

**Summer
Time
in the Capay
Valley!
June-August
2015**

**BLACK HISTORY DAY
FEBRUARY 14, 2015 AT
GUINDA GRANGE
HISTORY DAY**

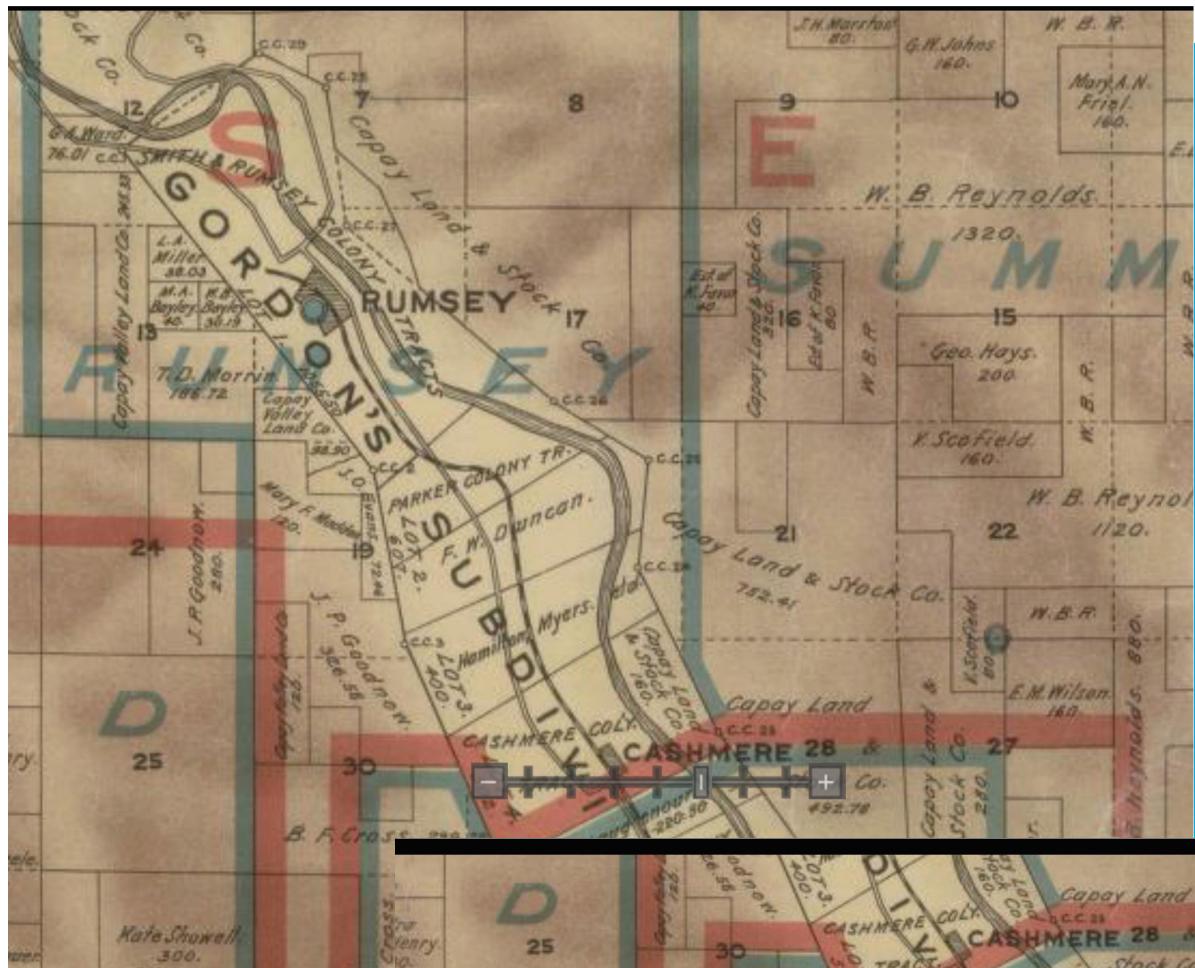


Come visit our
booth next to *The
Friends of the Yolo
County Archives* at
the Yolo County Fair
in the Ag Building:
August 19-23, 2015!!

TGCVHS NEWSLETTER

Brooks-Rumsey areas on Official 1908 Yolo



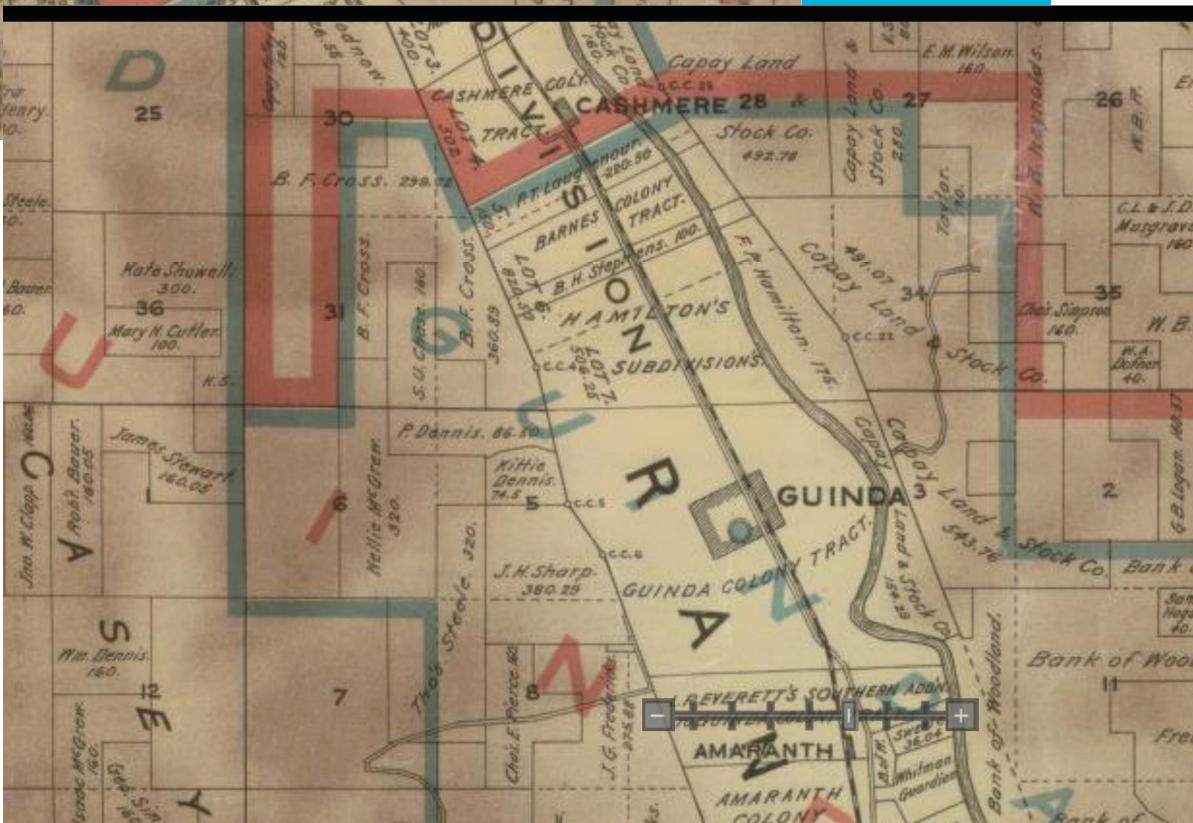


At Left:

This portion of the 1900 Map of Yolo County shows Capay Valley from Cashmere to Rumsey.

Below:

This portion shows Guinda to Cashmere



County Map

Map on page 1: a portion of the 1908 Map of Yolo County shows the portion from about Brooks to Guinda—on a map owned by the Monroe Family.

Throughout this article are other portions from this map and the 1900 from The Yolo County Archives.

In Newsletter 2, I started transcribing a hand-written narrative—*History of Early Settlers in Capay Valley, by Henry Earl Smith, 1954*. Robin Beck, Smith's granddaughter, shared this fascinating account with us, and I found some maps closely corresponding to his narrative of families living up the Capay Valley from the late 1870s through the early 1900s.

In 1954, Earl Smith wrote a 10-page report on the History of Capay Valley and another 10-page document giving all the names of all the early settlers up the valley, starting in Capay. When Robin mailed me a copy written in Earl's own lovely cursive, I asked to transcribe some of it for our quarterly newsletters!

History of Early Settlers in Capay Valley, by Henry Earl Smith, 1954

This placement of early pioneers to the Capay Valley begins around 1875 in the town of Capay [then Langville] and go up the valley in order until reaching Rumsey. I have attempted to transcribe it pretty much as he wrote it, not correcting errors...I believe it lets us see how the towns and homesteads were laid out as they went up the valley...I include text from Guinda through Rumsey in this newsletter —

Of the Guinda area he wrote: *The Nick Sweitzer Ranch that lies full width of the valley. The ...Heine Ranch. Mr Heine was inventor of the Heine Piano. The LP Everett and James B Everett ranches, a mile south of Guinda. The George Boniface ranch west of Guinda. The Al Logan Ranch is across the creek on top of the mountain from Guinda. The Chas. E Pierce in the canyon west of Guinda. The Indian School west of Guinda. The BF Cross NW of Guinda and adjoining is Samuel Chase ranch [see page 347 in the book *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley* for more on these two families—as a matter of fact most of the families he mentions appear somewhere in the book! See last page of this newsletter or go to greatercapayvalley.org to find the book.] Frank P Hambleton Ranch lies 1 mi. north of Guinda. A historic place 2 mi. N of Guinda off east side of highway was where Geo. Tilly conducted a Post Office by name of Oak PO in 1880-86 and west of highway was Occidental School. Levy Vineyard was just north of school. 1 1/2 mi. S of Rumsey was Robert and John Gordon Ranches. On NW corner of Levy Vineyard on a small hill there lived Mr & Mrs Hoverman who raised sheep—this was west of the Gordon Ranches. John P. Goodnow owned a tract of land about 1 mi S of Rumsey. Other farmers & fruit growers in and around Rumsey were EF Haswell, Geo Farish, Geo. Twomey, EW Smith, Frank Schaffer, August Janes, Tom D Morrin, JM Morrin postmaster & storekeeper, Paul E Keller, Ben P Lloyd, John T Lowrey, Nick Lowrey grandfather of our assemblyman Lloyd Lowrey, Geo H Richardson.*

In Casey Flat up from the valley & on top of the Mountain beginning west of Brooks were Walter Wallace, the Andrew Smith family, Chas Denny, JC Duncan, John Brown, Milo Walker. Henry H Smith & the Meyer family in north Casey Flat about 1883??

Henry Earl also wrote of his family's early days in the Capay Valley beginning in 1875—which we started in Newsletter 2 and will continue here; quick recap-intro: Henry Earl Smith's parents were Emeline and

Henry H. Smith, who would marry in 1868 and eventually have 3 boys and 2 girls, the last 3 of which—Henry Earl, Clyde J. and Willard F.—would be born in the Capay Valley. Emeline and Henry came to Capay Valley penniless, but Emeline's father, Jacob, traveling with them, had enough to buy 160 acres known as the Billy Raymond Ranch and on which *now [in 1954] stands the Brooks P.O. on the southwest corner Brooks.* The Smith family located on the Dave Wolgamot Ranch adjoining the Henry Ranch on the south. The hilly part of the Henry ranch, where the Brooks P.O. later stood, *was heavily covered with chaparral, pines, oaks, and manzanita, all of which had to be cleared by hand.*

Herein is a continuation of what times were like for the early settlers to the valley:

When the log cabin was burned, lumber and shakes were carried in to build a new house. The split pine shakes were carried in by horse and on our backs. The largest lumber, such as 4x12x16 and 1x6x16 were carried in by putting one end lashed to pack saddle and the other end carried by walking behind. It was 4 mi from the main road but 2 mi was by wagon road and the other 2 mi was by horse trail so narrow that it was hard to make the turns in the trail with a 16 foot piece of lumber. Lumber was hauled in by wagon that first 2 mi and stored in a cabin until it could be packed in the last 2 miles.

In the 1880-86 there were only 2 post offices in Capay Valley. The first one the Capay PO, located about two miles north of the present town of Capay; established by Joel Wood in 1868. The other: Rock PO, located about 2 mi south of the present town of Rumsey; established in 1878. He also claims the following: Later, 2 mi. N of Guinda off east side of highway...Geo. Tilly conducted a Post Office by name of Oak PO in 1880-86, but officially Guinda and Rumsey POs were established in 1889 after the Rock PO was discontinued and the RR came to the valley; Brooks PO was established in 1884; the [1864 Capay City/Dogtown] "Capay" PO in what we now know as Cadenasso was re-established in the currently-named town of Capay in 1888. [John Gallardo investigated and found slight discrepancies in his claims, but they are pretty close.]

Our generous contributor, Robin Beck, is also descended from the Capay Valley Russell family. Her paternal grandparents were Robert and Agnes Russell, who had Lowell, Robert Milton (her father), Joseph, Helen and Dick. Robert's brother Felix would marry Agnes' sister Pearl and their house would eventually become the Capay Valley BnB in 2001. Helen would marry Carroll Ender and Dick would marry Barbara and both families remained in the Capay Valley area for many years.

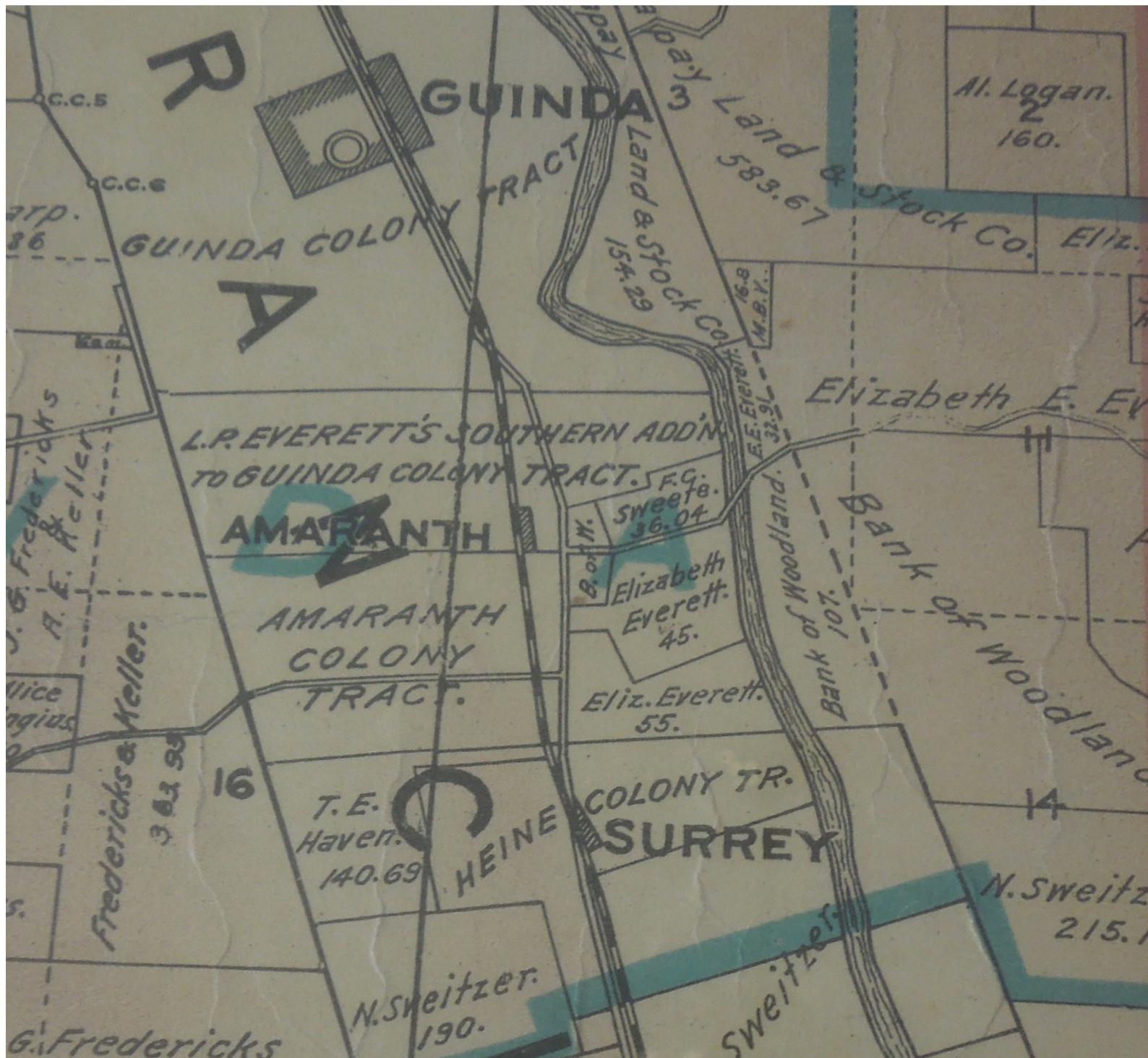


**YOUR LOCAL
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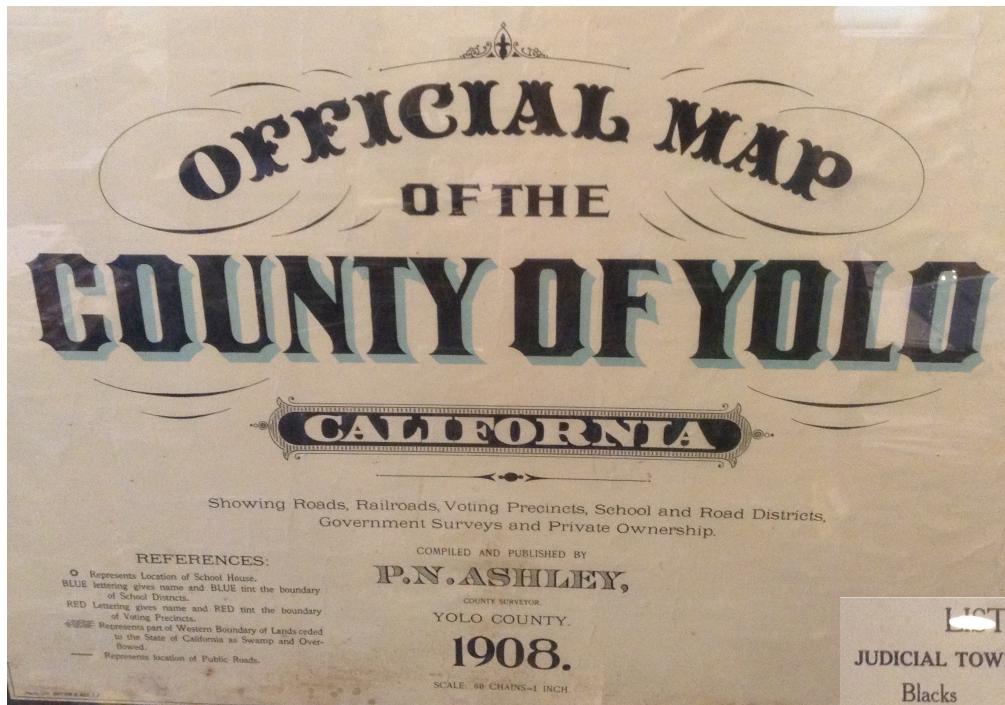


NOTE: Elizabeth & Kevin Campbell were instrumental in converting the old Felix & Pearl Russell 'Seven Palms' homestead in Brooks to the Capay Valley BnB in 2001. Today it is under new ownership. Felix' brother Robert married Pearl's sister Agnes, and they settled nearby, having five children: Lowell, Robert 'Milton', Joseph, Helen and Dick.

Of special interest: on the section of the 1908 map below you can see the location of the Sweete [Swete?] parcel south of the town of Guinda, to the right of the historic farming area Amaranth, and above the historic Surrey area—both of which had RR sidings shown on this map. It was at this location that the biggest bootlegging bust of the nation took place in 1926! See the complete story behind this event in our Journal 4, and in the book *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley* beginning on page 68 — both of which can be located by going to our website greatercapayvalley.org.



The 1908 Map of Yolo County referenced in this newsletter was owned by Sheriff James Wm Monroe, who was voted in as County Supervisor in 1909 and then Sheriff in 1911—and he kept this map on his office wall until his retirement in 1938. It shows many things of interest, including the School Districts and the then-sitting Supervisors, as well as the owners of land parcels.



For more information on all this, try cagenweb.com/yolo and historicmapworks.com and <http://www.yolocounty.org/general-government/general-government-departments/assessor/parcel-number-or-recorder-s-reference-search> and davidrumsey.com — a great collection of such maps!

SUPERVISOR'S DISTRICTS.

First District is composed of Clarksburg, South Putah, and Washington Voting Precincts.

Second District is composed of Davisville, Winters, and North Winters Voting Precincts.

Third District is composed of Dunnigan, Blacks and Knights Landing Voting Precincts.

Fourth District is composed of Woodland, Suburbs, and Woodland (two Wards) Voting Precincts.

Fifth District is composed of Guinda, Capay, Madison, and Cacheville Voting Precincts.

LIST OF JUDICIAL TOWNSHIPS. JUDICIAL TOWNSHIP OF WHAT VOTING PRECINCTS COMPOSED	
Blacks	Blacks
Capay	Capay
Clarksburg	Clarksburg
Cottonwood	Madison
Cacheville	Cacheville
Dunnigan	Dunnigan
Grafton	Knights Landing
Guinda	Guinda
Putah	South Putah and Davis
Winters	Winters and North Winters
Woodland	Woodland, Suburbs and two Wards in City
Washington	Washington

This Map approved and declared the Official Map of Yolo County on this 2nd day of November, 1908. Supervisors:

P. H. Kopper, Chairman,
I. J. Vaughn
F. B. Edson
Eli Snider
S. A. Palm,
Other: C. F. Kendall Clerk

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS COMPOSING THE SAME.

Esparto Union High School District is composed of Cadenasso, Canon, Cottonwood, Esparto, Fairview, Gordon, Guinda, Madison, Monday, Mountain, Mt. Pleasant, Rumsey, Summit, Willow Spring, and part of Capay School Districts.

Winters Union High School District is composed of Apricot, Buckeye and Winters School Districts.

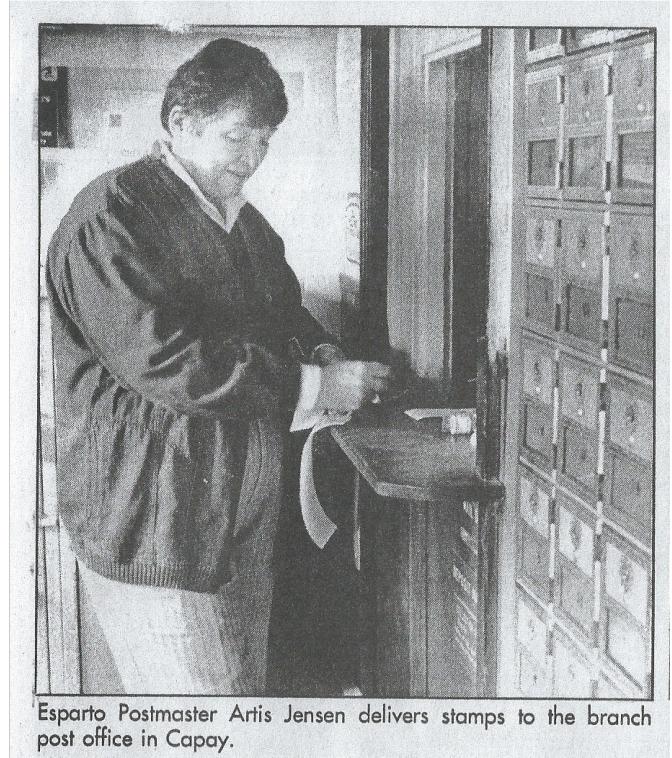
Woodland High School District is composed of Woodland and part of Laugenour School Districts.

Pierce Joint Union High School District is composed of Wildwood and North Grafton School Districts.

Speaking of small town and rural Post Offices of Capay Valley...I fondly recall our Capay Post Office—even remember our box number was 34 and recall when they added zip codes! Capay School was right next door, so when we waited for the bus or for Dad to pick us up in the 1950s, we were allowed to go pick up the mail from Postmistress Wilma Krebsbach, who either handed us the mail and chatted with us or let us stand on tiptoe and turn the combination lock on the little door. Recently, someone sent me some newspaper clippings he had regarding our post offices and I was delighted to see two of our now-gone Capay PO.



Small town patrons like their P.O.



Post offices

The article appeared in the Daily Democrat in 1993 when Brooks was about to get a new, *bigger* post office trailer. Theirs had been a small red-white-n-blue trailer for years—and their biggest concern was whether they would still get to have it in these colors! Apparently, the unique color-scheme caused tourists to stop and pop in—much to the delight of the friendly postmaster, Jeanne Han, who was quoted as saying she met people from all over the world!

When I went off to college in 1971, I often wrote to rural friends back home, and if I didn't know their addresses I just wrote their names and the town they were nearest to—and the mail got delivered! Even today, my mail carrier looks out for my place when I let her know I will be away—and she has been known to text me and offered to call the sheriff if she sees a mysterious car in the driveway while I am gone! She has even fed my cats—shhhh, don't tell!

In 1991, when Rumsey was about to lose their in-home post office, due to the retirement of the postmaster, Frank Morris [sic—Morrin?], they simply had people collect their mail from the front porch of his deserted house until the community, led by The Rumsey Improvement Club, raised the money to build a tiny PO next to the historic Rumsey Hall—also a successful project of the now-named *Rumsey Improvement Association*. As the article says, We *like* our post offices! We've fought hard to get them and to keep them—for over a century!

Water Witches, Well Witching — or Masters of *Dowsing*:

This drought has brought us a lot of concern about water, obviously, but it has also brought out some creative new methods to conserve water and to rethink farm water-schemes and the replacement of thirsty crops with drought-tolerant crops—farmers are nothing if not innovative and conservative, especially with their water! But it has also brought out the *old* methods—such as *Witching!* Well, OK, Bill Rominger—a “dowser” himself—corrected me when I called it *well witching*. It’s respectfully called *Dowsing*. Bill has long had a profession in the pump and well business, but he is also a practicing dowser, so I asked him to tell me about it. While some will still say dowsing is fool-hardy and non-science, I have seen it practiced—and work—so I am with Bill, a true believer!

When I was about 12 years old, my parents bought a 10 acre parcel 2 miles from Esparto, closer to the high school for their four Hungry Hollow kids. My father had to sink a well and hired an outfit to come drill. We all went out to watch...but were dismayed when after three dry holes, nothing. Dad told the well drillers, much to their somewhat derisive amusement, “I am going to call Ol’ Man Hayes!” Roy Hayes was a well-known and respected *well witcher*—and my dad was not only a believer, but was desperate!

Mr Hayes arrived with a Y-shaped piece of baling wire and quietly went to work—about 50 yards from our desired home site, though the *professionals* had insisted there was no water near this site and had drilled their dry wells on the far side of the parcel. Within minutes the wire was pulled down toward the ground! He marked the spot and walked away and came at it from several directions with the same result. He then simply said, “Tom, drill right here!” And, low and behold, skeptics, that is where the well produced water—shallow, plentiful and delicious! Good luck to you all with your precious water!

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

TO:

**The History and
Stories
of the
Capay Valley**



Elizabeth Monroe

Don’t forget to contact us for a copy of the new 440-page hardcover book! Check it out on greatercapayvalley.org or if you are a member-subscriber, your discounted rate is \$150—\$50 off the \$200 Retail price! Send a request and check to TGCVHS at the address above—and how you want the author to sign it!

Come by our booth in the Ag Building at the Yolo County Fair Aug 19-23 and buy a raffle ticket for prizes—including a copy of the book!