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# CAPAY VALLEY

June 2012

Volume Eight

greatercapayvalley.org

The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society

PO Box 442  
Esparto, CA  
95627

EMAIL  
EMONROE353@GMAIL.COM

GREATERCAPAYVALLEY.ORG

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

As I have traveled the Capay Valley area these last two years, pondering what to explore and write about next, I noticed not only many new plantings of olives, but also old-growth and rogue olive trees **everywhere!** I had to wonder how I had never even noticed the old ones before--after all, I had been calling the Capay Valley "home" for 58 years! I lived here my first 18 and last 3 years, and in between I came back continuously. But I really only remembered one small orchard, the one next to our house on CR85C near CR23. I had spent a lot of time sitting in those lovely old trees, reading and daydreaming the hot summers away...the Greek owner from Sacramento taught my mom to cure olives after a harvest one year, as a way to thank her for keeping quail hunters out of his grove. I have long meant to learn to do this myself--and now I will! As I have found varieties of trees--truly **everywhere!**--I plan to cure some from many sources and label them as such, just for fun!

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



**Rogue olives hug an old phone booth in Brooks, near the old town center. Once I started looking for olives and their history in the Capay Valley, I found them everywhere! Lining almost every road, standing tall and unharvested on old homesteads, wild and wooly or planted in neat hedge-like rows--sometimes a few acres and at others thousands of acres, as far as the eye could see! Pioneers and farmers planted them as shade and for wind breaks, as well as for their fruit, since the 1840s.**



Continued on Page 3 Greater Capay Valley Historical Society, PO Box 442, Esparto, CA 95627

## PAGE 1 -- CONTENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CITATIONS

*Special thanks to: Donor Bill Harris; article contributor, Jim Hiatt; the Harris and Burris families, Ken Han-- and all the faithful subscribers and advertisers!*

- Page Cover-1 = Introduction by Editor, Elizabeth Monroe
- Page 2-8 = Contents/Works Cited; *Olives!*
- Page 9-12 = Esparto Druggists
- Page 13 = Star Thistle
- Page 14-15 = Fire Dept.
- Page 16-17 = Sheriff's Log
- Page 18-21 = 2 Owls of Capay Valley: Barn & Booby
- Page 22 = Memorials
- Page 23 = Olive Products
- Page 24--Subscription Info/Ads

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*Cathy West was born in Yolo County and spent many years there where she developed an emotional connection with the area. The influence of this connection exists in her artwork, from stately olive trees to brilliant Fall vineyards. Cathy creates her mixed media pieces on handcrafted paper made by Joe Muller with plant materials he collects from photo locations. To see the unique results of this pairing of paper and imagery, please visit: [www.wildmoonarts.com](http://www.wildmoonarts.com) or send an email to [wildmoonarts@yahoo.com](mailto:wildmoonarts@yahoo.com).*

Cathy's artwork (below) depicts the ancient olive trees (above) at UCD's Wolfskill Experimental Orchards south of Winters on Putah Creek Road.



Wildmoonarts.com

## Olives, Olives Everywhere!

I have learned that many local, old-time families cured their own olives, and I have been offered many methods and recipes lately--and the right to pick as many as I want to try it myself! Locally, most of the olives today are raised for oil, while in the past they were raised for their fruit. I have also learned that while many farmers only grow to sell their high-yield crops for oil, they often keep some olives to bottle their own oil and/or cure the fruit--sort of a *boutique* thing. Most just make it for family and friends, but you can occasionally pick some up as a silent auction item at a local fund-raiser--if you're lucky, since many of these same farmers are winning metals at fairs and other competitions! But more on this later...

Another interesting thing came out of this research: the many other uses for olive oil--and even the leaves! The medicinal uses became most interesting to me as I thought of ways to thematically tie olives to my other focus this issue: the local doctors, mid-wives and druggists in Capay Valley at the turn of the last century. While these may not have used olive oil in their American practices, historically many cultures have done just that--for centuries! It is certain that many of the immigrants from those countries cultivated olives here for just that reason: to them olives and their oil held health-giving properties that were essential--to the point of being *magical*! And certainly spiritual.

Celebrating this magic is author Carol Firenze [yes, that is the Italian spelling for the renaissance town of Florence, and it is her real name!]. In her delightful book, *The Passionate Olive*, Carol claims, "For more than four thousand years, the olive tree has been a symbol of abundance, peace, and longevity. Given to humankind by a goddess, revered by ancient cultures, and protected by emperors, the olive tree and its precious fruit have always played important roles in civilization. Dubbed 'liquid gold' by Homer, olive oil has been used for food, medicine, magic, beauty, and divine rituals...Joe DiMaggio is even said to have soaked his bat in olive oil." --how *American* can you get?!

Continued on Page 4



## *The First Olives arrive in what would become Yolo County in the 1840s--compliments of John Reid Wolfskill*

It is believed the first olive trees came to Yolo County in the 1840s, brought by John Reid Wolfskill. Born in 1804 in Boonesborough, KY, Wolfskill came to southern California in 1838, but made his way north, arriving in the Putah Creek area in 1840. "He was smitten. Acres and acres of wild oats grew taller than his horse's back, a sure sign of fertile soil. The land along Putah Creek had a steady source of water and was slightly higher than the surrounding valley – perfect for the agricultural life he so wanted to lead." Thwarted in his early attempts to acquire a grant of land, because he was not a Mexican citizen, he turned to his brother William, who had become a Mexican citizen in New Mexico. "On May 24, 1842, Governor Juan Bautista de Alvarado granted four square Mexican leagues, over 17,750 acres, to William Wolfskill. Brother John set out a short time later with cattle, oxen, a few horses and a satchel of cuttings and seeds to settle on his dreamland...believing agriculture could become California's true treasure, a conviction he cultivated and a legacy he left to Yolo and Solano counties," all according to the historical sketch found at <http://ucanr.org/sites/wolfskill2>

As pioneers, many in search of gold, began "poured into the Sacramento Valley in the early 1850s, mining hillsides and creek beds for gold, Rancher John Wolfskill" was already living in the area. Similar to them, he too was a "pioneer raised in the wilds of Missouri who had survived the long, hard journey to California in search of a better life. But he had no interest in joining the rush for gold." According to local author and historian, Joann Leach Larkey, "Wolfskill was a horticulturalist at heart...He was living and working on lush, fertile land along Putah Creek – that was his goldmine."



Only four leagues, his grant, *Rancho Rio de los Potos*, was small compared to other Mexican land grants, but "local legend has it John wanted only as much land as he could cover on horseback in one day from sunup to sundown." As Larkey put it in *Winters: A Heritage of Horticulture, a Harmony of Purpose*, "John Wolfskill judged the fertility of the soil by the height of the native grain, cutting back toward the creek whenever the grain no longer came up to the highest point on his horse's back...That could explain why the land grant's northern boundary, now marked by Russell Boulevard, follows an irregular stair-step contour roughly parallel to Putah Creek." The four leagues straddle a county line: 10,750 acres in what became Solano County and 7,004 acres in Yolo County.



*Gnarled olive trees, such as the one at left, still line the drive up to the old Wolfskill homestead, while others line the roads bordering the property, like those at top right.*



## Wolfkill's Legacy: UCD Wolfskill Experimental Orchards

Mrs. Frances Wolfskill Taylor Wilson, John's daughter, "bequeathed 107.26 acres to the University of California for an experimental farm from this portion of Rancho Rio de los Putos. The University's research has since enriched the state's horticultural industry... 'The Wolfskill Experimental Orchards are a research treasure,' says Professor Ted DeJong, a pomologist and the station's director. 'Work there has resulted in the development and release of 55 new varieties - 29 strawberry, eight processing peach, seven cherry, five almond, three prune and three pistachio - as well as two almond-peach rootstocks.' 'Germplasm evaluation blocks for research and education have been conducted



*Pictured here, the plaque at the entrance to the Wolfskill Grant, mounted on locally quarried creek stone and the grand olive-lined drive to the old homestead.*

visit also:  
[ucdavis.edu](http://ucdavis.edu)



*commodities – everything from apricot to almond to avocado. The orchards have been invaluable for plant breeding and environmental stress research, such as rain cracking with cherries, and testing cultural practices and tree physiology, like nitrogen requirements for prune and peach trees.*

*"In addition to the 107 acres, the Wolfskill family donated another 28 acres from the original land grant in 1953 and Masson Land Enterprises donated another 20 acres in 1985. Since 1980, the Wolfskill Experiment Orchards have also been home to a USDA-run National Clonal Germplasm Repository, which keeps alive several hundred varieties of stone-*

*fruits, grapes, walnuts, pistachios, persimmons, walnuts, olives, pomegranate, fig and kiwi."*

*"None of this would have been possible without John Wolfskill,"*

*says Al Bonin, agricultural superintendent of the Wolfskill orchards since 1979."*

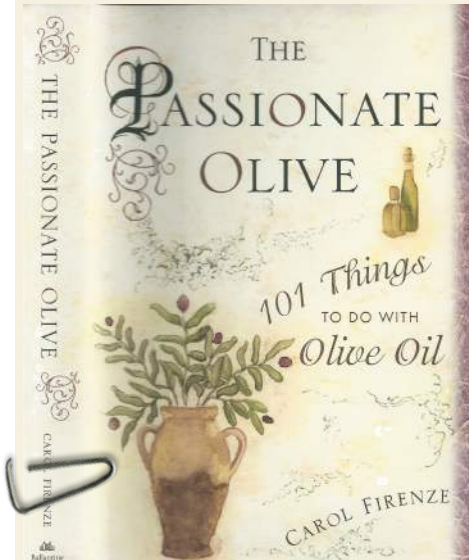
Information from:

<http://ucanr.org/sites/wolfskill2>



## *The Story of Olives, mythical, spiritual, magical...*

*excerpts from The Passionate Olive, 101 Things to do with Olive Oil, by Carol Firenze*



*The history of olive culture mirrors the history of Western civilization...the olive tree most likely originated in Asia Minor...the first cultivated olive trees appeared around 6000BC in an area of Syria. They then spread to Crete, Palestine, and Israel...By the 7th century BC, olive trees were well established in Greece. The olive tree was so sacred that legislation was written to prohibit the cutting down of one...Known as Solon's Olive Protection Law...anyone who uprooted or destroyed an olive tree would be judged in court and, if found guilty, sentenced to death...In Rome, gladiators oiled their bodies...Celebrated physician and Father of Medicine Hippocrates recommended the use of olive oil for curing ulcers, cholera, muscular pain. Olive oil perhaps is the missing piece used in building one of the engineering wonders of the world, answering the question scholars have posed for centuries: What else could have helped ease the movement of the great stones to build the pyramids of Egypt?*

*[Eventually] Hispania (that portion of the Roman Empire encompassing most of present-day Spain and Portugal) was the largest supplier of this precious liquid, and its olive oils were considered the holy grail of oils and thought to have the finest quality. The oil was shipped in terra-cotta amphoras...[which] could be used only once. The number of discarded amphoras is staggering. In fact, there is a mountain in Rome called Mt. Testaccio--forty-nine meters high and one kilometer wide...made entirely of methodically broken, discarded, and stacked amphoras.*

*Olive cultivation declined during the barbarian invasions...rare and valuable during the Middle Ages...it was chiefly used for religious purposes...The history of olive cultivation in the New World can be traced to missionaries traveling with Spanish explorers and conquistadors who carried the olive to Mexico (New Spain)...mainland of South America...and at last, to what is now California. As early as 1524, Franciscan missionaries planted olive trees in New Spain.*

*Historically, the original purpose of growing olives in California was for the making of oil...first oil produced in 1803...by the end of the nineteenth century, table olives became the primary products...in recent years, a number of Californians...make exceptional olive oil.*



PHOTO: © RUSS FISCHELLA, SF

CAROL FIRENZE is a board member of the California Olive Oil Council and a professional member of the American Institute of Wine and Food and the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade. She received her Olive Oil Consultant Certificate from the Italian Culinary Institute in New York and holds a doctorate in education from the University of San Francisco, with a focus on cultural and communicative understanding. An international management consultant, Firenze lives in Los Gatos, California.

*NOTE: Ms. Firenze is now a "past member" of the California Olive Oil Council--book jacket is 10 yrs old*

Jacket design: KarenLau.com

Jacket illustrations: Margie L. Preston, Interface Design



Ballantine Books  
New York, N.Y.

www.ballantinebooks.com

## Olives Come to the Capay Valley...

*“Since 1985, the use of olive oil in the US has grown exponentially [due to] the importing of excellent European oils, the availability of award-winning California oils, the nutritional focus on health and nutrition, and the growing interest in culinary arts...Capable of living up to three thousand years, this hardy and undemanding tree can survive semi-arid climates, shallow soil, and decapitation. Should a tree die, shoots will begin to grow from the base.”* by Carol Firenze.

[see pictures below, by Elizabeth Monroe, from old, gnarled trees that had been cut and have re-sprouted; left to right: off Highway 16 in Brooks and off CR14 in the Dunnigan Hills]



*Obviously, this tenacious tree is well-suited to our climate and growing conditions.*



Today, many farmers have turned their sights to olives--mostly for the oil. Whether it is *Cal Worthington and his dog Spot's* exceptionally large planting of over 1700 acres along CR19 in the Dunnigan Hills--an amazing and surreal sight; take the drive!--or the more typical efforts of the valley, such as *Grumpy Goats Farm*, with their 7.5 acres of trees on their 22 acre farm at 23946 State Highway 16, new olive orchards are cropping up all over the greater Capay Valley! And whether they are grown traditionally like those of Cal Worthington, or organically (and soon to be certified), such as Grumpy Goats; whether grown as “trees” or in hedge rows; harvested mechanically or by hand, they are--mostly--doing well here. There have been a few mis-fires, and this “boom” has caused some to wonder whether all this activity will hurt the local bottom-line in the long run, but for now, the oils coming from these harvests are winning awards and fans--and selling at good prices. Until recently, the valley farmers have had no choice but to take their olives to mills outside the valley, like Olivino in Hopland, “a first rate custom mill,” according to their local, faithful clients Pam and Stuart--the *grumpy goats* who gave their farm its unique name. Another favorite is *The Olive Press* in Sonoma, [www.theolivepress.com](http://www.theolivepress.com) Some who have depended on their Deborah Rogers--and refer to her as “the olive queen”--are now looking at the possibility of switching to the new local option: Yocha DeHe has hired Ms. Rogers as a consultant, which makes their new press even that much more appealing to the likes of Jean Chevalier of Taber Ranch, who sings her praises. He joins Joe Muller, mill production manager of the Yocha DeHe mill in Brooks, in being excited about this new local option. [www.yochadehe.org/news/state-art-olive-mill](http://www.yochadehe.org/news/state-art-olive-mill)



Grumpy Goats Farm  
Capay Valley Olive Oil

Stuart Littell, Partner

23946 State Highway 16  
Capay, CA 95607

Phone: (530) 796-0000  
stuart@grumpygoatsfarm.com  
[www.grumpygoatsfarm.com](http://www.grumpygoatsfarm.com)



Counter-clockwise from upper right: Logo for California Olive Ranch; 3 shots of surreally expansive new orchards off County Road 19; *Seka Hills Olive Mill* sign; Karl and John Giguere's vine and olive harvesters.



Before the new olive oil boom in the greater Capay Valley, the real California olive oil story was in Corning and Oroville, where farms like *California Olive Ranch* still produce vast quantities of the stuff. Locally, the trend is still mostly small farms. Some, like the approx. 5 acres at *Taber Ranch*, are medium-density and still shaken from the trees. Some are high-density and planted in hedge-rows, like vines--then harvested by machines like those of Karl Giguere, seen below. Last year, he harvested a grove near my house near CR14 on CR86 in the middle of the night; boom lights and huge, hovering machines, with an ominous "maw" lowered down over the rows--very eerie to watch! Several of the smaller farmers sent me to see Karl's machines, which he adapted to custom-suit his needs and those of other farmers--like his vintner-brother John. His ingenuity is obviously much admired. Others, like Jean Chevalier, are admired for their planting technique and high quality yield. He not only planted for *Taber Ranch*, but also *Grumpy Goats* and Dennis Robbins' *Capay Gold*--award winners! And some, like Joe Muller, are not satisfied with just making awarded oil--in addition to his *Copper Hill* arbquina extra virgin olive oil, he makes balsamic vinegars. I have tried his elderberry vinegar--love it drizzled on salade with his oil! He is



custom-making one for the new BnB and Event Center on CR26, *Inn at Park Winters*, from their old-growth pomegranates--can't wait to try it!

Check out the medals at: [www.yolocountyfair.net/html/olive\\_oil\\_competition.html](http://www.yolocountyfair.net/html/olive_oil_competition.html)







## Past Medical Practitioners in the Greater Capay Valley--from Homeopathy to Pharmaceuticals! The beginning of a series...

*Prior to WWII and the chemical revolution in medicines, doctors and pharmacists still mixed their own concoctions, mostly from dried plants and minerals. Researching the medicinal properties of olives caused me to look more closely at how medicine would have been practiced here in the late 1800s and early 1900s--it has been an interesting journey! I still have much to explore on the various care-givers, mid-wives and doctors--beginning with our own, colorful Ol' Doc Thornton Craig of Capay--so more on that in the next issue. But our local druggists and the social aspect of an old-time drug store are an interesting starting place...*



One of the great delights of this research is the great people I meet--and the stories they tell! Out of the blue, Bill Harris, now living in Washington state, drops into my lap when I had just read about one of the first pharmacists of Esparto by the same name. So I asked, *How are you related to him?* Turns out my

new resource grew up in Esparto and the Capay Valley as the only-child to pharmacist William Harris and his lovely wife, Helena (Brown). Turns out, also, that I found quite the story-teller! Bill sort of said, *Sure, sure, my father was the pharmacist, but I think my mother is a much more interesting story for your readers...* So I got him to send some pictures and tell me her tale--he was right! While she is unique in many ways, her spunk also represents the *true pioneer spirit* that led many to our state--and our valley:

*My Mother was born in Verona, North Dakota in 1881 when ND was still a territory, not a State. Shortly after her birth, the family moved to a homestead north of Reed Point, MT on treeless land. As a child, she road a horse to school along with her brothers, 9 miles each way. She had to leave school after the 4th grade to help with the farm along with her brothers.*

*Gradually, she and some of the brothers were able to homestead adjacent land (she fibbed about her age). Her brothers and neighbors would stop by to check to see that she was doing well. She was only 17 and filed on her claim lying about her age. She worked one summer at the lodge in Yellowstone as a "bread lady." She applied for a sales position with the **United Drug Company** (which operated **Rexall Drug** as a franchise) and was accepted. Though 'decent young women did not travel from town to town' in that day, she would visit college campuses and arrange with local druggists to have invitations sent to female customers and she would demonstrate the use of cosmetics, a new product to most women. John Leithold's daughter took her to Esparto to introduce the local 'good customers' to a free demonstration. The local ladies received invitations in the mail. This is how she met my father and finally married at the ripe old age of 32.*

**Pharmacist William Harris, pictured at left, was the Esparto druggist until he retired and sold his practice to Frank Burris. Upon retirement, Mr. and Mrs. Harris bought 305 acres in Capay Valley abutting the Taber Ranch south of highway 16. Bill fondly recalls the Tabers--and the Campbells! He shared: *Helen Campbell enabled my mother to stay on the ranch as long as she did [until 97 years old]. Helen did her grocery shopping and physician's visits--probably for way less than her assistance was worth.***





At left: Frank Burris in the *Esparto Drug Store*--note film crew camera at right side of picture; as one of the few extras with a speaking part, Mr. Burris appears as a small town druggist in the film starring Jon Voight, filmed in part in Esparto; released in 1973: *The All American Boy* -- see a clip on our website at [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org)

Below, L-R: Frank and Jean Burris, Richard Johnson, Barbara Russell, ??, and Dorothy Green.

The Esparto Drug Store was established by John Leithold of Woodland. In 1922, with a *farm depression* and a *severe drought* dragging on, William Harris left farming to his father 2 miles north of Esparto and went to Woodland to ask Mr Leithold for a job as a pharmacist. Hired for the Esparto store, he worked for Mr. Leithold until 1927 when he bought the business. According to his son, Bill Harris, *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*



*for auto repair, a blacksmith's shop, a lumber yard, and a Ford auto dealership. Southern Pacific train service was three times a week. Folks came from all directions to pick up goods and seek services. Along about 1938 my father bought the Fredson Bldg and moved the store from what became the Post Office to the re-modeled garage operated by "Dutch" Medley (directly across from Lindberg's Pool Hall). During the depression and early 1940's, even though Woodland was only 16 miles away with Woolworths and JC Penny, movie theaters, etc., Esparto merchants were doing fairly well...due, in part, to a California law called the Fair Trade Act (?) which prevented trade-marked interstate products from being sold below a posted price. When it came down to actual enforcement, there really was none. A Chinese merchant in Woodland started to break "Fair Trade" prices and it was costing Roy Wyatt. Cost in gas between Esparto and Woodland at the time was about 35 to 40 cents. Roy took the merchant to court for his advertised prices. The trial lasted for several days and was very well publicized in the Woodland Democrat. Ironically, Capay Valley and the surrounding area realized that for about 35 to 40 cents in extra money for gas they could save by traveling the extra 16 miles! Wyatt's General Store, the Esparto Drug, etc., started to fade shortly after.*

Below: Frank Burris as a new pharmacist starting out in Temple City, CA, after he left the air force in the 1940s.



*Mr. Harris sold the business to Frank Burris in the early 1950s. The memories of my generation include a soda fountain in the store, complete with counter and stools. That counter served as a hub for social gatherings in Esparto for years--apparently even after hours for an occasional night cap!*

## Lani Burris Yukimura Remembers “the Good Ol’ Days” of Esparto

*Drug Store this way: Probably the still-remaining tiles spelling DRUGS was part of the original drug store--not sure how they chopped up that building, but Dad bought it from Mr. Harris. I think he opened the drug store when I was in the first grade, so about 60 years ago. We moved from Southern Calif where he began his career in pharmacy after WWII (he was a pilot instructor, Capt. in Air Force). We moved to Woodland where I remember attending Dingle School as a kindergartner, and he worked at Leithold Drugs for Mr. Griffith. He always wanted to live in the country, so he bought the drug store in Esparto in the early 50's. Not sure when he stopped the soda fountain, but probably because it was losing money--I remember it was hard to get cooks. Growing up, though, I remember the wonderful ladies that worked there: Angie Osborne, Dorothy Bolton, I think Grace Ereka's mom--they made home-made apple, berry, apricot and peach pies. Jane Johnson, Katie Pearson, Teresa Giraldi also worked there--Katie was like a mom to all of us after my mother died in 1964. The neatest thing about that big old building was the ice cream room. A huge ice cream maker was behind the fountain area and we used to make our own ice cream and sell it at the store. We made ice cream until we ran out of supplies, I guess...was one of those things we did at night and probably a lot of work, or maybe the machine broke--dunno, but remember Crystal Dairies wanting to have the machine as a museum piece. Not sure whatever happened to it...was a big heavy thing! Dad worked for Mr. Wright in Woodland in the evenings as well as at the Esparto store in the 60's and after he closed the store--not sure what year that was. He spent a lot of time and money looking for doctors to come to Esparto--it would help his business, too; it was a huge challenge for the drug store to thrive when a doctor was not in town. Yet he never denied anyone credit and answered calls all through the night to help someone who needed ear drops, or anything that ailed them--I remember the phone ringing late at night when we were all asleep many times, and dad leaving to meet someone at the store for the medicine they needed. He sold the Sunday paper at the store by setting them outside (I remember going down to the store early to put the inserts into the paper) and there was a hole in the store front to put your quarter in..then Monday morning we would crawl under that front window and get the money out and count it. It was the honor system because the store was closed on Sunday.*

Frank Burris grew up in Kingsburg, CA, and was the youngest in his family. He lost his dad when he was young and his uncle Frank took him under his wing, moving him to Sonoma and making sure he went to school.

He went to Santa Rosa Junior College, UC Berkeley, and in San Francisco got his degree in pharmacology. Frank met Jean Rose Brunner while in the service--she was a secretary from Columbus Ohio. They were both college graduates thanks to rich uncles. Jean had “a degree in Music and English and everyone knew that she could play anything on the piano; she was really gifted with an ear for music. When they entertained, she would be at the piano and everyone would gather around and sing with cocktails in their hands.” Active in some service organizations, Frank was mostly a great supporter of Jean in her Eastern Star activities.

Right, L-R: Frank Burris, Chet Parker, 3 unidentified, then Jean Burris in fur; everyone dressed up after a social night for Eastern Star, probably--they just walked across the street to the store for a night cap.

*Photos and info Courtesy of the Frank and Jean Burris Family*





**Bill Harris tells it as he saw it--though he modestly insists no one would find his snippets of 1920-30s memories interesting! Well, I sure did! So I am sharing them with you...First, on his parents' place in Capay Valley he shared, "No water for irrigation, so essentially a *home site*, nothing else. I inherited it in 1988 when my Mother passed away at 97. It is kind of pretty..."** Of note: Willow Creek runs through it and there was an old, prior family cemetery with scattered headstones, partially washed away by the creek over the years. In our chats I mentioned I was doing some research on the local mid-wife, Mary Gaither, and he came right back with: **"I did not know she was a mid-wife. Mrs Gaither used to have a nephew my age, pre-school, that would visit in summer. I couldn't wait until he arrived (lasted 2-3 years). Early on, until the Gaithers moved away, I was usually at their house in the early evening. They always listened to *Amos & Andy* on the radio in the evening. Funny, I have not thought of them in a long while."**

*[For those who do not know, Mary Gaither is a local legend in her own right. She has been written up in the newspapers and several books on the history of Yolo County. When Bill knew her as a young lad, she lived in Esparto with her husband and sons--and the occasional visiting nephew, obviously! She cared for several local invalids in her home or theirs, and acted as mid-wife under Doc Thornton Craig, among others. I will be covering her and the doctors more in future issues.]*

**In further reminiscing, Bill shared these fun, interesting tidbits:**

"A young employee of Wyatt's was getting married. I can't recall the name, but the family owned the almond orchard at the first corner east of Capay. Everyone that worked for the Wyatts knew that the young couple would move into a vacant apartment above the grocery store. The younger co-workers managed to string a thin rope tied to the bed springs down through the office to the basement and then tied a cow bell to the rope!"

"When I was still in grammar school, Smith shot Copick (sp<sup>2</sup>) in the pool hall mid-afternoon. Fortunately, he did not kill Copick, but did manage to wound him severely. I recall asking my dad why it happened. His answer was, *I think he was 'stealing gas'*. I doubt that was the reason and Smith was never prosecuted."

"Among services available at the *Esparto Drug Store*: An almond grower from Rumsey, Howard Moran (sp<sup>2</sup>) [*Morrin, perhaps?*], drove the school bus to Esparto High School with all the Valley kids on board and returned them home at 3PM weekdays for many years. Weekdays from 9AM to 2:30PM, he repaired watches and clocks at a bench in the corner of the store. He stayed pretty busy, as dollar watches and Timex had not arrived yet. I don't recall Mr Moran {sic?} missing many days. I do not recall him ever having a mishap on the bus."

"I have a rather faint memory of a little Monroe girl coming in the drugstore in the late afternoon and saying 'I want some SMA for Jimmy'. My mother thought this little girl was the cutest being on planet Earth. Could my memory be accurate?" *[This would probably have been one of my first-cousins, either Nancy or Martha Monroe, in the 1930s, asking for formula for her baby brother Jimmy, Jim and Lucille (Nurse) Monroe's kids]*



*And: "Southern Pacific eventually replaced the [first agent] Coles 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 Esparto 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 RR Company sent someone from San Francisco to open the safe. Seems the combination was written on the wall and Depot was locked out!"*



© Justin Smith / Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA-3.0  
--pictures above.

Yellow starthistle

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

*Centaurea solstitialis*, yellow star-thistle, is a member of the Asteraceae family, native to the Mediterranean Basin region. [Wikipedia](#)

**Scientific name:** *Centaurea solstitialis*

**Higher classification:** [Centaurea](#)

**Rank:** Species

moved, to spread itself all over the state, especially the hot, dry areas typical of the central valley farm and ranch lands. Beside its obviously bristly bad manners, it is considered a “weed” when its “roots steal moisture from other plants,” to quote Matt Weiser in the *Sacramento Bee* article on May 26, 2012. He goes on to explain that “before leafing out much on the surface, the plant shoots its roots down as deep as 6 feet to find moisture...it can, over time, eliminate even oak forests, which grow in much the same manner and need the deep moisture to propagate seedlings.” Blooming annually, “its prickly arms grow so dense they shade out other plants...a field will lose native surface growth, such as grasses, flowers and forbs, that capture rain and snowmelt, allowing it to filter into the ground. Instead, run-off moves across the land much faster in a star thistle field, causing erosion.” And then it goes to seed! “A single large plant can produce more than 100,000 seeds, which can survive as long as five years in the soil, waiting for optimal growing conditions.”

Olives weren't the only plants introduced to CA by the 1850s--  
**Hello Invasive Star Thistle!** We all grew up with it, knew it was prickly and a “weed,” but who knew the history? I just thought it was the reason my cowboy dad wore chaps--since it could grow to 6 foot and our hills were full of it!

Turns out, this invasive weed, fatally toxic to horses, arrived from its origins in the Middle East with our ancestors, via Chile, from whence they shipped alfalfa seed to California beginning in the 1850s. Ironically, when the *Gold Fever* got many to California but cattle and farming became the real “gold,” this golden invader came along for the ride. Since then, its bristly seeds have clung to anything that



Check out:

[www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/yellowstar.shtml](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/yellowstar.shtml)

Flower - Cindy Roche

[invasive.org](http://invasive.org) --picture above

*And now it is not satisfied with just the hot, dry valleys and foothills--it is climbing up into the Sierras, and with funding cuts, attempts to stop it are losing ground! Groups like Leading Edge Project, coordinated by Wendy West, a UC Cooperative Extension advisor, say their work is not expensive, but due to erosion and fire hazards, their work should be a funding priority--for the whole state!*



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## ***Grass Fire Burns Out of Control in Capay Valley!!!*** I just read this

recently in the news and it brought back so many memories of such common occurrences in my childhood here. When your home and business, family, pets and livestock stand in the path, there is no “good news” imaginable--but some would say these fires are both *good news and bad news*. It’s frightening and destructive, but “natural” for these occasional fires--whipped by our *hot, ol’ north wind*, as my dad always called it--to clear the land of invaders like star thistle and to clear brush and limbs, and allowing new grass growth. “Beneficial” or not, he, of course, was one of the first locals to drop everything when the Esparto All-Volunteer Fire Department’s siren went off, grab the boys and head for the smoke. The jeep and pick-ups always had buckets and

burlap sacks, along with the usual shovels and pick axes, ready to go. He and my two brothers joined everyone else in soaking burlap in buckets of water and beating down sparks and small blazes, or creating fire breaks with common farming tools to assist the fire department trucks. In the 1950-60s of my memories and before, we didn’t have all the air support we have today, the planes with retardant and helicopters with buckets for scooping water from local creeks and reservoirs, but even then, fire departments from all over would send their support--often even from the



UCD fire department and those of adjacent counties. Today, a fire that might have gone on to scorch tens of thousands of acres and many structures is more likely to be contained after a few acres--or a few hundred acres like the recent one in Capay Valley on June 9, 2012...but in my memory, it was something quite different--more like what CO is experiencing right now!

**According to current Esparto Fire Chief, Barry Burns, the older harvesters using gasoline were more likely than today’s diesel-powered machines to spark a fire--but they can still tip on these steep hills!**

**Photos Courtesy of Gene Rominger Family and Dudley Craig.**

*One such memory comes from about 1959, when a harvester behind our house, on one of our typically steep Hungry Hollow Hills, flipped and sparked a grass fire. The driver limped frantically into our kitchen, covered in soot and blood and begged for our phone. As was usual, my 8-year old big brother, Tommy, was “in charge” of us while our parents were at work--Mom in Esparto, Dad in the hills--and helped him to our old crank phone. After reporting the fire, the driver went back to the blaze to try to impede it until help arrived. I remember all too well staring out the window in horror into what looked like Hell, my whole world ablaze! Tommy did what he had been trained to do: called Aunt Lucille Monroe, living up the road on the old Duncan-Monroe homestead, to come get us, and then herded us all out of the 100-year old tinder box we lived in.*

*Six years old and frightened out of my wits, I fought him until he went back in and collected all my precious stuffed animals to join me in the much safer gravel driveway. He wanted to kill me, of course, but to this day he is just the ‘hero’ he always was--he made a great fireman, of course! Check the interesting video on a typical Capay Valley fire on June 10, 2012 -- 260 acres:*

[www.fox40.com/videobeta/cbc418d6-b027-469b-a65d-0459d7d400ea/News/Grass-Fire-in-Yolo-County/News](http://www.fox40.com/videobeta/cbc418d6-b027-469b-a65d-0459d7d400ea/News/Grass-Fire-in-Yolo-County/News)

*Aunt Lucille (Nurse) Monroe came to our rescue in her big blue car and whisked us to the big Ranch house, where she reassured us that everything would be fine--and threw a tea party for Cathy and me on the front lawn, complete with tiny tea cups and comforting chocolate chips. Soon Mom came to pick us up, taking us to the now-safe old wooden place we called home--but now eerily surrounded by very surreal black, smoldering hills. Dad was up at the Turkey Camp, no doubt, busy with his burlap sacks and buckets of water, saving--one more time--the original old pioneer homestead of his ancestors!*



97° **Capay Valley All-Volunteer Fire Departments, a long History in the valley.** The individual all-volunteer departments in Brooks, Guinda and Rumsey are all part of the *Capay Valley Fire Protection District*. Today, the valley also has the Yocha DeHe Fire Department with its new, state-of-the-art fire station next to the Cache Creek Casino in Brooks. Capay and Esparto make up the *Esparto Fire Protection District*.



Above Engine is owned by Bob Cassel who explains:

As a typical example, Esparto's all-volunteer department was founded by the Board of Supervisors in 1931. One of the 1950s chiefs was "Sonny" Paul Stephens. Lee Findley served from the 1960s until he retired in 1989, at which point, assistant fire chief Barry Burns was voted in as chief by the other volunteers. Except for a few year in the mid-90s, when Ted Pearson and then Jim Mast served as chief, Burns has served until today. Barry explained that with today's air support and improved methods, the fires we recalled raging out of control, burning thousands of acres, are less likely, indeed. Today, as in the past, farmers use common sense to keep the grass down around their homesteads and farms. *In the picture below, The Turkey Camp's old, weathered, tinder-box buildings are seen in the 1950s with sheep inside the farm enclosure to keep the grass cropped short around the buildings.*

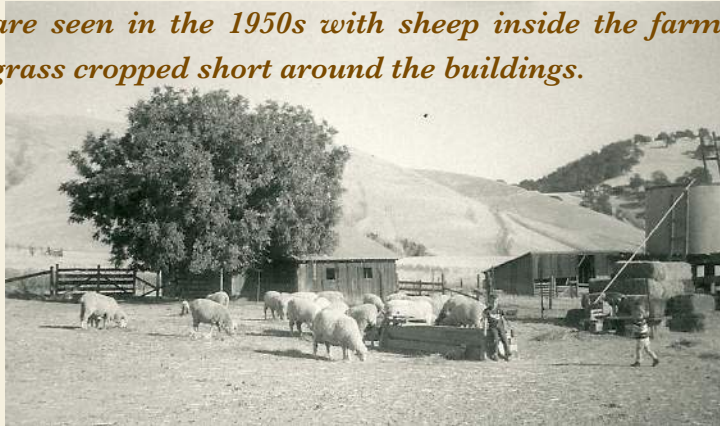
Today, fire departments warn everyone to create a defensible space--whatever method they use! No one wants to have to decide which structure can be saved when a fire rages nearby, as was the case recently, when several local fires occurred all on June 10, 2012.

As reported in the **Daily Democrat** for that date:

*The largest fire occurred around 2:30 p.m. along Hwy. 16 north of Capay near the Cache Creek Casino. It burned about 260 acres before being contained around 7:30 p.m., the California Department of Forestry reported. There were no injuries reported. Fires were also reported near Esparto High School, near Interstate 505 and Hwy. 16, and on Hwy. 113 near I-80.*

Check out: [http://daviswiki.org/grass\\_fires](http://daviswiki.org/grass_fires) and [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)

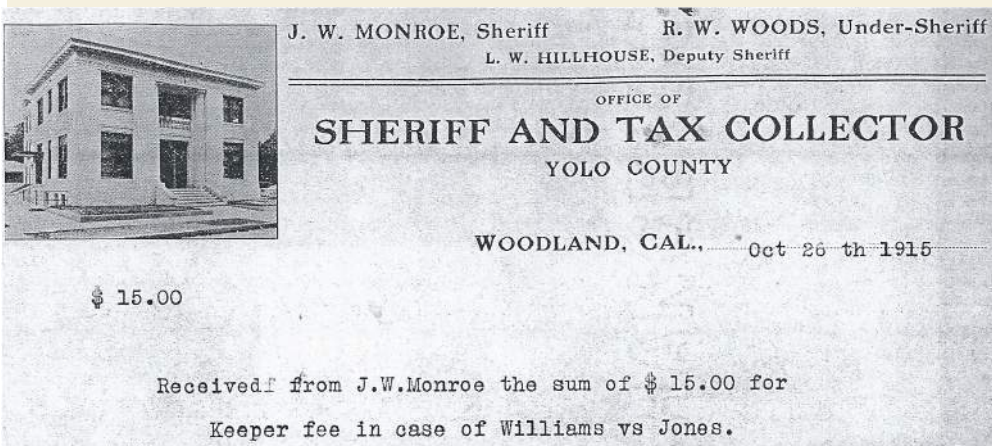
Capay Valley Historical Society, PO Box 442, Esparto, CA 95627 Vol 8



*The engine was originally a California OES (Office of Emergency Services) Mutual Aid engine...the State would loan these engines to local fire agencies in return for the agency sending them, with staff, to large emergencies statewide. It was retired after its 20 years in service and purchased by Capay Valley Fire District, who ran it as a first-out fire engine for another 10 years. It was loaned to Yocha DeHe Fire Department (then Rumsey Rancheria) that protects the Wintun Tribal land and Cache Creek Casino, while we were in the process of purchasing engines when we built that department. After Yocha DeHe got done with it, Capay Valley had purchased a new engine and didn't have use for it. I purchased it from Capay Valley. The engine is still in serviceable status, just needs cleaning and some service. It is a gas driven engine with two pumps, one stationary one for pump and roll for grass fires. Engine sits on the **Historic Oakdale Ranch**, today.*

## Local Color: Sheriff's Log

*I began this regular feature by sharing excerpts from my colorful wild west sheriff grandfather's memoirs, pulling out those events of interest occurring in and around the Capay Valley. And when I ran short of local stories, I raided Ada Merhoff's tome, Capay Valley The Land & The People 1846-1900--plenty of local gun fights and colorful stories in there! [volume 7 of this journal] And, of course, I visited the Yolo County Archives and was rewarded with the newspaper article about the largest bootlegging bust in the nation--taking place right here in Guinda during my grandfather's tenure as sheriff! [volume 4 of this journal] I also found that the feds had indicted my grandfather the sheriff, along with 15 other unnamed men--feeling, I suppose that there was no way this operation could have gone on up in the valley without them all knowing about it...and then a tiny note in the paper about charges being dropped...no explanation. And later, my grandfather's obituary and the standing-room-only crowd spilling out onto a street in Woodland, many of those paying respects from Emeryville and Oakland--where the bootleggers had been shipping out their product!?! Hmmm? Well, while I may not yet know "the details" on all that intrigue, it will make a great short story or novel someday when I do! And while I was at the Archives, I discovered a delightful box of scrapbooks and receipts kept by my grandfather, "Sunny Jim" Monroe, sheriff from 1911 until 1939, and by his son, my uncle Forrest D. Monroe, following him as sheriff from 1939 until 1971--60 consecutive years of Monroes as Yolo County Sheriff. I would like to share in this volume of the journal some of the tidbits I found in that treasure trove. First, I had no idea that the early sheriffs were also tax collectors. Many of the old receipts were hand-written by my grandfather in the early 1900s--in pencil! Aside from the delight at finding his penmanship matched my father's, his youngest of seven kids, I thoroughly enjoyed the informative content. I also found notes he wrote and received related to warrants and bail bonds and instructions about apprehension of criminals--and all the illegal booze being poured down the city gutters!*



Artifact to left, courtesy of Yolo County Archives' Sheriff's Department Scrapbooks, shows a picture of the Yolo County Sheriff's Office/Jail in 1915, and the fact that the Sheriff at that time was also Tax Collector. R.W.Woods was the under-Sheriff during the early part of James Monroe's tenure as sheriff--and much admired by him. Later, Forrest D. Monroe would be in that position, James Monroe's eldest son.





**Sheriff: Truant Officer, Detective, Tax Collector, Jailer, Peace-keeper, eventually Coroner...whether "chasing the bad guy" or making someone pour illegal hooch down the gutter and pay a fine, they were interesting times!**

Card No. 14

*In reform school*  
**Wanted for Burglary!**

Woodland, California, September, 10, 1912.

Milton Stephenson about 21 years of age, 5 feet, 11 inches tall, about 145 pounds, rather light complected, blue suit of clothes and soft black hat. Tall lanky kid, slouchy appearance.

This boy spends most of his time in county jails, and is half witted or nearly so. He broke into a house in the country and stole 3 gold rings, one a man's ring with large opal and engraved on inside 1866-1899. One Iver-Johnson pistol, 38 Cal. with wooden grip.

Arrest and wire at my expense.

J. W. MONROE,  
Sheriff, Yolo County.

**STOLEN**

Ten head of young cattle, yearlings and two-year-olds, mostly, if not all, steers. Branded A, also a crop off right ear and slit in left. These cattle were missed out of quite a large band on pasture near Madison on Nov. 5, 1915, and are supposed to have been stolen. Wire any information regarding them at my expense.

J. W. MONROE, Sheriff,  
Woodland, Cal., Nov. 10, 1915  
Yolo County



**COUNTY OF YOLO**  
Woodland, California

To J. W. Monroe, Sheriff of Yolo County, California:

Dear Sir:-

You are hereby instructed to destroy, by pouring into the open gutter, all the alcoholic liquors confiscated under your instructions and by reason of a Search Warrant issued by this Court on November 23, 1923. The said Defendant, Jim Sisto, having plead guilty as charged and paid the penalty imposed by this Court, and the time in which said defendant could perfect an appeal having elapsed.

1924

*J. W. Harrison*  
Justice of the Peace,  
Woodland Township,  
Yolo County.

**WANTED FOR FORGERY**



**Interesting note: someone obviously thought the comment "has the look of an Irish Mick" was less than PC--wonder who lined this out and when?**

LEO MURPHY, alias STAMM, about 30 years old; 5 feet 11 inches; 165 or 170 pounds; florid complexion; light reddish or sandy hair, clipped close in back; blue eyes somewhat staring; feminine voice, gold teeth in upper front part of mouth, one of the gold teeth missing. When he left here his left foot was sore. Wore a pair of tan shoes, size 9½; lot No. 30524 and marked O'Donnell on the strap. This man is a cement worker and may be found around new buildings that are under construction. The above picture was taken about ten years ago. His face is now fuller but bears a strong resemblance to him yet and ~~has the look of an Irish Mick~~. This man is badly wanted for a number of forgeries, and I respectfully ask peace officers to make special effort to locate this man for me.

I hold felony warrant. Wire me at my expense.

J. W. MONROE, Sheriff,  
Dated Sept. 24, 1915. Woodland, Yolo County, Cal.

Card No. 15

*men Capobianco*  
**Wanted for Robbery at Plainfield**

On the night of August 24th 1912, two men entered saloon at Plainfield and held up proprietor, taking \$30.00 in gold and \$40.00 or \$50.00 in silver; also a check made payable to Darcy and signed D. R. Jones; also Coit's special revolver 32-20 4 in. barrel six shooter, blue finish, rubber handle. Following is a good description of the two men who did the job:

No. 1—About 35 or 40 years of age, 5 ft. 7 in., weight about 165 lbs., left eye defective, lid inclined to droop, slight scar over left temple; smooth shaven, medium complexion, wore black felt hat, and dark coat and pants, rather full face. This man entered the place first unmasked and called for drink and did all the searching.

No. 2—About 5 ft. 3 or 4 in.; talked with German accent, wore a blue handkerchief for mask; also had on dark suit of clothes; used 32 caliber revolver of some inferior make.

Wire any information at my expense. Answering description were seen about ¼ hour after hold-up.

Card No. 13

*Found*  
**Strayed or Stolen!**

Woodland, California, September, 10, 1912.

On August 25, 1912, Otto Martens of Esparto missed two horses running on county road in vicinity of Madison. One small sorrel pony 9 years old, weighing about 650 pounds, branded 3 ③, white face. One gray horse 16 years old, 1100 pounds, blind in left eye.

Wire any information at my expense.

J. W. MONROE,  
Sheriff, Yolo County.



## The Barn Owl, our local beauty--at risk?

The following contribution comes from our local amateur ornithologist, Jim Hiatt. Of all the local birds, owls are a personal favorite of his. Rather than pick his brain, I asked him to just compose the article himself--complete with great pictures:

*Our most common owl in western Yolo County is one that everyone in these parts has seen--or at least heard at night--the Barn Owl. This one and the Great Horned Owl--Bubo virginianus--are worldwide in range and are likely the two best known, though The Great Horned Owl*

*in North America ranges further into the northern latitudes. Sometimes the Barn Owl was called by earlier generations "The Monkey-Faced Owl." And, interestingly, if you look at a half shell of a local Black Walnut, it looks very much like their 'facial disc'.*

*According to Birds of North America, page 330, in a number of the midwestern states, farming practices have cut down on their 'rodential' food supply, making them close to endangered in some of those areas. Especially with the reduction of older farm buildings, such as older barns and tank houses, it has made it more difficult to maintain their numbers. Happily, that is not as much the case here; we still co-exist very well with them from Hungry Hollow to Winters and up the Capay Valley--and, happily, we still have many old farm buildings to entice and house them!*

*Most night predators actually see in the infra-red portion of the spectrum, making hunting much easier for them--the mouse, gopher, vole, etc., is seen by the owl as a 'glowing orb' and thus an easy target. While normally they are primarily nocturnal, when caring for anywhere from 3-6 little ones I have seen them hunting as late as 10 A.M. These lovely creatures have one or two broods a year, and will feed as many of their young as they can find rodents for. Sadly, if food is sparse in a given year, and if they hatch 5-6, they may take 1-3 of them and simply throw them out of the nest. When I was a child, my grandmother would sometimes go by the tank house in the April-May time frame and find one to three little orphaned, white down-covered bodies on the ground. It was a good, though sad, way to gauge the rodent population in the immediate area. The newly fledged young hunt together with 'Mom' for a time to get the feel for it, and then go off on their own. Barn Owls have a frequently-heard 'rasping shriek' that almost sounds like the 'Shhhh!' we would use to ask someone to be*



Random local barn photos by Elizabeth Monroe, while running around scouting out olives--both were delightfully abundant!





quiet. Given in flight, it sounds most like 'Shhh-EEK!!!' They also make a loud series of snapping sounds with their beak and even do this in their sleep. This is what got my attention for the owl seen above, asleep in our old-growth olive tree. I 'snapped' its picture in its sleep, rocking back and forth on its feet--pay attention and Mother Nature always has something new to teach you! I have also experienced many times in our tank house, 3-5 little ones, half-grown, with a fair amount of down still on them, trying to keep me 'at bay', by rock back and forth TOGETHER, and giving a slower and more drawn-out version of the hiss/shriek that they do as adults. When you have 5 up there, as we did one year, the 'chorus' can be so loud between the five of them that if you'd taken someone up there to see them as well, you both would have to talk in a very loud voice to hear each other above the 'din' of the 'owl-lets'!

I grew up in Woodland in the 1950s and 60s, when Woodland was more agrarian, and you saw more country-type birds than you would now, as Woodland was closer to a population of 10,000, as opposed to its current 60,000. Barn Owls could be heard at night frequently shrieking and snapping--and even Horned Owls were not uncommon there. Not so in today's world.

These are lovely creatures, with golden-tawny brown coloration on the upper parts, and a white underside, tinged with golden-brown streaks. They are one of the few owls with feathered legs down to the claws. Birds of North America tells us that these can live up to 8 years, have a wingspan of some 3 1/2 feet, and are pretty much solitary after mating.

On a final note, in the early 1980s, on the way home from work, right beside the Clover School I found one standing in the middle of the road with its eyes closed. Suspected that it had been hit and hurt, but not killed, I picked it up at the shoulders such that it couldn't claw me, and brought it home. Kept it on the front porch, and fed it raw hamburger balls the size of large marbles, and actually force-fed it, but it really didn't fight me--sensed I was trying to help it, and the meat likely tasted good anyway. Three weeks later, when it was more alert and



responsive to me, I took it outside, lifted it aloft and it promptly flew head first, right into the house! Tried again, and 'aimed' it at our walnut trees, and this time the 'launch' was successful. Saw it in the evenings for quite some time afterward.



**...and then there is the elusive "Booby Owl," seen above...**

Just as Jim was finishing up his article on the Barn Owl, he captured rare footage of the Burrowing Owl--or "Booby Owl," as our grandparents' might have called it. Not much bigger than a softball, laying eggs underground, they are unique in many ways--and their behavior may have led to the idiom...?

**Continued on next page**



## The Burrowing or "Booby" Owl of the Capay Valley...



The "Booby Owl," has some more dignified names: *Athene cunicularia* is the scientific name of what's more commonly known as the Burrowing Owl. Earlier generations have also referred to this little fellow as the "Ground Owl," but my grandmother's generation referred to these during her childhood as "Booby Owls"—thus, that's my personal favorite! What gave rise to the term "Booby Owl"??? I wish I knew, but Grandma called them that a century ago when they were much more plentiful than now. I suspect it may have been some of their odd behaviors—

*acted like a booby! As in, He escaped from the booby hatch?*

*They are the only known species of owl that actually lives underground when not out hunting. It's easiest for them to use an abandoned squirrel hole, or a culvert, or an old pipe or pile of piping, and failing the availability of these, will simply dig their own. I learned from *Birds of North America*, p.343, that they use their beaks to dig a new home if needs be. I didn't know that one. Imagine using your TEETH to dig out a new home for yourself! And worse yet, a broken beak certainly puts them at a disadvantage in dining or in bringing home game for the little ones!*

*They do lay 5-10 eggs--quite a few for an owl whose actual body size is no bigger than a softball—Way to go, Mom!! She has these underground, to boot! Their diet is everything from small rodents (mice, voles, gophers, etc.) to insects. They do tend to "pair up" for life, meaning that if you do see one, conspicuously perched upon a fence post or large clod, or on the mound around the hole, it's a good bet there's another either in the hole or very nearby.*

*One personal observation I've made on my own, in the evenings at dusk, is that these will fly up to a certain height--say, 30' to 50' up, and flap their wings in such a way as to hold them in a stationary position--Sparrow Hawks, White Tailed Kites, and Rough Legged Hawks do the same--while they watch for prey movement. These, like all night predators, do see in the Infra-red portion of the spectrum, which means a mouse will appear as a "glowing orb" to them and, thus, an easy catch. But where I'm going with all this is that, unlike the White-Tailed Kite, which will "drop" in stages, before finally pouncing on the prey, these little fellows don't wait for gravity to get them there, but actually FLY DOWNWARD and basically "slam" upon the "happy (or, perhaps 'unhappy') meal." I learned by watching when I still had my second job at the Landfill in Yolo, where my work adjusting gas wells frequently kept me in the field past sunset, and thereupon was blessed with many a visual treat in observing this.*



## Barn and “Booby” Owls of Capay Valley, continued...

*How is a Booby Owl similar to Curley of "Three Stooges" fame, who, whenever he would run away from something or someone, had the habit of his trademark Woo-boo-boo-boo-boo!? Well, when approached a little too closely, the Booby Owl will jump straight up and fly back a few yards, and utter a "Wheee-blee-blee-blee-blee-blee!!"--in exactly the same manner as Curley! (Must have watched "Training Videos" of the older episodes to pick up the habit!) And from thence, upon re-alighting several yards away, will stand very straightly up, and suddenly take a very deep "bow." What a polite little creature!! This bow is repeated several times, and is actually a warning gesture to keep you safely back--or perhaps scare you away in their own odd, little "booby" manner. The pix that accompany this little missive were taken at the entranceway to our farm in Hungry Hollow in 2012. Came out rather nicely. Jim*



*Hungry Hollow's own 5th-generation descendant Jim Hiatt is an amateur 'birder' and photographer in the Capay Valley, whose great grandfather named this area Hungry Hollow. Jim shared the pictures, information and stories on these four pages with us.*

### On-line sources for Owl Information:

[www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barn\\_Owl](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barn_Owl)

[Barn Owl - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](http://Barn_Owl - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barn\\_Owl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barn_Owl)

The Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) is the most widely distributed species of owl, and one of the most widespread of all birds. It is also referred to as Common Barn Owl...

### **Burrowing Owl**

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

The Burrowing Owl is a tiny but long-legged owl found throughout open landscapes of North and South America. Burrowing Owls can be found in grasslands, rangelands, agricultural areas, deserts, or any other open dry area with low vegetation... Wikipedia

Scientific name: *Athene cunicularia*

Higher classification: *Athene*

Rank: Species

*NOTE: I tried to "Google" them under "Booby Owl," hoping for a lead on the possible idiom about Boobies being crazy, but got some weird sites--use Burrowing Owl!!*

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Remember Me...in loving memory of some we have known...and will always cherish...  
...as another "cowboy" passes from us--the family and friends of "Sonny" Paul Douglas Stephens, Jr. remember him well:

April 24, 1923 - April 28, 2012

On April 28, 2012, Sonny Stephens, 89 years old, passed away with his loving wife, Dolores, at his side. They had been married for 69 years.

Sonny was born to Paul and Alice Stephens on April 24, 1923. He attended Esparto schools, and then UC Davis until his enlistment in the Army in 1942. Sonny served under General George Patton in Europe, and was in Berlin on VE Day. After the war, he returned to Esparto to farm with his father on the family ranch north of Esparto.

Sonny was a generous and civic-minded citizen. He and Dolores were active members of Countryside Community Church, where Sonny helped to maintain the property and where Dolores is still the organist. He was a member of the Esparto School Board, the Yolo Housing Authority, the California State Sugar Beet Association, and a Fire Chief for Esparto All-volunteer Fire Department. Sonny was an avid sports fan who enjoyed playing golf and attending Giants and 49ers games. He and Dolores spent hundreds of hours attending school sporting events to cheer for their sons, and then later for their grandchildren. Their love and generosity continues to be an inspiration for all of those who have been privileged to know them.

Sonny and his beloved Dolores have three sons, Greg (Helen), Doug (Cathy) and Bill (Toni). Sonny was preceded in death by sisters Margaret Stephens and Betty Jean Tabor, and is survived by his sister Patricia Armstrong. He will be greatly missed by his family, including grandchildren Marilee, Nancy, Janet, Derek, Corey, Mandy, Michael, and Wyatt, and 12 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of Sonny's life was held on Saturday, May 12, at 10:30 AM at the Countryside Community Church in Esparto. Sonny's nephew and his wife, Richard and Martha Armstrong, hosted a reception at the original Stephens ranch east of Esparto.



BnW 1920s Photos, top to bottom: Sonny on Shorty; Sonny with sister Patricia Armstrong [courtesy of cousin Fult Stephens]. Color Photo: Sonny and Dolores at the home of son Douglas and Cathy (Monroe) Stephens and family, Christmas 2010, by Douglas Nareau At left: Sonny courts Dolores.



Go to: [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) to watch the oral history memorial videos hosted and created by Elizabeth "Betsy" Monroe for: The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society



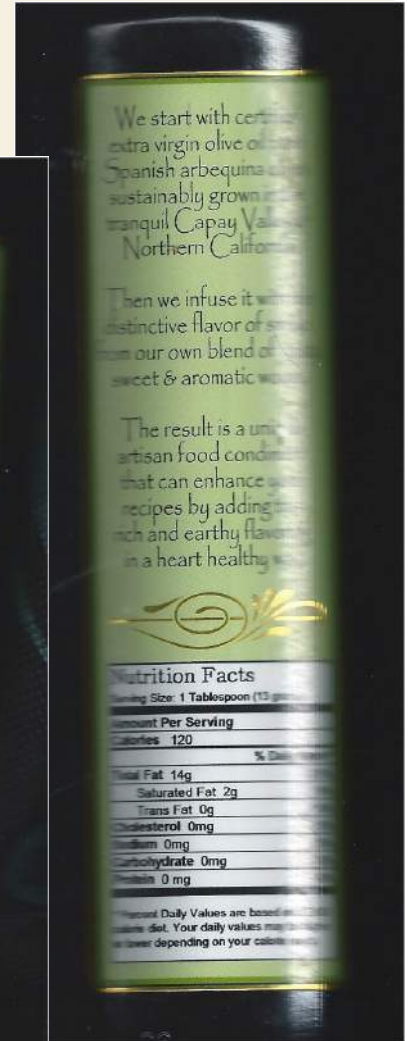
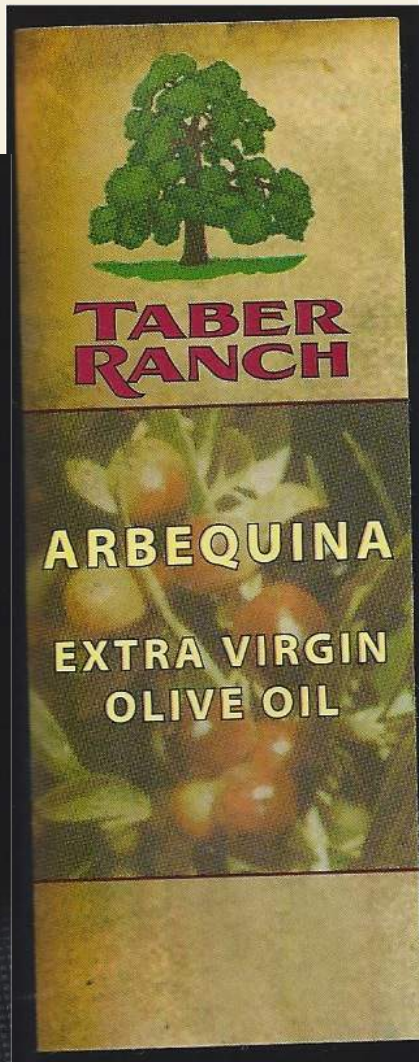
CAPAY VALLEY PRODUCTS AND PRODUCERS OF THE OLIVE

In addition to the farmers already mentioned, Chris Steele recently bought the old Knolle Place north of Highway 16, east of Taber Ranch, and has planted about 50 acres; and is now putting in about 90 acres on land he leases from Harmon Taber at "Taber Corner." RJ Vannucci is putting in trees in Capay on his grandparents' old ranch. John Scully of Winters has tried, failed, and replanted hundreds of acres on the old Wyatt Duncan Ranch northwest of Capay in Hungry Hollow--hoping his new deer fencing will do the trick. The familiar brand Bertolli has many acres out in the Dunnigan Hills between CR19 and CR15, and Live Oak Farms has about 2 acres of organic olives in Rumsey. Whether it is the Mission olive of old, or the more recently popular Spanish Arbequina, or the light Arbosana for blends, Extra Virgin or another grade, Olive Oil is making it big in the Capay Valley--again!

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It is often claimed that the Mediterranean diet is one of the healthiest. And it is no secret that one of the most prominent ingredients is olive oil. For some time we have heard that people with more olive oil in their diets can cut cholesterol and reduce heart disease, but according to a study in *Archives of Neurology* "people who adhered closely to an olive oil-rich Mediterranean diet had a 28 percent lower risk of developing cognitive impairment. The Mediterranean diet not only protects your heart, it also protects your brain!"

So, eat it, cook with it, bathe in it, smear it all over yourself and enjoy life! And note that Dr. Jonny Bowden, of Clayton College of Natural Health, author of several nutrition and health books, further contends that the olive leaf is even more magical! --Check it out at: [www.jonnybowden.com](http://www.jonnybowden.com)

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## CAPAY VALLEY

June 2012 Volume 8

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*Karen Hackett Duncan--or "Karita," as her daddy called her--grew up in Guinda in the 1950s and 60s, learning the art of self-reliance from her resourceful family. She now hand-makes Olive Oil based soaps and other bath products in her home in Willows, selling them on-line and at local Fairs, Festivals and Farmer's Markets.*