

# BLACK HISTORY DAY

CAPAY VALLEY

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## *Many African American Families Homestead on a Heavenly Summit 1,200 feet Above Guinda, Beginning in the 1890s.*



The first African-American settler to homestead in the Guinda area was Green Berry Logan, [seen in photo to left] moving his family from the Dunnigan area in the 1890s. Green Berry is buried in the Logan Cemetery up on the “summit,” a heavenly 1,200 feet above Guinda, which was at one time home to about 100 settlers. Once the Logan Private Cemetery, it is now located on property left to the Hayes family, who keep its access open for descendants to visit.

As covered in prior issues, the settlers built their own school [seen at lower left], but eventually joined the other local students in the Guinda School after 1912. Following after Mr. Logan was a barber/musician, Charles Simpson, who moved to the summit with his wife and daughter. There followed other Black families, among them were the Hemphills, Longrus and Hacketts, related to local historian Bill Petty’s family by marriage. And just like so many other families in the valley, there were several marriages between clans, as seen to the left with Harriet Emily (Logan) Simpson [later Hickerson]: “Hattie” was Green Berry’s sister-in-law and married Charles Simpson and started a family. After Simpson’s death in 1912, Hattie married

Capay Valley celebrates this history every second Saturday of February at the Guinda Grange Hall, up Forrest Avenue behind the Cornor Store

As featured in the 6th journal for The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society, the unique community of African-Americans in our Guinda began in the 1890s

*Celebrating the History of African Americans in the Capay valley w  
BLACK HISTORY DAY*

*Guinda celebrates its unique Black/African American History--as well as that of the national Black History Month in February--on the second Saturday each February. The 14th annual celebration is this February 14, 2015 at Guinda Grange Hall. The brainchild of local*

musician Clarence Van Hook and local Black Historian Bill Petty, it draws people from all over the country. Before statehood and after—since California was a free state—there are sizable enclaves throughout this area with early pioneers of African descent. One such area is Hungry Hollow and the Dunnigan Hills, where the “largest Black landowner in Yolo County at the turn of the last century” settled and prospered: Basil Campbell would be a magnet for many Black pioneers to follow. Many found their way to the Guinda area in the Capay Valley. Bill Petty explains that the Guinda area has a rich history of being well integrated from the beginning of early settlements. Many of the blacks settling in the area were never slaves, while others were freed after settling in the area. Come learn about this unique history, listen to the music led by musician Clarence Van Hook, and enjoy the booths and presentation—and the great food! Pot Luck—while it is not necessary, you are welcome bring something to share! 10AM to 5PM



Above: the students and teacher of the Summit School

Built by the pioneer families of Hayes, Logan, Simpson and others—it was always integrated.



Photos from top: Summit School was integrated from the beginning, built by white and black families on the east side of Cache Creek from Guinda; 3 descendants of the Summit celebrated their 90th together this year; Bill Petty and the Prince Hall Masonic Grand Lodge of Woodland would soon break the color line between theirs and the California White Masonic Grand Lodge in 1994.

Photos courtesy of Bill Petty and YCHS



**The Meffords of Capay:** Claire Mefford Mabry [whose husband Bill Mabry played fiddle for years with *Asleep at the Wheel* the Texas swing band—often locally, much to our delight!] contacted me recently and let me know her grandparents were great friends of my great-grandparents Wyatt Godfrey and Mary Duncan of Capay and Hungry Hollow from the 1870s. Claire’s father Clarence was best buddies with their son, my great uncle Wyatt Godfrey, jr, as well. She sent me a great photo of the *Townspeople of Capay* [see it bigger on the website] picnicking on the Duncan Ranch in about 1900 w our ancestors circled in ink for me—what a delight! She tells me of her family history in Capay Valley here:

*“My grandparents came to Capay in 1877 from Elmira, Solano Co. They had eight children; three were born in Elmira and the other five in Capay. Their names were: George, John, Henry, Mary, Deina, Franklin, Stella and my father Clarence. My grandfather built a small house on what is now Mefford Lane in Capay. Two retired professors from the University of California bought the house around twenty years ago and had the name changed. My grandmother was forty-five when Dad was born. He said his mother always told him she was Stonewall Jackson’s cousin, so I checked it out on the computer and sure enough she was. Her grandmother and Stonewall’s father were brother and sister. She had died in the flu epidemic in 1913 and I had never even seen a picture of her until I got a copy of The Jackson Brigade quarterly. Her picture was on the back cover. Dad’s best friend was Wyatt Duncan, jr, and their mothers were also best friends. I had never heard Wyatt’s mother called anything but “Mother Dunc.” Wyatt had a Stutz Bearcat car and dad said it was very very fast. At the same time he was telling me this he also mentioned a fine moonshine still hidden in the Capay hills. I asked him if there was a connection between the fast car and the still but he just smiled. Since it was prohibition at the time, I always wondered...”*

She went on to tell more, but you will have to enjoy it on our website [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) — or buy the Book: **The History and Stories of the Capay Valley**, by Elizabeth “Betsy” Monroe coming out January-February 2015! See the website for details and order instructions.  
Yours, Betsy Monroe

From: The Greater Capay valley Historical Society

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