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# CAPAY VALLEY

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Volume eighteen

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The Greater Capay Valley  
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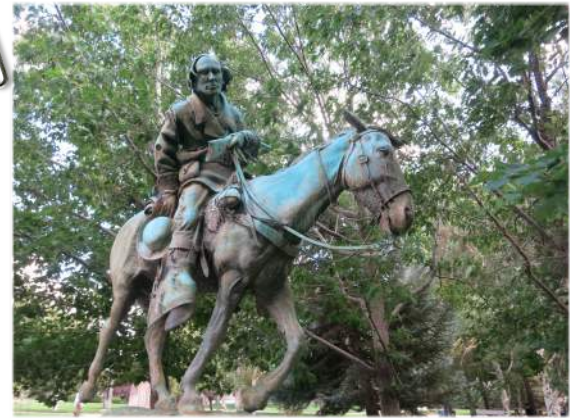
EMONROE@GREATERCAPAYVALLEY.ORG

## Pictures, Stories and Research to reveal and celebrate a very special place--the Capay Valley!

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

As I sit here writing the last of 18 volumes of the quarterly journal for The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society, I wonder what can be said "in closing." I came *home* to the Capay Valley to research and write about my own Scottish pioneer ancestors who settled here beginning in the 1850s, and I embarked on an unexpected journey of my own—though not nearly so arduous as that of the *pioneers* to this special place! I have been blessed at every turn, both in finding what I was looking for and by the many people I have met who had their own stories to tell—and who so kindly let me into their lives! But to close this chapter of my research and writing—and to get out three books that are the product of the last 4 years—I am taking a break from the journals. So, I am sharing a few more family histories I have collected, and tales of other places my search has finally taken me—to the arduous pioneer trails leading to Oregon and California, and even a journey to Scotland!

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Above: Genoa, Nevada, way-station for weary pioneers—the oldest established town in Nevada; a statue of early explorer Kit Carson; and a pioneer cabin as art... seen in and around Reno and the Carson Valley



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Special thanks to: my contributing hobby-ornithologist, Jim Hiatt in Hungry Hollow; contributing families; local historians Douglas Nareau and John Gallardo, as always, so generous; and certainly all my faithful subscriber-members, donors and advertisers! I couldn't do this without you! And a big shout-out to my printer-angel, Jane! AND Cris Rominger re-designed our website as a donation in her father's name, so see what she and her daddy Gene Rominger have done for us at our newly revamped [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org)

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Buckeye St., Woodland, CA 95695

*Nevada Historical Society*  
1650 N. Virginia St, Reno, NV  
89503



Great Horned Owl on Halloween 2014  
by Jim Hiatt in Hungry Hollow

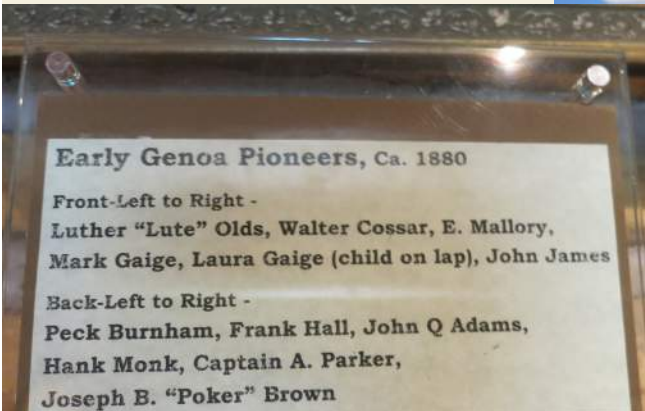
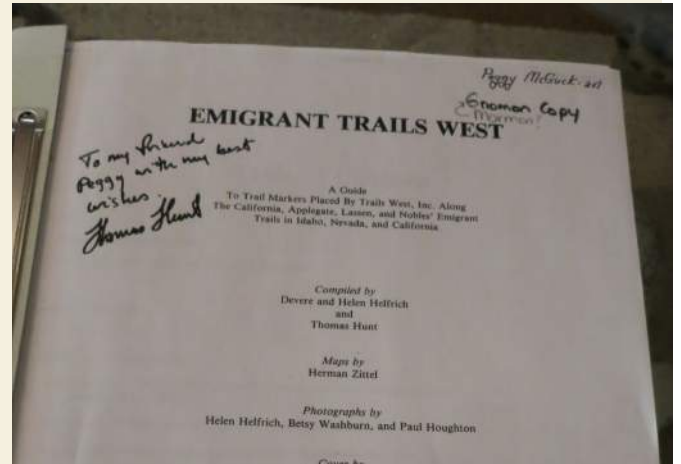
After getting out Volume 17, I spent a week in Nevada marveling at the paths that had to be taken for my ancestors to get to Oregon and California. I found the trails, hiked some of the mountain paths, and spent hours in museums and reading pioneer diaries—*wow!* My father always said, when we kids whined about how hard we had to work on the historic Duncan-Monroe family ranch, “Your great grandfather crossed the plains and mountains at 21 years old with his 12-year-old kid brother, driving cattle for Doc. Lane; do you think they whined?!” Well, yes, we assumed they *did*, but that was beside the point—but now I have a whole new respect for what they had to endure. Not to mention our great great grandmother who crossed while pregnant and with a 2-year-old in tow! *Really?* Taking the wagons apart and pulling them up the cliffs with oxen to rebuild them on the other side just to cross the Sierras? *IN SNOW?!* And this after crossing the 40-mile desert with little water, and that which they did find was sulfurous and deadly! Many of these pioneers were not-very-distant descendants from *pioneers* to the *New World*—mine mostly from Scotland. Some were escaping persecution and some just wanted a better life—always in search of land to own and a new way to live. Sadly, they would displace others who were here before them and they would often *own* others to make it all possible—there are skeletons in all our closets, but I had to look inside to find out who we are and from whence we came...it has been an amazing journey!



## What's Your Ancestral Story?

Exploring what it took for the pioneers to get to California and Oregon is itself an amazing adventure—though not nearly as amazing as what they had to go through! My Monroe ancestors went by Oregon Trail and settled first in the Eugene area, eventually moving to the Buckeye area of California where Sheriff James William Monroe would be born in the 1860s. My Duncan ancestors came directly over the California Trail & Carson River Trail to El Dorado for the Gold and then to the Capay Valley in the 1850s...my Franklins and Campbells I am still working on...

<http://emigranttrailswest.org/>



California Goldrush! most people think of 1849-50 when they think of the first rush of pioneers to California—and they would be right—but they had to follow trails created by explorers who came before them: Jed Smith, Kit Carson, John C. Fremont, et al...

According to Maurice S. Sullivan: in the 1820s, Jedediah Smith “*was the first white man to cross the future state of Nevada, the first to traverse Utah from north to south and from west to east; the first American to enter California by the overland route...the first white man to scale the High Sierra, and the first to explore the Pacific hinterland from San Diego to the banks of the Columbia River*” — *American National Biography* (1999); Morgan (1953, 1964), *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*, p. 7; Dale (1941, 1991), *The explorations of William H. Ashley and Jedediah Smith – 1822–1829*, p. 175.

Early histories of the Capay Valley mention that Jed Smith followed Cache Creek for some distance as he passed through early California. Local gal Nora Covington tells me her family can trace their local Smith line back to this early explorer!

Following in his footsteps—figuratively and sometimes literally—were men such as Kit Carson, for whom the Nevada Carson River and Valley are named, and John C. Fremont, with whom he explored in the 1840s.

Goldminers would then follow in those footsteps and wagon trails to get over the Sierras to find that elusive Gold! One of many diary accounts I stumbled onto actually mentions Cache (Cash) Creek as a miner took forays from his mine in El Dorado to scout out the potential of other claims to stake—and maybe farmlands? His account was so similar to my own great grandfather it is eerie, so I scanned a copy of a transcribed page of his diary, seen at right; *The Diary of Randall Fuller*, excerpted in *Overland Journal* vol 6 #4 1988.

**Randall Fuller’s diary—phonetic spellings, such at Woolscates for Wolfskills (see vol 8) near today’s Winters, etc...**

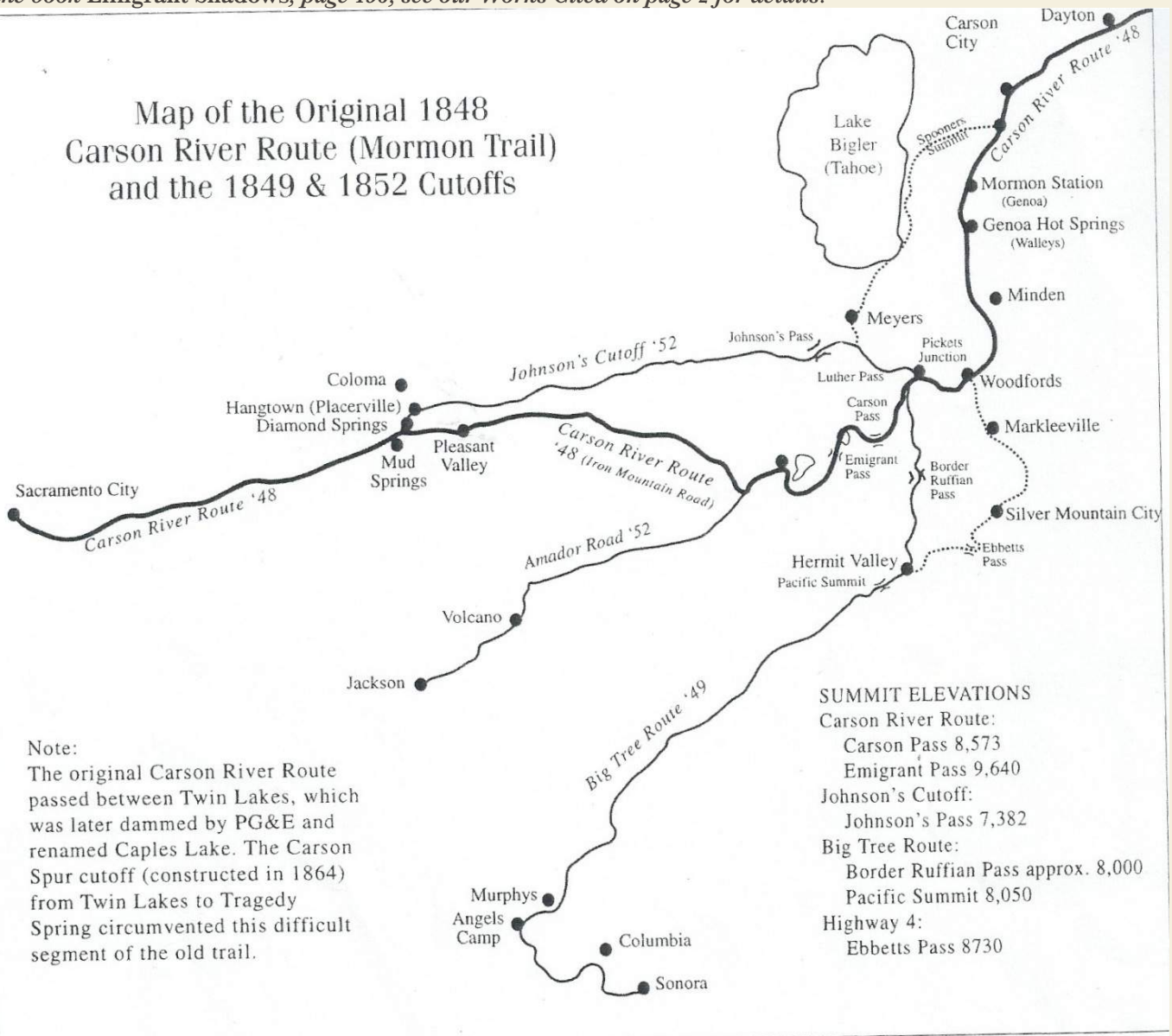
I left the ranch the last of June and went to the foling places  
sacrament city Ring gold Weever Ville Hang town cold  
springs Coloma Union city and back home a gain the dis-  
tance 140 miles up to July Sunday the 6th 1851. July 7th I left  
the ranch 10 miles a bove sacramento city to look at the contry  
the first day I went to pewter creek 50 miles by the way of  
freemont and cash creek I staid all nite at woolscates  
the 9th I went from Woolscates to nappa city by the way of  
balkers and suson valey the distance a bout 40 miles  
on the 10th I left nappa to santa rosea valey by the way of  
sonoma 12 miles from nappa to sonoma and 18 miles from  
sonoma to santarosea the distance 30 miles. Left san-  
tarosea on the 11th and went to Rucian River the distance  
from santarosea 22 miles at Widow Fitchs plase or ranch  
left here a bout noon folowed down the river a bout 6  
miles and then struck of from the river to bedago staid all  
night at bedago the distance that I traveled to day is 37  
miles left bedago and returned home by the way of Valejo  
the capital and benica the hol distance that I traveled on  
this tripe is a bout 374 miles.

**NOTE: Cash Creek and Pewter Creek = Cache and Putah**

Cash creek is a hansom contry situated in a hansom part of  
the contry wild oats groes spontaiones is good but  
rather dry for farming perpues. Pewter creek extendes with  
wildes oats in a bundantes and the land is vary fertile and  
timber cares more plenty on cash creek. A fine valey near bar-  
kers and running water the year a round cash creek dryes  
up in the sumer in the a bove vales oak timber Suson  
is a vary hansom valey but rather dry no water in the  
sumer wild oates groes in a bundantes but rather dry to  
farming a spesimal [especially] for raising garden or good for  
raising wheat and barley and oates and the greatest contry in  
the world for stock the next valey below this is nappa  
Valey and one of the best vales in the world good for grain  
and vgtables and grain and general grass and good water and  
readwood in this valey wild oats at the loer end of the  
valey The next below is Sonoma a vary hansom and  
healthy valey and good water springs and a small creek a run-

Getting to California in the 1840-50s...map courtesy of Nevada Historical Society; from the book *Emigrant Shadows*, page 158; see our Works Cited on page 2 for details.

Map of the Original 1848 Carson River Route (Mormon Trail) and the 1849 & 1852 Cutoffs



Note:  
 The original Carson River Route passed between Twin Lakes, which was later dammed by PG&E and renamed Caples Lake. The Carson Spur cutoff (constructed in 1864) from Twin Lakes to Tragedy Spring circumvented this difficult segment of the old trail.

Once the Major Trail to California, the Carson River Route Spawned Many of Today's Highways

1. The Carson River Route from Johnson's Pass (Diamond Springs) to Sacramento served as the basis for later U.S. Highway 50. To the east, in Nevada, the Carson River Route parallels U.S. Highway 50, from a point immediately west of Ragtown westerly to the south end of Carson City. From there to Diamond Springs, U.S. Highway 50 more or less follows the Johnson Cutoff.
2. That portion of the Carson River Route from the intersection of U.S. Highway 395 and State Route 88 in Minden westerly to the Iron Mountain Road turnoff west of Caples Lake, evolved into State Route 88.
3. The Big Tree Route, which emigrants used to reach the southern mines of the Mother Lode, is now Highway 4.

**Other Descendants of Early Settlers in the Capay Valley** have been willing to give me their histories, stories and pictures and here are a few: Gladney, Hayes and Hambleton. As the Hambletons of Capay Valley tie into my own ancestral lines, I will start with that. I was contacted by Harry Hamilton (nee Hambleton) via my family tree on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) and he had this to share, explaining for me how my great grandfather Wyatt Godfrey Duncan came by cattle drive to the gold fields and both families eventually settled in Capay Valley:

On 24 April 1850, Dr. E.C. LANE, of Barry County, MO, hired Wyatt and William DUNCAN, Benjamin FRANKLIN, and three or four other young men to take cattle to California to start a cattle business. They arrived in California, probably around the gold fields (Mud Springs?) of El Dorado County in 1 September 1850. LANE and Wyatt DUNCAN would later form a partnership to raise Cattle in Yolo County, CA. and still later, Wyatt would strike out on his own to become one of Yolo County's wealthiest and best known residents of the Capay Valley. Ben returned to Barry County, but returned with his wife prior to the start of the Civil War and Wyatt Duncan married FRANKLIN's daughter (32 years his junior) in 1879.

Who were the other men on the cattle drive? I suspect that my ggg grandfather, Abraham HAMBLETON (HAMILTON) and his son James were on that cattle drive. They left Barry Co in 1850 for the gold fields and returned to Barry County in 1852. James married Wyatt's and William Duncan's sister, Eliza, in Barry County. In 1857 Abraham and James brought their families back to Yolo County [Capay Valley], about the same time as Ben FRANKLIN, who had returned to MO, also took his wife [Elvira Wright—pregnant and with a 2-year-old in tow] to California.

**When I asked about the likely route, he wrote:**

Getting back to the original cattle drive. The trail I was thinking of was the Cherokee Trail. The first wagon train was a combined Cherokee Indian and a group of whites coming out of Arkansas. It started in southeast Oklahoma near Stillwell. By 1852 it was very heavily used by people coming out of Arkansas and Missouri and Kansas. People coming out of southwest Missouri (where Barry County is located), essentially headed nearly due west before picking up the Cherokee Trail in northeast Oklahoma. The trail took them northwest into central Kansas where it joined the Santa Fe trail to about Pueblo, Colorado. The trail then turned north running along the Rockies to Wyoming, then headed west across the mountains (lots of branches and spurs here, but basically running along what is today the Wyoming/Colorado border) before joining the California Trail at Fort Bridger. They may have then gone down into Salt Lake, taking the Hastings Cutoff south of

the lake. Even though this is a big chunk of desert to travel across, it was the most direct route to the gold fields. This was of the most widely used routes for people headed directly for the gold fields and central valley. It was used a lot to bring cattle to the minors. This also the route of the Baker/Fancher Wagon Train that was massacred at Mountain Meadows, Utah on 11 September 1857. A Hamilton oral tradition is that when they returned to California in 1857, they came across the Massacre site and buried those that hadn't been buried.

From what we think we've found, they crossed the Sierra Nevada dropping down into what became the Beale Air Force Base area. This is a guess on my part, but again, it would make sense because it would be basically in the middle of the gold fields.

The DUNCAN story, with the specific dates are written up in various books, including:

*History of the State of California and Biographical Record of the Sacramento Valley, California*, by J. M. Guinn, The Chapman Publishing Co., Chicago, 1906

*History of Yolo County California*, Tom Gregory, Historic Record Company, Los Angeles, CA, 1913, 365-367

*Capay Valley: The Land and the People 1846-1900*, Ada Merhoff, Roger Franke, 115 Dourt St., Woodland, CA

Our HAMBLETON (HAMILTON) family history (or tradition) indicated that Abraham and one or two of sons had gone to CA in the 1850s and that they had returned by steamer, via Panama, to New Orleans then back up to Barry County. They came back to California in 1857 to settle in Yolo and Yuba Counties. *Below: Eliza Duncan Hambleton poses with her Capay Valley kin.*

**Duncan Clan: Standing: Ben Franklin, Margaret (Stephens), Bill, Sally (Brattin), and my great grandfather Wyatt "Doc" Godfrey**



**Jane (McGlothlin), Mary (Goosetree), Harriet (Strong), and Eliza (Hambleton).**

Photo below is the Hambleton harvest crew near Guinda: Father and son Frank and Lewis and patriarch James Hambleton, are assisted by Frank Gibson and others. Like many in Capay Valley, the family eventually converted some grain to orchards: walnuts and fruit.



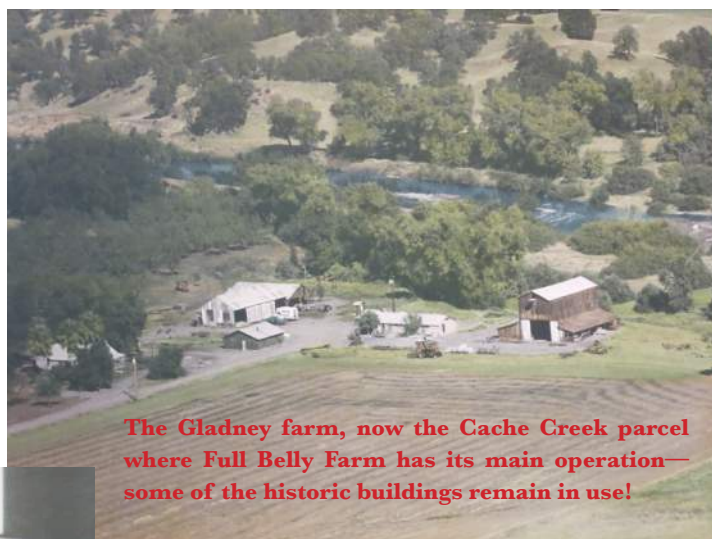
Photo from Ada Merhoff's book—see page 2

*Stan Gladney grew up in Guinda, near the family farm in what was known as Cashmere Colony when his grandfather S. Gladney moved there from Antelope in 1891, bringing his new wife, Josephine Daly, in 1895. S [for Shadrack, but he went by Rack] and Jo had their first child, Roy, in 1899, at which time they bought a parcel on Cache Creek, which is today a part of Full Belly Farm [see volume 5]*

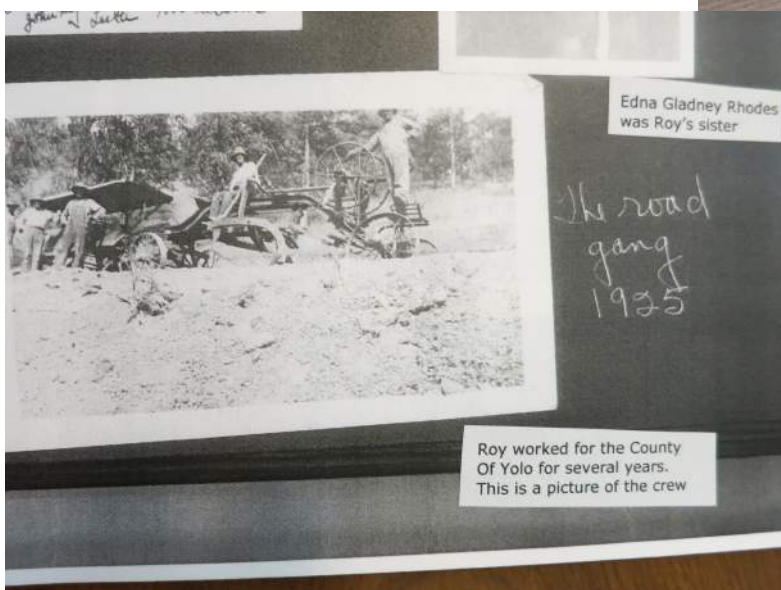


Roy stands with the family tractor in the picture above—whereon, Stan says, “My dad had me from sun up to sun down.”

Below: Stan’s father Roy works on a road crew in 1925. Roy’s sister Edna would marry a local Rhodes boy; and Roy lied about his age and served in France in WWI at about 16 years old. Once home, Roy started a dairy on the family farm—traditionally grain, almonds and walnuts—and in 1953, Stan returned from the Korean Conflict to help deliver dairy products.



**The Gladney farm, now the Cache Creek parcel where Full Belly Farm has its main operation—some of the historic buildings remain in use!**



Edna Gladney Rhodes was Roy's sister

The road gang 1925

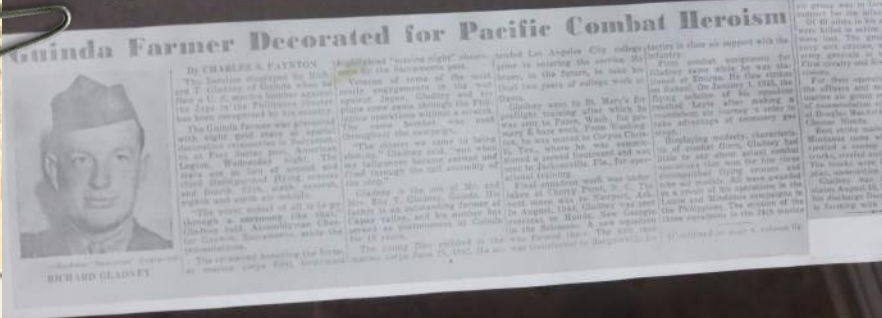
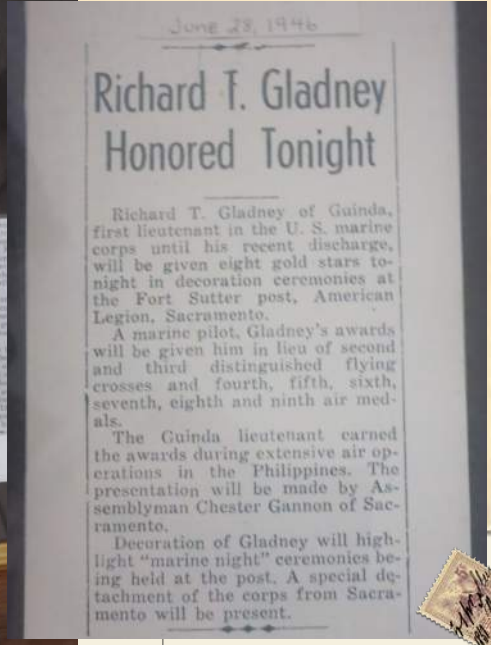
Roy worked for the County Of Yolo for several years. This is a picture of the crew

*Stan’s brother Richard also served his country: in WWII Richard earned several medals—see page 9. Together the brothers started a milk route, delivering their milk and that of other Capay Valley farmers—first in flat-bed trucks and later in refrigerated trucks—to individuals in the area. Roy got into the wholesaleretail business with Home Milk and son Stan delivered for him all the way to Sacramento, including Esparto high school, Wyatt’s Store and Burris Drug-Ice Cream Fountain; Madison Store and Guy’s Tavern; and Nugget and Richard’s Ice Cream in Woodland.*





*Typical of Capay Valley, the Gladney boys proudly served their country and then came home to farm—and raise families. Richard and Lois had two daughters, Sueann and Barbara; Stan and Nancy had Stacey, Timothy and Richard; and Miriam had Gary, Robert and Dianne—all of whom spent much time on the historic Gladney Ranch.*



Left: Roy and Dorothy Gladney wed in October 1921 and lived in Guinda. While also returning to farm with his father, Roy worked various jobs, including the local road-building crew, while his wife ran the Guinda Post Office—from 1925 to 1970! Their three children were Richard (1922), Mariam (1924—delivered in Esparto by Mid-wife Mary Gaither; see vol 10); and Stanley Amos (1929). Dorothy's mother died young and her father Amos Peterson remarried local Capay Valley gal Olive Hayes in 1917. Dorothy's Grandmother Peterson ran the Esparto Hotel and Dorothy lived with and worked "like a slave for her grandmother while she was 11-12 years old." She was relieved to move back to her father Amos and his new wife—Ollie Hayes was a loving step-mother; *Grandma Peterson* to the kids.

*Interesting side stories: Stan delivered to Hungry Hollow when I lived there in the 1950s—I fondly remember the delivery truck coming down our long gravel road! He delivered in the Valley area until 1961, then moved to Sacramento and eventually Woodland, driving for Crystal for 30 years. Stan met his future wife, Nancy Watson, while she babysat for a woman he had been dating—beware the milkman?! Happily married for 59 years!*





**Ollie Hayes of Guinda marries Amos Peterson, whose daughter Dorothy married Roy Gladney**—I constantly marvel at how intertwined our Capay Valley Families are! Ollie (Olive Hayes) was living in Esparto, having divorced Carl Bicknell, when she met and married Amos. She and her two sons, Mel and Ken “Curly,” moved in with the Amos Peterson family and were always fondly considered “uncles” to Roy and Dorothy’s three kids, Richard, Miriam and Stan Gladney—and Ollie was always *Grandma Peterson*.

Stan Gladney generously shared with me a family history book written by his sister Miriam for her own children. In it she describes Olive Hayes (Bicknell, Peterson) very fondly. *Ollie* married Amos Peterson March 2, 1917, probably having met him “when he came to Esparto to build the garage,” known as the Esparto Garage Building, sitting next to the hotel. It would house Esparto Motors [also *Central Garage*] for years in that building owned by Leo Hayes, Ollie’s brother. Amos and Ollie moved to Los Angeles in 1926, where they lived most of their adult lives. Amos restored elegant cars and built the first armored car for Bank of Italy (later B of A). “Granddad loved old cars—I mean big old cars! He always restoring them and never parted with them. He had an Allis Chalmers, Pierce Arrow and a Rolls Royce...whenever we went to Los Angeles...we would always have to go for a ride in it. Granddad would drive, wearing his white work coveralls and Grandma Ollie would sit in front with him and the rest of us would be on the jump seats and on the regular rear seats. This car had a window that rolled up and down between the driver and the passengers...Whenever he would park this Rolls, he never failed to take the radiator cap off and put it inside the car so no one would steal it. I believe it was silver...The car they used most of the time was Pierce Arrow. This was the car that they drove to Guinda every year...We always looked forward to their visit...they would drive up in that big old Pierce Arrow and it was a treat to be with them for a week. Incidentally, these old cars were all sold to a movie lot when Granddad and Grandma moved to Guinda...Metro-Golden-Mayer.” By *Miriam Gladney Faulkner 1994*

Photo at top: Amos and Ollie (Hayes) Peterson 1940;

Photo at bottom: Jo and S. (or Rack) Gladney 1921;

courtesy of the Gladney family



Amos and Ollie in LA in 1940



Jo and Rack Gladney in Guinda

The Hayes Family of Capay Valley, arriving in the 1893



Sign at left says Roy L. Hayes, son of family founder George E and father of Birthday Boy, Al—celebrating 90!

ALFRED'S  
90<sup>th</sup>  
BIRTHDAY  
PARTY!

As seen above, the Hayes Family arrived in the Guinda area in the 1890s, ranching up on The Summit since 1893, in a homestead founded by George Evans Hayes. These signs are on the Hayes Hunting Cabin up on the Summit—taken on the occasion of Alfred’s 90th birthday in February 2010, attended by over 100 close friends and family! See an excerpt of this party in a video posted on our website under Hayes at [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) Also featured in the video are Al’s brother George and his cousin Darrel, as they celebrated turning 90 years old in 2014, along with William Petty, also a descendant of families up on the Summit. Also in the video are Gene Rominger and Jean Monroe, old family friends of the Hayes family. NOTE: The families living up on the Summit were very



close and a variety of races, who built and shared a school which was never segregated. Historic Note: The Summit was once commonly called “Nigger Heaven,” even on old survey maps, but local lore has it that it was never meant to be derogatory\*\* see pages 16-17

Above: The students at the Summit School 1899: among the students from the Hayes, Logan and Simpson families are, standing at right, Ollie (Olive) Hayes, who would marry into the Gladney family by marrying Amos Peterson (see pages 8-10).



Photo at left: Founders of the Capay Valley Hayes family: George Evan Hayes (1852-1925) here marries Elizabeth Jones (1867-1941) in 1883. Born in Illinois, George came by train to California. By 1894 in Yolo County, he and Lizzy had five children: Leo, Roy, Olive, Ora, and Deston. In 1893 they had bought a parcel of 200 acres on the Summit above Guinda for \$2 an acre, to which they soon moved—by 1895 they had a house and barn. Last son, Leland, was born here in 1899—but *his pregnant mother had to walk down out of the hills to her sister's home near Dunnigan to have him!* They were neighbors of two mixed-race families, the Logans and Simpsons [see volume 6]. Together the families built a school. NOTE: Upon his death, Green Berry Logan, founder of the first African-American family on the Summit, arriving in 1891, left his property to the Hayes family, “To keep it and the Logan Family Cemetery intact,” according to the Hayes family. Today, George and Lizzie’s great grandson Doug Hayes keeps the road to the cemetery graded for access to all descendants.

*An interesting side note: Speaking of the many races living and cooperating in the Capay Valley, there were many Chinese men—who stayed after they helped build the 1888 railroad to Rumsey. While they were not allowed to bring their wives and start families, they did much of the labor for early pioneers. For instance, Green Berry Logan hired Gin Lee and China Joe to “clear land fit to farm” and Logan used Lee’s seed for planting, then leaving the care and harvest of crops to the Chinese on “equal shares”—thus the Chinese became “sharecroppers” on the land of a man who had left slavery to come to California to become a landowner. More of the ironic and unique history of our special Valley!*

NOTE: Lizzie Hayes’ parents Wytal and Mary Jane (Bridges) Jones also lived on the Summit (not to be confused with the other many Capay Valley Jones families, also mentioned in this issue: one founded by Harry and Clara Jones, and his second wife Della Armstrong; one being Jasper and Katie Jones—but more on them, later!) I mention her parents here because they factor into some of the favorite Hayes lore. As it turned out, George and Lizzie did not have good water on their parcel—so sulfurous only the animals could drink it. They had to “borrow” water from her parents’ parcel and Lizzie did her washing there, leaving it to dry for her school-aged sons Leo and Roy to pick up in the wagon on their way back home from school. Another favorite story is about how George Evan Hayes made money by cutting cords of wood, worth \$12.50 for 2.5 cords, which he hauled by wagon to Woodland—a three day roundtrip, requiring an over-night in Capay, where he shopped for family supplies at the Orengo store. By “1896 George Hayes was harvesting a wheat crop with an old binder and threshing machine, hauling his grain to the Madison Mill,” according to family lore as given to Ada Merhoff for her 1986 book, *Capay Valley The Land & The People 1846-1900*.

In addition to Ollie’s connections with the Gladney family, the sons of George and Lizzie left lines that are still represented here, today: son Roy, had Jack, Al and George mentioned in this article; and Leland had Darrel and Delores (Neilson); while Deston had Robert and William—some of whom have left descendants in the Valley.

## Several Hayes Lines Remain in the Valley

*Even though this is my last journal for awhile, I am still collecting information, photos, genealogy and stories from more historic families from the greater Capay Valley—pulled from those for this issue are: Hayes, Gladney, Farnham, Schaupp, Neilson and Mast. At right at the Clover School in 1938 are Darrel Hayes and Owen Farnham. Darrel still lives near the school on CR 19 near the family farm. Sadly, his wife, Gessie Mae Jones Hayes, has passed on—but her name and reputation live on in the Valley. Whether news-related or the making of wedding cakes for locals, Gessie left a colorful impression—as did her mother Katie! Darrel's sister is Dolores Neilson, whom he insists is the best one to talk to about their history. And then there is his cousin George Hayes, with whom he just shared their mutual 90th birthday at a celebration in Rumsey, near where their ancestors first settled in the Capay Valley: the Summit above Guinda in the 1890s—seen below, the Summit view; you can see why it was considered a “heaven”!*

*photo courtesy of Don Tompkins*



Submitted by Gessie Mae Hayes

The 1938 graduating class of Clover elementary school, located on County Road 19 in Yolo County, L-R: Vernon Horgan, Darrel Hayes, Robert Whitcomb, Owen Farnham. Their teacher was Alice Reimers who now resides in Sacramento. Horgan now lives on Road 17, Hayes on Road 19, Whitcomb in Paradise, and Farnham lived on Road 24 until his death in the 1980s.

Darrel E. Hayes was born to Leland E. and Florence M. Hayes in 1924; and his sister Dolores in 1929. Dolores would marry Lawrence Neilson, while Darrel married Gessie Mae Jones, whose father was Jasper Jones and mother was \*Katherine Schaupp (of the Hungry Hollow Schaupps—see page 14).

NOTE: In the above photo is also Owen Farnham, one of several sons of Noah and Ivy Farnham. Ivy would die young, leaving Noah as head-of-household to Dan, Harry, William, Owen, Jack and his wife Helen and their three children, Leland (4), and twins Jack and Dolores (2). More on the Farnham family, page 15.



17/09/2006

*Gessie Mae Jones, what a character! Her mother Katie, even more so!*



Many I have talked to over the last 6 years have said, *It's too bad you didn't get here in time to interview Al Hayes; Katie Jones; \_\_\_\_\_*—you fill in the blank! But I went off to have a life outside the Valley, and when I came back, I had a whole world to discover—what an amazing place and people and stories! Sometimes I am lucky enough to hit on “the one with all the historical knowledge,” but other times I just make great discoveries—and new friends! I have been welcomed into homes and hearts and told grand stories in the process! And, often, I meet ghosts of those who went before—I *do* wish I had met them! but I am getting to *know* them anyway—through those who did know and cherish them!



Above: Katie (Schaupp) and Jasper Jones  
Left: Katie's parents, John and Frieda (Maichle) Schaupp, like many others from Germany, settled in the Fairview-Hungry Hollow area and had several children, including Katie and Charlie: born in 1899, Charlie would have several children, including Clarence, who would farm the area all his life—leaving his 4 children to continue farming to this day. Photo at right is courtesy of



eldest son, Charlie, showing Clarence and his father Charlie on their new Allis-Chalmers HD10 Crawler tractor in 1949.

Gessie Mae, in her later years, submitted many photos to the *Daily Democrat*, which they frequently published in the *100 Years Ago* section. She was also famous for her wedding cakes; Candy Lopez claims the right to the last one she made, for Candy's marriage with David Hatanaka in May 1980 (see page 22). And just like Clarence Schaupp and his cousin Gessie Mae, Gessie's mother Katie played the accordion—as well as piano, organ and many other instruments, often all at once! Frequently, she could be seen as a one-woman band at the Saturday Night Dances at Madison Town Hall, as well as in Zamora, up the Capay Valley, and throughout the area, according to Hazel (Neilson) Peterson and John Gallardo. (see page 25)

Clarence and cousin Gessie Mae were seen in journal volume 17 in an accordion band. Encouraged, no doubt, by Gessie's mother Katie, whom many recall fondly as “a one-woman band,” who played at local events, “a sight to behold!” *I am doing more research on Katie for a future article for the Yolo County Historical Society on interesting German pioneer women of Western Yolo—it will also appear on our website at [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) of course!*

Photos of Jones and Schaupp couples courtesy of Jim Hiatt from his mother's news-clippings (see also page 25)

Those Pioneers could not have gotten over the Sierras nor survived on their farms without their blacksmiths—the earliest among the pioneers even had to dismantle their wagons and heave them up in sections by oxen or horse, then reassemble them before they could get from Nevada to California! And imagine being broken down in the 40-mile desert en route across barren Nevada! Fascinated by this fact, I have been touring some historic shops and found that the Farnham family donated their entire shop to the Gibson Museum in Woodland—check it out! Also check out the video I made and posted on our website at [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) labeled *Hayes* — for some references to blacksmiths and farmers, etc., featuring brothers Al and George Hayes and their cousin Darrel, and some family history and lore. *More on Farnham Family on page 24*



*Photo below: Jack Farnham at right of his brothers, Bill, David, Harry, sons of Noah and Ivy (Smith) Farnham of the Esparto area. Courtesy of the Jack Farnham family—many of whom have remained in the Esparto-Capay Valley area. Another line of the family settled in the Woodland area—see plaque above and page 24*



## William Petty,

Capay Valley descendant,  
historian and noted Civil  
Rights Advocate!

When I returned to the Capay Valley and heard there was now an annual *Black History Day Celebration* in Guinda, I



hoped this would be a way to find the history of this unique area I grew up with but really knew nothing about. I contacted the founders, Clarence Van Hook and William Petty, and volunteered to come shoot a video of the next event in exchange for the history and stories they might provide for me—*what a brilliant move on my part!* Mr. Van Hook is a recent arrival to the area—a Texan and Blues musician—who bought property near Guinda and became fast friends with the Hayes family elder, Al. Learning of the unique history of the area and its historic Black community, Clarence set out to celebrate it. With local historian Bill Petty, he launched an annual celebration—alternately also referred to as *Multi-cultural Day*. See volumes 1 & 6 and videos on our website: [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org)

*I never know where this kind of research will lead! Having met Mr. Petty, I made an appointment to come interview him and I not only got the history of our Summit area, but found he is a fascinating—and important—personality in his own right. I made several trips to his home, resulting in two videos—one focused on our own Capay Valley history, and another on his personal importance to our own Civil Rights movement in northern California—and the nation! I grew up here knowing that while we had some racial strife in the 1960s, it was nothing like that of the rest of the nation—or even as restrictive as neighboring towns, even Woodland. My mother grew up in Woodland and made a point of this fact—but Mr. Petty helped me see it even more clearly, from the point of view of a \*Black man.*

Photo, above: William Petty sits between Darrel and George Hayes, here in 2014 celebrating turning 90—all descendants of the area's pioneers. While the Hayes cousins were direct descendants of 1890 pioneers, Bill Petty's family arrived in the 1940s from the South, having family who married into pioneers on the Summit.

\*Mr. Petty uses the term *Black* more often than *African-American*, and even uses the term *Colored*—I assume due to his 90 years hearing those terms more often. His father was a Civil Rights advocate in the South, a fact that put his family in harms way, but not until their house was torched did he choose to move his family to California, following relatives to our area. William Petty is of mixed race, so they were in even more *danger* in the South. But, as you will see, even here, while in less *danger*, they faced discrimination...





The first time I met William Petty, after hearing my last name and explanation of how I was related to the Monroes of Yolo county, he fixed me with that eagle eye of his and said, “I once sued your uncle for discrimination.” While taken aback for an instant, I quickly replied with a laugh, “Well, knowing my uncle, he probably deserved it! He and my dad did not share the same views on race relations—you would have loved my mother and father, Tom and Jean!” And from this start, Mr. Petty and I became fast friends and he opened his heart and trove of historic knowledge to me.

When I first started researching my own family roots, my dad warned me that I would find some things I would not be too proud of, but to remember never to be ashamed of who I was and to always remember to just be sure the same things did not happen on my watch! Well, he was right. When I learned that my Scots ancestors were historically *planters in Virginia*, it dawned on me that while it was never discussed in our family, we came from slave-owners. Many years later, thanks to [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), I was able to find early census documents to verify my supposition: slaves were listed along with the family members and white and Chinese servants. And through Mr. Petty, I learned about another mulatto of historical importance to our own area: Basil Campbell, who would become *the largest Black landowner in Yolo County*. While he came to California with the Stephens family, I wondered about his surname enough to do some digging and found that he was born as a slave to a mother owned by my own ancestor, JD Campbell, a neighbor of the Stephens family in Cooper County, Missouri...knowing enough about our slave history in this country to assume what only a DNA test would verify, just knowing about Basil’s ties to my own roots gives me a whole new appreciation for our tangled history. In my own family, obviously, there were some complex views on race relations, but my own parents were very clear about who we were and how we would conduct ourselves: *We are who we are and need only to look at ourselves in the mirror and not be ashamed of who we see looking back.* Thanks, Mom and Dad!

Now, back to William Petty! There is not room in this journal to do him justice, so I have posted a much larger article on the website at [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) along with the videos, but herein are some locally interesting notes.

The first thing Bill and I discussed was the history of the unique and historic community of African-Americans in the Guinda area beginning in the 1890s [see journals 1 & 6]. He pointed out he was the one who fought to have the term *Nigger Heaven* dropped from the county maps in the 1970s. I said, “But as a historian, doesn’t it bother you that you have *expunged* history?” He admitted that after the fact he was kind of sorry—so he always makes a point of teaching about that historic place-name at the Black History Day Celebration, making sure the old survey maps are displayed on the wall of the Guinda Grange Hall, where the event is held, to illustrate his point.

Bill’s family came to Guinda, California in 1942, to settle in the Capay Valley near relatives who came to this area in the 1870s. Bill had run from a lynch mob in North Carolina for talking back to a White man—it was time to find a better life. But while Claud and Mae Petty settled on a piece of farm land near Guinda, there were no jobs, so Bill, who had served in the Army and married his school sweetheart Marie, moved with her to Woodland. There they found few jobs for *Black men* & only domestic jobs for *Black women*—and no one willing to sell them a home. So Bill began a long history of fighting for the rights of minorities, including women, in Yolo and Sacramento counties.

*See more on page 21.*

## Great Horned Owl —*Bubo virginianus*



This being the last issue of this journal—for awhile—a special bird had to be the focal point, one everyone is familiar with but rarely gets to see up close and personal: **the Great Horned Owl**. These are the among largest of our owls (perhaps only the Great Gray Owl is larger, but it's not found around here) and is perhaps the stereotypical owl that first comes to mind when the word "owl" is mentioned; the Barn Owl is perhaps the second best known and was treated in volume 8.

The "Horneds" are mostly a rural owl, though when Woodland was smaller and more of an "agri-

town," I sometimes saw these alighting on top of one of our buildings of antiquity, such as the Opera House. Decoys of these were frequently set atop the four corners of older buildings to keep pigeons—and their associated *calling cards*—away, but it really didn't work. The pigeons just got too used to these things never moving. Woodland had more Barn Owls then, too, often choosing to roost and nest in the palm trees that surrounded the old Hershey Mansion at Walnut and Main.

We have a nesting pair here at the farm in Hungry Hollow and have had since I was a youngster. They, at least out here, have territories of maybe a couple square miles--I hear another pair hoo-ing over at Durst's Organic Farm about 3/4 of a mile away, and in other directions as well. They live some 20-25 years, and mate for life, though they are independent within the pair and don't always hunt together nor set out for hunting at the same time. Though these are night hunters, they can be awake and hooting from mid-afternoon on—but I can't remember ever seeing them hunt in the daytime, hereabouts.

Horned owls are very intense and aggressive hunters. Once leaving our Eucalyptus, one will flap rapidly and intently to gain some height and then will set his wings and glide for hundreds of yards before perching, to begin the hunt. Preferring a high point, he will watch from a perch for game for some time, then move to another spot if nothing shows itself.

Horneds prefer larger prey, and usually go for things large enough to be worthwhile, though they will take smaller prey as well. It's been tougher hunting for them these past few years, as irrigation methods have changed greatly. With drip irrigation becoming more necessary with the drought, there's less standing water around to support the normal prey. When this happens, the



*Horneds*—and Barn Owls—may raise fewer young, as they will raise only what they can support. Cottontails, jackrabbits, possums, and similarly-sized critters are the normal fare, but pets like cats and small dogs have been known to be taken when times are lean. At night other Owls are sometimes attacked in the air, and larger hawks may be taken as they sleep. Like other nocturnal predators, owls see in the infrared, and make ground-sleepers like pheasants easy prey, as owls see the "heat signature" of their bodies. They are perhaps the only predator known to even take skunks, as well,—which begs the question whether they have a strong sense of smell or whether smell even enters into their picture when food's needed. A falconer I know has told me that Horneds are among those that will sometimes kill just because they have an aggressive nature... **whooooooooooooooooooooo...**

*Horned Owls, continued...*

In spite of how often we hear them of a night, Horned Owls don't "hoot" all year-round, but are vocal during breeding and parenting. This cycle in their lives begins around October (Halloween??) and continues through April or so. The female is a little larger than the male and gives the classical 4-note "Hoo-HOO--hoo-hoo" The male has a 5-6 note call, higher in pitch and more urgent in tone "Hoo-hoo HOO—hoo--hoo." Another call they make is one few would recognize unless they lived among them as I do: it is a "HYAARNK!" —along with barking and screaming sounds...did I mention they are favorite Halloween symbols? Occasionally, I've also heard "hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-WOO-BOO-WOO-BOO-WOO-BOO!!!" —sounds just like that!

In courtship the male does steep dives and sharp climbs back up into the tree to impress his life-long partner. She sometimes responds with a more muffled series of *hoo-hoo-hoo-hoos* in appreciation. Am not sure where I have them, but I have years ago taken photos of the mating actually taking place—I almost felt embarrassed for "peeking," but it's just nature and a rarity to capture. Frequently here I'll hear the hooting right in the tees outside my bedroom window, and sometimes you wonder if the ever-repeated same notes actually mean something in Owl-ness. Maybe it is the eternally given "I love you"... or am I just a romantic?

Horned Owls usually use the same nest every year: a heavy stick nest, sometimes made by other large birds like crows, into which they raise from 1-5 little ones.

Speaking of which, many who live in this area have stories of finding fledgling owls on the ground—so ugly only a mother owl could love them! If they are all fluff, they fell out—or were pushed for lack of food? If mostly feathered, they may be trying to take wing. Several years ago, I heard a repeated wheezing sound by the *volunteer* Eucalyptus tree behind our barn, and since it didn't sound like anything I was used to hearing, I checked it out. I found a young one on the ditch bank near by, the size of a small chicken, nearly-ready-to-fly-but-not-quite, with some down still on it. I got my camcorder and got some pretty nice footage, some as near as 4 feet from the little one. Mother and Dad were lit on top of the barn and were distinctly displeased, making about every sound that they could make that wasn't a hoot. I watched with concern over my shoulder as I shot video because I knew they might attack—most likely the mother. About 25 years ago I got some lovely photos of a Short-Eared Owl's ground nest of eggs out on a cattle ranch south of Davis when I worked for Mosquito Control. I had seen the nest the day before so I brought my camera to work, and while I shot, the mother dive-bombed and just missed me—all but once! I caught quite a blow on top of the head from the claws and felt the lingering sting for a couple hours afterward. Birding is not for sissies! It didn't happen on this occasion as I watched for diving from Mom and Dad, but it pays to be cautious!

Horned Owls are found from upper Alaska to Tierra del Fuego at Argentina's southern most tip. Most of the owls perennially heard in earlier Disney Movies were these. Sadly, most young folks today get little chance to experience these in the wild any more. Luckily for me, my resident pair are good and natural companions and friends sharing the area with me. Our female knows my presence and I've walked up under her before and complimented her on what a particularly lovely girl she was. Wasn't a bit afraid of me—thus the lovely photos I got!



Though chillin' in my barn,  
this is not a Barn Owl

*Continued from page 17:* Civil Rights Activist, Bill Petty—one of our own! Among his many accomplishments and awards, one he is most proud of was accomplished in 1994: As past Master of the black Masonic Monument 74, he “and Doug Young, past Master of the white Masonic Lodge of Woodland, came together to lay the cornerstone for the Yolo County Central Library on Buckeye Street. This was the first time the white and black Masons had ever held a joint function. Now, after over one hundred years of being separate, we are one body and recognize each other equally,” Bill proudly explained. Bill served as chairman of the Board of Directors of the Most Worshipful Prime Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of California. Awards fill the walls of his home in Hillcrest west of Woodland—a home he built only after his light-skinned wife “passed” for white to buy the lot, as no one would sell real estate to a Black man in Woodland—as late as the 1960s! “The told me there were ‘restrictive covenants against selling to coloreds’.” With the lot legally in his wife’s name, the community was not too thrilled when he showed up to lay the foundation to the home he has had ever since. Among his many awards and accomplishments are: Equal Employment Opportunity official at McClellan AFB, for which he has the Air Force Distinguished EEO Award of the Year; the Aguila Unity Award (*Spirit of the Eagle*) the highest honor given by the Latino Community Council to a non-Mexican for his part in “responsible empowerment of the community”; Bill served as the first African-American on the Yolo County Grand Jury in the 1950s—and brought lawsuits against county officials for discrimination. Upon retiring from McClellan AFB, Bill continued his activism: as chief volunteer for the Yolo County Coalition Against Hunger and in 1973 he was appointed Yolo County Affirmative Action Committee to create the county’s first Affirmative Action Plan.

See more on the families in this and prior journals at [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) —including Bill Petty and Katie Schaupp Jones!

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Vol 18

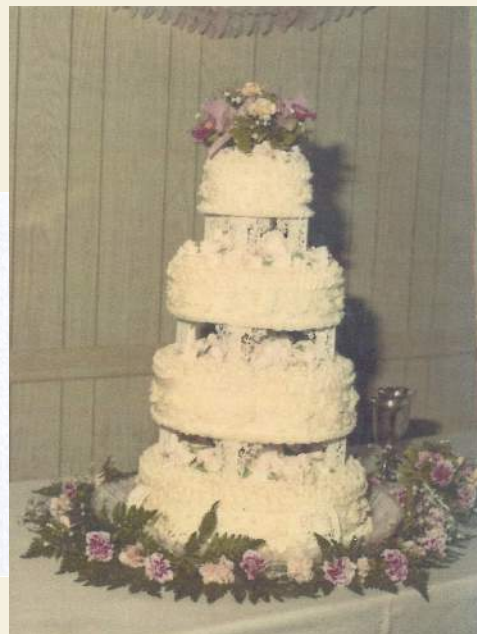
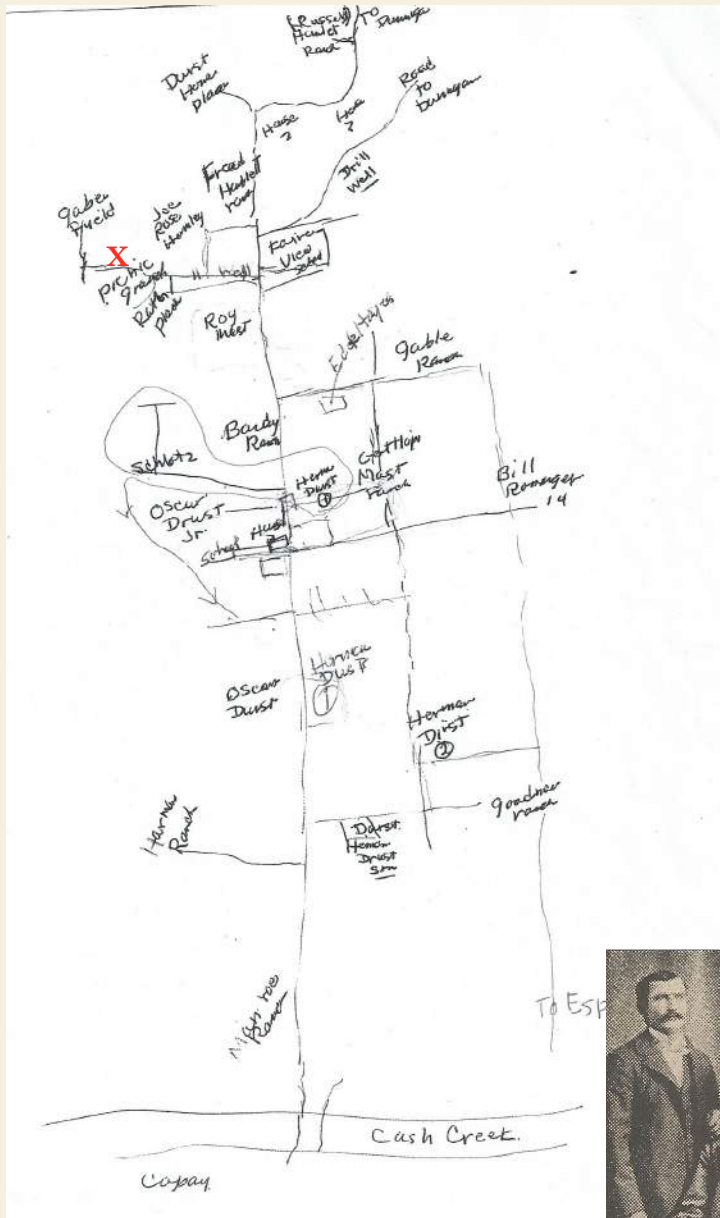


Photo at left: The last of many wedding cakes made by Gessie Mae (Jones) Hayes—this one in May 1980 for the marriage of Candy Lopez and David Hatanaka, who both attended EHS with Gessie’s son Tommy Hayes, but also farmed the Hayes land northeast of Esparto for years—so they talked her out of “retirement” to do this one last cake!

**Courtesy of Candy Lopez-Hatanaka**

*The Masts of Hungry Hollow*, beginning with Gottlob Mast and his wife Mary Anna Summ—from another early Capay family, of course!



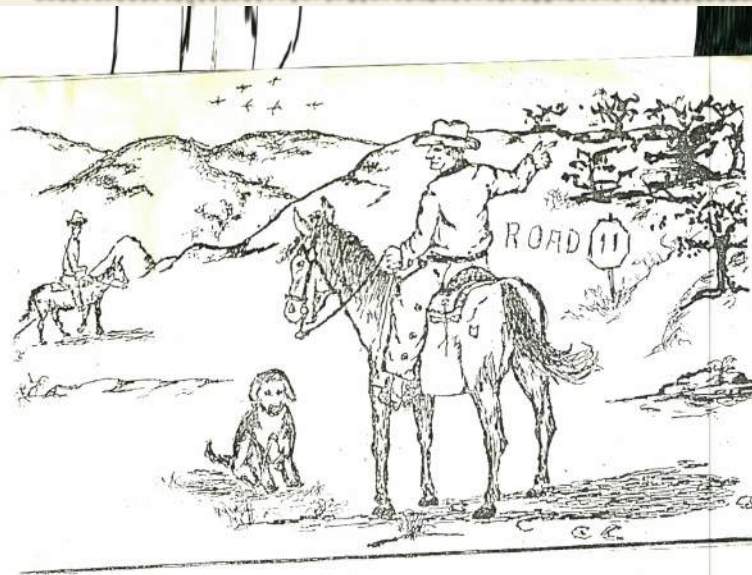
We have many Masts descendants still living in the area, but the most willing to share family information with me is 94-years-young Naomi Faye (Mast) Brannan. Faye was born in 1920 and grew up with her siblings Roy Amos and Edith Amy on the family farm north of Esparto. The Masts had property scattered all over the Hungry Hollow area, as far north as Fairview. One of the many things Faye shared with me was that they continued to have regular family gatherings at the old homestead for decades—and the invitations that were sent out were artistic keepsakes, some of which she offered to let me share with our readers. First of all, she drew me the map of Hungry Hollow seen at left, showing at the far north end of County Road 85 the Mast property where the picnics were held, out near the Fred Hamblets and the old Durst homestead—and Fairview School.

Photos, etc: courtesy of Faye Mast Brannan

Map: from Capay; going up County Road 85 to Fairview; X marks Mast picnic area

Right: the Mast family at the wedding of John Mast; Patriarch Gottlob Mast, in beard, is seated at center. Of interest: Janet Mast would marry a Hayes—why not!





You are invited to the  
**MAST PICNIC**  
 Pit Barbecue and Bean Feed  
 SUNDAY, April 5th



*Patrick Scribner*

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Vol 18



DUNCAN HINES NEVER ATE HERE.  
 THERE WASN'T ROOM FOR HIM.

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE  
**MAST PICNIC**



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE  
**MAST PICNIC**  
 For A Pit Barbecue and Bean Feed.

SUNDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 1990  
 Please bring a Side Dish  
 Hope to see you there.

*Lowell E Mast*  
 See you there  
 Love Virginia

Lowell E. Mast seems to be the humorous artist—and even did a sketch of the old Fairview School seen at left. (The Masts attended the school and Faye loaned me the photo of it that I used in volume 17.)

As I pulled together information and pictures of various families who have shared with me, I noticed how many other local families their lives touched—

*Oh, what a tangled web we weave!* Here are a few pieces of those connections.

There are several local Farnham lines, I have come to find out—all related, no doubt, but I was never given the *common thread*, so I went searching with my [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) account—this is how I pull all these family stories together—it is quite a tapestry to weave! First, I start with what I know and get from families—and what I am personally most interesting in finding. So, since I grew up knowing the Farnhams of the Esparto-Capay Valley area—Jack Farnham was a friend of my father, Tom Monroe, and I went to Esparto High School with Terry Farnham—I wanted to tie together all the threads to see if I could find their link to the earliest pioneer Farnham...First, I found a news clipping of Joe Farnham, who graduated from Esparto High in 1928 and was born 1911 to Warren and Fay Farnham. Just before Joe was born, Warren and his wife Fay lived with his brother Elmer and his wife Grace in the *Cottonwood Township* with their 6-month-old son Edgar. Due to an old school program I was given, I know that in 1923 Joe (b. 1911) and sister Stella (b. 1913) attended Clover School along with two brothers, Billy and Jack; and also an Edgar Farnham (1910). Warren was born in Woodland, California in 1887 to (Erastus) Silvester (b. 1844 MI) and Ella (b. 1854 IN). In the 1900 census there are six children: Birdie, Edwin, Ella, Elmer, Warren and Lloyd (see page 15 of this journal), so I believed I may have found the *founder* of our Yolo County Farnhams, whose blacksmith shop was donated to the Yolo County Historical Society—*Turns out Erastus and Daniel were both sons of David and Naoma (or Leona?)* Now, let's see, Jack Farnham...the 1940s census of the Cottonwood Township shows Noah [wife Ivy had died after 1930 census] as head of household with adult sons: Dan, Harry, Jack (b. 1912), William, Noah\*; and daughter-in-law Helen (Jack); and grandchildren: Leland (4) and twins Jack and Dolores (2). Then I met a Tiffany Farnham while she was working at ACE Hardware in Esparto and got from her that Terry is her dad; and his father is Darrel Farnham and his mother is Joyce Stotts—then customers came in and she had to go, so back I go to [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) for now...hmm, Darrel was born 1912 to Harvey and Carrie (Sharp) Farnham—and Harvey had a brother Noah! *Bingo!! So Noah and Harvey are sons of Daniel and Sylvina; Daniel and Erastus are sons of David and Naoma, who came to Yolo County by the 1860s...*OK, now where does *Owen* fit into all this? *Owen Farnham* does not come up on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)...so was he Noah *Owen*, by any chance? —and on it goes! People to call and websites to search!



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



*Joseph & Doris Farnham 1933—  
honeymooning in Torey Pines, CA  
from a news clipping from Jim Hiatt*

The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society: PO Box 442, Esparto, CA 95627 vol 18





**Schaupp**

I was given a box of old news clippings and found these: Charles and Lillian (Schlotz) were married in 1926 at left, and celebrated their 60th anniversary at right. (see page 14)



News-clipping on this page are courtesy of Jim Hiatt from his parents' attic: Gayle Goodnow of Hungry Hollow grew up knowing all these people and kept up with them, often through their mutual church, but also newspapers, school programs and, eventually, through obituaries and funeral programs—there is quite a treasure trove, here! Gayle would marry Alvin Hiatt of Dunnigan and they spent their remaining years living in Woodland (See volumes 6 & 7) raising three sons—including our own hobby-ornithologist, Jim Hiatt.

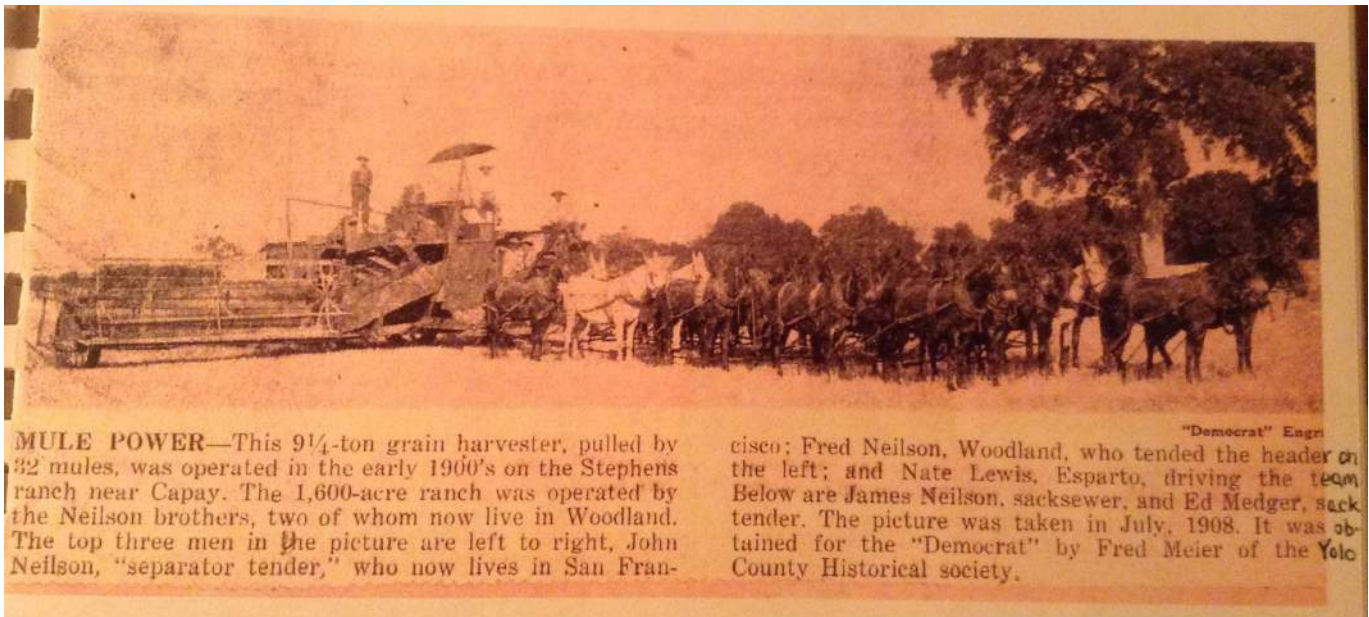


Above: Lawrence and Dolores (Hayes) Neilson, celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary—with one of Gessie Mae's cakes—in 1974.

In my quest to find more information about those I have included in this journal volume 18—and to add other historic families—I found and spent time with Hazel (Neilson) Peterson, who not only gave me Neilson family history and photos to share with you, but also let me photograph an organ her granddaughter inherited from Gessie Mae (Jones) Hayes: below you see music-phenom Katie (Schaupp) Jones' organ! (see page 14 for more...)



**The Neilsons of greater Capay Valley...**as written earlier in this volume, Dolores Hayes married Lawrence Neilson in 1949, another descendant of an early pioneer. She is the daughter of Leland Hayes, whose father George Evan Hayes came from Illinois to settle in the Guinda area of the Capay Valley. Her father Leland farmed part of the Gordon grant (north of Madison) from 1927 until his death in 1970, and her brother, Darrel, would continue farming that land and remain on it until this day. Her husband Lawrence was the son of Fred Neilson, whose father James E. Neilson built a home in Esparto in 1888—the same year the valley got its railway line! According to Fred's daughter, Hazel (Neilson) Peterson, her father Fred farmed in the Capay Valley until 1920.



**MULE POWER**—This 9 1/4-ton grain harvester, pulled by 32 mules, was operated in the early 1900's on the Stephens ranch near Capay. The 1,600-acre ranch was operated by the Neilson brothers, two of whom now live in Woodland. The top three men in the picture are left to right, John Neilson, "separator tender," who now lives in San Fran-

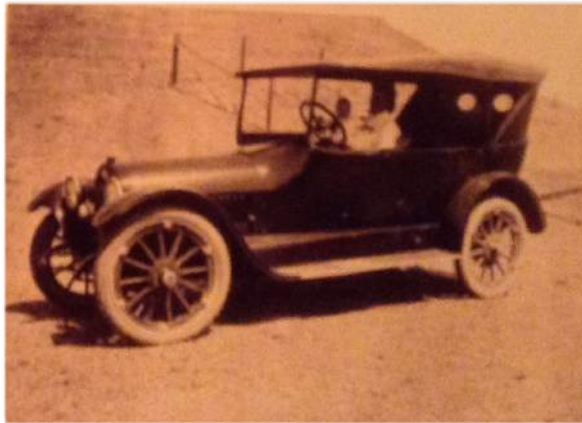
cisco; Fred Neilson, Woodland, who tended the header on the left; and Nate Lewis, Esparto, driving the team. Below are James Neilson, sacksewer, and Ed Medger, sack tender. The picture was taken in July, 1908. It was obtained for the "Democrat" by Fred Meier of the Yolo County Historical society.

**Above:** the photo shared by Hazel shows a 9 1/4-ton grain harvester pulled by 32 mules in 1908, where Fred Neilson farmed land owned by yet another early pioneer family, the Stephens—on land that is now the Cache Creek Casino and adjacent farmland near Brooks.

*Ironically, much of the history of her Neilson family Hazel got from an interview conducted between John Gallardo and her father, Fred. John is a long-time supporter and contributor to this journal and began his collection of histories and stories of the Capay Valley area long before I came along to research-write-&-publish, so we are all lucky to have access to his vast collection and amazing memory—and love of our history! John insists his own family history here makes them "late-comers," having arrived in 1921. His parents, Edna and Joe Gallardo, farmed their orchards in Lamb Valley southwest of Esparto, and Joe was also a local electrician—owning Esparto Electric Company—who took his son John along on jobs throughout the area, exposing this curious, history-minded son to many of the old-timers and their historic farms and ranches. A graduate from Esparto High School in 1966, John's history of the area had won an essay contest and was published in the Daily Democrat Newspaper in 1965.*

When Fred Neilson’s family moved to the Esparto from Chico in 1889, Fred’s father James had come the prior year to build a house in the new town of Esparto—now a stop on the new rail line from Elmira to Rumsey with a new two-story depot. James and Henry Mefford of Capay built it about a mile west of the town center on what is now country road 85B. It was one of the first houses built in the new town and, fun fact: in 1922 it was actually dragged in two pieces by a tractor by Wilbur Duncan into Esparto where it would become the home of Alice Marsh (*see vol 17*), who was then a new teacher in Esparto—retiring after 40 years as teacher & administrator, 1919-1959!

Clockwise:  
the first car  
of the newly  
married  
couple in  
1920, Fred &  
Wilhelmina  
“Minnie”;  
their last  
car; and the  
couple in  
1959.



Hazel tells their family story this way—and I paraphrase: The five Neilson brothers, James, Alexander, Robert, Fred and John, were born in Marinette, WI...they and their parents came west to California in 1883. 4 sons would remain bachelors, but Fred married Wilhemina Young in 1920.

By 1900 the five brothers were working for the Stephens brothers on their 1600 acres near Brooks. After 2 years they bought the latter’s farm equipment and ran the ranch until 1920, raising barley and were in the mule and cattle business. Their mother cooked and kept house for her 5 sons, husband and various farmhands. Brothers Jim, Bob and Jack would eventually buy an almond orchard 3 miles west of Capay, taking Mother with them, while Sandy became a grain buyer living in Woodland. Fred also bought a cattle and grain ranch across Highway 16, later called the Harris Ranch, and eventually bought his father’s farm near Esparto, where he and Minnie would build a new home, raising almonds and fruit trees—and three children: Freddie, Lawrence and Hazel. Fred died peacefully in 1967 at 85, having spent only the last 2 days in the Woodland Clinic—the only time he ever spent in a hospital. His *Minnie* would live on until 100 years old in 1993, *Nana* to her large, adoring brood, including 6 grands, 14 great grands and one great great grandchild.

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Send a check payable to TGCVHS for \$25 for 2015 at the above address and continue to contact me, but at the new email:

[emonroe@greatercapayvalley.org](mailto:emonroe@greatercapayvalley.org)

At the end of 2014 I will stop publishing the 24-page, full-color journal—for awhile. I need time to publish the hardcover book, *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*, a 400-plus page compilation of all 18 journals I have produced so far. I also have 3 other books on this area I am working on and a lot more historical research to do—in addition to working on a series of short stories set in The Capay Valley. In the coming year, I will continue to research, interview, and collect photos and stories—as well as write! For the member-subscribers, I will mail out 3-4 shorter newsletters during the year to share historical Valley gems with you, and I will keep the website updated with ever new finds! I encourage all of you to keep the stories and history coming my way! I ask you to continue to support this work by subscribing, but at the newly reduced rate of just \$25 per year. TGCVHS will also continue to raise funds and interest for historical plaques and the restoration of our few remaining buildings—like the Canon School!

from: TGCVHS  
PO Box 442  
Esparto, CA 95627

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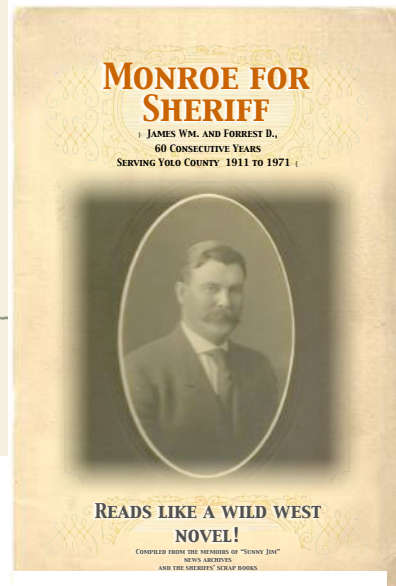
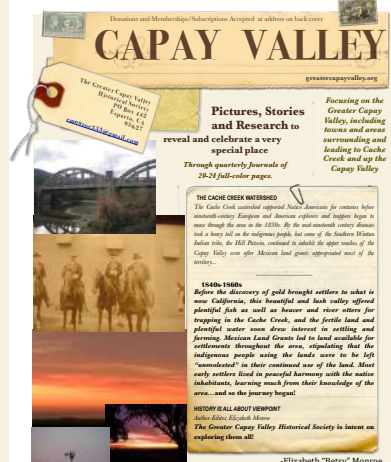
I am currently pre-selling three books that are near completion:

*The History and Stories of the Capay Valley* will be out in hardcover in January 2015, retailing for \$200 but on pre-order sale now for \$175

*The Birds of Capay Valley* will be out in February 2015, a compilation of the bird articles I published for the last 4 years in the journal; \$25

*Monroe for Sheriff, 60 Consecutive Years Serving Yolo County, 1911-1971* will be out in the summer of 2015, a compilation of James Monroe's published memoir of 28 years as sheriff and his son Forrest Duncan Monroe's sheriff department scrapbooks of the next 32 years—as well as their historical backgrounds and the people they knew in Yolo County; \$35

**The History and Stories of the Capay Valley**  
A compilation of 18 Journals from January 2011-December 2014



**The Birds of Capay Valley**

As featured in the Journals  
for The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society 2011-2014



RESEARCH, PHOTOGRAPHS AND WRITING BY ELIZABETH MONROE AND JIM HART  
7th generation pioneer descendants of Capay Valley Hmong Haidou

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