary.*

*Then there was my older next door neighbor...a teenage girl that became pregnant in a tiny town and simply disappeared...never to be heard from again. The town was not always kind.*

*In between events, life was really dull.*

Well, not "dull" to me, so I asked him to talk more about downtown Esparto...



Facing north down the main business district of Esparto in 1970s.

Photo courtesy of Douglas Nareau

Below: Esparto Hotel 1889 - sadly torn down in 1935. In her prime the three-story hotel featuring gas lights, a pressurized water system, and electric bells.

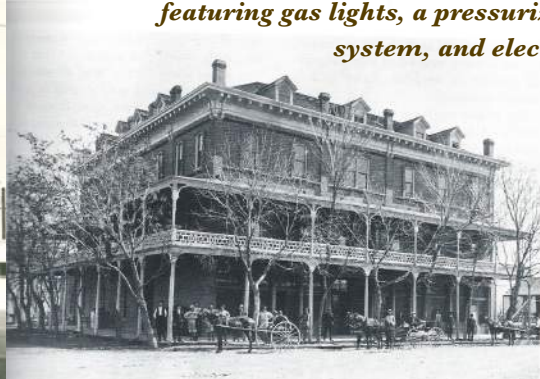


Photo courtesy of John Gallardo

My first recollection of the building was "Dutch Medley's Garage" which occupied the whole building. At that time [facing the building seen on page 4, left photo] there was a recessed large pane window. Dutch would become irritated with the locals seated in the recess, visiting and spitting tobacco. Dutch's solution was to hook up a wire to an old car battery and shock them when it suited him.

My Father purchased the building about 1937 and completely remodeled it, installing a soda fountain, ice cream mixing machine and, thanks to Dick Holverstadt, state of the art fluorescent lighting. Dick later moved his business to Woodland and the Duncan bros joined him in a very successful business. Facing the building, to the left of the pharmacy was my Mother's dress shop and my father's Frigidaire appliance store. The alleyway separated the old bank bldg (later, Dr's Office) and what I knew as "the Fredson Building,"\* my father's pharmacy. Down that alley in back of the store, we sold cases of beer and Union ice. Ice Cream mix came in from Galt, CA, via PMT weekly in 5 gallon cans encased in insulated jackets.

Between 1929 and 1942 we would do most anything to create business. Free movies on Saturday night in the vacant lot between the current P.O. and Diamond Match. Lucky Strike and Camels sold for 15 cents per pack. Domino and Wings were 10 cents. Mrs Fredson was an absentee owner of the building, but I do not know much of anything about the building's history prior to "Dutch." It should be noted that building owners often provided space regardless of delinquent rent as it was much better to have an occupant in the building than leave it vacant. \*[Fredson at one time apparently owned this and the old Levy/later Wyatt store building, so there is some disagreement as to which is known historically as "the Fredson Building"]

Years later, I stopped by after the building no longer was a drugstore and found a...bronze placard attached to the building in the alleyway...but the "Esparto Business Building" you refer to, Betsy, should be the "Fredson Building"--"Dutch" Medley would want it that way. [In later years, other historians referred to the building further to the north as the Fredson Building, as Alonzo Fredson had restored it, too.]

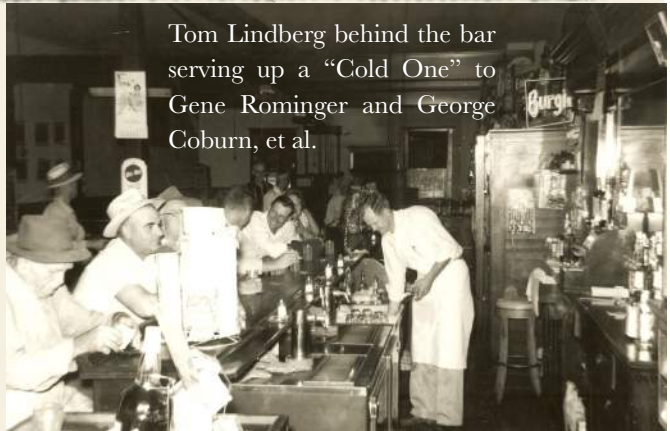
When I was a kid the brick hotel across from Wyatt's where the service station-later-restaurant is today was unoccupied and starting to crumble. Behind the hotel there were 2 or 3 small brick apartments that were occupied.

NOTE: To the north of old hotel site Mercy Housing is building an apartment complex today and looking for an appropriate name for it--I have suggested and hope they will settle on *Esperanza Village*, Esperanza being the original name for Esparto and meaning "hope." What could be more appropriate, since their motto is "Live in Hope"?!  
 Check out Mercy Housing at: [mercyhousing.org](http://mercyhousing.org) [NOTE: the name is now *Esperanza Crossing*]

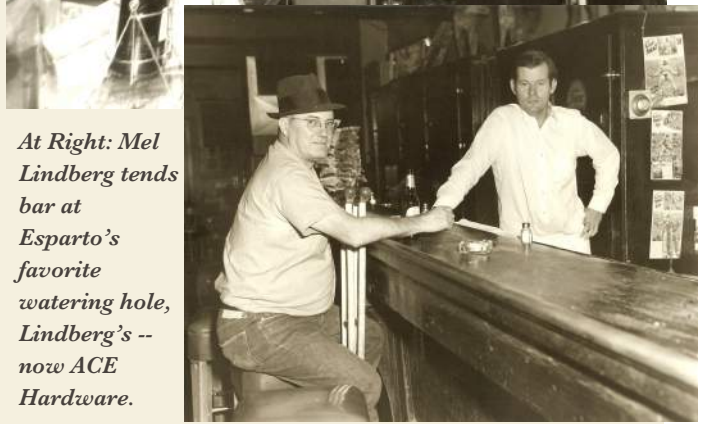


**Tidbits from Ol' Esparto...**

photos and news clippings courtesy of Dudley Craig



Tom Lindberg behind the bar serving up a "Cold One" to Gene Rominger and George Coburn, et al.



At Right: Mel Lindberg tends bar at Esparto's favorite watering hole, Lindberg's -- now ACE Hardware.

Below: L.F. Craft built this building in Esparto in 1890 for Wolf Levy and Sam Schwab (seen below in the 1980s); it was later bought and renovated by A.H. Fredson, investor, who sold it to the Wyatt brothers in 1915--the year that family helped launch Capay Valley's first Almond Festival! Built to look like three separate buildings, that is just the facade; but inside, there actually were three stores with connecting doorways: groceries, hardware and a mercantile store. Office and meeting space was upstairs while carriages and farm equipment was displayed and sold from the full basement. Courtesy of Yolo County Archives

Ads on this page are from The Woodland Democrat, 1968--the year the Almond Festival was re-launched after years of dormancy. Note the date for that festival was February 25!--this year it was February 24!



Welcome to Capay Valley Almond Festival

THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25  
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We proudly invite you to visit our beautiful Capay Valley Sunday, February 25

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817 YOLO STREET ESPARTO

NOTE: Clara's Place was one of three saloons in Capay through the 1960s--more on fascinating Clara, later!



*Madison, Cal.*

*Snow Flake Swimming Pool*

**Crowder's Pool,** built in 1925, for 56 years it was a county landmark: Yolo County's oldest swimming pool. Officially called the "Snow Flake Swimming Pool," it lay hidden in a field off County Road 89 between Madison and Winters, about a mile south of Madison. In 1981 it was bulldozed and covered over with dirt--but

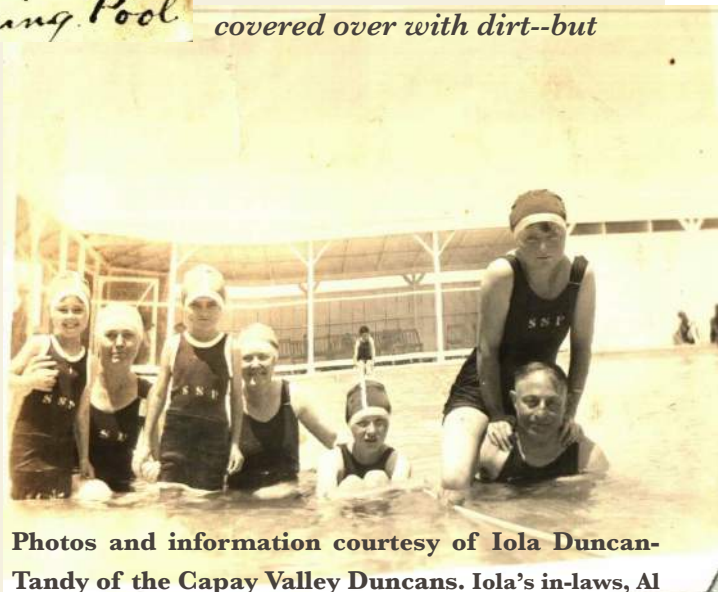
leaving so many wonderful memories for the Capay Valley and surrounding area!

Crowder's pool was built and opened in 1925 by Celia "Annie" and A. S. "Al" Crowder, for the general public. At that time there was no other public or private pool in Yolo County--the closest was Riverside Baths in Sacramento.

The 110x60-foot pool had been closed since 1962 and used as an irrigation reservoir and mosquito fish hatchery for the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito Abatement District.

We Capay Valley kids were most often swimming in the canals and Cache Creek, but occasionally we would be taken by a friend for an afternoon at Crowders. I already swam like a catfish when the Craigs took me for a swim lesson with their son Dudley. I had dived off of many a boulder and off the Capay Dam, but that high dive was frightful! My big brother goaded me until I tried it--and I will always remember the sound and pain of that first belly flop! But I mostly remember fondly the excitement of a public pool!

Betsy Monroe



Photos and information courtesy of Iola Duncan-Tandy of the Capay Valley Duncans. Iola's in-laws, Al and his wife Ellen Tandy, owned the pool for awhile with their 2 daughters, Ellen and Janice. Many local kids took swimming lessons from their daughter Ellen Tandy Peckham.

Comment by Bill Harris: *I spent many summer days at Crowders. There was a black widow spider under every bench in the changing rooms. You are quite right, the high board was frighteningly limber and more than 10 ft above the water. I finally had the courage to*

*jump.*



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

## Western Yolo Grange #423 in Guinda



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Below: at the Grange Hall for Almond Festival 2013--Frank and Marian Nichols



Below: Frank Nichols and Clarence Van Hook



Below, front: the late Al Hayes enjoying Black History Day 2010



I had already been meaning to write about the Grange Hall in Guinda and the delightful couple, Frank and Marian Nichols, who manage it, when an article in the December 2012 issue of the *Valley Voice* newspaper for the Capay Valley just inspired me to do so for this issue. The Nichols have just been given the “prestigious Grange Lifetime Achievement Award at the 140th annual meeting of the California State Grange...highest honor, recognizing not only the accomplishments of members who have contributed so much to the Grange, but in doing so, to their fellow Grangers, and their communities,” according to California State Grand President Bob McFarland, as quoted in the *Valley Voice*. Frank has been a Grange member since 1946 and Marian since 1956, the year they married--57 years last December! I have attended a number of events held at the Guinda Grange Hall over the years, especially Black History Day and Almond Festival, and have had the pleasure of meeting these two kind and dedicated sweethearts many times--always a blessing and delight!

A bit of history of the town of Guinda and of the Grange and what it means to a community like the Capay Valley is in order. *The valley's agricultural growth led to the establishment of the Capay Valley grange, officially Western Yolo Grange #423. The grange grew quickly and by 1879 had 66 members--and the town of Guinda grew right along with it. The Guinda store (still in use) was built in 1891 and the Guinda Hotel in 1893 (torn down in the 1990s) and are seen in photos on next page. Both establishments were busy and successful during their early years, and the Guinda Hotel supported a popular bar until the 1950s. A substantial two-story elementary school building was erected at Guinda. Fruit packing sheds began to operate in Guinda and Rumsey, making daily seasonal deliveries to two trains with ice cars, though some other ambitious land company plans were short-lived.*

*Guinda, long the trading center for the upper Capay Valley, was laid out on 1300 acres in the late 1880's by the Southern Pacific RR. Five hundred town lots were surveyed and additional twenty-acre parcels outside the town were also made available. While Rumsey became the northern terminus of the railroad, Guinda became the trading center for the northern valley due primarily to its strategic location within the Capay Valley. Guinda was founded by settlers who were lured by advertisements, a prevalent technique often used during this era. By 1913 the town was the chief shipping point in the Capay Valley, consisting of large sheds, a general store, harness shop, meat market, barber shop, candy store, blacksmith shop, hotel and post office. Much of the early growth of the town was due to the efforts of the Guinda Improvement Club, an organization founded in 1907.*

*When its railroad era ended in 1934, Guinda began to decline. Although the railroad was replaced by automobile and truck traffic, the town of Williams and the Highway 20 route to the north--rather than the Valley's Highway 16 route--benefitted most from the new mode of travel. By 1940 the town's population was 235. From the end of World War II until the mid 1980's, the town steadily declined. In 1970 Cal-Trans listed the town's population at 93. Since roughly the mid 1980's the town has profited from a small revival due to its popularity as a retirement area, new small farm operations, and it has become a center for outdoor activities: the Cache Creek has become very popular as a rafting area and many rafters take out at Nichols Park, which is located near the southern part of the town. The recent casino in the more southern town of Brooks has also led to more tourism and interest in the town of Guinda.*

History courtesy of Douglas Nareau





**California Grange** is the state grange division of the National Grange, which came into being in 1867. The National Grange, officially known as the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, was started by activist farmer Oliver Hudson Kelley from Minnesota. He felt that farmers, being independent and scattered, needed a national organization to represent them similar to what unions did for industrial workers. Guinda's grange is in the local division of granges which is part of the greater county grange of Yolo. The Grange motto is: "In Essentials, Unity - In Non-essentials, Liberty - In all Things, Charity." It is interesting to note that the National Grange was the first fraternal organization to include women.

Our own grange hall is located at 16787 Forrest Avenue just behind the Guinda Store, which sits in the middle of town on Highway 16. Established in the early 1900s it offers a meeting area for many local activities, most notably Black History Day and activities for the Almond Festival in February. They are a member of the Chamber of Commerce and support sustainable and traditional agriculture, among other things. Many of their members--currently at 127--have contributed to the betterment of the Capay Valley for many generations. Our grange maintains the Guinda Park and established a softball diamond there; sponsors the Almond Queen dinner and co-hosts the

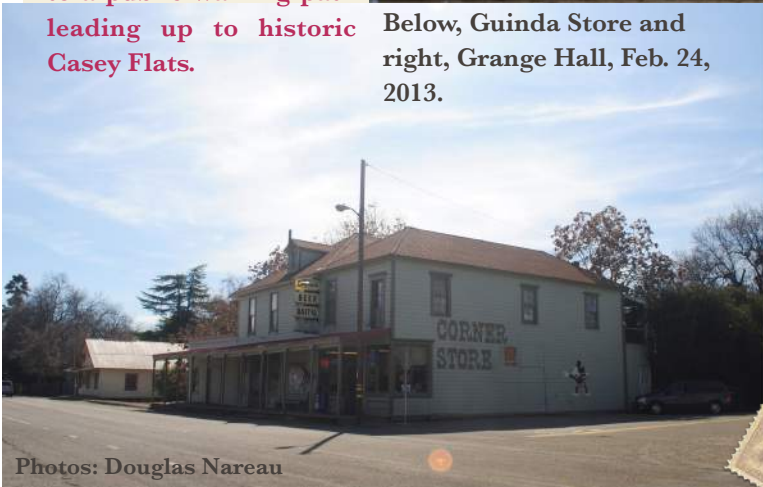
Almond Festival itself. They support many of the local activities, festivals and events, and donate scholarships for 2-3 Esparto High School students annually. They have a certified kitchen which they rent out as needed and offer the hall for a minimal fee for youth dances. Local churches have met there, as has the local AA. They have been involved in recycling in the past and hope to renew these efforts to do their part to keep the valley "green."

Info from their website at: [westernyologrange.org](http://westernyologrange.org)

At Right: downtown Guinda in 1908. The late Guinda Hotel is in the foreground; beyond is the barbershop [now an empty lot]; Forrest Avenue runs between this lot and the historic Guinda Store seen beyond it. The Grange Hall sits just behind the store. If you continue up Forrest Ave., you come to a public walking path leading up to historic Casey Flats.



Below, Guinda Store and right, Grange Hall, Feb. 24, 2013.



Photos: Douglas Nareau





## At the upper end of the beautiful Capay Valley sits Rumsey, named for Captain DeWitt C. Rumsey,

who had originally settled in the area in 1869 on a 925 acre townsite to the west of Cache Creek. Founded by the Vaca Valley & Clear Lake RR in 1887, the town of Rumsey—from the July 1, 1888 until 1934—was the northwestern terminus of that branch of the Southern Pacific Railroad. After the new town of Esperanza [renamed Esparto, after a native bunch grass, in 1890] was laid out, the railroad track was laid up to Rumsey at the north end of the valley, with the first passenger train running in July, 1888. The town included a roundhouse, a section house, a manually operated turntable, railroad sidings, a packing shed, and other trimmings of a Southern Pacific terminus. A 23-room hotel was also built. The town was the site of the Rumsey School—originally built south of town as Occidental School in 1876 but moved to town and remodeled in 1891. The building today is a private residence. In 1899 the Earl and Buck Fruit Companies extended their operations from Vacaville and Winters to include packing facilities in Rumsey. Sadly, after 1934 the town declined slowly: in 1940 it had a listed population of 20, but by 1970 the town boasted a population of 40 and was struggling to grow. Located four and a half miles up Highway 16 from Guinda, Rumsey borders the west side of Cache Creek. Rumsey bridge [seen below] crosses on the northern edge of town, leading to the



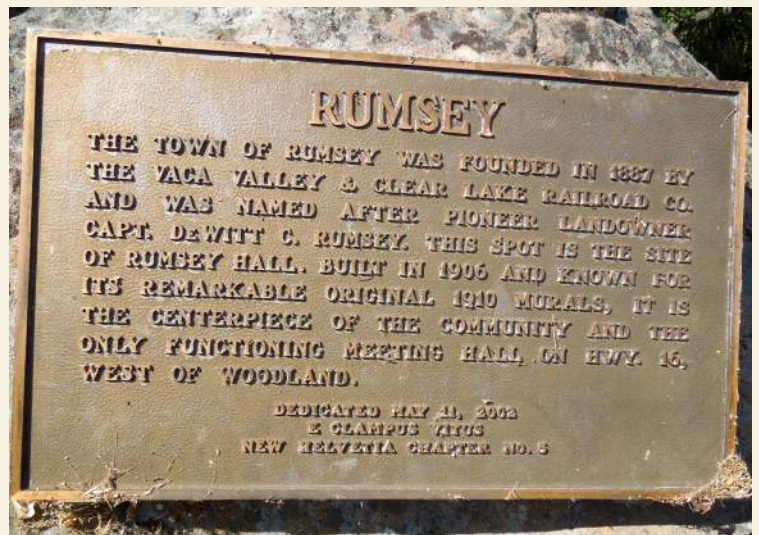
Rumsey Hall above was lovingly restored by Rumsey Improvement Association and acts as one focal point and the terminus each year for the Capay Valley Almond Festival. Built in 1906, it sports murals from 1910 and is the centerpiece of the community, allowing locals and visitors to recapture the mood and glamour of the turn of the 20th century, Rumsey's golden era. The sign at the entrance is taken from the Rumsey RR Depot.

In 2010, Cal-Trans listed the population as 150. The town has a Bed and Breakfast, a lavender farm, and among many new small farms, claims *Full Belly Farms*, one of the first organic farms in the valley.



Rumsey Grade, a rough dirt road that crosses the hills to the Arbuckle area in Colusa County.

Rumsey was laid out from the old 1,900 acre Smith and Rumsey Tract, purchased from William Gordon. It prospered to some extent due to its proximity to a vein of mercury taken out of the surrounding hills in an area know as the Quicksilver area, making Rumsey at one time a major quicksilver producer. Some claim the town was laid out by Captain Rumsey after he persuaded the county to build a road leading to the quicksilver area of northwestern Yolo County. The decline of the market value of quicksilver around the turn of the century may have hastened the town's dependence on farming.



*Doctor "Rod" Scott, everyone's favorite large and small animal vet to the Capay Valley for 27 years until his retirement in 1979. Many of you will recall him as clearly and fondly as I do. He was "Doctor Scott" to us kids, but my dad called him Rod--most adults did. But his given name was Ralph Cleland Scott, Jr., and the story goes that he always wanted to be a cowboy and his admiration of ranchers and cowboys drew him to be a large animal vet. In 2006 I just happened to catch his obituary in the Davis Enterprise and was saddened to see his passing--but fascinated to read about his life.*



**Ralph C. Scott**

*Born in Santiago, Chile on August 19, 1918, to American parents, he spent his early years there, coming to the US in 1925. After attending schools in Berkeley, his love of the cowboy life led him to work on Nevada ranches. In WWII he was a B-17 pilot in the Army Air Corp; shot down over Germany on his 8th mission, he was a POW for a year and escaped twice. With the GI Bill, he was able to attend UCD Veterinary School and graduate in 1952. With a partner he started the Yolo Veterinary Clinic in Woodland, which still exists today.*

*My first memory of him was coming out to our ranch in Hungry Hollow to deliver a calf hung up in a new mother. He patiently explained that a heifer often had hips too narrow for an easy delivery. At 7 years old I joined my dad, Cowboy Tom Monroe, in the barn to watch him calmly try turning the calf by putting his whole arm into the cow...and then listened, heartsick, as he consulted with my dad about which to save, the mother or the calf...and then he took the time to explain to this curious 7-year-old that he had to take a piano wire and cut the dead calf in half to remove it in parts to save the cow--this is NOT an experience a 7-year-old would ever forget! But I still dreamed of being a vet, just like him!*

*Doc Scott made many a visit out to our ranch for the large animals over the years, and treated many of our smaller pets at his clinic in Woodland, the Yolo Veterinary Clinic on Main Street. He had the sad task of putting my cat and her 8 kittens down when I was nine and the mother came down with distemper--I was so distraught and he was so kind. I remember the horror of watching him help my father geld his new stallion. I remember him having to put down my younger brother's dog after I ran over him while learning to drive...The last time I saw him, not much later, was up at the Turkey Camp*

*where Dad and I helped him tie a rope to the exposed hooves of yet another hung-up calf and tie the other end to my horse's saddle horn, moving the horse back to extract the calf--this time with better success for both calf and mother! In later years, "All Creatures Great and Small" became a favorite TV show for me--always reminding me of our beloved Doctor Scott.*

*After retirement, Doc Scott and his wife Elaine traveled extensively and he volunteered to help build needed facilities in small villages in Nicaragua. Well-known for his story-telling, his wit and humor and congenial spirit, he died peacefully at home in 2006 at age 87 years old.*

## Cattle and the Capay Valley



Above: Angus-Hereford-cross cattle at the Turkey Camp--today, as for decades--on the old Duncan-Monroe Ranch. Right: a white-face mixed calf enjoys some spring sun.



Growing up on a cattle (and sheep) ranch meant riding roundup, feeding, fence-mending and helping with the unpleasant tasks of branding, marking and de-horning. My sister and I were spared the messiest and toughest jobs, but we were often there for it and expected to help. When we were very young, she and I were to collect manzanita branches and keep the branding iron fire blazing hot...I will never forget the cries of the calves nor the smell of burning hair...but I realize now that it was a special childhood and one I very much appreciate in retrospect. If I had paid more attention back then, I would not have to be here researching--without my cowboy dad's help!--to find out what my family really experienced in the Capay Valley for over 150 years. So many questions! But it has been a fascinating journey and I have gotten lots of generous help from many an old-timer willing to take the time--so many questions and so little time!

One of the things I was curious about was the breed of cattle on our ranch. I grew up with mostly Hereford--the bull had horns and the cows did not. But I remember when my dad bought an Angus bull and let me name him *Ferdinand* after my favorite children's classic, "Ferdinand the Bull." He was so excited about the new white-face black calves the Hereford cows threw with the black Angus bull. I also remember the dreadful night when it was pouring rain and Dad was late getting back for dinner. Mom sat up in the kitchen for hours and I got up to wait with her. Finally, he came in dripping wet and covered with blood and mud--and a tear-stained face! I had never seen my father cry, so I sat stunned as he slumped, defeated at the kitchen table and told her how his old red cattle truck slid off the sloppy dirt road from the Turkey Camp when Ferdinand shifted his weight and that he did what he could, but the bull was dead. I

The old squeeze-gate and loading chute at the "Turkey Camp," Monroe Ranch.



cried with him, then--for Ferdinand, of course. But I realized years later that he cried for more than that sweet-tempered bull--he must have cost a fortune and represented my young, struggling cowboy father's hopes to build his small herd and support his family. The cowboy life can be so hard.

*Betsy Monroe*

## Angus and Hereford Cattle:

In my memory and from recent historical research, the pure, red-n-white Hereford was the breed of choice in the Capay Valley for at least 100 years. But cattlemen began adding the black Angus to the breed stock in America at the end of the 1800s, and they became more prevalent in this area around the turn-of-the century. My father added his first Angus bull--Ferdinand--about 1960 to cross-breed with his beloved Hereford cows. Apparently, the Angus breed is naturally *polled*--hornless--unlike the Hereford. Breeding Herefords to Angus produces polled calves--no more painful and labor-intensive de-horning! And the black color acts like sunscreen--did you even know that cattle have skin cancer issues?! Especially the utters. An added feature seems to be the gentle nature of the Angus--those scary horned Hereford bulls were gone from our hills and these hand-raised, gentle, black giants took the fear and danger out of our long walks through the herd to get to the school bus-stop on county road 85 as small children, and on the cattle drives and round-ups on foot and horseback in our hills.

Curiosity sent me to some sites on-line to check the history of the introduction of Angus to our herd;

at <http://www.cattle.com/articles/title/Angus+Cattle.aspx> I found:

*The Angus breed began in the northern regions of England. Originally both red and black cattle were equally selected for in attempts to get high quality traits wherever possible. In the latter half of the 18th century, the cattle of the Aberdeen – Angus counties of northeast Scotland were being heavily used for the improvement of other regional cattle herds.*

*One of the most successful English breeds of cattle, the Angus has long been the cattle “business” breed. Its black color is highly sought after in crossbreeding programs as a potential seal of Angus quality. Perhaps the most representative breed in cowherds, the Angus holds a well earned spot amongst all beef breeds.*

*The very first Angus cattle were imported into the U.S. in 1873. George Grant, a Kansas rancher wanted to develop the Angus as his primary breed and introduce it to the region as an ideal beef option. At their first public appearance in*



Above: the modified head-gate/squeeze-chute once used to hold the calves for de-horning, marking and branding, sits rusting on the former Monroe Ranch in the Capay-Hungry Hollow Hills.

*the 1873 Missouri Exposition, the Angus cattle were negatively received. At this time polledness [hornless] was not yet appreciated for its benefits within feedlot cattle, and the black color was too different from common red*

Continued on Page 17



**Doctor Thornton Craig, continued**--more treasures left to us by this interesting man. Here is a reproduction of one of his personal letters, revealing not only his delightful character, but shining a light on the past in Capay Valley.

Letters courtesy of his great-grandson, Dudley Craig--I have dozens of them and will include others in the book being published in January 2015.

Capay Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1922

Dr. Ches. W. Craig  
My Dear Son.

Your welcome letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> reached me yesterday with check included. I will wait until I go to Woodland to have it cashed as I do not want Esparto people to know our business. We'll very little news here very quiet. Mr. Fred Neilson expected to be confined Oct. 23 & has not been sick yet she keeps me at home pretty close. I think a week after she is sick I will go down to the City. I will let you know & you can meet me at 16<sup>th</sup> Street. It is mighty lonesome here these long evening & no place to go & no one to come in. but you need not tell your mother as it would make her feel bad & she would be anxious to come home. We have had very little rain here so far. North wind today & tonight & quite cold. I have been cleaning up the leave & black walnuts this P.M. & putting them in a pile to burn. I have 5 sacks or over of English walnuts & I think I will try & sell some of them. I want your mother to stay down there until she is cured & well.

With much love to you & your family  
Your affectionate father.  
T. Craig M.D.

I just spoke with Hazel Neilson Peterson and asked who Doc Craig would have been waiting to deliver for her mother, Mrs. Fred Neilson, in 1922—it was her brother Lawrence, born November 3. Interesting note: their grandmother Bessie Neilson died a few weeks later and people came to the house to both view the casket and greet the new baby boy...

Left: In this typically affectionate letter from Doctor Thornton Craig to one of his sons, Charles, DDS, in "the City," San Francisco, he mentions that in November 1922 Mrs. Fred Neilson is expecting but "has not been sick yet"--gone into labor? "She keeps me at home" revealing what a lone country doctor's life was like, tending to his flock!

He goes on to say he is lonely, but don't tell Mom or she will feel the need to come home earlier--she is apparently staying with Charles and family while she gets "cured and well"...??

He and his sons have mutual economic interest in the Capay farming, so there is often a check going one way or the other--in this case he says he will wait until he gets to Woodland to cash the one he just got from Charles, as he does not want "the people in Esparto to know our business." This amused me; sounded like my mother in the 1950s and 60s saying she was sure the ladies in the post office read her mail! Gotta love life in a small town!

There is very little rain but the cold North Wind is blowing while he collects leaves and black walnuts for the burn pile and 5 sacks of English walnuts to sell--sounding like a typical winter day in Capay to me!

I love the way he addresses each of his 3 sons in letters, always: My "Dear Son" and "With much love to you and your family, your affectionate father, T. Craig, MD"



In the letter below, Doctor Thornton Craig's wife, the former Lizzie Rhodes, writes to her son and his family two months after the death of her beloved husband...

Chico March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1923.

My dear Children.

A few lines this glorious morning to greet you on the morrow. I planned to write to you yesterday but simply did not get around to it. Bethie and John were washing so I assisted some with the other work, finished a kitchen apron for my self and <sup>off</sup> having a good hot-bath. Read for a while. In the evening Bethie and I took a walk to the P.O. and I was not in the walking mood when we came back.

We returned to Chico last Monday arriving before dark this time. Called by Woodland and John M. called at Houston's office for a few minutes. When went to all florists and I bought a nice bunch of huckleberry, which was in bloom and some very pretty red everlasting leaves (have forgotten the name) for our loved one's grave. The north-wind was blowing so hard we decided the leaves would be blown to pieces so we kept them for another time. The florist said the huckleberry would last for a month or six weeks. John M. put it in water and tied it to the headboard and it had the appearance of a little bush growing at the head of the grave. ~~What time~~ Before when I was down I bought some lovely daffodils and ferns for the grave and they kept fresh for several days. We took a lovely bouquet of china lilies from home one trip and violets another time. I do not know how long we will be in Chico this time. Do not think Bethie will go to Capay when we go again. I have a number of things that I want to look over there and will want to do stay some and do not want to feel hurried so I may decide to remain here for a while alone. May possibly decide to get a room somewhere as I do not want to be alone nights. Can get along nicely during the day and will in all probability spend Sunday writing some where as Sundays are the loneliest day for me in Capay. Mrs. Crawford gave me such

Mrs. Craig was formerly Lizzie Rhodes, born in Brooks in the Capay Valley in 1860 and married to the new doctor to the valley in 1884. The couple had three sons: John Milton in 1885, who would become a mining engineer, but eventually come home to farm for the family in Capay; Thornton, Jr., born in 1887, graduated from UC in 1913 to become a dentist; and Charles Westley, born 1893, also becoming a dentist after graduating from UC. Charles married Maurine Lucas and they would live in the SF Bay Area and have two children, one being H. Rockwell Craig--whom we all knew as HR. Born in the Bay Area, HR and his wife Dorothy would come back to his ancestral home and settle in the Capay area, raising three sons, Scott, Dudley and Todd. For that reason we are lucky to have these precious letters that Charles received from his parents and left to his son HR--and which remained in the estate of his 3 sons, who so generously loaned them to me.

In the letter above, she talks about having gone to Chico to stay with son John and his wife Esther and buying a "nice bunch of huckleberry...for our loved one's grave." She wants to go back to the house in Capay to look over things, but will take a room somewhere else, as she does not want to be alone in their empty Capay house...especially on Sunday, "the loneliest day" for her...once again, the cold North Wind is blowing: *His death occurred on December 20, 1922, unexpectedly...*

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We once had Local Doctors in Esparto and the Capay Valley and when I went looking for information on them I found some interesting source documents at the Yolo County Archives to share with you...

To the County Clerk of Yolo Co., Cal.  
 Sir:—In compliance with Sec. 5, of the "Act" which has been granted by the Board to residents of your County.

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY.  
 Regulate the Practice of Medicine in the State of California, approved 3d April, 1876, I have to inform you that the following persons have been examined and certified by the Board of Examiners of the California State Medical Society.

NAME	RESIDENCE	HAVING DIPLOMA OR LICENSE FROM	STATE OF	DATED	DATE OF CERTIFICATE
Craig Thornton M.D.	Capay	McGill University Montreal Quebec	Canada	March 31, 1876	June 29, 1876
Madkill Rich, D.M.D.	Cashville	McGill University " "	Canada	May 3, 1876	" " 1876
Gordon Ed. A. (M.D.)	Knight Landing	St. Louis Med. College Missouri	Missouri	March 15, 1876	August 19, 1876
Kiew Capay M. " "	Knight Landing	St. Louis Med. College Missouri	Missouri	March 1876	" 19, 1876
Walter Lorenz " "	Woodland	Board of Examiners of the State of California	California	Aug. 17, 1876	" 19, 1876
Houch Albert " "	Dunsmuir P.O. Antelope	Board of Examiners of the State of California	California	Sept 19, 1876	" 19, 1876
Jord Howard M.D.	Woodland	Memphis Med. College Tennessee	Tennessee	1871	Oct 13, 1876
Jackson Geo. H. " "	Woodland	Depart. University of Calif. Cal.	California	May 1871	" 13, 1876
Quinn Ed. " "	Woodland	University of Maryland Maryland	Maryland	March 4, 1865	" 13, 1876
Ross Thomas " "	Woodland	McGill University Montreal Canada	Canada	May 5, 1863	" 13, 1876
Strong Anderson " "	Woodland	St. Louis Med. College Missouri	Missouri	1860	" 13, 1876

March 22, 1935.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

The document above was sealed in San Francisco in July 6, 1876. I left the other Yolo County doctors on here for interest, but my main focus was Doctor Thornton Craig at the top, about to begin his practice in Capay. He was first certified in June, 1876, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, having just graduated from McGill University there.

The other two documents at left certify the two Esparto doctors mentioned by Bill Harris on page 3: Frank McManus in 1935 and Webb Garcelon in 1945.

All documents courtesy of the Yolo County Archives.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, That Frank Paul McManus M. D., of Woodland, Yolo County, California, is a Graduate of Washington University Medical Dept. Medical College, an incorporated Medical College of Missouri; that he has been in the actual practice of his profession at least five years; that he is reputable in his profession, and that he is a fit and proper person to act as Medical Examiner in Lunacy under the provisions of Section 5000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

March 27, 1945.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, that Webb Daniel Garcelon M. D., of Esparto, Yolo County, California, is a Graduate of St. Louis University School of Medicine, Missouri, an incorporated medical college; that he has been in the actual practice of his profession at least five years; that he is reputable in his profession, and that he is a fit and proper person to act as a Medical Examiner under the provisions of Section 5000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

G. B. McDonald  
 Judge of the Superior Court



## Cattle Crossing!



### Cattle in Capay Valley, Con't from page 13:

coloration seen in the familiar cattle. Angus ranchers however were not dissuaded and continued to promote the Angus and also began to crossbreed it with the hardy Texas Longhorn. The results were polled, very hardy black calves – a very appealing cross to past critics. A heavy importation of Angus cattle direct from Scotland followed, at its peak 1200 cattle were brought in from 1878 to 1883. [NOTE: our local Duncans' ancestors are from the Aberdeen area, Scotland]

The American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association was founded on Nov 21, 1883 in Chicago, Illinois. In 1950, it was renamed the American Angus Association. Today, it holds the distinction of being the largest purebred beef registry in the world.

Angus beef hardly needs an introduction; it is renowned for its fine marbling texture and superlative eating qualities. The Angus given a minimal amount of days on feed will manage to repeatedly turn out Prime and Choice grade meats. The Certified Angus Beef program was the first of its class. It provides Angus beef producers an increase in the marketability of their stock directly leading to higher premiums. For the consumer, it provides a consistent eating experience and the assurance of knowing what one is purchasing. In order to qualify under the phenotype requirements of the CAB programs, the cattle must exhibit at least 51% black coloration as well as the absence of non-Angus traits (Brahman humps, dairy cattle conformation). The surge in the CAB program has led to a wide-reaching escalation of breeding black into cattle stock, most often using Angus bulls.

Angus bulls are an excellent crossbreeding option. Breeding to an Angus bull virtually eliminates calving problems. The resulting calves are born polled minimizing injuries in feedlot situations. The Angus' black coloration also serves as "sun block" of sorts, helping to prevent cancers and sun burning of the udder. The ChiAngus (Angus x Chianina) and the SimAngus (Angus x Simmental) are only two examples of Angus hybrids that carry the qualities of both breeds making leaner, more efficient grain converters with higher performance numbers.

While the high quality traits of beef are not exclusive in the Angus, their numbers increased due to their consistency in producing quality...It is a docile breed, relatively hardy; cows calve easily and have excellent maternal instincts. At feedlots its meat quality proves its superiority time and again. When in doubt, it is the cattleman tradition to go black—a time tested strategy that has served them well.

And from another source I found information on Polling at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polled\\_livestock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polled_livestock) :

*Polled livestock is a term for livestock without horns, in species which normally are horned. The term refers both to breeds or strains which are naturally polled through selective breeding and also to naturally horned animals which have been dehorned.[1] Natural polling occurs in cattle, yaks, water buffalo and goats, and in these it affects both sexes equally; however in sheep, both sexes may be horned, both polled, or only the females polled.*

### Scurs

*Naturally polled animals may have scurs – small, loose, horny growths in the skin where their horns would be. In cattle, this trait has been traced to a separate gene (on a different chromosome) from that responsible for polling. However, the presence of the allele for scurs in cattle can only*

*be seen in a polled animal, because horns replace the scurs in horned animals.[6] Similar scurs may also occur where dehorning of a naturally horned animal has been incomplete.*

### Reasons for polling

*Polled livestock are preferred by many farmers for a variety of reasons, the foremost being that horns can pose a physical danger to humans, other livestock and equipment. Horns may also interfere with equipment used with livestock (such as a cattle crush), or they may become damaged during handling.*

*In other circumstances, horned animals may be preferred, for example, to help the animal defend itself against predators, to allow the attachment of head yokes to draught oxen, to provide a hand-hold on smaller animals such as sheep, or for aesthetic reasons – in some breeds the retention of horns is required for showing.*



## The California Buckeye Tree -- more commonly known to the Capay Valley locals of old as *Horse Chestnuts*...

...but scientifically, they are *Aesculus californica* (Spach) Nuttall, according to "The Natural History of Western Trees." They range from the foothills and valleys of California Coastal Range, between Mendocino County and south to San Luis Obispo County, and up the slopes of the Sierra Nevada and Mount Shasta mountains up to 5000 feet. Oh, and pop up all over our beautiful Capay Valley! You will have seen various place-names in this area such as the historic Buckeye Township near Winters and Buckeye Creek--and many others. The early pioneers and forty-niners dubbed it the California Pear due to the pod color and shape before the more familiar orange-brown seeds appear--

which someone thought looked like the eyes of a buck, rumor has it, and others saw it looking like a chestnut...of course my dad would call a horse's dropping "horse chestnuts," so perhaps that similarity in appearance has something to do with it...? Sadly, for the early pioneers, they are inedible. They do produce a lovely flower, though: against pale grey bark and dark green leaves, the pink-to-white flowers are on long stems with dense narrow petals about one inch long with 5 to 7 stamen with long filaments extruding...OK, kind of hard to imagine, so see the block print above right taken from "The Natural History of Western Trees." See another lovely block print of the whole tree in bloom on the back page.

The oldest and biggest specimens may be seen in the Alder Flats of the Point Reyes peninsula near Inverness, but we have plenty, here and there.

Barren of leaves over half the year, the pale gray and crooked boughs make no two buckeye trees alike. Ours look more like broad-spreading bushes, up to 12-15 feet high, though the rare tree will get up to 40 feet tall in the 100 years it takes them to mature. Most people choose not to plant them in their yards--unless they enjoy raking leaves--so they are mostly seen growing wild.



Left: a Buckeye Tree in upper Capay Valley along Highway 16, recently photographed by Jim Hiatt with the foliage gone for the winter. He hung his shirt on the tree to give it perspective--

perhaps 12-15' tall. At the top he displays 2 balls in his hand. Below: another lovely block print shows the balls and leaves.

Photos courtesy of Jim Hiatt



## Dave the Dove--A Children's Tale of Friendship

Dave the dove was found at the Capay Cemetery, fallen from his nest and flopping helplessly in the road, still in pin-feathers. Betsy Monroe, visiting her relatives' graves, (assuming he was a ubiquitous Capay Valley "mourning dove," due to his cemetery location...) picked him up and took him to her home in Petaluma in a shoebox. She soaked puffed millet in milk and fed him by hand (just as her mother used to do in Hungry Hollow) until he was fully feathered and grew too big for her parakeet cage. She put him into an outdoor 4-foot-square cube of a cage in her Petaluma yard, much to the amusement of her 4 feral rescue cats! Later, when she wanted to move to the Capay Valley, she left him with Jack McClure and Dave found a new way of life in Two Rock, west of Petaluma:

*David Dove grew up in Petaluma. He had a large cage to fly in, and he could sit on his perch while he watched the cats in the yard.*

*The cats were not mean to David. They were just being cats. So they'd get up on the roof of his cage and act like they were going to eat him. But they never did, of course.*

*Then David moved to a ranch near Tomales. His cage was under the trees, and he loved his new home. Then another dove came to visit him.*

*David had never seen another dove. He cooed back and forth, and they began their friendship. One morning, the dad saw this, and said to the mom, "We have to let him out of his cage. He wants to fly free."*

*"But he's never been free," said the mom. "What if a hawk gets him? He doesn't know how to protect himself."*

*So they agreed to ask David what he wanted to do.*

*"David," said the dad, "you can choose. Would you rather have a safe life inside your cage, or fly free and take your chances?"*

*David looked at the dad and said, "Duh!"*

*So Dad opened the cage, and David flew up into the trees. The next day, as the dad walked to the garden, he saw David close to the feral cats in the yard. "David, these are not like the house cats you grew up with. They will try to catch you. Be very careful."*

*David looked up at Dad and said, "I can handle this. Chill."*

*Now, the cats didn't know what to do about David. After all, their instincts were to catch birds and eat them. And David knew this, of course. But he was very persistent.*

*He would get close to the cats, but not too close. He would fly away at the last minute. But he kept on hanging around the cats, every day. Day after day he would just be there. Soon the cats got used to him. Sure, every once in awhile a cat would try to jump on him, but David would fly away noisily, and the cats learned they didn't like the noise. Besides, they grew to like David.*

*So after a few weeks, David was hanging with the cats. He sat on the arm of the rocker on the front porch as Uno was sleeping. It was sort of a slumber party.*

*Then some kittens were born. Like all kittens, they were playful and cute. And they liked to get into mischief. Their mom, Nortina, had been a mom before, and*



*would simply roll her eyes as they jumped off the porch, or fell off the cat tower.*

*So David decided to be their nanny. Mostly, he just hangs out with them.*

*Watching. Being around when Nortina is off hunting gophers. Or giving them a stern look when they're too frisky at the top of the cat tower.*

*And when it's nap time, David is there, watching out for them.*

*Sometimes when you choose to be a good friend, it doesn't matter who you are. Anyone can be a good friend. Story & photos, Jack McClure*



As lovely as they are, ring-neck doves are not native to the Capay Valley--they are an "invasive species" of dove, here...check out: <http://www.birdlife.org> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring-necked\\_Dove](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring-necked_Dove), which gives us:

*The Ring-necked Dove (Streptopelia capicola), also known as the Cape Turtle Dove and the Half-Collared Dove, is a widespread and abundant bird in...southern and eastern Africa. Their name comes from a black patch of feathers on the back of their necks. The rest of their feathers are a pale brownish-grey, with darker colors on their backs.*



**A New Sheriff is Elected in Yolo County, 1938--carrying on after his father James William Monroe retired in 1938, Forrest Duncan Monroe will serve continuously for the next 32 years: 1939-1971**

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.

NOTE: A 1906 entry in OI' Doc Thornton Craig's diaries revealed what I had been looking for: Uncle Forrest Duncan Monroe, future 32-year Yolo County sheriff, was delivered in the Capay Valley to James Wm. and Elvira Grey (Duncan) Monroe; read what Doc wrote:

**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.

*July 18, 1906 - "Jas. Munro to accouchment boy, born at 3:45 \$20" -Uncle Forrest!! Then the doctor re-crossed Cache Creek and visited on the 19th and 20th to check on "Grey" and her second child and first son--future sheriff Forrest D.*

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, James "Sunny Jim" Monroe. I drew heavily from his memoirs, published by the Daily Democrat Newspaper the year the sheriff retired in 1938. I have also found news articles and the Sheriff Department Scrapbooks at the Yolo County Archives, 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 D. Monroe.

I am simultaneously writing their book, which I will publish in 2015:

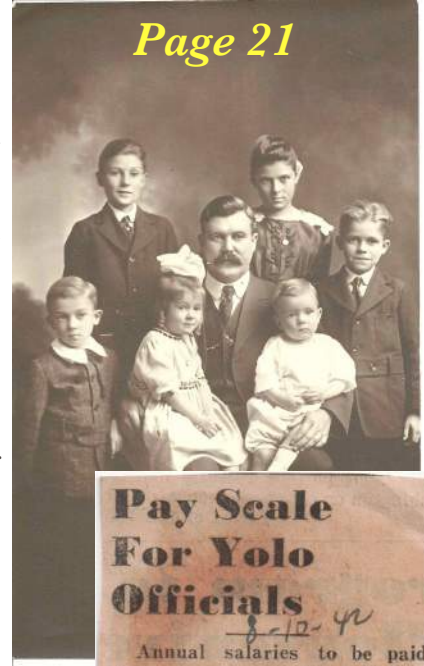
**MONROE FOR SHERIFF**  
 + JAMES WM. AND FORREST D.,  
 60 CONSECUTIVE YEARS  
 SERVING YOLO COUNTY 1911 TO 1971 +

**READS LIKE A WILD WEST NOVEL!**  
 COMPILED FROM THE MEMOIRS OF "SUNNY JIM" NEWS ARCHIVES AND THE SHERIFFS' SCRAP BOOKS



Proud Papa, "Sunny Jim" James Monroe and his growing family. At left, about the time he was elected to his first term as Yolo County Sheriff in 1911; surrounding him clockwise from top right are his wife, Elvira "Grey" (Duncan), Forrest D., seated is Wyatt, Jim and Mary. Photo at right, in about 1918 when his last child, my father Tom, was born, are clockwise starting with Mary at top right, Jim, John, Aytla, Wyatt and future sheriff Forrest D.

The first four children were born in Capay Valley on Grey Duncan's parents' ranch on county road 85, just north of the town of Capay over Cache Creek in the 1879 home which still stands today. When "Sunny Jim" was elected supervisor and then sheriff, he bought and remodeled for his growing family a home at 740 College Street, Woodland.



### Pay Scale For Yolo Officials

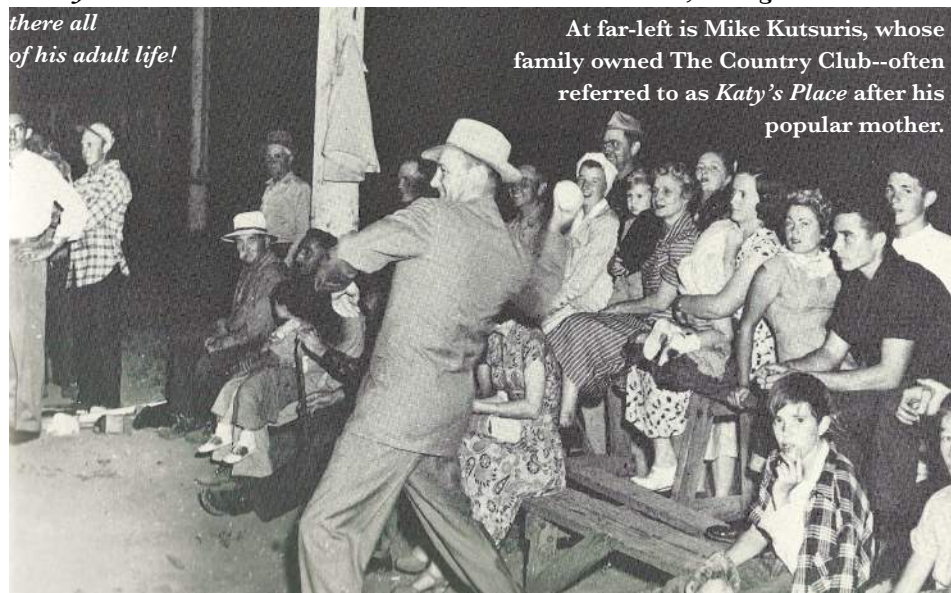
Annual salaries to be paid Yolo county elective officials and leading appointive officers follow:

- Supervisors, \$1,200 each;
- Harry Saunders, clerk, \$3,000;
- Fred Porter, auditor, \$3000;
- Mrs. Eleanor K. Bandy, superintendent of schools, \$2,250;
- Roy Cole, treasurer, \$2,800;
- Byron Hillhouse, assessor, \$3,500;
- R. W. Woods, tax collector, \$2,400;
- C. C. McDonald, district attorney, \$3,000;
- C. C. Stitt, surveyor, \$1,500;
- F. D. Monroe, sheriff, \$3,300;
- Le R. Pierce, recorder,

Below: in 1948, Sheriff Forrest D. Monroe throws out the first baseball at "Katy's Place," a popular tavern in Capay with room for a baseball game out back--Capay had a baseball team! Like his father before him--"Sunny Jim" Monroe, 28-year sheriff of Yolo County--Forrest was very civic-minded in his 32 years in office, and especially enjoyed visiting the Capay Valley where he was born. Comment from Bill Harris: "Your Grandfather, when I stop to think about it, was very bright. He could turn every event into an opportunity while still maintaining law and order. In the '40's we occasionally hit the joints on the levee of the Sacto River (they were serving after 2 AM). Your grandfather's picture hung on every wall." It hung at the Winter's Buckhorn Bar, too, through the 1980s. And in Capay today, they still have pictures of Sunny Jim and Forrest among the many interesting photos at Katy's old place--now *The Capay Junction*--still a local favorite, often offering live country or blues music and dancing. Check it out!

In news clippings from the *Woodland Record* at right we see that Forrest D. was a popular sheriff--and that his pay in 1940 was \$3,300 a year. (Courtesy of Yolo County Archives)

NOTE: Seated in white hat at left below is the delightful George Coburn; he was present the day Forrest was born in 1906 at the Duncan-Monroe Ranch, having there all of his adult life!



At far-left is Mike Kutsuris, whose family owned The Country Club--often referred to as *Katy's Place* after his popular mother.

### Forrest D. Monroe Is Good Sheriff

There has been considerable enthusiasm manifested over the good work of F. D. Monroe, sheriff of Yolo county.

He is ably fitted for this important office by training and experience and his selection is generally conceded as being a very wise one on the part of the voters he has so ably represented.

Sheriff Monroe is by no means an unknown quantity--all of his actions, politically and otherwise, have been marked by honesty of purpose and success. Few, if any, have a firmer hold on the affections of the people. He not only holds their friendship, but their respect and confidence as well. It is therefore fitting indeed, that he should have been chosen for this honor and it goes without saying that his administration is of a constructive character that stamps him indelibly as a man to be both admired and reckoned with.

Sheriff Monroe is one public officer who, on the strength of his own record as a popular citizen of large capabilities, should command the support of all friends of good government.



## Isn't it a sin to kill a Meadowlark, too!?!

...to paraphrase author Harper Lee in her 1960 novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, through the wise words of her protagonist, Atticus Finch, one of literature's great, ideal father figures:

"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..." **Meadowlark!** OK, so the novel's title refers to a crime against mockingbirds, but the sentiment holds true for our lovely late-winter visitors, the meadowlarks, surely. Their varied songs are magical and they do us no harm, but only bring us delight. When my father realized that I shared his love of their songs, he taught me to whistle to them--and get an answer! And once, in my moody teen years, when I was feeling especially blue and unable to shake it, insisting that I just could not think of one dang thing to be happy about (no doubt there was some boy in the story...) he sat in thought for several minutes and then said, "Think of the Meadowlark's song!" We whistled their song together and the healing began...What blues? What broken heart? HA!

So, I got ahold of my bird-man of Hungry Hollow, Jim Hiatt, and asked him what he could tell me about this beloved bird..

Text by Jim Hiatt, bird-man of Hungry Hollow:

*Few folks in the Hungry Hollow or Capay Valley area do not at least have a cursory or subconscious familiarity with our beloved Western Meadowlark, *Sturnella neglecta*. They are about as eternally an avian fixture here as we have, and are as ubiquitous and normal a member of our country fauna as jackrabbits and buzzards.*

*In Birds of North America it is found on page 638. On the other side of the U.S. they are blessed with the Eastern Meadowlark, which are very similar in appearance and song as the Western, but these are distinct species. These lovely things are a bird of the open field, and will perch in deciduous trees during the winter before the leaves reappear, even those around buildings and driveways. They don't normally show up in your back yard, as their lifestyle and needs are exactly met from farming and ground cultivation, since that's what gives rise to the bugs they eat and the seeds as well. Freshly-mown alfalfa hay gives them a fresh, though temporary, plate of food with the insects this exposes. Meadowlarks are a walking bird, just like others that frequent these open fields. They, like Brewer's Blackbirds and many others common to us here, are not likely to show up on anyone's "endangered species" listing any time soon, happily.*



*Western Meadowlark*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western\\_Meadowlark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Meadowlark) - mw-head[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western\\_Meadowlark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Meadowlark) - p-search

Not to be confused with the Eastern Meadowlark, a different species, our darling fellow sits out in the middle of fields atop stalks of grain, difficult to photograph well, so I downloaded a nice picture from good ol' Wikipedia, seen above.

When a fence post is not available, they are happy to perch on grain and shrubs to sing--near their food and nesting sites. Common this time of year in western North America, they will partially migrate toward Mexico in the dead of winter. Feeding mostly on insects like beetles and grasshoppers, they are a friend to the farmer--who gets to enjoy their songs of complex bubblings and whistlings in descending pitch, a nice accompaniment to their hard labors! So lovely to hear!

They build nests of domed grass cups, hidden in tall grass, and raise their annual brood between March and August. All the singing they do this time of year is the prelude!

*Betsy Monroe*



Jim Hiatt continues: *Although not normally a bird of upper altitudes, they are found in the hilly areas hereabouts, and I've even seen them as high up as in the cottonwoods on the west side of Fiske Creek Lake, and even in the limited grasslands of the Homestake Lake area. They are pretty strictly a bird of the open country, though they can be found in field areas just outside towns. Not a big city bird--smart little things.*

*They are gregarious in nature and do pretty much keep to flocks most of the time. They are most notably known for their songs, which are unique among our birds and almost beyond lovely. Consummately musical. Some of my own earliest childhood memories are of enjoying the several specific sequences of notes that these lovelies are known for. The songs are normally a series of very distinct groupings of specific note sequences. I know them all, as do many of us who pay appreciative attention to these. The specific sequences are not usually mixed with others, but are repeated again and again from the same perch for a time before they flit off. The sequences are usually 2-3 seconds long, but a very packed 2-3 seconds, like phrases. You have to hear to appreciate, and if you spend any considerable period in the country, you will gradually get to know them all--usually sung out from a perch on a fence post or even power line or tree top, with their beaks open as wide as wide can be. As well as I know them, I'm sure that they're songs are either territorial, mating calls, or a form of saying, in effect, "I am here; you are there; we are all here!" --a saying I borrowed from my old Ornithology Professor Nicholas Udvardy, one of the best birders in the world in the 1970s, under whom I was privileged to have studied. That was his homespun explanation of the mutual reassurance that these were all together an extended family. Meadowlarks also have an almost equally melodious single "CHIRP!" They can even make a single note musically worth hearing. They also have periods of time, often in winter, in which they are silent. If only they could tell those of us with a genuine interest what each sequence means, and why they are just as silent at other times...I would love to know!*

*These lovelies are easily spotted by the brilliant golden yellow breast and face, and a crescent-shaped "bib" on the upper breast. Above they are brown and white in striping and spotting. The male and female are essentially identical in plumage. These are a relatively chunky bird with more short and rounded wings, thus accounting for the rapid wingbeat accompanied with lots of gliding as well. They live an average of 10 years, and have a nesting practice that is unique among our valley birds: their nest is literally an "igloo" of grasses, mostly; an upside down dome with an opening on the outside, with one brood a year with 3-7 eggs. In my bird egg collection as a youngster, I had one of their spotted eggs which came out of the first nest I'd seen once while rabbit hunting. The nest looked different from anything around it, and upon observing the nest construction and keeping one of the eggs, a visit to my Audubon's Land Bird Guide taught me what I'd just found.*

*And while I know Betsy will not like this story, one of my childhood memories is of my Grandfather telling me of times when much of the family's food was shot for the dinner table and he would go out after school with his shotgun and shoot 3 or 4 of these for his school lunch the next day. Those were the times in which our menfolk shot Canadian Geese along the Arbuckle Hills by the buckboard load in season for the family table; when families of 6-8 kids were the average and times could be tough and food scarce. Sorry, Betsy! But these beauties are, indeed, a joy to get to know--and are safe from my dining table! Sing on, magical Meadowlarks!*



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**Elizabeth Monroe, writer-editor**

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FROM:  
**THE GREATER CAPAY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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**CAPAY VALLEY**



Otter photo: Douglas Nareau



*River Otters (above) are making a comeback in Cache Creek and local rivers! Less pesky than their buddies the beavers--whose handwork is seen at right at Cache Creek Nature Preserve.*

Photo: Jim Hiatt

