

# The History of The African American Community in the Capay Valley—especially in Guinda.

Having written a great deal about the large number of African American families who settled in Yolo County beginning in the 1850s, and especially focussing on those in the Capay Valley, I have pulled together pieces of my research and writing and published them together in this Small Book, as I call these books pulled together from prior writing.

Sadly, COVID lockdown put the annual Black History Multicultural Celebration on hold and it never came back to Guinda—yet! But we have not given up trying. In the meantime, I have pulled together some history to keep this celebration of our uniquely multicultural valley alive until such time as we can resume an annual Celebration!

## Black HISTORY DAY IN CAPAY VALLEY'S Guinda

celebrated its unique Black/African American History--as well as that of the national Black History Month in February--on the second Saturday each February at Guinda Grange Hall on Forrest Avenue behind the Guinda Corner Store. The brainchild of local musician Clarence Van Hook (seen on stage on page 4 ) and the late local Black Historian Bill Petty; it drew people from all over the country. Before statehood and even after--since California was a "free state" there are enclaves throughout the state with sizable early pioneers of African descent. One such area is the Guinda area in the Capay Valley. Bill Petty explained that the Guinda area has a rich history of being well-integrated from the beginning of early settlements. Some of the blacks settling in the area were never slaves, while others were freed after settling in the area. We learned about this unique history, listened to the music led by musician Clarence Van Hook, and enjoyed the booths and presentation--and the great food! Pot Luck--while it is not necessary, we were welcome to bring something to share!

Check out [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) for more information on our unique African-American history in the greater Capay Valley; [emonroe353@gmail.com](mailto:emonroe353@gmail.com).

Herein are excerpts from the journals written for The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society by Betsy Monroe—with support from The Yolo County Archives

# BLACK HISTORY DAY

CAPAY VALLEY

PAGE 15

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Above: the students and teacher of the Summit School

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



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

Photos courtesy of Bill Petty and YCHS





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



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

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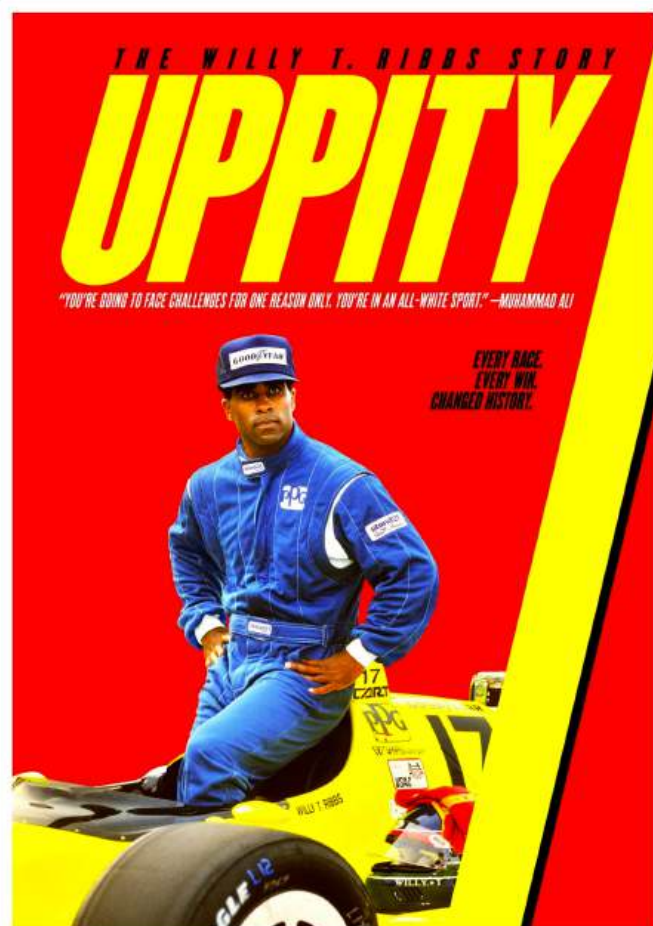
The second African-American homesteader to settle in the area was Charles Henry Simpson, seen at left, and buried in the Logan Cemetery. As covered in volume 1 of this journal, he is responsible for the “Simpson Grade,” still kept graded and useable today by the Hayes family.

These delightful pictures and much of the history is courtesy of Jeannette Molson, descendant of the Logan family. Her grandfather, Alvin Alfred Logan, Sr., was born to Green Berry and his first wife, Lavinia Coffey, along with Green Berry, Jr--known as “Green.” Only one of the nine children born to Green Berry’s second wife, Mary Ann Dix, a part-Wintun Indian, married and had a family.

Jeannette also enlightened me about other families down in the valley: “The Browns and Watkins families had homes in Brooks and right outside of Guinda down the road from where my grandparents lived. Carmen McClellan had a business in Guinda, and my cousin, Charles Simpson, grandson of Charles Henry Simpson



Another interesting *Tidbit*: the racing career of one of our own, **William T. Ribbs**, grandson to **Henry and Nora Ribbs** of **Capay Valley**. **Willy T.**, as the racing industry knows him—though we all knew as *Billy* while he was with us at Esparto High, but that is another story. *Billy* came to live for awhile with his grandparents. His grandfather Henry had come here to hunt pheasant with a local friend, and they eventually bought an historic farm of about 250 acres between Rumsey and Guinda. The story *Billy* tells is that he was such a maniac racer long before he reached driving age his parents sent him to the windy backroads of Capay Valley to try to quell this instinct. But, as he tells it, instead, he took his grandfather's work truck and taught himself his *racing skills* in the back hills; then attempted to teach his friends those skills in their fancy new cars: hopped up *muscle cars* were all the rage at this time in the 1960s, of course. *Graveyard Road* was a favorite raceway—you know, the winding narrow road that runs by the *Capay Cemetery*? He has some great, hair-raising tales of spinouts and near crashes...but that is much too long a story for this page, so let me just say that he is finally getting his due in the racing industry and in film and television. First came a fascinating Netflix documentary, *Uppity, The Willy T. Ribbs Story*; and now he is featured in a series for television and has a website to give you all the backstory too lengthy to print here: [www.officialwillytribbs.com/](http://www.officialwillytribbs.com/).



Some of his more notable distinctions are listed in this article—one of many on his website:

**LOUISVILLE, KY (WAVE) - Racing champion Willy T. Ribbs is a rarity in the world of auto racing as very few African-Americans have been embraced as race car drivers. Ribbs is the first black driver to win a Trans-Am race, test a Formula One car, and race in the Indy 500.**

**The movie [Uppity] shows how Ribbs shattered the color barrier in his career. Ribbs overcame death threats, unwarranted suspensions, and engine sabotage to go after his dream. ESPN: Willy T. Ribbs Opener 2021 Formula One U.S. Grand Prix...see the documentary for more!**

And then there is this information about Yolo County Nursing which I found in a clip at the Yolo County Archives—from which I pulled this information and herein focus on our own

### **Capay Valley's Nurse-Midwife Mary Frances Gaither:**

In 1863 the Yolo County Board of Supervisors voted to build its first *healthcare facility*: an infirmary for the “sick and insane.” There were not yet any *county* doctors nor nurses, as such; doctors were usually in private practice—like our own Capay Valley doctor Thornton Craig—and *volunteered* their time to the county. And while we did not have rigorous training in place for nurses, we did have some *practical nurses* who had trained by working for doctors—such is the case with Mary Gaither, who was well trained before coming to Yolo County and then worked under Dr. Craig, furthering her training. Born to formerly enslaved parents in 1865 in Cooper County, MO., she worked for a white doctor whose ailing young son needed her; and when the doctor saw her great skills, he chose to teach her nursing. By the 1880s, she and her husband made their way to the Capay Valley area, and were eventually able to buy 2 of the inaugural lots in the new town of Esparto, sending their sons to the never-segregated Esparto High School. In her 50 years of nursing in the area, she delivered all the Black infants of the fairly large Black population in Western Yolo, but also perhaps half of the white babies. She later took in the elderly and provided geriatric care in her home, thus creating the county's first *nursing home*—to many of the earliest white settlers in the area, many of whom she had nursed in illness and whose babies she had delivered. [see more on Mary Gaither and the history of Black settlers in the Western Yolo County at our website [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org), beginning in volume 6 of the Journals, which were bound into the first addition of the book, *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*—now out of print, but currently being re-edited into a 2-volume set of 600 pages]

The text in this *Small Book* is from:

**THE GREATER CAPAY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

By Elizabeth “Betsy” Monroe

[emonroe353@gmail.com](mailto:emonroe353@gmail.com)

Check out our website: [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org)

And on FaceBook under The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society

## ***History of African Americans in the Capay Valley***

Before the settlements in Guinda, another area was Hungry Hollow and the Dunnigan Hills, where the “largest Black landowner in Yolo County at the turn of the last century” settled and prospered: Basil Campbell would be a magnet for many Black pioneers to follow. Many found their way to the Guinda area in the Capay Valley. Bill Petty explains that the Guinda area has a rich history of being well integrated from the beginning of early settlements. Many of the blacks settling in the area had been enslaved, while others were freed after settling in the area.

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

As covered in the 18 journals & 12 Newsletters written by Elizabeth Monroe for The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society, the settlers built their own school [a rare photo of which is seen herein the and in the 440-page book], but eventually joined the other local students in the Guinda School after 1912. Following after Mr. Logan was a barber/musician, Charles Simpson, who moved to the summit with his wife and daughter. There followed other Black families, among them were the Hemphills, Longrus and Hacketts—the latter related to local historian Bill Petty’s family by marriage. And just like so many other families in the valley, there were several marriages between clans: examples like Harriet Emily (Logan) Simpson [later Hickerson]: “Hattie” was Green Berry’s sister-in-law and married Charles Simpson and started a family. After Simpson’s death in 1912, Hattie married Maryland Hickerson.

Of the many African-American Families Homestead on a *Heavenly Summit* 1,200 feet Above Guinda, Beginning in the 1890s, the second African-American homesteader to settle in the area was Charles Henry Simpson, buried in the Logan Cemetery. As covered in volume 1 of the journal, he is responsible for the “Simpson Grade,” still kept graded and useable today by the Hayes family. Many delightful pictures and much of the history is courtesy of Jeannette Molson, descendant of the Logan family. Her grandfather, Alvin Alfred Logan, Sr., was born to Green Berry and his first wife, Lavinia Coffey, along with Green Berry, Jr--known as “Green.” Only one of the nine children born to Green Berry’s second wife, Mary Ann Dix, a part-Wintun Indian, married and had a family. Jeannette also enlightened me about

other families down in the valley: “The Browns and Watkins families had homes in Brooks and right outside of Guinda down the road from where my grandparents lived. Carmen McClellan had a business in Guinda, and my cousin, Charles Simpson, grandson of Charles Henry Simpson,” as featured in the 6<sup>th</sup> journal for The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society, the unique community of African-Americans in our Guinda began in the 1890s. See all journals posted on the website [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org) or bound into the book *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley* by Elizabeth Monroe or on our website read Journals and Newsletters for 95% of the current 3rd Edition of the book.

From another section of the book I give you this:

William Hamilton is in his 80s and retired from the Army, and shared, “I have been the Secretary of the California Military History Foundation for more than 40 years. I formerly worked for an organization as a Historian researching and writing histories of current and former military bases in most of the Western U.S.” While in the service, he would re-meet a Guinda local named Bob Logan. Bob and his wife Lillian had several children and lived in Sacramento last time he and Bill spoke—but they, apparently, still come to reunions in Guinda—as do many other Logan descendants.

Speaking of Logans; It’s funny how the creation of the quarterly newsletter starts on one topic or family, but the research into that spins out into other interesting stories. For instance, I contacted several people who had knowledge of historic Guinda while I was writing about the Robbins Family, and two things came from that: one, that there is a movement afoot to rename two of the bridges that span Cache Creek in Guinda and Rumsey; and two, the desire is to honor more women-of-color in historic Capay Valley in some way. This led to proposing the name of two women-of-color, who went on to great things and are important to our local history. This process may have folded, but what came from it was of interest: it was suggested that Mabel McKay\* of Capay Valley should be honored on the new Rumsey Bridge being planned; and I suggested that the Guinda Bridge should honor some local pioneers who gave Guinda its unique nature. I suggested naming the fairly new Guinda bridge after the first African American settlers on the Summit in 1890: The Logans. And perhaps including the white Hayes family, who settled up on the *Summit* across Cache Creek from Guinda town at the same time—and to document this with a memorial plaque about how these two families built their own multi-racial *Summit School*. I like the *Logan-Hayes Bridge*. But I also like *Three Sisters Bridge*, perhaps—after a descendant of the Logans, Jeannette Molson, gave me some very interesting facts about her mother Addie and two of her sisters. They were 3 of the 5 granddaughters of the Logan founder, Green Berry Logan, Sr,



and they went on to careers in education. Jeannette is the Logan Family historian, and her mother Addie grew up in Guinda. And thanks to Jeannette, I had written about the Logan pioneers and her mother, Addie Mae Logan, in a prior journal. But when I said some were thinking about naming a bridge after “a local woman-of-color who went on to great things,” she gave me this: “...my great grandfather, Green Berry Logan, Sr., homesteaded there in 1890. Green Berry Logan's eldest son, my grandfather Alvin Alfred Logan, Sr., also homesteaded in Guinda. He was the father of five sons and five daughters. Three of his daughters were elementary school teachers. The eldest daughter, Grace Logan Patterson, had an elementary school in Vallejo named in her honor. She was the first African American hired by the Vallejo School District. My mother, Addie Logan Molson, was the first African American hired by the North Sacramento School District. And Nellie Logan Lewis was the first African American hired by the San Lorenzo School District in the Bay Area.” Addie was educated in Berkeley and got her teaching certificate at Sacramento State, but the unique multi-racial nature of her childhood in the Capay Valley did not mean the girls would not meet with racism once they left the valley. Jeannette went on to add, “I should mention that my mother couldn't get a position as a teacher, in Woodland, until after she retired! Also, she and her older sister, Grace, couldn't do *practice teaching* in the state of California because of their race. They were required to travel to Jim Crow Mississippi in 1935!” Which caught me by surprise at first, but just reinforced the unique nature of Capay Valley. While the state of California did not ban segregated schools until early 1890s, all of *our* earliest schools were always mixed-races. [[ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) is a great source for census—through 1940, so far; Yolo County Archives offers access for free.]



**Far Left: Addie Logan while at UCB before she graduated in 1940. Majoring in Spanish with a minor in French, she received her elementary teaching certificate in the early 1950s.**

**Near Left—the way I remember her—during her teaching years. Courtesy of her daughter Jeannette Molson;**

**[Con't on page 21]**



**Black Historian William Petty visits Guinda's historic Logan Cemetery on the Summit at left.**

*The original Black settlers were the Green Berry Logan family, followed by others beginning in 1890. Later, the Petty family arrived in 1940, about the time the Hackett family arrived. Clarence Van Hook, relatively new to Capay Valley, helped start an annual celebration of Black History in the area after he bought the old Ribbs ranch—which cuts across Highway 16 to Cache Creek and claims one of the oldest barns in Capay Valley. The annual February celebration is now a celebration of the unique multi-cultural make-up of this special valley.*

#### **HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT AFRICAN-AMERICAN ENCLAVE IN THE VALLEY**

Since California was a *free state*, there are enclaves throughout, with sizable populations of early pioneers of African descent. One such area is the Guinda area in the Capay Valley. Local Black historian Bill Petty explains that the Guinda area has a rich history of being well integrated from the beginning of early settlements. Some of the blacks settling in the area were freed from or descended from slaves, while others who came earlier were freed only after settling in California. One of the most common names in the Guinda area was Logan, with many Logan descendants still in the area today.

An earlier Yolo County pioneer of interest is Basil Campbell. Bought out of slavery in Missouri, he was given his freedom in California by John D. Stephens, who helped him buy available sections of land that eventually led to his being the largest and wealthiest black landowner in Yolo County. Many of the blacks arriving after the Civil War had some connection to him—including Green Berry Logan. Where Logan eventually settled in the Capay Valley about 1890, the summit above Guinda had a mixture of races, all attending the local school and some of them joining in marriage. Some I interviewed considered poverty the early commonality. Early *Summit* family names included: Logan, Hayes, Simpson, Benham, and Zacker; some White, some Black. The 1896 census showed close to 25 school-aged children in the area, a figure that remained constant into the 1900s. August Simpson became a Guinda barber, becoming the first Summit resident to work down in a valley business.

#### **Summit School at right:**

As the pioneer community on the summit grew, so did their concern for the education of their children. Albertine DuBois had been providing informal schooling in the early 1890s. The Pace family had a sheep ranch in the East Side hills and the neighbors met at his sheep camp by a big spring, where students had been taught by Mrs. DuBois, and discussed a proper school.





## William Petty,

Capay Valley descendant,  
historian, and noted Civil  
Rights Advocate!

When I returned to the Capay Valley and heard there was now an annual Black History Celebration in Guinda, I hoped this would be a way to find the history of this unique area I grew up with, but really knew nothing about. I contacted the founders, Clarence Van Hook and William Petty, and volunteered to come shoot a video of the next event in exchange for the history and stories they might provide for me—*what a brilliant move on my part!* Mr. Van Hook is a recent arrival to the area—a Texan and Blues musician—who bought property near Guinda and became fast friends with the Hayes family elder, Al. Learning of the unique history of the area and its historic Black community, Clarence set out to celebrate it. With local historian Bill Petty, he launched an annual celebration—later also referred to as *Black History & Multicultural Day*. See volumes 1 & 6 & our website [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org)



Photo, above: William Petty sits between Darrel and George Hayes, here in 2014, all celebrating turning 90—all descendants of the area's pioneers. While the Hayes cousins were direct descendants of 1890 pioneers, Bill Petty's family arrived in the 1940s from the South, having family who married into the Hackett family in Guinda.

I never know where this kind of research will lead! Having met Mr. Petty, I made an appointment to come interview him and I not only got the history of our *Summit* area, but found he is a fascinating—and important—personality in his own right. I made several trips to his home, resulting in two videos: one focused on our own Capay Valley history, and another on his personal importance to our own Civil Rights movement in northern California—and the nation! I grew up here knowing that while we had some racial strife in the 1960s, it was nothing like that of the rest of the nation—or even as restrictive as neighboring towns, even Woodland, where “redlining” was common. My mother grew up in Woodland and made a point of this unfortunate fact—but Mr. Petty helped me see it even more clearly, from the point of view of a \*Black man [see \*note at below].

\*Mr. Petty uses and prefers the term *Black* more often than *African-American*, and even uses the term *Colored*—due to his early years hearing those terms more often growing up in North Carolina. His father was a Civil Rights advocate in the South, a fact that put his family in harms way, but not until their house was torched did he choose to move his family to California, following relatives to our area. William Petty is of mixed race, so they were in even more *danger* in the South. But, as you will see on the next page, even here, while in less *danger*, they faced discrimination...

**The first time I met William Petty:** after hearing my last name and explanation of how I was related to the Monroes of Yolo County, he fixed me with that eagle eye of his and said, “I once sued your uncle for discrimination.” While taken aback for an instant, I quickly replied with a laugh, “Well, knowing my uncle, he may have deserved it! He and my dad did not share the same views on race relations—you would have loved my mother and father, Tom and Jean!” And from this start, Mr. Petty and I became fast friends and he opened his heart and trove of historic knowledge to me. When I first started researching my own family roots, my dad cryptically warned me: “You will find some things you will not be too proud of, but remember never to be ashamed of who you are nor who you come from, just make sure the same mistakes do not happen on your watch!” Well, he was right. When I learned that some of my Scottish ancestors were historically *planters in Virginia*, it dawned on me that while it was never discussed in our family, we came from slave-owners. Many years later, thanks to [ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com), I was able to find early census documents to verify my supposition: slaves were listed along with the family members, as were white and Chinese servants. And through Mr. Petty, I learned about another *mulatto* of historical importance to our own area: Basil Campbell, who would become *the wealthiest Black landowner in Yolo County*. While he came to California as a slave with the Stephens family, I wondered about his surname enough to do some digging and found that he was born as a slave to a mother owned by my own ancestor, JD Campbell, a neighbor of the Stephens family in Cooper County, Missouri. Well, knowing enough about American slave history to assume what only a DNA test would verify, Basil’s ties to my own roots give me a whole new appreciation for our tangled history. In my own ancestry, obviously, there were some complex views on race relations, but my own parents were very clear about who we were and how we would conduct ourselves: *We are who we are and need only to look at ourselves in the mirror and be sure we are not ashamed of who we see looking back.* I am researching and writing a book on Basil Campbell!

The first thing Bill and I discussed was the history of the unique and historic community of African-Americans in the Guinda area beginning in the 1890s [see journals 1 & 6]. He pointed out he was the one who fought to have the term *Ni\*\*er Heaven* dropped from the county survey maps in the 1970s. I said, “But as a historian, doesn’t it bother you that you have *expunged* history?” He admitted that after the fact he was kind of sorry—so he always makes a point of teaching about that historic place-name at our *Black History Day Celebration*, making sure the old survey maps are displayed on the wall of the *Guinda Grange Hall*—where the event is held—to illustrate his point.

**Bill’s family came to Guinda, California, in 1942, to settle in the Capay Valley near relatives who came to this area earlier. Young Bill had run from a lynch mob in North Carolina for talking back to a white man—it was time to find a better life. But while Claud and Mae Petty settled on farm land near Guinda, there were no jobs, so Bill—who had served in the Army and married his school sweetheart Marie—moved with her to Woodland. There they found few jobs for *Black men* & only domestic jobs for *Black women*—and no one willing to sell them a home. So Bill began a long history of fighting for the rights of minorities, including women, in Yolo and Sacramento counties.**



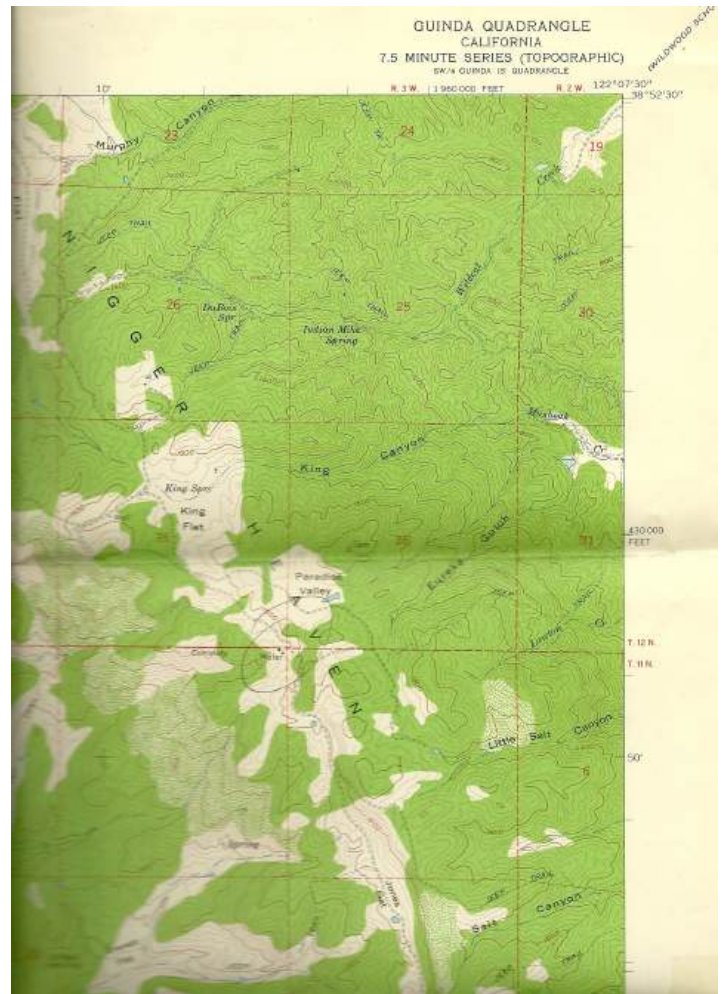
# *A Community is Born--and then a Proper School and Road...*

*After the next census showed enough potential students, the supervisors approved their petition for a school district, called "Summit." On an acre donated by non-resident Vanaleen Scofield, and with lumber bought with county funds, free local labor created the Summit School "on a slope up from a small flat...and in July 1895 Albertine DuBois came with her two little girls Pearl and Birdie to teach a class of 11, the usual attendance. Along with others, her husband Joe and his brother Bill from Guinda worked on the frame building with its full length porch along the elevated east side."*

*A community up on a hill needs a reliable road. A local summit family, Charles and Harriett "Hattie" Simpson, would give them one.*

*Green Berry Logan's sister-in-law Harriett lived in Oakland. Later Harriett (Hattie) Emily Logan met and married the barber Charles Simpson. They moved a homestead of 160 acres, filed in 1890, on the summit, near Green Berry Logan's homestead. By 1896 Charles was successful with fruit and nut trees due to a good well dug in 1893. Hattie was a skilled dressmaker, sewing for local Guinda families...Seeing the importance of contact with Guinda, he laid out a road from the ford at the end of Forest Avenue to switch--back to the 1,200 foot level...at the west side of King Flat. Worked on for several years, it proved its value in the summer of 1894 when it acted as a barrier to a forest fire and was always referred to as the 'Simpson Grade'. Today, Doug Hayes, descendent of another early settler, George Hayes, keeps that road open and passable for all the families to have access to the summit, the Logan Cemetery, the Summit School site, and the various homesteads and properties--at his own expense. He was honored recently at the 9th annual Black History Celebration in Guinda for this generosity.*

*Much more will be forthcoming on other early families--such as this Hayes family--in future volumes. Many of these families still live in the area and join the tribal descendants and "new comers"--some arriving in the last 50-60 years are teasingly referred to as *new comers*--in keeping the valley alive and vibrant.*



Not all history is pretty. While it is rightfully considered inappropriate today, there was an area on a summit above the town of Guinda that was once commonly referred to as "Ni\*\*er Heaven"--even appearing on county survey maps as such. There are some today who claim it was dubbed so by the black pioneers who settled there, while still others--direct descendants among them--claim this is a bit of "revisionist history." Perhaps it just helps locals focus on celebrating the history of the racially integrated and cooperative nature of the area by softening the distastefulness of this politically incorrect blemish. Whatever the truth, the geological survey maps until the 1970s still carried this place name, so at that time a movement--headed up by local historian/civil rights activist William Petty--fought to have it removed from future maps. Since that time, it has commonly been either referred to as *The Hill*, *The Heaven* or *The Summit*, but what is most significant is the rich black heritage of this area--and the fact that the summit and school were integrated, as were all the other schools throughout the Greater Capay Valley area.

Civil Rights Activist, **Bill Petty**—one of our own! Among his many accomplishments and awards, the one he is most proud of was accomplished in 1994: As past Master of the *black Masonic Monument 74*, he “and Doug Young, past Master of the white *Masonic Lodge of Woodland*, came together to lay the cornerstone for the *Yolo County Central Library* on Buckeye Street. This was the first time the white and black Masons had ever held a joint function. “Now, after over one hundred years of being separate, we are one body and recognize each other equally,” Bill proudly explained. Bill served as chairman of the Board of Directors of the *Most Worshipful Prime Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of California*. Awards fill the walls of his home in Hillcrest west of Woodland—a home he explains he built only

# PARADISE FOUND



Alfred Hayes holds a muzzle-loading shotgun that his father, Roy Hayes, bought in 1895. The Hayes family and a black family headed by Green Berry Logan were homesteaders and good friends in Guinda in the late 1800s. The Charles Simpson family (inset) arrived in Guinda about the same time.

Story by  
GREG TROTT

## High in Guinda, homesteaders were above racism

**T**he dirt road wound like a coil through the Guinda Hills above the Capay Valley. On a wet day, a four-wheel drive vehicle would have a go of it on this dirt path.

Luckily, the day was dry and gorgeous. “Just a little farther,” said Bill Petty, 77, the guide. A little farther means about five miles by Guinda measurement. Driving through gates, pastures, washouts and nudging confused cows aside, five miles seemed more like 500.

Finally, the truck rolled to a stop on a grassy point overlooking the Capay Valley. It was a view worth the drive. Cache Creek flowed down below, intersecting almond and walnut orchards. The roofs of farmhouses sat like dice that had been rolled on the green of the valley floor. Is this heaven?

“Here it is,” said Petty, getting out of the SUV and walking to a small, wire-fenced area.

It wasn’t much. Inside the fencing were a few headstones and rocks. Nothing else. This was all that was left of a small community that thrived just a 100 years ago. This little piece of loneliness was called The Summit by some and a more derogatory name by others. That name included a racial slur indicating that it was a “heaven” for blacks.

Why? Good question.

Ask around and you’ll get different answers. Some thought it was called that because of this small cemetery where black

homesteaders were buried; others suggest that it was what movie theater balconies were called back when blacks were not allowed to sit on the main floor.

Petty knows different.

Petty is black. His relatives grew up in these hills perched above the tiny town of Guinda. His explanation of the now-derogatory name? “It’s because they lived so good up here.”

“They” are black families who moved to the hills above the Capay Valley in the 1890s to homestead. Green Berry Logan, who is buried in the small cemetery, was the first and most prominent black homesteader to arrive. He brought his family from Dunnigan. There was musician/barber Charles Simpson who moved here with his wife and daughter. There were other black families, too. Like the Hacketts, related to Petty by marriage, the Hemphill clan and the Longrus family.

They found the Guinda hills, at 1,200 feet, to be nirvana — a place where they could escape from oppression, own some land and make some money. These weren’t urban dwellers. They came from the farmlands of Missouri and North Carolina. Their parents had been slaves. Logan, for instance, had a white father and black mother. They were seeking paradise, and found it in this remote corner of Yolo County.

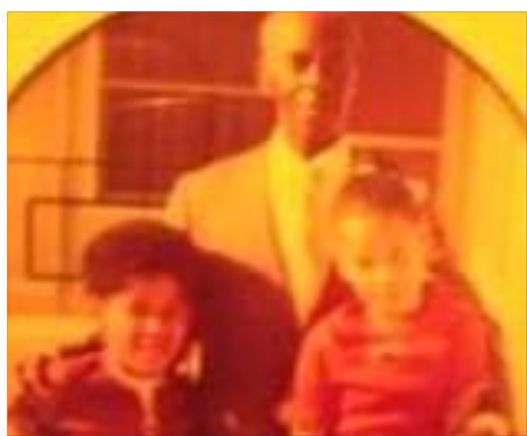
Yet it wasn’t just black families in these hills attempting to eke out a living in land

■ See *Paradise*, Page 5F



after his *light-skinned* wife *passed* for white to buy the lot. No one would sell real estate to a Black man in Woodland—as late as the 1960s! Bill explains, “They told me there were ‘restrictive covenants against selling to coloreds’.” With the lot legally in his wife’s name, the community was not too thrilled when he showed up to lay the foundation to the home he has had ever since. Among his many awards and accomplishments are: *Equal Employment Opportunity* official at *McClellan AFB*, for which he has the *Air Force Distinguished EEO Award of the Year*; the *Aguila Unity Award* (Spirit of the Eagle) the highest honor given by the *Latino Community Council* to a non-Mexican for his part in “responsible empowerment of the community”; Bill served as the first African-American on the *Yolo County Grand Jury* in the 1950s—and brought lawsuits against county officials for discrimination. Upon retiring from *McClellan AFB*, Bill continued his activism: as chief volunteer for the *Yolo County Coalition Against Hunger* and in 1973 he was appointed by *Yolo County Affirmative Action Committee* to create the county’s first *Affirmative Action Plan*.

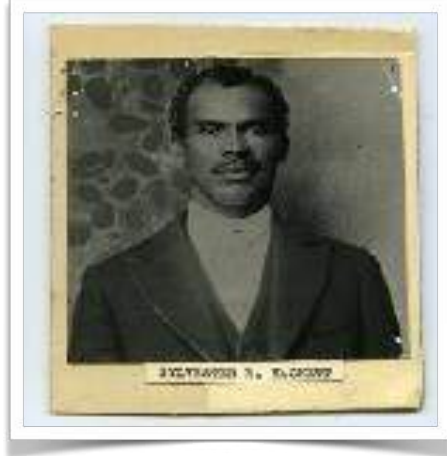




**Find out what kept drawing people to this area, such as: The Hackett family of Guinda, beginning in the 1940s**

Recently, family members of the Hacketts of Guinda contacted me and helped create a backstory for this family so many of us recall. Unlike the earliest African American settlers to Guinda in the 1890s—the Logans and Simpsons, et al—the Hacketts came in the 1940s. But they have such a long and storied history in the California Bay Area that they are featured in the *African American Museum & Library* in **Oakland**. Most of us recall **Roy Hackett** and his second wife **Bamma** and their many children, all of whom attended the local schools, and some of whom still live in the area. I will *sequel* later on Roy's brother **Tyra D** and his son **Tyra Bernell**—who went by **Tyra B**—and their families. But for now, I will start with some backstory on these two families and work back to their pre-California roots. **Roy** and **Tyra**: descendants of **Sylvester Hackett**—who came to California with his brother **James** in 1885. Roy and first wife, **Lillian** (center left), had 3 children—Roy's first children with Lillian were **Roy, Jr.**, **Shirley** and **Jacquelyn**— in the Oakland area before he remarried a woman we all knew as **Bamma**, with whom he had six children in the Guinda area. Bottom Left Photo: Bamma and Roy Hackett.

**[con't page 17]**



Left to right above: **Matilda Hackett** and her sons **James** and at right **Sylvester**. According to TJ: "Sylvester and James were among 12 brothers and sisters, all born in *Wilkes, North Carolina*, before and after *Emancipation*. Their parents were *Orange* and *Matilda (Bryan Parks) Hackett*. Matilda is listed as *Mulatto*. Orange was born on the *James Hackett plantation* and Matilda was owned by *Col. Felix Bryan Parks*. Sylvester and James came to California in 1885 to find a better life for their families. James was co-founder of the **First AME Church in Oakland** and a founder of the historic African American town of **Allensworth**. Ruth, one of Sylvester's daughters, and her husband *Eugene Lasartemay*, formed the **Negro Historical Society of Oakland**, which led to the building of the **African American Museum and Library in Oakland** on 14th Street.



Below in 1917: **Sylvester and Marie Ada Hackett** and family in *Alameda, CA*; Roy standing left and his brother Tyra D standing in the middle; Roy and Tyra would come to Guinda in the 1940s and raise families there. Above to the right is a portrait of **Marie Ada**.







**Left: Roy, Sr., and Bamma Hackett**—as many of us would remember them.

**Below: 2-Roy, Jr. and his bride Iris Petty**—sister of our late, local Black historian *William Petty*, [about whom I wrote in several Journal volumes, including volume 18, page 16; page 400 in this book]

Roy, Sr., and Bamma would raise in Guinda: Cindy, Kenny, Bert, Bruce, Karen & Shandra; and Grandson Tony Holiday—who claims “there were also many others they raised!”

NOTE: Bamma lamented to me in 2010 that all her family photos had burned in their house fire in Guinda—so, thank you, TJ, for reaching out to me!!



As it turns out, this is not the first connection between the Hackett and Petty families: they had a marital connection back in NC before heading to CA in 1885.



Clockwise from Left:

1) Bamma 2011

2) Roy, Jr. and Iris

3) Jacquelyn's daughter *Yvonne Shirli Grandberry*, mother of TJ

4) Roy, Sr., with daughters Jacquelyn (our left) & Shirley (on our right)

5) Roy and Lillian's 3, left to right: Shirley, Roy, Jacquelyn





At left: photo is of *Tony Holiday* in 1968 and his mother, Shirley Haven [stage name] Hackett Holiday, about whom I wrote extensively in Journal # 6; pg 18/book page 118, thanks to her permission and information shared by her son *Tony Holiday*, seen her with her in 1968; **And below, right** she is seen with her step-mother **Bamma** and one of Bamma's great granddaughters, [we think Bamma's daughter **Karen**

**Hackett Duncan's** daughter]; **and** below is Shirley's sister *Jacquelyn Ramona Hackett-Pitts*



(1928-1989), grandmother of Roy's great grandchildren [who are seen in photo at top left with Roy, Sr. on page 12/541 in the book]: **Adam** and **TJ**—who so kindly shared all these photos. When I interviewed Bamma a decade ago, now, she lamented that all their family photos had burned in a fire in Guinda, so this sharing of TJ's was a real goldmine!



**Country Doctors often worked with other Doctors and Nurse-midwives, such as Capay Valley's own Mary Gaither: nurse, mid-wife, care-giver, seen at right with her three sons.**

**Many local histories and newspapers have covered Mary Gaither, so we happily have her biography--and her own narrative:**

*Mary was born in May 4, 1865, in Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri to Willis and Marcia Brisco. Her mother died when Mary was 10 and Mary was taken in by a Dr. Evans to care for his only son. The good doctor decided Mary was a gifted nurse and placed her in training to that profession, nursing under his supervision for nine years.*

*Mary's husband Augustus Gaither had a sister and her husband living in California, Elijah and Sarah Jennings. Elijah was a half-brother of Basil Campbell, the wealthiest Black land owner in Yolo County, and they both settled in the Dunnigan Hills-to-Fairview area. Through them, Mary and Gus came to California to find work in*



*Above: Mary with her three sons, left to right: Leland, Elmer and Eddie, born and raised in Esparto by Mary and her husband Augustus.*



*Etching of young Doctor Thornton Craig from the De Pue Collection 1879. He graduated from McGill University in Montreal, Canada in 1876 with a degree of MDCM and came to the Capay Valley that same year. Mary Gaither would soon work with him in the Capay area*



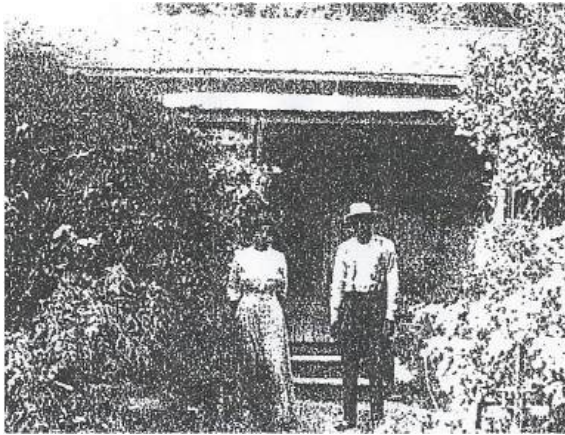
*1886. They began working out in Hungry Hollow on Jennings' land off what is now County Road 85, and later became the Merritt Ranch. Mary describes the pre-paved roads in Hungry Hollow thus: "We hear lots of talk today [she means 1931] about good*

*roads, but those days we lived in Hungry Hollow we certainly knew what it meant to have good roads. It took us five hours to go to Madison in the winter time. Of course, there was no bridge this side of Madison, and we had to stop every little while and get out and scrape the mud off the wheels--that old adobe stuck until the wheels got so heavy the horses could hardly pull the load. Esparto at that time was only a wheat field. It took us two days to go to Woodland, and especially during the winter months, we never attempted to make the trip to town unless for emergency; we laid in supplies in the fall... [con't next page]*

*Mary Gaither, Turn-of-the-Century Capay Valley Mid-wife and Nurse continues:*

*Sometimes the farmers went to Sacramento in the fall to get their winter's supply, going in a sort of covered wagon and camping along the way and making a family outing of it. That trip would take a week. I can remember Mrs. Roth telling me they laid in their supplies in that way and she said they always took along some hens to lay eggs on the trip."*

[This narrative is taken from the *Esparto Exponent* dated October 16, 1931, vol.15 no. 52. I did not have a copy, so John Gallardo hand-copied it out for me from his old, faded copy--his to me was in beautiful cursive! I very much appreciate all the great support I get in this endeavor!—Thank you, John!!!]



In this narrative, Mary goes on to say: *"When the town of Esparto was laid out, there was much excitement; the railroad ran an excursion and there was a big crowd of people here...we located on Capay Street, with nothing there but some white sticks driven into the ground to mark the streets, where now towering walnut trees stand. I have seen the town grow and have witnessed all the buildings and improvements through the years...The brick for the Esparto Hotel and the other brick buildings in town was burned in a kiln just back of where the C.P. Ingram house now stands [in 1931]. One of the first houses to be built here was a two-story house that stood where the Durward Parker home now stands. It belonged to a Mr. Craig who worked at carpenter work with Mr. JJ Smith [who built the first high school and a church in Esparto,*

*as well as the white house great-grandson Charlie Schaupp is completely restoring to its original state on Esparto's main street: Yolo Ave/Highway 16; about 1889-1900]* Mary goes on: *After he left here, Mr. Rice Woods, a brother of Mrs. D.Q. Adams, lived there with his family and I served them many years in that house. The house afterwards burned.*

*I raised three boys here and they all attended both grammar and high schools. Elmer graduated in 1908 and was the first colored boy to graduate in Esparto and the second in the county...During all my years of life here I have followed nursing, and have served many, many homes. Oftentimes I have taken care of babies born to women whom I had cared for at their birth. It is much easier to take care of sick people here now than it was in the pioneer days. Dr. Craig, who served the people here through all those early days, rode and drove over those terrible roads, swimming his horses across the creek, to care for the sick and to usher in the new generation that is now raising families of its own."*



**Mary and her husband Gus [seen above right] first bought their two Esparto lots in 1892, where they built a large home. Mary tended to the nursing needs of many people of all races in the Capay Valley. They also took in boarders in Esparto. She "traveled all around the Esparto area to treat the sick, first by horse and buggy and later in a Ford Motel T," according to the narrative for the *Stroll Through History* reenactment script created for the *Yolo County Historical Society*. Mary's husband Gus died in 1930 and she died on July 3, 1938. Along with Doc Thornton Craig, she was one of the Capay Valley's "best known and most respected people in the area."**

**[Photos courtesy of the Yolo County Archives]**



**Continued from page 9:**

Jeannette Molson also shared: “*Green Berry Logan, Sr.* had a brother, *Griffin*, and they were *Mulattoes* born to a mixed-race marriage. Their father was a Caucasian and their mother was an African American.” Griffin lived in Tehama County, but one of his daughters, *Hattie Logan*, later moved to Guinda, where she first married a man named *Charles Simpson*, who also settled on the *Summit*; and later, when widowed, she married a Black named *Maryland Hickerson* of *Rumsey*. [for more on these families, go to [greatercapayvalley.org](http://greatercapayvalley.org); Journals; vol 6, pages 15-18] The Logans first came to CA in 1857, settling first in Shasta County—so, before the Civil War.

Since the times we find ourselves in is not only affected by a cultural shape-shifting *pandemic*, but also a reaction to some very visible *systemic racism* within our culture, I am spending even more time researching our multicultural history in Yolo County. Appropriate **nomenclature** has become of interest in these times. For instance, I find in some circles the term *Mulatto* is considered insensitive, due to the fact that it often resulted under force/rape of a slave woman and a white owner—a common practice during slavery. So I asked Jeannette Molson about her use of it [above] and she feels it is not demeaning if all it refers to is one white parent and one black. As was the case with her own father’s ancestors, wherein it was the choice of a white woman to marry a mulatto man in a rare area of early America that did not outlaw this in 1776 in York County, Pennsylvania.

I have a lot of interest in our early Black pioneers in Yolo County because I am researching and writing a book about **Basil Campbell**, who by the 1860s was a *mulatto* who became “the wealthiest Black landowner in Yolo County,” according to our several history texts. Basil Campbell, who arrived as a slave in 1854, not only became a wealthy Black landowner, he was much respected as a peer among all who knew him—of all races. One very interesting thing this research has shown me is how many Southern slave owners came to the free state of California with slaves in tow—many of them to Yolo County, like Basil, who came with his then-owner John D. Stephens. Many came to California with owners under these same arrangements; usually for the gold, but then stayed to help with farming, *earning* their freedom. It’s important to understand that they were not instantly *free* by virtue of arriving in a *free state*: **California’s obligation to the federal *Fugitive Slave Law*** meant that a *run-away slave must* be returned to his *master*. There are many interesting stories now being researched and exposed about cases brought and tried in our early courts. These facts were not taught in our school curriculum, so it was a surprise to me. [Check out [blackpast.org/african-american-history/people-african-american-history](http://blackpast.org/african-american-history/people-african-american-history); and the article “‘Slavery: California’s hidden sin’; California’s image as the *enlightened* edge of the country doesn’t include the dark chapter on slavery. That’s a story being uncovered by a team of intrepid Sacramento historians” by Chrisanne Beckner on *Sacramento News and Review*; and also the *Gold Chains* site at [aclunc.org/sites/goldchains](http://aclunc.org/sites/goldchains)] But after I learned this, I started to look into the many early pioneers’ names and found many of them were either former slave owners or descended from them. How we managed to have such a *racism-lite* county with this start is fascinating to me. Not that it was completely un-bigoted—it wasn’t. But it was surprisingly so, given this start. By 1884, Basil was a well-respected landowner worth over \$100,000, who became a political activist state-wide, and helping other Blacks arriving later, many of them after the Civil War, but also including Green Berry Logan, who had originally settled in Shasta County as a free man in the 1850s, but made his way to Yolo County in the late 1880s.

In Basil’s case, a *mulatto*, his mother was *enslaved* by James D. Campbell in Missouri, so it is quite likely his father was a white Campbell. When James died, his wife, Ellie Stephens, sold young Basil to her own family, the neighboring Joseph Stephens family. Later, one of Joseph’s many sons bought Basil from the Stephens estate and made him this offer: *Come with us to California and work off the price I pay for you and you will have your freedom in the free state of California*. According to interviews with Basil, John D. treated him *more as family, not a slave*, and helped him invest his money in land and livestock, leading to his great wealth. Basil’s brother **Elijah Jennings** later joined Basil in business. Elijah was born of the same slave mother, but his father was her black slave husband. But Elijah was also brought to Yolo County under a similar arrangement, by settlers in **Buckeye** near today’s **Winters**. These early settlers all knew one another in Missouri—a *bi-polar* state that had as many abolitionists as slavers in the 1840s. Many of each ilk settled in Yolo County—and started fresh, apparently accepting the freed Blacks living among them fairly well.

Even so, while *people-of-color* were allowed to *enter public establishments by the front door* in Yolo County—unlike much of America, not just the Deep South—sometimes, even in Woodland, according to our late Black local historian **William Petty**, it could be difficult to buy homes or lots to build on in certain neighborhoods as recently as the early 1960s. But rural Yolo County seems to have had an even more accepting nature: rural towns like those in the Capay Valley had a very mixed ethnicity—seen quite clearly in their early school photos and early census, which show place-of-origin and race. There was quite a mix throughout the valley—though as usual in anthropological migration, certain groups settled near each other. And even though the state still allowed segregation of schools until about 1890—as long as there was “a suitable school for the *colored* children available”—throughout Yolo County, as far as I can find, we did not ever *choose* to segregate our schools. Though the federal government did remove our Native children to boarding school, mostly in Nevada—more on this later.

Our Yolo County history texts show us that the white **Hayes** family settled above Guinda with the black **Logan** family and together they built a school on what we today call **the Summit**, but which then was dubbed *Ni\*\*er Heaven*\*. [Until the 1970s, place names using the term *Ni\*\*er* and *Negro* were common, even on county survey maps; mostly not considered derogatory—and some claim the inhabitants on the summit in Guinda coined and used the term themselves.] Another historically significant couple, **Mary and Gus Gaither**, bought two of the first lots in the new town of **Esparto (Esperanza)** in 1888, where Mary went on to be the local mid-wife, and later cared for elders of all races at her home in Esparto—many of whom were former slave-holders or their descendants. The Gaithers’ sons would be the first of *Americans of African descent*\* to graduate from Esparto High—followed not long after by numerous Logan progeny and others. [More Nomenclature: \**American of African descent* is one form preferred to either **Black**, **Negro** or **African American** by some; and Bill Petty often used the term **Colored**, claiming it was just habit from a childhood in North Carolina; and many use *people of color* to imply anyone not considered *White*.]

By the 1940s, other Blacks started arriving, such as the **Hackett and Petty** families. Roy Hackett and his brother Tyra Hackett, Sr., and Roy’s nephew known as Tyra B, had many children in the Guinda area—some of them mixing the races—but the Hacketts came here from **Alameda County**, where their family is featured in the local museum as the earliest Black settlers there in the 1890s. Included in my Hackett family history, and in my book **The History and Stories of the Capay Valley** you will find a nice feature on page 118 about Roy’s eldest daughter **Shirley Haven**—her *stage name*. [excerpt below] She would make quite a success on stage and screen—but traveling so, she eventually left her son Tony with her father and his second wife, fondly known to all as *Bamma*, in Guinda with her younger siblings.



The Hacketts of Guinda were a family I knew fairly well growing up, but I had never met one of the eldest daughters of Roy Hackett. Her stage name was Shirley Haven and she worked with Eartha Kit; traveled with the Charles Brown band for years; was in the first all-Black color movie: *No Time For Romance*; recorded a couple tunes with the *Four Jacks*; and was part of the first all-black USO tour--and while touring in Korea she adopted Anthony Stanton, giving him her married name, Holiday. She brought him back to LA and to Capay Valley to grow up with Roy and Bamma Hackett’s kids. The Hacketts had been in the valley since the 1940s and William Petty’s sister Iris met and married Roy, Jr., thus blending the Petty and Hackett families. My hat is off to the enterprising spirit of my Capay Valley “neighbors”--like the lovely Shirley Haven who, through her son Anthony, gave me permission to use the great ad photo of her!

I am also intrigued by the *Hackett Hotel* in early Sacramento, which is rumored to have been part of the *California underground railroad* for many escaped slaves. Whether this was ever an actual hotel or just a front, no one seems to know—yet; nor whether the Hackett involved in running it were related to our Capay Valley Hacketts—I'll let you know what I find out!

I have developed a keen interest in this swept-under-the-American-History-rug practice during slavery of developing ones chattel slave population by *breeding* with their female slaves, which gave so many former slaves *mixed-blood*. I learned long ago—and coached my horrified white students when I taught it in my American History classes—not to be merely *apologists* for this part of our shared ancestral past. *What can be done about it?* I would ask, which led to great discussions. I have also had many recent discussions with friends who are *Black/Negro/African American/Americans of African Descent* about not only appropriate nomenclature, but also what can be done in the name of *reparation*, a concept kicked about a lot lately. We all generally agree that the true *reparation* is going to come from the question: "What are you going to do to make this right?" It isn't going to be cured by a *check-in-the-mail*. It was perhaps easier to do *reparations* with the *Americans born of Japanese ancestors*, as America did recently—because they, for the most part, still had pure Japanese genes. America and the state of California had done them wrong and in a show of contrition paid each a small stipend and offered citizenship to many Japanese Nationals who had been denied this before the end of WWII. Certainly not enough, but it was something—more than just an apology. But our American slave history is far from *Black and White*; it is even more complex and fraught. I had been excited and hopeful that America was seeking to *rip the bandage off our eyes* and take a good hard look at the *truth*. But then the political current took a different turn: *two steps forward and one step back* is not uncommon for something so fraught with emotional baggage. It is obviously uncomfortable for those of us who have always taken pride in our *forefather* ancestors—but I am all for getting the stories out there, however uncomfortable it makes us. As my insightful father always said, "Never be ashamed of who you come from or who you are, just be sure their same mistakes do not happen on your watch." Dad, a proud 4th generation of Yolo County's earliest pioneer settlers, was *Atticus Finch* before there was a fictional Atticus. He would be the first to say we need to own our past and then figure out how to move forward so America's dream of equality is finally a reality. Obviously, this is not just a *Black and White* issue; there is the treatment of the Native people and all immigrant groups. Let's address this, not just continue to deny it.

My own form of reparations is to research and write about our fraught history: I am doing so for our own Basil Campbell—it's about time he got his own book!



Basil "Baaz" Campbell

Courtesy of Yolo County Archives

**Basil Campbell, landowner...coming to California with John D. Stephens in 1854, Basil and JD had an agreement that he would “work his way to freedom” within ten years. By 1861 he renegotiated and bought his freedom at \$700 for his remaining 3 years. During his 7 years, JD had been helping Baaz invest his money and he was now worth about \$10,000.**

*In 1884, his total wealth was estimated at \$100,000...2000 acres of tilled land and 280 acres of untilled land, valued at \$51000, \$3100 in livestock as well as 66 acres of hay, 12 horses, 3 mules, 1100 sheep, 80 hogs; acres of wheat and barley and numerous commodities.*

*Photo at left courtesy of Yolo County Archives*



## BASIL CAMPBELL CONTINUED:

*At a time when almost all Afro-Americans of economic prominence made their gains through mining, mining-related business or business enterprises, Campbell made his advancement through agriculture (3)."*

*Cited from:*

*1-San Francisco Examiner, 11-29-1884*

*2-US Census for 1880, Products of Agriculture in Yolo county*

*3-Delilah L. Beasley, The Negro Trail Blazers of California (LA, CA., 1919), 70-71*

In 1865 Baaz was elected as delegate to the **State Convention of Colored People** and became vice-president; and in 1873 he was sent as state delegate to the **National Colored Convention** in Washington, DC.

*By the time of his death he had wealth and respect among people of all colors in Yolo County.*



Speaking of nothing being simple: some in the Stephens family claim this commonly accepted picture of Basil, seen on page 23, is actually his brother; and no one but *I* seems to feel the man standing in the middle of the Stephens harvest picture, below, in hat and vest, is a visiting family friend, Basil Campbell—*Always dapper*, as described by a man who knew him, Bill Rominger [see article in my larger book] and not working the harvest, obviously...?

I am grateful to William Petty and Jeannette L.

Molson for much of this material and pictures. Jeannette's mother, Addie Mae Logan Molson was a dear friend of my father's and was a delight to know, a woman of great humor, common sense, talents and interests. She sang and played big band piano to make ends meet in college at UC Berkeley. Raised in Capay Valley, she married James T. Molson, who encouraged her to go back to college for her credential at Sac State College. She became the first African American teacher in the North Sacramento School District.

And among the many newspaper clippings I got from Mr. Petty, I would love to mention Benjamin Asa Longrus, who lived in Hannibal, MO, while Samuel Clemens was forming his ideas about slavery and race relations, and who came to California at about 20, settling first in the Winters area, his family having belonged at one time to Briggs and Ely families in that area--and once to Daily Democrat editor Ed E. Leake's family. It was an article in that paper I used to get much information on Basil Campbell. And then there is Capay Valley midwife Mary Frances Gaither, whom I wrote about here and in my larger book *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley* along with Ol' Doc Thornton Craig of Capay, under whom she practiced.