

An Agricultural Valley Celebrates Itself:

ALMOND FESTIVAL, HARVEST FAIRES, BLACK HISTORY DAY, FOOD AND WINE PAIRINGS, MUSIC, ETC.

Most famous and long-lived is the Almond Festival—NOTE: if you're a "real" local, Almond has the "I" knocked out of it!

History of the Annual Almond Festival

The Capay Valley Almond Festival began in 1915 and has been a Northern California tradition. The only five town event in Northern California, the festival is a showcase of the Esparto/ Capay Valley Region. It began in the fall after the harvest and moved years later to the spring, in order to show off the lovely blossoms. Of recent years the festival has received large amounts of rain and wind and this year the festival moved to the month of March.

The Almond Tree is the most mysterious nut tree and is mentioned in the bible in the book of Numbers 17:8. Its crop is very valuable to our state and California is the only place in North America that grows almonds commercially. A \$2 billion industry, more than 6,000 growers devote an estimated 530,000 acres in the Central Valley to almonds — California's largest tree nut crop — in a stretch of land extending from below Bakersfield in the south to Red Bluff in the north. For more information about almonds and recipes go to www.almondboard.com.

The Capay Valley Almond Festival traditionally included the towns of Madison, Esparto, Capay, Brooks, Guinda and Rumsey. Entertainment, crafts, good food and fun for all members of the family are provided. It

is a wonderful time to see the beauty of the whole Capay Valley and to meet many of the wonderful people who live and work in the area.

Queen Pageant

The 2011 Almond Queen Dinner is now being held at the Newly renovated Western Yolo Grange in Guinda.

Courtesy of:

Monique Garcia

Esparto Chamber of Commerce

16856 Yolo Avenue

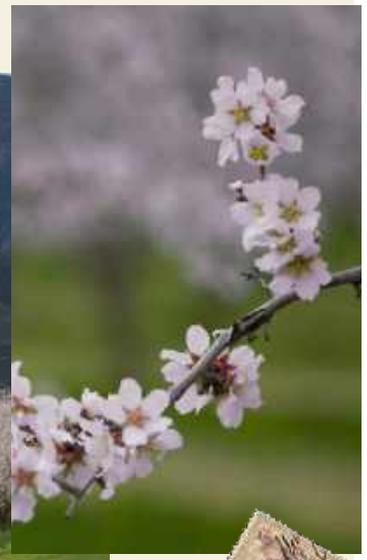
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Greater Capay Valley Historical Society, PO Box 442, Esparto, CA 95627 vol 1

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Excerpts from the book *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*, by Elizabeth Monroe

Almond Festival 1915-2015



1965 Almond Festival in Valley Sunday

The scintillating burst of pink and white almond blossoms in the Capay Valley seem to be the herald for a revival of the once-faded Almond Festival which took place between the years 1915 and 1933 in Esparto.

The affair will be revived this Sunday with a tour of the valley, the crowning of a festival queen, and a pancake breakfast - all pretty tame stuff compared at least to the first festival held September 4, 1915.

But everything has to start somewhere, even a revival, and the newly reformed Esparto chamber of commerce under Bill Davis of Guinda is working very hard on a limited budget to bring back some of the glories of past days.

Sunday's event will begin at 11:30 a.m. with brunch, pancakes and served in the VFW hall in Esparto.

Following the brunch there will be a motorcade through the Valley to Guinda where this year's Almond queen, Shirley Lloyd will be crowned by last year's queen, Lani Harris.



Almond Festival Draws 500



The Beautiful Capay Valley Celebrates the Centennial of its Almond Festival February 22, 2015

Begun on September 4, 1915, the Capay Valley held the Almond Festival on and off until bringing it back with a bang in 1965; after one 22-year hiatus, beginning during WWII in 1943, the Esparto District Chamber of Commerce voted to "reactivate" the celebration on February 1965—its 50th Birthday! Originally a fall festival, celebrating harvest, the chamber decided that the spring blossoms were the real draw for the valley, so the festival was moved to the last Sunday each February, with celebrations from Madison to Rumsey!

Early blossoms

By BARBARA FLECK
Democrat staff writer

It's the prettiest time of the year in the Capay Valley as almond trees that were bare a few weeks ago glisten with pure white blooms.

But the blossoms, which came early this year, are rapidly fading and may not make it until Sunday's Almond Festival, which promises to bring about 10,000

It's also a scary time of the year for almond growers throughout the Central Valley as they worry whether the sun will come out long enough for bees to pollinate their crops or whether it will freeze enough to kill budding nuts.

Some growers are more worried than usual this season because trees blossomed two-three weeks early, leaving the baby nuts vulnerable to frost for a longer period.

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Friday, Feb. 24, 1995

worry almond growers

"I've been watching blossoms for 20 years and think it's about the earliest I've noticed," said Dave Baker, who works with grower members of the large Blue Diamond almond cooperative.

Woodland farmer, George Oliver said his bee population had been cut to one-third through the winter and he doesn't see too much bee activity on his almond ranch along Cache Creek.

"It's too early to tell what kind of crop

we'll have," Oliver said. "(But) I'm not looking forward to a very good year."

The tule fog problem hasn't been uniform through the almond-growing region, which the Almond Board of California says produced a 466-million pound crop in the 1993-94 marketing year.

Fog has lifted most afternoons in the Sacramento Valley and in the central and southern San Joaquin Valley. But for several days this week, fog refused to go

away and yield to sunshine in San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties.

The fog also has been pretty wet which has growers worrying about fungus.

"Fog keeps the trees wet, which we don't want because it creates fungus," Oliver explained. "I have a little blossom blight now but it's hard to tell how much damage has been done."

Capay Valley farmer Charlie Gordon
See BLOSSOMS, back page

Blossoms

Continued from Page 1

said the valley doesn't get the kind of fog Woodland has so his crop shouldn't be affected as much as those of the Central Valley.

"Capay Valley has had some nice days these last weeks and we haven't been hit as hard as Woodland may have been," Gordon said.

"The earlier varieties were hit with rain and we had nice weather for the mid to late varieties. The late varieties are in bloom now so we are more worried about rain (than fog)."

Gordon said this kind of weather can actually have a positive effect because it prolongs the bloom on some varieties, which gives the bees more time to pollinate.

"This might offset some of the

bad," he said.

Some Central Valley farmers are concerned about the chance of frost but according to Oliver, there's no need to worry in Yolo County.

"In two or three weeks a frost would be bad (because the baby nuts would have formed by then), but it'll never get that cold here this time of year," Oliver said.

Even if bees pollinate properly and the young nuts don't freeze, California's 7,000 almond growers probably will harvest a lighter crop than in 1994, according to Baker.

Baker said last year's crop was large which weakens the trees and decreases the number of blossoms.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

With Farming, anything can happen—and usually does!
Farmers have a history of adapting...

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CAPAY VALLEY

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Volume Six

greatercapayvalley.org

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

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

So, what's so special about this place we call the greater Capay Valley? As explored in the prior 5 issues, it has a lot to do with the beautiful and bountiful farm and ranch lands, and the unique history of integration and cooperation between the various groups that have come here--and either stayed on or have gone. But it is also the unique flora and fauna and the amazing sunsets and sunrises. And most of all, it is the spirit of the place, whether a 5-6 generation descendant of the earliest pioneers--or the native population or more recently arrived--the people who have stayed seem so hopeful and enthusiastic about the possibilities. There are the numerous festivals and celebrations, and then service organizations and non-profits keep popping up to try and improve on an already unique and special place. In this issue, I will cover the oldest festival of all, the Almond Festival, and one of the *service organizations*, the Esparto Regional Chamber of Commerce.



Egrets feeding on Cache Creek, December 1, 2011--unusual for this much water to remain at this time of year, so this scene is a rare delight!

NOTE: *The "Esparto Judicial Township" refers to the boundary served by the old Esparto Justice Court and Census area.

Continued on Page 3

Pages 4-13 are excerpted from Volume 6 of the 2011 quarterly Journals that were eventually bound into a book of all 18 Journals 2010-2014: *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*. Go to our website greatercapayvalley.org and click on Journals to read it all for free. Below the Journals are the more current Newsletters—which will soon be bound into the 2nd edition of the book.



Agriculture in the Capay Valley

[continued from Cover-Page 1]

The greater Capay Valley, rich in agriculture today, was largely overlooked by settlers during California's gold rush era. But with its abundant water supply and mild climate, it soon became an important center for California agriculture. In some ways, though, even the fertile land and good water source was of limited value at first, since transporting perishable crops to other areas any distance from Cache Creek was problematic--until the railroad arrived, but more on that later!

Therefore, though some farmers tried vines and orchards early on, in the years following the gold rush, the area was primarily a grain and cattle raising area.

When, in 1847, the northern seven and one-half leagues of the Rancho Canada de Capay grant was conveyed to Jasper O'Farrell, basically the Capay Valley as we know it, a "land rush" of European pioneers began in earnest--including some important speculators, like John Gillig and Sy and John Arnold. On August 11, 1850, the Arnold brothers made the first commercial subdivision in the region and sold off some 5,500 acres to nine different parties for a handsome profit, according to historian Douglas Nareau's *Historic Land Uses in the Esparto Judicial Township*.*

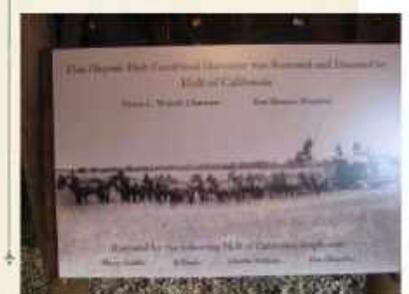
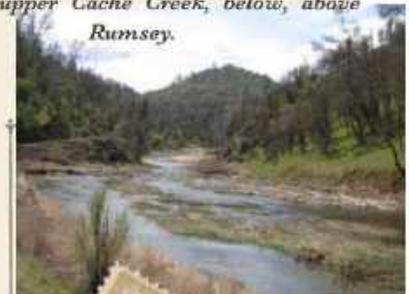
Then, in 1855, David Quincy Adams, looking for a better feed for his livestock, imported the first alfalfa into the area--and possibly the state. This alfalfa, known as Chilean Alfalfa, is believed to have come to the Capay Valley area from Chile where it was imported from Switzerland and known as Lucern Alfalfa. This is significant in that alfalfa requires abundant water, but if it is mostly used locally it need not be limited by transport concerns--but did require a means of irrigation.

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 volume 2]

Inspired, 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. Gillig planted grain, grapevines, and fruit trees northwest of Langville [the present community of Capay], and established the county's first winery in 1860. Other speculators, Rhodes and Pratt, each took title to 6800 acres in the northern valley and began to sell parcels to settlers. Scattered ranches and tiny settlements developed along



Salt Creek, above, near Guinda; upper Cache Creek, below, above Rumsey.



NOTE: at the top of each page is the Journal page number; at the bottom you see the page number in the bound book--here it is book page 103



Agriculture, continued from page 3

the unpaved, dirt road [today's Highway 16] leading up to the quicksilver (mercury) mines in the canyons to the west, according to the Esparto Chamber of Commerce.

As explored in volume 4 of this journal, the Capay Valley became well known for viticulture, and by 1861, the **Capay Valley Winery** was awarded a gold medal as the finest winery in the State of California. The area's agricultural was off and running!

In the 1870's, Klaus Spreckels planted some of the state's first sugar beets in the area, which became one of the area's leading agricultural crops. Soon, the **Capay Valley Grange** was established, marking the first attempt at formal cooperation in the farm community--and growing quickly.

Livestock and grain farming were still the mainstays of the region's developing agricultural economy, but irrigation was changing the landscape--now, *thirsty* crops, destined for shipment, would soon flourish.

According to the Esparto Regional Chamber of Commerce website, "The Almond



Tree is the most mysterious nut tree and is mentioned in the bible in the *Book of Numbers 17:8*. Its crop is very valuable to our state and California is the only place in North America that grows almonds commercially. A \$2 billion industry, more than 6000 growers devote an estimated 530,000 acres in the Central Valley--California's largest tree nut crop--from Bakersfield to Red Bluff"--and throughout the greater Capay Valley area, of course!!

While I am working on a much more thorough article on the railroad in the next volume, it is important to understand its significance to the development of the crops in the Capay Valley...After the Central Pacific Railroad established a line from Elmira in Solano County to Winters in Yolo County, five investors incorporated the Vaca Valley and Clear Lake Railroad in 1877, planning to extend the line north from Winters to Cache Creek, and then through the Capay Valley and on to Clear Lake. Although financing for the line was not quickly secured, the town of Madison was established where the railroad was to curve northwest toward the valley. Most of the village of Cottonwood to the southeast was moved to the new town, which became a center for grain shipping, according to

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Beginning on September 4, 1915, the greater Capay Valley began celebrating itself with the Almond Festival. On and off from time to time, it came back with a bang in 1965. After one 22-year hiatus, beginning during WWII in 1943, the Esparto District Chamber of Commerce voted to "reactivate" the celebration in 1964, but due to severe weather conditions, postponed the grand rebirth until February 1965--its 50th Birthday! Originally a fall festival, celebrating harvest, the chamber decided that the spring blossoms were the real draw for the valley, so the festival was moved to late February. In later years it was moved again to mid-March, due to a series of heavy rain years and late blossoms.

At various times, the festival either began in the small town of Madison on Highway 16 or Esparto, and went up the Capay Valley to either Guinda or Rumsey. Today, the 22-mile route begins in Esparto [since Madison no longer displays the traditional car show (which has been held in Esparto for years) but the Madison Fire Department is still the host] and ends in Rumsey--for ribs, music, and crafts!!



INVITATION

The Esparto District Chamber of Commerce cordially invites you and your family to attend the first revival of the old Capay Almond Festival held over 40 years ago. In those days families and friends of the valley came from miles around to enjoy the beautiful scenery and the scent of almond blossoms in the air. At no time of the year are the hills greener or the trees as pink as they are right now during almond season. Everyone in the Capay valley is proud of their land and the product it produces, they are proud of the fertile green valley bordered on either side with majestic green hills, it is because of this pride that they extend this invitation to you to join them this coming Sunday, February 21st.

— Highlights From Capay Valley's First Almond Festival —



FIRST FESTIVAL — This was the scene in Esparto September 4, 1915, at the first almond festival held in the Capay Valley. We don't know who was riding in the auto (shown above), but we do know that it had to have been a grand thrill. After more like that thing, almost, in 1915, the

Esposito district chamber of commerce is attempting to revive the festival and develop interest in the beauty of the valley especially at this time of the year with its almond trees bursting with pink-white flowers.



THE TOWN BAND — The town band of Esparto is shown as it lined up prior to the big parade through the town which began festivities at its first almond festival day September 4, 1915. Tomorrow's festival in Esparto and up the valley to Guinda will be smaller but the district chamber of commerce hopes that the festival will become a solid, annual event and will become a day to which everyone for miles around will look forward.

Festivities begin with the traditional pancake breakfast in Esparto, and the park and town are transformed with festivities--but if you haven't been up to the far reaches of the valley, you haven't tasted the famous Ribs at the Rumsey Hall nor danced to their live music. And you have probably missed the crowning of the Almond Queen (Most often at the Guinda Grange Hall) the day before, and have most certainly missed their intriguing blacksmith demonstration--and Shelford Wyatt's Grandmother's special recipe for "Grammy Wyatt's Almond Roca" featured at the Grange Hall. Shelford Wyatt, some of you may ask? Well, a descendant of a local pioneer family, Shelford was voted the first "Most Perfect Baby" in the first-ever Almond Festival in 1915--and 50 years later was instrumental in getting the festival reactivated in 1965. [NOTE: It was his grocery store at the northwest corner of Esparto at the dog-leg in Highway 16 en route to Capay Valley that was recently demolished. Many of us remember buying penny candy there on an open tab carried by our parents, and walking from store to store on the squeaky old wooden floors of that mercantile--groceries, hardware, 5-n10, etc.] **NOTE: Festival 2012 will be March 11!!! Don't miss it!!**



Photo at Right: 1965 Almond Queen, Shirley Lloyd, surrounded by, left to right: 1964 Yolo County Sugar Queen Lana Parker; 1930 Almond Queen Helen McCants; 1964 Almond Queen Lani Burris; and Princess Pat Johnson.



I was a bit confused about why the Esparto Chamber of Commerce tried to “reactivate” the Almond Festival in 1964, but didn’t actually do it until 1965,

so I asked several participants from that era. Many claim to have little memory of the details, but then I got lucky when I contacted Lani Burris (now Yukimura, living for many years in Hawaii), who had this to say:

*I was the first Almond Princess since Mrs. Helen McCants [1930 Almond Queen] was crowned (not sure that was accurate, but it is what I was told). I understood that the Almond Growers Exchange (something like that) wanted a princess so they did what was easiest and said the homecoming queen would be the almond princess. I was “crowned” at the high school barn dance in the social hall by A.D. Keisler. They did plan a festival, but, yes, the weather was too rainy, so instead they had a Hootenanny in the high school gym. I was introduced as the almond princess, and sang with my buddies Lana Parker, Mary Hayes and Suellen Hess (we had sung together since the 6th grade), and there was some other entertainment by some guys from Woodland, and the master of ceremony was **Gus the Gopher** from a radio station in Sacramento that was popular at the time. I have pictures of the hootenanny that someone gave me and shows the bleachers in the gym filled with townspeople. I remember everyone was encouraged to take a drive up the valley and see the almond blossoms, so that was it for 1964...And in response to a photo I sent her of the 1965 ceremony she wrote, I have that photo of Shirley being crowned, and I remember attending the breakfast with Lana and crowning Shirley at the VFW Hall—I think that’s where it was; we had breakfast there...I think the chamber of commerce may have been involved in 1964 because Marty Wyatt [Shelford Wyatt’s wife] was the one helping with the tabloid story. She had me pose for this picture for the cover in the Parker orchard next to the high school parking lot, and wanted a lot of blossoms around my face, so I was kinda stuck in this tree, and she had me hold a branch she snapped off from another tree, so more blossoms would be around my face—and you can see in the picture that it was not part of the tree...thought it was funny, but oh well...I know the Almond Festival has really “blossomed” since then, and feel honored to have been a part of its revival.*

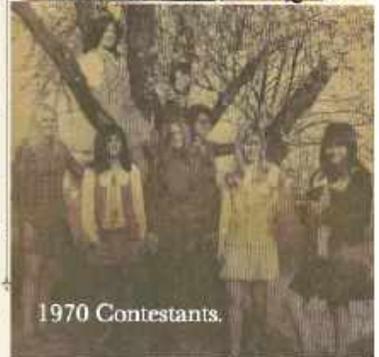
And she is right, Mr. Keisler was present at the barn dance to crown her in 1964—he was the president of the Esparto District Chamber of Commerce that year and instrumental in reactivating the festival. In those days, according to long-time-local, Don Warren, who was very much involved in the festivals and Esparto chamber at the time, the small towns had district chambers, but were all under the umbrella of the Yolo County Chamber of Commerce, meeting regularly with other chamber representatives and county supervisors, et al. In 1965, when Lani crowned Shirley Lloyd Almond Queen in the first “new” almond festival, many of the different chamber presidents and county supervisors were present, all interested in seeing this festival revived—one of the few things they all could agree on, according to Mr. Warren!

In 1970, the Chamber took over the Queen Pageant and the EHS Homecoming Queen and her court were no longer automatically reigning over the Almond Festival. Candidates would now be sponsored by various businesses and organizations—a clever move for a chamber of commerce, no doubt! Though frequently held at the Guinda Grange Hall, that year the crowning ceremony was held at the Rumsey Hall, sponsored by the *Rumsey Improvement Club* [now *Association*], after a traditional grand car caravan up the valley with candidates and their escorts.

Esparto Regional Chamber of Commerce, the official name today, began as a *district* chamber among many within Yolo County. Having promoted the “annual” [though not held consecutively since 1915] Almond Festival to draw attention to the Capay Valley and its agriculture, ERCC today sees itself as representative of the whole “region,” not just Esparto. In that way, it tries to embrace the whole “greater Capay Valley region”—and sees the annual Almond Festival as one perfect way to do so. Festivities begin in the town of Esparto, but everyone is encouraged to take the traditional and beautiful drive up to the valley towns of Capay, Brooks, Guinda and Rumsey and stop to enjoy the music, food, crafts, and entertainment all along the way. For more Info, go to: espartoregionalchamber.com or almondfestival.com



Antoinette Perez, 1968 Queen



1970 Contestants.

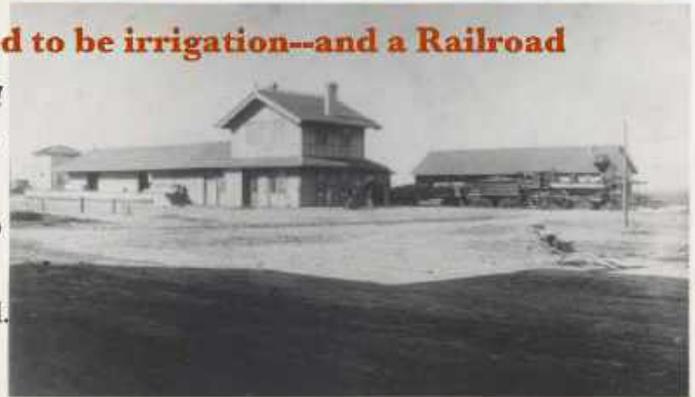


But there would be no festival without the Almonds!

And for orchards to succeed, there needed to be irrigation--and a Railroad

In 1887 several San Francisco investors incorporated the Capay Valley Land Company, composed mainly of officers of the Southern Pacific Railroad. The company planned to divide several large land holdings into 10- to 40-acre parcels for fruit and nut farming and to establish town sites along the length of the coming railroad.

*That same year local farmers formed the Rumsey Ditch Association to build and operate an eight-mile irrigation canal (later shortened) from Cache Creek above Rumsey to the vicinity of Guinda. In 1888 the new town of Esperanza [renamed in 1890 **Esparto**, after a native bunch grass] was laid out, and railroad track was laid up to Rumsey (named for a local landowner) at the north end of the valley. By the time the first passenger train was running, Guinda had a house for the section supervisor and a bunkhouse for workers, and postmasters were appointed at Guinda [the Spanish word for the wild cherry trees], Rumsey and Langville [later renamed **Capay**].*



Typical and unique in the Capay Valley is the cooperative support the farms lend one another. A good example: Capay Valley Grown is a logo-label shared by 25-30 local farms in support of one another and the area.

“Capay Valley Grown is a partnership of farmers and ranchers who are all committed to growing the very freshest and tastiest of foods. Capay Valley Grown products, many certified organic, offer the delicious flavor that comes only from locally grown food. By dedicating themselves to sustainable production of cherished land, these farmers and ranchers have also dedicated themselves to your long-term satisfaction.” this quote is from their website at: capayvalleygrown.com

In 1889 the three-story hotel seen at left was completed in Esparto, featuring gas lights, a pressurized water system, and electric bells. A grand building difficult to imagine in the Esparto of today-- a sleepy village in the process of a comeback!



Picture courtesy of Douglas Narrau

*Above: **Esparto Hotel**; the hotel was damaged in the 1892 earthquake but repaired; after a succession of owners, the grand building was sadly torn down in 1935.*

*Top Right: **Esparto Train Depot and engine**. Right: **Capay Valley Almond Orchards**. (Courtesy of Martin Armstrong)*



PAGE 2—VALLEY TRIBUNE—THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1995

Yolo native recalls winning baby race

By Steve Archer
Tribune Editor

Although Shelford Wyatt was only six months old when the first Almond Festival was held, he still walked—or crawled—away a winner.

"I won the baby contest," Wyatt told the Valley Tribune. "The first festival was quite an affair and mother was very active."

Wyatt's mother also had a recipe for almond rocha which caused quite a stir at the time.

"We used Grammy Wyatt's almond rocha recipe at a General Electric display at the county fair one year, demonstrating stoves," Wyatt recalled. "They didn't sell many appliances but people would wait an hour to get a batch."

The secret to making exceptional almond rocha—and the key difference to peanut brittle—is using raw almonds instead of toasted.

"If you make almond rocha properly the oils from the raw almonds will escape—under the heat—into the sugar mix so the candy has a toasted almond flavor throughout," Wyatt said. "If you make it at a festival or county fair the aroma will bring people running."

"I think the almond industry is missing the boat by not taking advantage of the almond smell and promoting almond rocha," Wyatt continued. "I feel it could be very lucrative franchise."

A tourist attraction for almond rocha—like Ghirardelli Square for chocolate—would foster the smell of almonds toasting and introduce more people to the confection, Wyatt suggested.

According to Wyatt the festival was originally held in Capay but after World War II Esparto became the nucleus for the valley-wide event.

"I don't believe the festival was continuous from 1915," said Wyatt, "but after the war it was a regular event."

Wyatt's father operated a general store in Esparto which—

though the building is not in use—still bears the family name.

"I got acquainted with the valley as a teenager running a grocery truck from Esparto to Runsey," Wyatt said.

Since the days of his youth Wyatt has seen the almond—and human—population decrease.

"The economics of the valley have changed considerably," Wyatt said. "There are now row crops, alfalfa and walnuts and less almonds."

"There hasn't been any significant population increase either," said Wyatt. "I think the population is less than it was 50 years ago."

According to Wyatt, almonds may now account for less than 25 per cent of the valley acreage, while almonds may have made up to as much as 50 per cent of the acreage 50 years ago.

"There probably won't be much more reduction in almond acreage because most people who could convert already have," Wyatt continued.

Wyatt said some have switched to walnuts because walnuts bloom later, are less susceptible to frost and yield more tonnage, although they need more water.

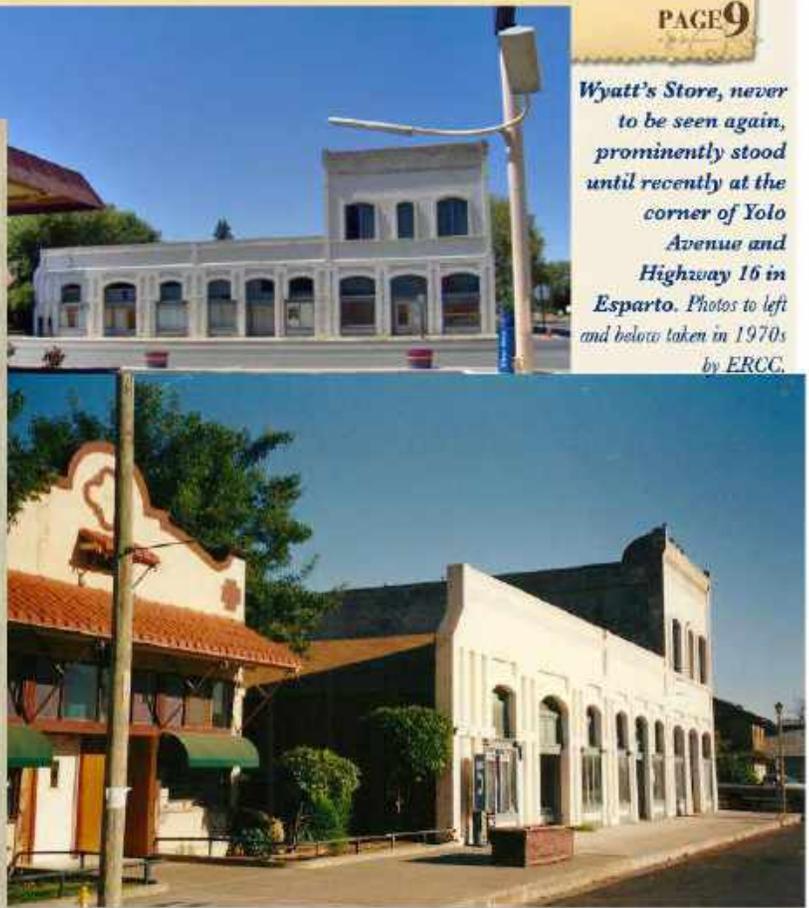
However, Runsey and the area around county road 79 are still ideal for almonds.

"Runsey is mostly a frost-free area," said Wyatt. "There are even some citrus growers at the head of the canyon."

Although there are many types of almonds, the most popular, says Wyatt, is the Nonpareil. The Nonpareil is favored over other types because of its thin shell, large meat and excellent flavor.

Wyatt said one variety that looked like it would be successful is the Jordan almond. But, after 10 years, the tree, "goes crazy on top."

"The trees start branching out non-productive shoots, like someone's crazy hairdo," Wyatt said. "There's nothing you can do when that happens."



Wyatt's Store, never to be seen again, prominently stood until recently at the corner of Yolo Avenue and Highway 16 in Esparto. Photos to left and below taken in 1970s by ERCC.

Fred and Roy Wyatt bought the building in 1915 [the same year as the first Almond Festival!] and it became known for many decades as the "Wyatt Building." Originally, Wolf Levy and Sam Schwab, successful Capay merchants, opened the building in 1889, just after the Railroad arrived in Esparto. Sitting across from the impressive 3-story hotel and across from the new train depot, all three were built as inducements to get settlers to Esparto. The Esparto General Store, an office, a meeting room, a hardware and a dry goods store filled the building for many decades. Sold by Shelford Wyatt in the 1970s, groceries were sold until the early 1980s and Giz and Alice Garrison ran what had been the Hastings hardware store from 1982 until 1996—by which time the building was in grave dis-repair.

Esparto's new Pacific ACE Hardware store is across the street in the newly remodeled IOOF building, which for decades housed the popular local "hub," Lindberg's Bar downstairs, and on the second floor a springy wooden dance floor. Anyone have pictures/stories of Lindberg's to share?



530-787-3800 in Esparto

As seen in the 1995 Tribune article above, the Wyatt family was long involved in almonds in the area—growing them and making Grammy Wyatt's Almond Rocha, and helping promote them with our long-lived Almond Festival!

Bees!!

--without them, no almonds!



I hadn't meant for this issue to be all about the birds and the bees, but sometimes life is just like that--and without "the birds-n-the-bees" there would be no "life," so there you have it! Knowing I was to write about the Almond Festival and almond crops in the Capay Valley, I bought a book by Susan Brackney, *Plan Bee, Everything you Ever Wanted to Know About the Hardest-Working Creatures on the Planet*, and became even more fascinated than I already was. Then I visited several websites--including good ol' Wikipedia. First, from one of our local beekeepers, John Foster's B-Z Bee site, here's the scoop!

History and Health Benefits of Honey

Honey is mankind's oldest sweetener. Honey is manufactured in nature's most efficient factory - the beehive. Bees make honey from the nectar of flowers and they will travel as far as 40,000 miles and visit over 2 million flowers to produce one pound of honey.

Honey has been found in the tombs of ancient Egyptian Pharos and man harvesting honey is painted on the wall of caves by pre-historic man.

Honeybees have been in Europe and Asia for hundreds of thousands of years. It was not until the late 1600's that the bee was brought to this country by Europeans. Native Americans called the honey bee "White man's flies." Approximately one half of the human diet is derived directly or indirectly from crops pollinated by bees. Today honeybees are an essential part of a healthy agriculture economy.

Have hayfever or allergy problems? Many individuals eat honey to build tolerances to pollen.

*Find out more about the **Health Benefits of Honey** by visiting bz-bee.com or emailing john at: johnfoster@bz-bee.com or calling: (530) 787-3044*

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www.everythingabout.net/articles/biology/animals/arthropods/insects/bees/ carried the picture at bottom of a food-gathering yellow honey bee by: Larry Crowhurst / Oxford Scientific Films.

And from *The Economist* on-line, May 4, 2010, at www.economist.com/node/15612155 I got the cookie dough-fattened bee at the top left.

Also used was: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bee

More information from all sites on next page.



There are 11 families of bees, many of them native to California, but not the familiar “honey bee.” Since “honey bees” are not native to the US, why not just depend upon our many native pollinators? Well, as Wikipedia points out, while [our native] bumblebees have been found to be about ten times more efficient pollinators...the total efficiency of a colony of honey bees is much greater due to greater numbers. Likewise, during early spring orchard blossoms, bumblebee populations are limited to only a few queens, and thus are not significant pollinators of early fruit. And as *The Economist* points out, more than 80% of the world's almonds are grown in California and, to pollinate them, the 7,000 or so growers hire about 1.4m of America's 2.3m commercial hives. Thousands of trucks deliver the hives in February—from Maine, Florida, the Carolinas and elsewhere—and will soon pick them up again. The bees' job is to flit from one blossom to the next, gorging themselves and in the process spreading the trees' sexual dust. Farmers growing fruit trees, sunflowers, almonds (unlike many other nut trees, such as walnuts) and other crops needing pollination, now pay about \$150 to rent a hive, needing 1-2 hives per acre for almonds. The cost has increased drastically since 2006 due, primarily, to “colony collapse disorder” (CCD), a mysterious affliction that has drastically reduced their numbers, per *The Economist* article. Farmers, bee-men and scientists have speculated on many causes, including mobile-telephone radiation, viruses, fungi, mites and pesticides—or none of the above. In the absence of a clear explanation, one scientist, a Dr. Gordon Wardell, with a PhD in entomology, therefore a sort of bee doctor, is concentrating on something different: nutrition. He is force-feeding them protein. He owns a patent for MegaBee, which he says “looks like cookie dough.” He puts a bit of this into the hives, blocking the bees' entrance so that they have to champ their way through it.

The creative “Bee gate” on John Foster's front drive in Lamb Valley.



Bees make up a superfamily known as the Apoidea. Of the 11 families of bees, the Apidae include our most familiar bees, the honey bees and their close relatives: four tribes including orchid, bumble, stingless and honey bees. They make intricate nests and live in complex societies. Their pollen-carrying structure is a smooth, bristle-surrounded area on one segment of the hind leg, known as a pollen basket, or corbicula. According to Susan Brackney, bees are of the genus *Apis*, Latin for “bee,” and honey bees are commonly known as *Apis mellifera*, which translates to “honey-bearing bee.” The first bees brought from Europe were the German bees, but later Italian bees became much more popular, due to their mellower disposition—I will avoid the temptation to stereo-type here! Less aggressive and likely to sting, they are much favored to this day. John Foster specializes in providing Italian Queens to his clients, for instance.

Honey bees come in three “types”: Queen, worker, drone—the latter are the only males and live only to mate with the queen...and then quickly die! Worker bees go from egg to adult in 21 days; drones 24 days; queens only 16 days. What a larvae will become is determined by the food they receive from the nurse-worker bees: a pure Royal Jelly diet for the queen, of course. Worker bees live from 30 to 140 days, depending upon whether they are bred to over-winter or just for summer work. Short and sweet!



info@capayvalleyfarmshop.com • 530.383.9022

CAPAY VALLEY

October 2011

Volume five

greatercapayvalley.org

The Greater Capay Valley
Historical Society
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Esparto, CA
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*Focusing on the
Greater Capay
Valley, including
towns and areas
surrounding and
leading to Cache
Creek and up the
Capay Valley*

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

To paraphrase Pulitzer prize winner Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings in her autobiographical novel *Cross Creek*, *Who owns Cache Creek? The scrub jays and magpies more than I...* "And what of the land? It seems to me that the earth may be borrowed but not bought. It may be used, but not owned. It gives itself in response to love and tending, offers its seasonal flowering and fruiting. But we are tenants and not possessors, lovers and not masters." Cache Creek "belongs to the wind and the rain, to the sun and the seasons, to the cosmic secrecy of seed, and beyond all, to time."

I have long loved that book and then the film--if you haven't read or seen either, I highly recommend you do so. Whether you be farmer or writer or recreational reader, it has something to say to you..."the cosmic secrecy of seed"! Dang, I wish I'd penned that!

As a writer/teacher/principal/parent/wife/home-owner leaving everything behind and taking a great risk to "make her dreams come true" back on Cache Creek in Hungry Hollow, the story of a similar woman-of-adventure has long inspired me. And I re-watched the film

Continued on Page 3



Hungry Hollow Harvest Moon -- Jack-o-lantern faced and pumpkin orange -- lit up the sky in October 2011



Jack-o-Lanterns carved by visiting kids to the Hoes Down Festival at Full Belly Farm October 1-2, 2011

Pages 14-24 are from Journal vol. 5, 2011, celebrating the history of agriculture in the Capay Valley. Go to our website at greatercapayvalley.org and click on Journals to read all 18 volumes that were bound into the book in 2015: *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*, by Elizabeth Monroe



Continued from Front Page: when I began to wonder at my sanity--and because I have an even greater appreciation for *the cosmic secrecy of seed*--and the farmers who tend them--after almost 2 years back out here.

“Thoreau went off to live in the woods alone, to find out what the world was like. Now a man may learn a deal of the general from studying the specific, whereas it is impossible to know the specific by studying the general. For that reason, our philosophers are usually the most unpractical of men, while very simple folk may have a great deal of wisdom.”

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Cross Creek*

Now, I know Marjorie did not mean anything demeaning in her term “simple folk” and I certainly do not intend to demean when I say I think of farmers when I read this passage--I come from a long line of farmers and ranchers! they studying the land, they learn to be very intimate with the earth and become, as a result, sometimes very philosophical and wise about the greater world around them. There are plenty of jokes about “city folks” coming out to the farm and sneering at or trying to take advantage of the “simple” farmer--with the inevitable punch line favoring the farmer. In my many conversations recently with the “farmers” now in the greater Capay Valley, I heard numerous times how many were “city kids” who came out here to farm and knew nothing about what they were getting into. Some had studied agriculture at college--often UC Davis--but many had just decided in the 1970s or 1980s that they simply wanted something different for their lives, their kids. Many of the current farmers out here are descendants in a long line of farmers and ranchers, of course, and many have stayed on the land, while others have gone off to college and/or “city careers,” only to come back to the land, like Jim Durst of Durst Organic Farms. Whichever the case, they work hard to keep this very special place in agriculture and they work closely together, whether organic or traditional in their approach, to do so. They work hard year-round, but take time to celebrate their efforts, the environment, and each other--often. Whether it’s at the county fair or the Almond Festival, Taste of Capay, or Hoes Down, there is reason to celebrate all their hard effort and the glorious place they call home. [see videos on our new website at: greatercapayvalley.org]

In this issue, I want to focus on and celebrate the growing trend toward organic and natural and/or sustainable farming in this area. I also want to share what I learned about the black walnut trees that grow wild along the creek and in stately rows along the roads all over Yolo County. And, of course, I want to share what I found when I reached back into our past and pulled forth names from our history as they tie to the farms and ranches thriving anew. And in keeping with the trend toward farming, I have a story from Sheriff “Sunny Jim” Monroe about Coxey’s Army, highlighting the plight of farmworkers and others desperate for work of any kind--a topic timely in today’s economy.



Above, Dru Rivers, partner at Full Belly Farm, conducting a farm tour for *Hoes Down*, October 2, 2011.



Above, cherry tomatoes at the end of their season, about to be disked back into the soil to replenish it for next year.

Below, Chickens raised outdoors for their fertile, natural eggs; portable roosting trailers are a very successful high school FFA project by Dru’s son, Rye Muller.





Farming in the Greater Capay Valley: Then and Now



Of course, before the arrival of my ancestors in the mid-1800s, there were people farming and managing the land in the Capay Valley area--for as far back as 8000 years. But most of what we know comes from the European-descended pioneers arriving following the gold rush to California. While many tried their hands in the gold fields, most quickly turned to the land to sustain them in a different way: farming and ranching. For some the real "gold" was in crops and for others it was livestock--and for many it was both. Soon the railroads came to make their lives even more profitable and promising--though their task was never an *easy one*. In the beginning, everyone of them was an "organic" farmer or rancher. It was natural methods, tried and true, that got them through, and only with the easier availability of chemicals for pest control and fertilization did many turn to this method to make them a greater profit and their lot easier. But with time, many turned away from the chemical approach due to its negative side effects, and the "organic movement" became a "new" way to farm--again! So, for many farmers, we have simply come full circle to the natural ways of our ancestors. And while organic farming is still only a small percentage of our crop/livestock yield, it is a growing trend with a growing respect and support structure--even fertilizer companies like Agriform and Tremont have special advisors for organic farmers today. And then there are ag groups specifically focused on helping small organic farms, like Peaceful Valley Farm Supply in Grass Valley. And due to the new trend toward eating locally and supporting your local farmers, Farmers' Markets and Co-ops have become more plentiful. As have CSAs, Community Supported Agriculture groups, wherein people pay an annual fee in exchange for weekly deliveries of local in-season crops year-round--a very symbiotic relationship, supporting the farmer in advance and getting fresh produce delivered at a cost often comparable to the supermarkets. Then there is even a movement afoot to try to keep current organic farms in organics in perpetuity, such as Good Humus Farm of Hungry Hollow's attempts through their Farm Preservation Project; since it takes years to purify the soil to earn the organic certification, this is a sensible solution. And then there is the cooperative support the farms lend one another: Capay Valley Grown is a logo-label shared by 25-30 local farms in support of one another and the area.

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

Pictured above left: the first traction engine used by a farmer in Yolo County in 1894, owned by brothers John D. and George D. Stephens outside Madison and Esparto.

Above right: turn-of-the-century tractor on the Wyatt G. Duncan ranch in Hungry Hollow.

Useful HTTPs:

www.tremontag.com/

Peaceful Valley Farms at:

www.groworganic.com/

Good Humus Farm's

preservation project at:

www.goodhumus.com/Pages/preservation_project1.htm

Capay Valley Grown at:

www.capayvalleygrown.com/

and

capayvalleyfarmshop.com



“Capay Valley Grown is a partnership of farmers and ranchers who are all committed to growing the very freshest and tastiest of foods. Capay Valley Grown products, many certified organic, offer the delicious flavor that comes only from locally grown food. By dedicating themselves to sustainable production of cherished land, these farmers and ranchers have also dedicated themselves to your long-term satisfaction.” Quote from their website at: capayvalleygrown.com

This Land is Your Land...thus starts a familiar folk song and a recent article in *Time Magazine's* October 24, 2011 issue--very timely for this volume's focus! It featured Joel Salatin, a “one-man symbol of an alternative food system,” very familiar to those who shop at local farmers' markets and know what a CSA is. His views are expressed often and quite clearly, but most recently in his new book, *Folks, This Ain't Normal*. Having just interviewed several local farmers for this volume, reading this article reminded me very much of the attitude and practices, of many. He may seem extreme in his views to many others, but his real focus is to encourage sustainable farming and a move back to the land and eating locally-grown. “He wants us to be full citizens of the food system, like Jeffersonian citizen-farmers who founded the country,” according to the *Time* article. Some farmers I have spoken to just consider him another *crazy liberal*, but his ideas are also very much about the freedom to farm without some government agency or bureaucracy telling you what to do. Sustainability means moving away from the grid and into self-sustainment--a pretty typically *conservative* view, really. He believes freedom begins with something as basic as our food and “the security of knowing where your food comes from.”

Which brings us to another burning issue when you talk to the local farmers--who will the next farmers be? As the *Time* article points out, “There are about 2 million farms in the US, down from nearly 7 million in 1935. Less than 2% of Americans farm for a living.” One refrain I heard often, from Sacramento's *Soil Born Farms* to the organic-natural-sustainable farms in the greater Capay Valley: If we do not do something to entice more people back to farming, who will feed us tomorrow? And so there is a growing push to offer educational programs through the organic farms--we will look closely at just such a program at our own Capay Valley's *Full Belly Farm*.

And what of our unemployment rates? If it is true that “Industrial agriculture is no different from any other modern manufacturing process: machines and chemical energy have replaced human hands,” as the article states, Salatin responds, “Yes, it will take more hands, but we've got plenty of them around.” Jefferson would be so proud if we turned more people back to the honorable profession of farmer!



Capay Organic's reservoir above and strawberry field below; at bottom, Full Belly Farm's pomegranate hedgerow.





Capay Organic Farm -- the Oldest *New* Organic Farm in the Capay Valley

When Kathleen Barsotti and Martin Barnes bought their first 20 acres in the Capay Valley in 1976, they had small children in tow, great hopes for raising them in the country, very little actual farming experience and a fallow sticker patch to start with. But today, their children and their own young families own over 350 acres, offer farm tours and education in organic farming and sustainability; and operate the CSA **Farm Fresh to You**, delivering fresh produce to over 40,000 customers around the state; and operate the *Kathleen Barsotti Non-profit for Sustainable Agriculture*, giving an annual scholarship to a high school senior “planning on pursuing a field related to sustainable agriculture.”



“90 miles northeast of San Francisco and 30 minutes northwest of Sacramento” on Highway 16 at the mouth of the beautiful Capay Valley, the farm is easily accessible and is now offering itself as an event center for the many activities commonly held in this agricultural paradise we call home.

In 1992 Kathleen Barsotti still saw a need to get organic produce to the public more effectively, even after she had helped start the Davis Farmers’ Market to provide a venue for Capay Organic and other organic farms. So, in ’92 she founded *Farm Fresh to You*—perhaps the largest CSA (community supported agriculture) delivery service in the country today. Her goal was to bring organic produce directly from the farm to the customers’ homes. Today, her sons, Noah, Thaddeus, and Freeman, and their extended families, continue the tradition, selling to individuals and to wholesalers, restaurants, grocery stores, and at farmers’ markets.

And this all from the initial 20-acre *sticker patch*, which at one time had been part of the Ben Franklin Duncan estate. Their 350 acres today embrace several parcels which had been given to Ben Duncan’s children in the 1800s as they married and started their own families.

Farm Fresh To You




Organic Produce Delivered
Fresh From The Farm



Making farm fresh meals
possible by delivering
local, organic produce
to your door

Farming in the Capay
Valley since 1976



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Above, a view of the Capay Hills across Cache Creek, with the farm's tractor tour tram; to the right, the Barsotti and



Barnes families enjoy the 2011 *Taste of Capay* event on their site

Capay Organic Farm features “the old Zentner place,” commonly referring to the home, tank house, and other out buildings of the home once owned by Hugo Zentner and his bride, Bertha Duncan, and later his second wife, Edna. An adjacent parcel was owned by Bertha’s sister Hester and her husband Coy Lines. Other pieces of the farm were part of the John Wirth property. The west side of the farm abuts what was Bertha and Hester’s brothers’ farms: Iverson, who married Irene Wood, and brother Wyatt, who married May Wood. Ben Franklin Duncan was a younger brother of the earliest Duncan pioneers to Capay Valley, Wyatt “Doc” Godfrey and William, but Ben died early of appendicitis in 1895, leaving his eight children and his wife, Atlanta, with property on the north side of Highway 16, much of which is now Capay Organic Farm, and a lovely home on the hill on the south side, offering “Lant” a view of the homes of her children for the rest of her life. After Ben’s death, his eldest brother Wyatt, [their brother Bill had also died in 1895] bought much of the land from “Lant” and through the years the property was divided and sold off. Today, the only significant structures remaining are from the Zentner home, seen in the picture at the left and below, taken in October 2011.





Hugo Zentner



Above: turn-of-the-century picture of Hugo Zentner is courtesy of another "cousin" through the Duncan clan, Jim Hiatt, of the Hungry Hollow Goodnow family. We are ALL related!!



Zentner grandchildren of Hugo and Bertha include Sandy at far left and Val at far right, pictured in the 1950s with three of their Monroe cousins, Tommy, Cathy and Betsy, on the Burnell and Micki Zentner place, once part of the old Duncan-Monroe Ranch on County Road 85. Not pictured here are son Burnell and daughter Joanie, who, like their mother and Val, still live in the greater Capay Valley. Their mother, former local Justice of the Peace, still lives in the home where Burnell first proposed.



She tells the story as though it happened yesterday: Born in Oklahoma, Sarah Myrtle Burns moved to California with her widowed mother and her older sister, Caesarine, at 8 years old. Working as cook at a family hunting camp in Lassen County, she met the Leslie Button family and they invited her to spend some time with them at their home in Hungry Hollow before she went home to her mother one summer. What she did not know was that they thought she should meet their ranch manager, Burnell Zentner, so they sent him to meet her at the bus station...and his proposal came before her next bus home. They were able to buy the Button place later and raise their 4 children there.



The Burnell and Micki Zentner home above was built on a parcel carved out of the original Wyatt Godfrey and Bill Duncan Ranch; the house was built in the 1920s by a Duncan, but later sold to Leslie Button. The tall pine to the left was annually decorated with Christmas lights each December by Burnell Zentner to the very tip top--much to the delight of people from all over Yolo County.

How the Barsotti-Barnes family came to own the old Duncan-Zentner and Duncan-Lines places reveals a lot about how old ranches and farms changed hands within the valley. After Hugo's death in the 1960's, his second wife, Edna, sold 121 acres to John and Judy Wirth in January, 1975. In April of 1975, John Wirth sold the same property to Street & Hinds, and on the same day these RE agents sold some portion of the property to Barsotti-Barnes. So, Kathleen Barsotti and Martin Barnes initially owned a small parcel and leased adjacent parcels to farm, including from Marlow and Lazaro. When Kathleen passed away in 2000, and their father now living in Paris, their sons bought more property, some from John Wirth's estate, managed by his executor, local real estate broker Jim Wirth. Some of that property was from the Duncan-Lines family.

And if that isn't cross-pollinated enough for you, it would appear that Kathleen's father, architect Frank Barsotti, bought the home site on the hill across highway 16 from their new farm--the original home site of Ben Franklin Duncan, overlooking his children, just as Frank Barsotti would do later. Though the home known for its viewing porch was long gone, the view remained.



Above: Original home of Ben and Atlanta Duncan.

Frank Barsotti would help the young couple with their dream in many ways, one of which was to design a barn for his daughter Kathleen along the same lines as a building that inspired her: the pictures to the right show the former barn, now Capay Organic Farm's offices, designed to look like the carriage house below, which sits to this day as it did for over a century on the Wyatt and Bill Duncan Ranch on County Road 85 in Hungry Hollow--though Kathleen surely did not know the familial relationship between the farm she bought and the ranch with the carriage house.



Above: red-roofed office of Capay Organic Farm, designed after the carriage house pictured below, as it can still be seen today on County Road 85.



DURST ORGANIC GROWERS

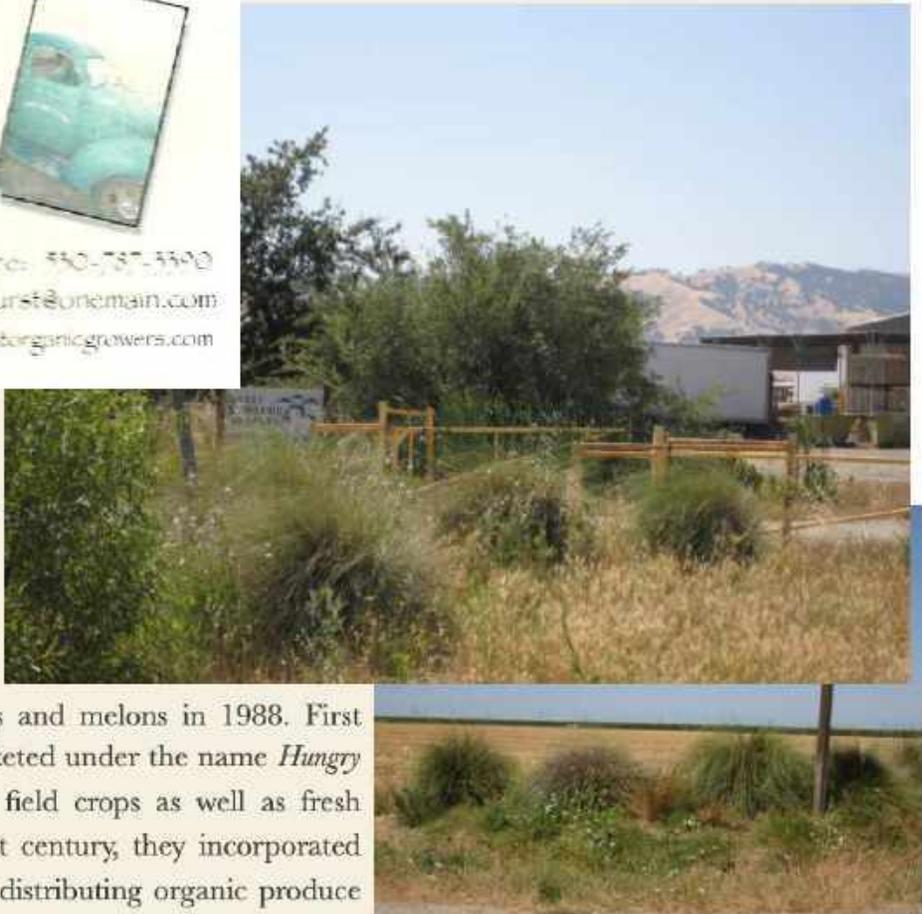


Jim & Deborah Durst
P.O. Box 40
26100 County Road 16
Esparto, CA 95627

Office: 530-737-5590
E-mail: jdurst@one.com
www.durstorganicgrowers.com

About the same time the Barsotti-Barnes family began organic farming in the Capay Valley, Jim Durst, a fourth generation Hungry Hollow native, brought his wife Deborah back home to farming. With their first 5 acres, they began farming organic crops

in the early 1980s, growing vegetables and melons in 1988. First founding *James Durst Farming*, they marketed under the name *Hungry Hollow*, "slowly adding acres to grow field crops as well as fresh market crops." By the turn of this last century, they incorporated and became *Durst Organic Growers, Inc.*, distributing organic produce under the brand name *Durst Organic Growers*. They believed strongly in "farming techniques that build soil fertility while balancing wildlife and insect ecology," according to their own promo releases. Their farm "practices organic methods that include cover cropping, crop rotation, maintaining balanced soils through amendments, and paying close attention to the needs of microbiological fauna that inhabits our soil," according to Jim. *Durst Organic Growers, Inc.*, is now a "mid-sized farm marketing into the wholesale and retail market place, committed to growing the best tasting and most nutritious produce, and to promoting a healthier environment for everyone." Their "micro-climate and good soils in Hungry Hollow" allow them to grow "delicious asparagus, to-die-for melons [the Dursts always had *y'all come pick 'em melons* I well remember from my childhood as their nearest neighbor!] as well as watermelons, cherry and heirloom tomatoes, peppers, peas, and winter squash." The crops are generally "picked in the cool morning hours and immediately refrigerated, removing residual heat--and it can get *HOT* in Hungry Hollow!--then packed for the market for that 'just picked' flavor" delivered to the customers. They also grow organic barley and alfalfa as part of their rotation, sold only into the organic dairy and livestock markets.



www.durstorganicgrowers.com



also in Hungry Hollow:

Jeff and Annie Main's
Good Humus Produce at:
humus@cal.net
and for schools, go to:

[http://goodhumus.com/
Pages/Farm%20to
%20School.htm](http://goodhumus.com/Pages/Farm%20to%20School.htm)

Full Belly Farm is celebrating its 27th year, the second oldest “new” Organic Farm in the Capay Valley. Situated outside of Guinda, it is over 250 acres, 110 of which is their original purchase, what is locally recalled as “the old Gladney place.”



In 1984, four partners, Andrew Brait, Paul Muller, Dru Rivers, and Judith Redmond, bought the farm from a man who had bought from the Shadrack Gladney family, and had let it sit fallow for about 10 years. Those ten years actually helped the partners “rest” the land before turning it to certified organic.

Like the other Capay Valley organic farms, Full Belly works cooperatively with the other farmers--Jim Durst would say they all started about the same time and were friends and supporters from the beginning. Not all of them offer a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) delivery program, but those who do, work cooperatively to lessen direct competition. They sell to different farmers’ markets, and some do door-to-door delivery, while others drop off at convenient locales for customers to pick up, and still others specialize in wholesale or restaurants and businesses, for instance. Several are members of **Capay Valley Farm Shop**, a cooperative designed to further get Capay Valley products to the greater public, and the passion of Thomas Nelson, married to Full Belly Farm partner Judith Redmond.

When Full Belly started selling its organic produce, there were few farmers’ markets and even less CSAs. Today, their CSA business is 25% of their profit. And since a CSA by its nature assures the farmer advance financial support, there is a built in safety net for small farmers--a fact Dru Rivers is happy to point out on her farm tour, always encouraging more people to become farmers! When asked on one tour what was the most cost-effective crop, Dru proudly answered their dried flowers and animals--her own personal favorites! Dru dried flowers and made wreaths from the very beginning, selling to the public. Food crops are labor intensive, especially in organics, while drying flowers is not.

Like each of the organic farms, certain features make **Full Belly Farm** unique. Perhaps most is the annual **Hoes Down Harvest Festival**.

Capay Valley CSAs:

info@capayvalleyfarmshop.com • 530.383.9022

<http://riverdogfarm.com/veggiebox.htm>

humus@cal.net

www.FullBellyFarm.com

Hoes Down Harvest Festival
An annual on-farm fundraising festival held on the first weekend in October, it is a 2-day event including optional over-night camping in the orchards, music, food, dancing, farm tours and workshops all along the Cache Creek and throughout the farm.

The focus is on celebrating the harvest time, but it is really a way to educate and inspire future farmers and their supporters.

www.hoesdown.org

Other unique features of Full Belly Farm:

50 full-time, fully-benefitted employees and 10-15 summer employees--but their goal is to employ everyone *full-time*, year-round.

A live-in apprenticeship program for 5 future farmers per year; 1 full-year minimum req'd.

Sleep-over/ camp-out Summer Kids' Camps

Pests?!



Left, common locally, the Western Scrub Jay; right, less common locally, true Blue Jay. Go to the Cornell Lab site and click on their birdsong audio--you will recognize our local fellow! --but please do not shoot them!!!

[All About Birds, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/blue_jay/id)

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/blue_jay/id

As I always maintain, history is all about viewpoint. I was researching the Capay Valley Gladney family in relation to the Full Belly Farm for this volume's feature on organic farming, and I came across an interesting "story" about the first Gladney pioneer to the Capay Valley: S. Gladney [he never used his given name, Shadrack, just "S"].

In a prior issue, I mentioned the importance of our local Western Scrub Jays in spreading the oak tree acorns and how delightful I found their screeching song. But not everyone found them so useful or charming, it seems! Ironically, I had just been listening to Dru Rivers of *Full Belly Farm* talk about the "pests" they deal with on their farm, so this story created even more intrigue.

According to "All About Birds" on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology site, "This common, large songbird is familiar to many people, with its perky crest; blue, white, and black plumage; and noisy calls. Blue Jays are known for their intelligence and complex social systems with tight family bonds. Their fondness for acorns is credited with helping spread oak trees after the last glacial period." This describes both the local Scrub Jay and the other Blue Jays throughout the land, but it does not tell of their "pest" designation.

Apparently, the Almond Growers Association in Capay Valley paid farmers five cents a jay once upon a time to protect the valuable almond crops. Upper Capay Valley's S. Gladney wrote, "I have often lost one half ton of almonds from blue jays in one season, which would be worth from \$125 to \$150." California woodpeckers, the red-shafted flicker, and the crow, often seen as pests, have also been trouble for almond growers, but since they are not as plentiful, they are not the problem the jays are. Some farmers tried mosquito netting, but it was far less practical than just shooting the jays out of the air!

Another beautiful and useful bird, the robin, is a "pest" to the olive growers during migration time...but isn't it as big a sin to kill a robin as a mockingbird?!

Cashmere Colony, a Capay Valley Ghost town.

According to *Ada Merhoff's Capay Valley The Land & The People*, S. Gladney and his wife, Josephine Daly from Antelope, were "the only purchasers of Cashmere Colony Tract land to remain as long-time residents in the area; later associated with the post office, they would be ever-important to the Guinda Community."

Arriving in Capay Valley about 1891, S. brought his new wife to join him in 1895. Their first child, Roy, came in 1899, at which time they purchased the creekside parcel that would become Full Belly Farm.

Read—or buy—our 60-page *Birds of Capay Valley*, by Elizabeth Monroe with Jim Hiatt on the website under Publications; Small Books at greatercapayvalley.org