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Farming in Yolo County

WHAT'S OLD AND
WHAT'S NEW



California Quail



JOHN HATANAKA

TGCVHS



Farmers Adapt

Whether it is Traditional or Organic or Sustainable, farmers adapt constantly to the weather and climate changes and to political or social demands—it's what they do. In some cases it is an adaptation to labor shortages, such as the end of the Bracero Program in 1962 and the resultant invention of tomato harvesters—offering us local kids summer jobs.

In the photo above, taken on John Hatanaka's farms south of Esparto in the 1960s, he stands at left with one of only 30 Blackwelder Tomato Harvesters ever created; built in Rio Vista with the help of UC Davis Ag research. These tomatoes are headed to Contadina in Woodland.

The History of Farming in Yolo County; Japanese American Farmers

I have finally scored a long-sought interview with local farmer and war hero John Hatanaka! Born in the town of Capay—population 50—to Japanese nationals, or *Issei [E-say]*, in 1918, John was an American citizen by birth. But after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, he and his family were *relocated* from the Capay Valley, and after the war he returned to the Esparto area to resume farming. I knew Mr. Hatanaka and his wife Toyoko Yamamoto—whom everyone affectionately called *Toy*—as I grew up in the Esparto area, attending Esparto High School with their sons, but had never heard his war nor *internment* stories. Not only did he come from a generation of Vets who did not talk much about their war experiences, but the internment of Japanese Americans did not exist in our history books before the 1970s—and no one I knew ever talked about it. Fortunately, with time, their stories have come out—not only as novels and memoirs, but now appear in the history texts in American schools.

In 2011, John and two other Yolo County Japanese Americans were honored as “members of the 442nd with a *Special Congressional Recognition Award*, given by Congressman Wally Herger. George Yoshio Nakamura, age 93 at the time, was one of the *Nakamura Brothers* who owns a furniture business by that name on Main Street Woodland since the 1930s; Woodland farmer Yorio Aoki, 91 at the time; and John Hatanaka, 92 at the time, were members of the 442nd Regimental Combat team—with a 93% casualty rate—in the US Army. The only one alive today is 100-year-old John Hatanaka, awarded numerous times for his service, including: member of the *100th Infantry Battalion - 442nd Regimental Combat Team Military Intelligence Service*, awarded in 2012 by Congresswoman Doris Matsui; and recently also honored by the French for his help liberating them from the Nazis—we can now call him *Monsieur Hatanaka*, he jokes.

According to Wikipedia: “between 110,000 and 120,000 people of **Japanese** ancestry, most of

Farmer and War Hero



whom lived on the Pacific Coast, were *interned*—sixty-two percent of the internees were United States citizens." Ironically—and claimed as proof that this action was based more on racism and mass hysteria—almost none of the approximately 130,000 Japanese nationals or Japanese Americans living in Hawaii at the time were interned. The very powerful Sugar Plantations refused, claiming that they “trusted these families”—and their farm labor was “essential” to Hawaii. In the research that took place only a few decades ago, it is revealed that some very powerful men in the military and politics pressured the president to intern *all of Japanese descent* living on the West Coast. One was since-dishonored Lt. General John L. DeWitt, who is documented as claiming, “A Jap’s a Jap. It makes no difference whether the Jap is a citizen or not.” Such pressure led to the internment of all: whether able-bodied or aged or infant or feeble, they were seen as a *potential risk*. Of course, this created a great labor shortage for farmers, and in 1942 the *Bracero Program* was started—but more on that in the next Newsletter.

As I learned from John and Toy, while they were sent to Amache War Relocation Center in Granada, CO, farmers like John were often given “essential work” outside the camps and he was able to leave the camp to farm nearby. He had registered for the draft while in Yolo County, CA, but with his mother and a new wife—and a child on the way—in the Amache Camp, he preferred to stay near them and farm in Colorado rather than enlist. Unfortunately for them, it was determined by the federal government that the state you registered in determined whether you would enter the service. So, unwillingly, he was drafted by the Yolo County Draft Board and served 2 years in the Army as part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which fought in Europe, mostly in Italy and France. “This unit is the most highly decorated U.S. military unit of its size and duration in U.S. military history. The 442nd's Nisei segregated field artillery battalion...on detached service within the U.S. Army” [wikipedia.org/wiki/internment_of_Japanese_Americans](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/internment_of_Japanese_Americans). I asked John if he had regrets and he said, “No, because I survived intact and I got my revenge: I told the draft board I would outlive all of them—and I have!”



Toyoko and John Hatanaka; married in February 1942; interned 2 months later

Since my focus for this newsletter is farming in this area, and since many Yolo County farmers are of Japanese descent, I wanted to find out what brought them here originally. Many started arriving in the US in the late 1880s from Japan—and approximately 300,000 Japanese came to Hawaii and the western coast of America between 1886 and 1924—following a civil war between the Japanese Emperor and the ruling Shogun and his Samurai class in 1886 and then due to recessions in Japan. Many left for a better opportunity in the farms of America, and many settled in Yolo County—such as John’s father *Arthur* Hatanaka, who came in 1906 with a group of other men interested in farming. Of course, *Arthur* is his *American* name, given to him when he first arrived in the SF Bay Area and worked as a *houseboy*, where he learned to speak English. His name was actually Hisakichi Hatanaka. In 1918 he went back to his little village in Japan and took as his wife a woman he would have known there, previously. He and Uta Kimura moved to the small white house in Capay on the Craig farm on the banks of Cache Creek. Here, on December 21, 1918, local doctor Thornton Craig delivered John Tamotsu Hatanaka, named *John* for Doc Craig’s son who farmed for his father and for whom Hisakichi labored. For fun, I located John’s birth as noted in Doc Craig’s diaries in the *Special Collections* at UCD’s Shields Library. We were both delighted to see this notation.



As seen in the 1928 photo to the left, John Hatanaka [front center] attended Capay School, as did his cousin Hideo Sagara [front right]. Of note: in 1942, Hideo chose the government option to move east and resettle, avoiding internment. His farming partner, Fred Vannucci, helped him do so by advancing his shares in their Capay farming business. When Toy was released from the internment

camp, she and toddler Nancy went to stay with the Sagaras in their “nice home” to await John’s release from the army. John was released to Chicago, IL, at his own request, for he had made friends in the army who offered him *a great deal* on a car if he came home to Chicago with them. He bought a car and drove it to Pueblo, Colorado, to pick up his wife and new daughter Nancy, who was born in Grand Junction, CO in 1944, for the return drive to Esparto, California. He returned to the Grant farm south of Esparto where he and Toy had started out together in 1942, and where he had worked even during high school in Esparto—as a farm laborer, supporting his mother and his brother. Because his father had died in 1934, his mother was forced to take his younger brother back to her village in Japan and leave him with family, while she returned by ship to SF in 1935. Times were rough in the 1930s, of course, so John was not able to attend college; he needed to work to support himself and his family. His younger brother, Mamoru, returned to CA in the 1940s, just in time to be interned with the family. On John’s return from Europe in 1946, he labored and put aside his money and began buying acreage nearby and eventually amassed a considerable farming operation—with no help from the US government; no GI bill, no discounted loans. Nothing. He claimed with pride, *I worked hard—and Toy worked even harder*. Interestingly, their address in the various census I looked up was Winters, so I had asked if they started out together in Winters—boy, did *that* get a response from John! *NO*, he never lived in Winters; there was a natural rivalry between the two communities: the Winters vs Esparto farmers. He hated that his address was actually in the Winters postal district—just across the county road/boundary from the Esparto postal district. At this, Toy added that they “lived in the Winters PO, the Esparto School District and the Woodland area code.” But John insisted he was *an Esparto Farmer*—period. He farmed with his brother Mamoru—whom everyone called *Mom*—and not far from him settled their cousin Hideo Sagara, who returned to farm in California after the war, as did his brother, Masao—whom everyone called *Mas*—and many other *Nisei* American citizens. To this day, many of their descendants live in the area—some still farming.

Initially, only men were allowed to enter the US from Japan, and these *Issei*—or first generation Japanese—were not allowed to own land. Later, as they leased land to farm and went back for or sent for wives and had children, many put their businesses and land in the names of their American offspring. While Arthur had previously known his future-wife, Toyoko claimed that her mother, Sasue Sasaki, was a *picture-bride*, who married Usaku Yamamoto, sight unseen—20 years his junior; he was 50 and she 30 at Toyoko’s birth, delivered by midwife at 1410 4th Street, Sacramento, on January 1, 1925. John, Toy and Roy, et al, are *Nisei* [knee-say] second generation—and by birth, American citizens—so were able to *buy* land, as I wrote about Roy Hatanaka of Rumsey in the last issue. Born in Rumsey to Issei parents, Roy was able to *own* land and the *Rumsey Farm Company* corporation was formed, with shares *owned* by Roy and others in his family. [I wrote in an article in my book *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley* about this family and the heroic efforts of their neighbor and friend Benny Lloyd, who kept their farms going and safe, setting aside half of the farming profits he made farming their lands during the war years, and handing it back to Roy and his family after the war. Roy and his family did not resettle in the Capay Valley, but moved to Marysville to farm. After 1942, there are no Japanese surnames on the photos of school children of Capay Valley. None. If interested, see Journal #16 posted on our website for the full article on pages 10-13.] **Thank you Nancy Hatanaka and Dawn Rominger-Hatanaka for making this interview possible! Thank you Toy and John!**

California Quail—alive and well in the area, though many of our bird species are threatened everywhere by Climate Change, farming practices, loss of habitat.

I asked our local bird man, hobby-ornithologist Jim Hiatt, to share with us some photos he has taken recently in Hungry Hollow and to share some of his knowledge and memories of growing up in the area with the many amazing birds of Capay Valley—as we refer to them in the book we created: *The Birds of Capay Valley*. Since the first edition sold out, we are adding to it for a second edition—which will be available, soon, on our website: greatercapayvalley.org.



As seen at left in the text *Birds of North America*, the bird Jim photographed in our area above is a perfect example of a male *California Quail*.

Jim writes: “There are lots of neat things about this bird, not the least of which is that it happens to be our State Bird—and a lovely choice. *Callipepla californica* is its species or *scientific name*, and is a member of the *Order Galliformes*, which it shares



with chickens, turkeys, pheasants; and other *game birds* like grouse, bobwhite, chukars and so on. Its *Family* name is a challenge to pronounce--try *Odontophoridae* on for size.”

It is a bird of the West Coast as high as British Columbia and as far south as Baja. *Birds of North America* does say it was introduced here as a game bird, but doesn't note when introduced nor from where. It also lists New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, and portions of South America, so it's been taken to lots of places.



Both male and female are lovely creatures, with the male a little more conspicuously so. The male has a face with black and white coloration reminiscent of a feathered raccoon, and with one single black feather coming out of the top of the forehead that slightly overhangs the face—as does the female—and is quite the ornament. The male had a little “comb” of short feathering on the forehead right in front of the eyes. The male and female share a tummy and abdomen of feathers resembling scales, and are gray and brown otherwise.

At our farm in Hungry Hollow, these show up in the Spring; the photos I share here of them I've gotten in April-May-June, when they're nesting here—our farm here is a good habitat for them. Insects and seeds and green plant leaves are their dietary fare; they are fairly omnivorous for small things. Most of their lives are spent on the ground as they are ground-nesters—which presents perils of its own. Ground nesters tend to lay a disproportionately large number of eggs—and for these, 10-15 eggs is the norm, as with turkeys and pheasants. This is *Designed* into them to help offset the danger of the chicks on the ground being easily swallowed up by feral cats, raccoons and skunks, and larger hawks and owls—who will also make quick culinary work of the eggs should they find a bonanza of eggs in the depression in the grass. The babes are *precocial* when they hatch and are ready to get up and go and follow Mom, whereas those birds who are born *atricially*—like blackbird or mockingbirds—are helpless for some time.

Their call is a distinctive “Chi-CA-Go! Chi CA Go!” in a series of repetitions. Dad always thought it sounded like “Look right here! Look right here!” --and either is just as good. Also given is a single noted “Wheeeer!” In a group on the ground, they will start twittering like they're blowing kisses to each other. As they are a gregarious type, they live in groups of from a few—as usually happens here—to dozens in a group more in the *wild*, like our hilly Capay Hills to the west.

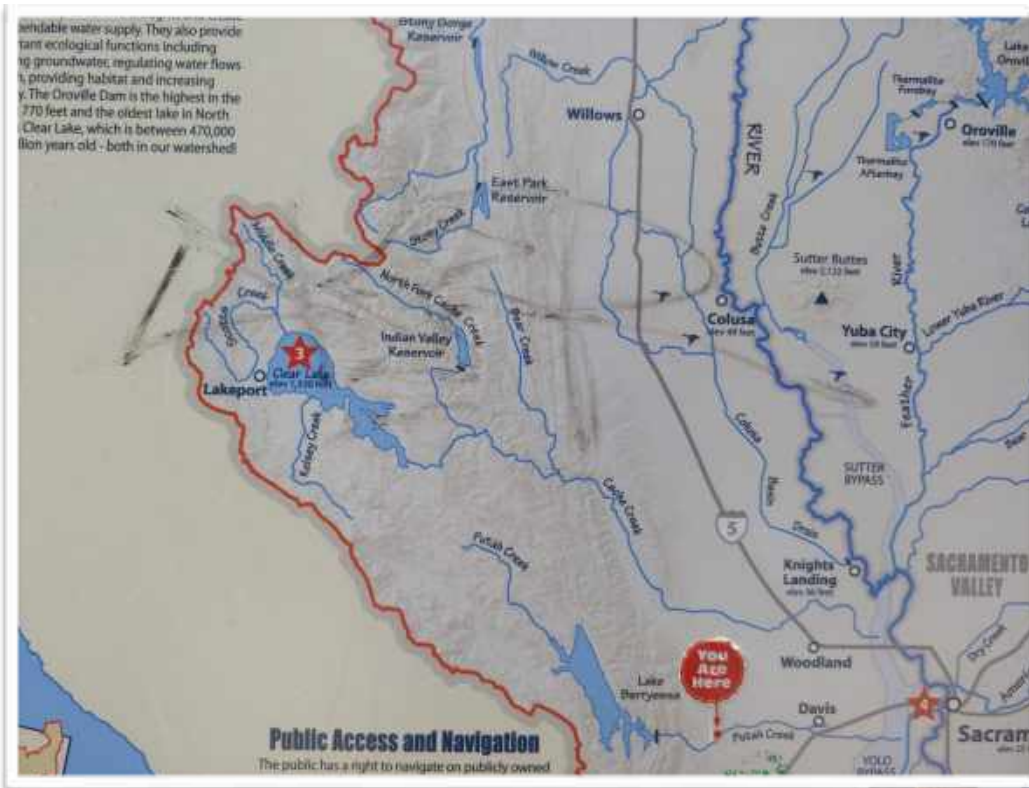
As a kid, when we'd fish for stripers—and end up getting carp—invariably the quail on the other side would begin calling, and Dad, who was the best whistler I've ever known, would imitate them back—and they'd answer! When we'd hunt, Dad would carry an ocharina (ceramic potato-looking flute) which could remarkably copy their tone and sequence and he'd call them that way.”



While Jim is an avid birder, as is typical in this area he is also a hunter. He shared several hunting stories with me, but one includes my dad, so here goes: “They prefer walking/running, but will fly when in danger, though flying does burn more energy. Quail hunters will tell you what a challenge these darting flyers are to hit in the brushy hills. My Dad would go out with his friend Tommy Monroe hunting in the Capay or Arbuckle hills, and go out with two boxes of shells and come back with one quail in each box!”

Yolo County — a River Runs Through it

Well, two major creeks, actually, but Cache Creek, as we call it, by any definition could have been called a *River*



Because of the rich soil and these waterways, farming has been fruitful in this county. These two major creeks run through the county on the south and north sides: Putah and Cache Creeks. They have historically both been diverted and dammed in various locations; irrigation canals have been built; and conservation attempts have abounded. To look more closely at this activity I will focus

on just the Cache Creek. [If interested in more in-depth articles on both creeks and their dams, see Journals #2 & 13 on our website: greatercapayvalley.org]

In 1856, the first agricultural ditch in the area was constructed about three miles northeast of Madison on Gordon’s Ranch. This canal was constructed by James Moore and led to other ditches in the area--the most significant being the Adams Ditch in the southern Capay Valley. The Adams Ditch was used to irrigate 150 acres of alfalfa and forty acres of garden crops, and was part of a larger system completed around 1870, which included the Adams Dam, forerunner of the present Capay Dam. [see Journal #2] **History of Moore’s Dam: see page 12.**



Inspired by possibilities, by 1858 land speculators Arnold and Gillig had purchased 13,760 acres in Capay Valley and began to subdivide the land into parcels of 200 to 3800 acres. Scattered ranches and tiny settlements developed along the valley—and throughout Yolo County, thanks to dams and canals from Cache and Putah Creeks.



Many crops were tried, including vines, cotton, rice, tobacco—tobacco?! Yes, during the embargo on Turkish Tobacco during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and WWI, local farmers tried their hand at tobacco. A grand barn was constructed on the Stephens Farm in Hungry Hollow in 1914 for this purpose. The barn was repurposed after WWI ended in 1918—used for sheep and grain storage, etc.—because the embargo was lifted and tobacco was not profitable enough in this area. But this unique and grand barn still stands—at least temporarily. Granite Construction owns it, now, on a vein of gravel they wish to mine, so it may be demolished—soon. I got a tour and asked for photos of it to share and got the one below from Fulton Stephens, Jr:

*Left:
2019
interior;
Right:*

photo of tobacco harvest in one of the Stephens barns, between 1914-1918—this photo belongs to the David Herbst Collection of original photos. Fulton Stephens, Jr’s grandfather George Dickson Stephens crossed the plains for the gold in California in 1849 with his brother John Dickson Stephens. Because of this unique barn’s history and the fact that it may be demolished—soon—I am researching and writing about it and this historic Yolo County family for the next newsletter.



Yolo County is roughly 1034 square miles, mostly ideal for farming. But farming is hard work and ever-adapting farmers look to groups like the still viable **Future Farmers of America, FFA**, to train not only in farm practices but good business, education and leadership skills. Our next issue will focus on farmers who offer apprenticeship programs on their farms and co-operative opportunities; and others who are carrying on a tradition of sustainable farming that may be over 8000 years old—our very own Hill Patwin of Capay Valley, who will appear in a future newsletter.



Regarding FFA, from <https://www.ffa.org/about/> we get:

National FFA Organization is an American 501 youth organization, specifically a career and technical student organization, based on middle and high school classes that promote and support agricultural education.

The letters FFA stand for **Future Farmers of America**; however, the official name of the organization was changed in 1988 to the **National FFA Organization**.

Founded 1928 by Henry C. Groseclose, Walter Stephenson Newman, Edmund Magill, Harry Sanders, the **FFA** Motto is *Learning to do, Doing to learn, Earning to live, Living to serve*. **FFA** functions within the three-circle model of agricultural education as a student leadership organization that complements a student's classroom/laboratory instruction and supervised agricultural experience program. The current National FFA President is Luke O'Leary. The National **FFA** Organization has evolved in response to expanded opportunities available in the industry of agriculture. Today's **FFA** helps members prepare for careers in agribusiness, agrimarketing, science, communications, education, horticulture, production, natural resources, forestry and many other diverse fields.

The National **FFA** Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. To accomplish its mission, **FFA**: Develops competent and assertive agricultural leadership." **FFA** is for students 12-21, and current memberships is over 669,000; while similar **4-H**, founded in 1902, is for students 5-21 and has a membership of 6 million, almost 2 million of whom are urban students. **FFA** is celebrating the 50th anniversary of opening its membership to women; today 38% are women.

Locally, of course, our Yolo County schools support Ag and the FFA, as well as 4-H. I had the privilege of recently working as an English teacher for 2 years at Woodland High School—from which both of my parents graduated—and got to know two of the finest Ag teachers: Eric Dyer, recently honored with a second place award among high school skilled trades teachers for the *2019 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence*; and Briana Perry Stoops, honored by her alma mater UC Davis with an *Award of Distinction*, an annual award to "individuals whose contributions and achievements enhance the college's ability to provide cutting-edge research, top-notch education and innovative outreach...Stoops teaches agricultural economics, animal science and veterinarian science and is the FFA adviser and liaison with a local agriculture booster organization," according to the October 3, 2019, Daily Democrat; whereas Eric Dyer has taught 33 years in Woodland, having received the Honorary American Degree from FFA in 2007, and the Agriculture Teacher of Excellence Award from the California Agriculture Teachers Association in 2014. All of Dyer's students "compete in FFA and present at least one project at the Yolo County Fair," says a Daily Democrat article on August 24, 2019. It goes on to say Dyer "trains and mentors other agriculture teachers and helps write curriculum to guide the state's programs, even helping to create a how-to guide on constructing greenhouses at schools"—as he did for the grand new one at WHS last year; to be featured in the next Newsletter!



Left: all WoodlandHS FFA students pose at the end of the 2019 Yolo County Fair; many with their awards and ribbons.

Too much CO₂ in our atmosphere—how can farmers help?

It has always been my experience that farmers—at least small farmers, close to the land, not so much massive corporate farms, often in it only for the monetary profit—are *scientists*; they have to be. They are also often the most *spiritual* people I know—they have a very close bond with Mother Earth, so they have to be. So when things they depend upon change radically, they are adaptive—they have to be! Necessity is the mother of invention, right? Well, while they may grouse about the politics of water, they take a look at their own practices when they really have to and they adapt. From thirsty almond trees to alfalfa and tomatoes, many moved from flood irrigation to drip in the last several drought years. In the sinking Central Valley, some areas are trying to replenish the aquifers they drained while they move to more efficient drip. This can be a huge expense up front, so they may not have chosen it unless forced to, but when their livelihood depends upon it, they adapt. Many have found this means less runoff into the local streams and creeks and some have learned that growing water filtering plants on their small canal levees means cleaner water runoff, thus less toxic algae, etc.

That said, whether we are Chicken Little running around saying the sky is falling or are *climate deniers*, it is obvious that there are better ways to use water and our air could always be cleaner—duh. If we have put too much CO₂ in the air, we also have the technology to sequester it—and farmers can help. All farmers know—as do all of us who paid attention in elementary school science classes--photosynthesis in trees and other plants converts sunlight and carbon dioxide to sugar they need to grow, and this process gives off oxygen we need to breathe. We animals are in a symbiotic relationship to plants—and with each other. Yes, massive fires can undo years of valiant efforts to clean the air of CO₂ and replenish the Oxygen—and the added CO₂ creates a greenhouse blanket holding in the heat that feeds these fires, and round it goes. Add to that a trade war with a country that used to buy our major crops, and other countries will be only too happy to burn down their Oxygen-producing/CO₂-sequestering forests to plant those same crops that corporate farmers are happy to profit in, filling the void; the Amazon forest is being burned by farmers planting soybeans and for grazing land for cattle—both of which America used to sell to China. Ripple effect. We all share the same atmosphere and Oxygen, and if one thread is pulled, other threads warp and unravel and the tapestry is marred. So, we adapt. Dairy farmers are attempting to control—and put to use—the methane produced by their cattle; farmers disk less and plant and rotate differently to sequester more and produce less CO₂, and all nations take a personal interest in what is happening in the Amazon and thousands of small fires burning in Africa and Alaska and Siberia—and California!—we all have to breathe the same air. And when the increasing heat melts centuries-old ice fields and glaciers, some see the *opportunity* to navigate to vast areas of potential minerals and oil, ignoring its potential to further heat the planet, while others see the danger of seas rising and desperate populations forced to move—to become those dreaded *immigrant climate refugees* which no wall will hold back, willing to risk drowning to get their children to a better place to live. Ripple effect. So, what can the farmers do? Well, see the bigger picture, of course. Be the spiritual scientists they truly are and know that adapting their practices not only helps them survive as the farmers Thomas Jefferson so admired, but it helps all of us.

All the news points toward California farmers needing to share limited water resources and some have adapted with methods like drip and others have changed the crops they grow, but others come to California and put in yet another huge almond orchard as the one I saw being ripped in October. Do they not read the same newspapers and crop reports I do? I am told it is an out-of-state corporate investor—no surprise. The local farmers just shake their heads. Someone is putting profit ahead of common sense. Someone is not considering the bigger

Dragonflies—who doesn't love them! Magical—and they

eat mosquitos! Due to abundant water, mosquitos abound and thus their predators do too—so the fields and waterways are filled with the sight of these magical beasts. I wrote extensively about them in Journal volume # 4--which you can read on our website greatercapayvalley.org or on pages 78-79 in the book *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*; but in the *Daily Democrat* August 31, 2019, there is an interesting article about their odd postures and what they mean—check it out in the *Community* section at dailydemocrat.com. Some postures are when they actually use their front feet to hold up their large heads to scope out their surroundings, and some are males reflecting the sun to warn other males to avoid their turf, while others are to heat or cool their bodies, fannies sticking straight up in the air if their bodies and flight gear get overheated, because if their powerpacks get too hot or too cold they can't fly. Is there any question why superhero stories often choose the magical powers of insects for their heroes? So I am waiting for the most amazing of all, the dragonfly, to get his own movie—with fingers crossed, stay tuned!

Mosquitoes abound, too—as does West Nile Virus; beware! According to an article by Caroline Ghisolfi in the *Sacramento Bee*, August 31, 2019, where she quotes the manager of Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District Gary Goodman, "Heat accelerates the life cycle of a mosquito and populations can increase very rapidly" and as you know this past August was one of our hottest in 40 years. The West Nile Virus season began in Yolo County August 7 and Ghisolfi writes "the season is far from over." They suggest the 3 D's: spray on *DEET*, avoid bare skin at *Dawn and Dusk*, and *Drain* standing water; and go to FighttheBite.net—and encourage those magical superheroes the Dragonflies!

picture: The Central Valley Project vs the State Water Project; the health of the Delta, the largest estuary west of the Mississippi; the fact that California is a desert turned into an amazing breadbasket by diverting scarcer and scarcer snowmelt through a system of dams reservoirs and canals—that we all need to



[**Too Much CO2...** continued] share and care for. All of this should be considered when we choose our farming methods, our water protection, our housing and community building—we are all in this together so it all needs to be considered together.

Two articles in the *Daily Democrat* on August 21, 2019 address this same issue: "Compost study digs deep to learn about carbon sequestration" and "Fertilizer feast or famine; Solving the global nitrogen problem." In both, UC Davis leads the way in the research—of course. In the first article, "UC Davis found that compost is the key to storing carbon in the semi-arid cropland soils, a strategy for offsetting CO2 emissions" and in the latter, "Commercial organic and synthetic nitrogen fertilizer helps feed around half the world's population" but "excessive fertilizer use poses environmental and public health risks" so UC Davis scientists "published a study that identifies 5 strategies to tackle the problem." In the next Newsletter, I hope to have had an interview with the Yoche Dehe about their sustainable farming practices—past and current; which they claim is an 8000 year tradition.

Also in the next Newsletter: Oak trees of Yolo County—the *Yolo County Tree Foundation* looks to find the biggest and oldest Valley Oak in Yolo County while learning about the other oaks native to this area. So, if you have not subscribed, this is a reminder, please do so by sending a check for \$60 to TGCVHS at the address below—today!

A Brief History of Moore's Dam — by Joe Farnham in Daily Democrat 1997

"In 1856, James Moore bought all the water rights in Cache Creek from William Gordon, except for several riparian claims in the upper Capay Valley area...The water purchase gave Moore the power to use the water as he saw fit. Being a dry farmer and land owner southwest of Woodland, he needed water to irrigate this land...he had purchased 60 acres of deeded ground about 2 miles west of County Road 94B on Cache Creek...higher in elevation than the land he proposed to flood...He chose a site in the center of the 60 acres with the creek running through it and constructed a type of dam such as a beaver builds...only slightly higher. He soon had a pond of water high enough to gravity-feed 500 cfs of water into a newly dug canal called Moore Ditch, which extended several miles to the south-easterly direction and terminated on his property."

Several years later, "Moore found that his neighbors of west Woodland demanded a share of the water also. He constructed a system of lateral ditches from the Moore that followed the terrain ridges, allowing all the farmers in the area desiring surface water from Cache Creek to have use of it. He charged a minimal fee based on the *second feet* used and incidentally became Yolo County's first millionaire...in the latter 1800's."

After his death, his heirs sold to *Consolidated Water Company*, which later sold to *Yolo Water and Power Company*, which built a concrete dam with a redwood and iron flash-boards system with spillways and a fish ladder to accommodate salmon and steelhead. The pond had 10 rowboats padlocked for the use of *favored fishermen*—but locals like Mr. Farnham found ways to use them just as they sat, to fish. In 1926 "the company sold out to the *Clear Lake Water Company*, which operated the system until it sold out to the newly formed *Yolo County Flood Control District* in the 1960s." But in 1955, "the beautiful Moore Dam commenced washing and eroding due to high water flows and lack of maintenance...In 1958 it completely washed out." Until this time, the "Moore Dam pond had been augmented by water from the West Adam-Adler Canal System, which diverted irrigation water at the Capay Dam 10 miles upstream on the north side of Cache Creek."

At left: This information is taken from a newspaper article courtesy of the *Yolo County Archives*: Joe Farnham wrote the history of Moore's Dam in an Opinion piece in the Daily Democrat, July 10, 1997

From: *The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society*; 416 Lincoln Ave., Woodland, CA 95695

TO: