

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this column, tomorrow is Christmas Eve and I'M READY. Pretty unbelievable since I have 19 guests coming for Christmas dinner. But, here I am thinking about the Society, planning programs for next year (listed elsewhere), preparing to travel to two possible locations for 2006 tours, and writing my part of the newsletter so newsletter editor, Jeannette Molson, can get it out in a timely manner.

Our November 27th program, "Those Wild and Lusty Gold Camps", with Alton Pryor was most enjoyable. Mr. Pryor has written numerous books. Many were purchased by the almost 45 members in attendance. I snapped up "Fascinating Women in California History."

This year I am chairing the Yolo County Women's History Month March Luncheon. The theme is "Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams". The four sponsorship levels will be Yolo County women of history who exemplify this theme and idea which came from reading Mr. Alton's book.

While I'm on the subject of the luncheon, this year we will be recognizing women from Yolo County communities who are examples of this theme. Do you want to nominate someone? Write a one-page essay giving the women's name and how she can be contacted along with your name and contact information. Please write a description of her activities and why you think she should be selected as one of the honorees. Send to Women's History Month, P. O. Box 711, Woodland CA 95776. Questions? Call me at (530) 662-0952 or e-mail me at bjford@pacbell.net.

Peace,

BJ

FUTURE PROGRAMS

We have a great line up for the rest of the year. Some have yet to be totally confirmed but are listed here so that you can plan.

January 22nd: We will meet at the Hattie Weber Museum for a program on the current exhibit – see cover page.

February 27th: As is our custom, we will join the West Sacramento Historical Society for our program at the Margaret McDowell Center. Yet to be confirmed as speakers are the husband and wife team, Shirley and Joe Moore, for a discussion on African Americans and the Early West.

March 26th: Tim O'Hallaran, general manager of the Yolo Flood Control and Conservation District, a real water history buff. He will present a program on Yolo County water history. The meeting will be held at the Flood Control District offices on Hwy. 16.

April 23rd: Yet to be confirmed, Jim Kuykendall of Clarksburg has been asked to share some of his experiences as a bottle collector. Jim has over 4,000 bottles in his collection. The meeting will be held in Clarksburg on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.

May: The Yolo County Historical Museum May Festival.

June: The Annual Picnic – Yolo County Historical Society/Friends of the Yolo County Historical Museum/Friends of the Yolo County Archives.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARK AULMAN SHARES A FAMILY TREASURE

By Marilyn Kregel

Mary and Mark Aulman knew about the YCHS's program at the Spring Lake Schoolhouse and, because of it, asked if I would like to see a book written by Mark's grandmother, Grace L. Davison.

The book, called Beans for Breakfast, was dedicated to Mark's mother, the daughter of Mrs. Davison. It tells the story of the author's life in California beginning in 1882, of her own school days, of her life as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse, and of her marriage to one of California's first forest rangers. After their marriage she left teaching and they lived in the ranger's cabin in primitive surroundings while he cared for and supervised the 300,000 acre forest reservation.

Before the marriage Grace Davison was much involved with school life, as a student first, and then as a teacher. Looking back, she told what it was like to go to school in California during the 1880s.

Her teacher walked to school, carrying her Bible and a big bunch of switches. Throughout the day, a process described as "lickin' and larnin'" went on, so that by day's end all the switches had been used.

The children walked, too, carrying their slates and books because the school provided only the furniture and a teacher. The books were McGuffey's reader and Webster's speller.

The school building itself, a deserted saloon, was the first public school in the valley where they lived. There was no well, so a child was sent to a neighbor for a bucket of water during the day. The bucket was then passed so that

each child could have a drink from the dipper.

Each Friday afternoon was set aside for a program of music, drawing, and recitation of verses and dialogue. Since visitors often came to hear the program, the girl students swept and cleaned the classroom with extra care. On the last day of the school year the room was decorated with flowers and green branches and the blackboard was covered with drawings in colored chalk.

These early school buildings were often the only community gathering places, so church, Sunday school, Saturday night dances, oyster suppers, ice cream socials, even weddings and funerals were all held here.

After the equivalent of two years of high school work, Grace Davison journeyed to Santa Barbara to take the oral and written exams that would entitle her to a teaching certificate.

With a score of 85% she could be finished with her life as a student and become a teacher instead.

[Part I of III – more next month]

CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

In September of 2004, our Society hosted the California Conference of Historical Societies. We have been told it was one of the best ever. None of our members have attended a conference since but now is our chance.

El Segundo is hosting February 17th to the 19th, 2006. The Society will help with expenses, if you would like to represent the Society. We recently received correspondence, actually a survey, as to why we have not attended one of the bi-annual conferences i.e., there will be one in Redwood City June 22nd to the 25th.

There is a definite opportunity to glean from other Society's new ideas and to share concerns and opportunities. Please let a Board member know, if you are interested. The signup materials for the February conference have not yet been received.

TOURS

Committee members, Shirley Goldman, Frank Cooper, and B. J. Ford are looking at two possible tours for 2006. One will be a trip to Redding to see the SunDial bridge and museum. Redding also has other historical venues of interest so this may be an overnight trip. Second, several members have mentioned a trip to Sorenson's Resort located on Highway 88, Hope Valley. Our hosts would be Frank and Mary Ann Tortorich who provide a drive-walk guided tour of the Historic Emigrant Trail along with other programs of interest. This would definitely be an overnight trip. The resort is open May through October. More on both of these tours next month

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DEADLINE:

Articles for the newsletter will be accepted until the 20th of each month. Please either e-mail Jeannette Molson at: JLMolson@aol.com or mail to the Yolo County Historical Society, P. O. Box 1447, Woodland CA 95776.