

Yolo County Historical Society



November 2015

Prez Says:

It is already mid November and finally we have some appreciable rain... Yeh! It is hard to believe that it is almost Christmas. If you are looking for a gift that keeps on giving, you might consider giving a donation to the Historical Society. We are waiting for the Hatti Weber WPA building remodel to see what items they need. Your money will help with that project.

Also remember that we have books that we sell at a nominal fee. The list of books include Hollywood Comes to Woodland; Clarksburg: *Delta Community*; Winters: *A Heritage of Horticulture*; Valley Empires: *Hugh Glenn and Henry Miller in the Shaping of California*; Old North Davis: *Guide to Walking a Traditional Neighborhood*; Knights Landing: *the River, the Land, and the People*; Woodland: *City of Trees*. If you are interested, please call Mary Aulman at 662-0743.

I am proud to announce that all the public and private schools in Yolo County now have two City of Trees, A History of Woodland books in their library. They were distributed last week with the help of Mary Aulman, Reva Barzo, and Lydia Venables. Thanks so much ladies for your help.

Our World War I group meets next week, on Tuesday, November 17 at the Woodland Public Library. You will be hearing more information from that group.

The Gibson Museum is having a Christmas Party on Thursday, December 3 from 6-8:00. The cost of the ticket is \$30.00 per person with wine and food. This is a fundraiser for the Museum and is a fun way to begin the holiday season. Again it is another opportunity to be with people who appreciate history. We are a fun bunch! Contact David Flory at the Gibson Museum, 666-1045 for tickets.

By the time you read this, we will have seen the Yolo Blacksmith Shop in Yolo. We will report more on that event in the next newsletter.

On Sunday, November 29, at 2:00, the Yolo County Historical Society will meet in Sacramento at the Museum of Medical History at 5380 Elvas Ave, Sacramento for our monthly meeting. They are opening up the museum especially for us. We are meeting at JCPenny's Parking Lot on the Gibson Road side at 1:00 and will car pool. The Davis/Winters group is meeting at the Hatti Weber Museum at 1:00 and will carpool from there. The Museum showcases developments in medicine specific to this region from the mid 1800's to today. Civil War amputation kits, various tools for bleeding, medicines with mercury, arsenic and strychnine are among the few highlights of the museum. See you there.

Have a great Thanksgiving, we all have a lot to be thankful for...

Remember, as always

History Rules!

Kathy Harryman,
President



Business Buddies

The following businesses in town have financially supported the Yolo County Historical Society. We would like you to support them and keep your money local:

L & S Printers, Main St.
The House Dresser, Main St.
The Gifted Penguin, Main St.
Corner Drug, Main St.
Dahlin & Essex Inc.

Chamberlain Farms
Bill Marble
Michele Giguere
Bernard & Lynn Gough
Larry Shapiro

If you know of any business that would like to join our support list, contact me. Businesses pay \$50.00 per year for advertising.



School House Memories

By Kathy Harryman

School Memories – remaining article

(In the last edition, the following information was not published. Here is the end of the article reviewing the 1926 magazine entitled Normal Instructor and Primary Plans. The previous paragraph dealt with Designs for Collars and Cuffs, Designs for Bird Feeding Stations..... Sorry for the inconvenience.)

...Stations, and Making a Pencil Case and Scissor Case. There is An Indian Project for Primary Grades, an article about the Screech Owl, Letters to a Country Teacher. There are designs for January calendars, lots of poetry and crayon lessons where the students are given a reproducible card and taught to color between the lines. There is a great emphasis on health, including how to create a Health Store, and a poster encouraging the students to “take a bath oftener than once a week.”

There are history questions and an article on Lucretia Mott...Friend of the Slaves, songs, plays and recitations. There are even suggestions for Thrift Blackboard Motifs such as “Save While the Saving is Good”.

At the end of the book, there are more ads...just in case you want to explore other areas of study. You could ‘pep up’ the last half of your school year by using pre made lessons relating to Food and Health Education. If your teeth are ‘off color’ you can quickly regain your whiteness by using “Pepsodent.” You can even go to Europe as your goal for 1926 in the economical round trips in Tourist 3rd Class Cabins on the White Star Line. You can also travel on the Northern Pacific

Railroad with exceedingly low rates to Yellowstone Park and the Pacific Northwest. And if your feet are tired, you can buy Jung’s, The Original Arch Braces and end foot pains in 10 minutes!

And the beauty of this book was that each teaching tip was restricted to one page. What a deal! And imagine...it was only 25cents per copy!

School Memories – Part 2

This is a follow up article from last month – School Memories. I thought it would be interesting to research the originator and author of the *Normal Instructor*. Here is his biography reprinted with permission from The Dansville Historical Society.

Another of Dansville’s largest, and longest-lived, industries owed its existence to the dreams and ambitions of a teacher who strove to improve the teaching profession by spreading teaching ideas across the country, in a magazine he originally produced in the attic of his mother-in-law’s country store.

Frederick Augustus Owen was born in 1867 in the tiny hamlet of Beachville, near Rogersville (South Dansville). He was educated at the Rogersville Seminary, which had been founded in 1842; but by the time Owen returned to work as a teacher, hard times had forced it to close. Undaunted, he reopened the school and quickly brought it back to success. At the same time, in 1889 he started a correspondence school for teachers, the Empire States Teachers Class (later renamed the American Correspondence Normal). In those days, it was still a common practice for teachers to assume their new profession straight out of high school, with no education in such things as child psychology and teaching methods, which his correspondence school sought to address.

To further that end, in 1891 he introduced a magazine, *Normal Instructor*, a humble 16 page periodical which he published in the low-ceiling attic of his mother-in-law’s South Dansville grocery store. It was in Owen’s own words, “dedicated to the interest of American school teachers,” and was intended as a medium of the exchange of ideas and methods of teaching children of elementary school age. From a shipment of 2,000 free samples came 500 subscriptions resulted; but over time, the

circulation of what eventually became *Instructor* magazine would surpass 250,000 copies.

Rapidly outgrowing his modest South Dansville location, Owen moved the business to Dansville in 1892. Over the next decade, the Instructor Publishing Company (later renamed the F.A. Owen Publishing Company) would expand from one building into another, until the impressive 3000-square-foot plant on Bank Street was completed in 1903 (next to the park that would be renamed Instructor Park in 1954). For most of the 20th century, F. A. Owen's company would be part of Dansville's "big three" industries, along with Foster Wheeler and Blum Shoe Manufacturing Company.

Owen married Grace Fenstermaker; his two daughters Helen and Mary, would both hold high positions in the company.



Thanks to the following for generously supporting the Society You too can be a Patron by donating \$100.00 to help us run our projects

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Hattie Happenings

By MaryLee Thomson

We did it! Thanks to generous donations from YCHS members and others, we were able to fund the renovation of the 1937 WPA building in Central Park. Jim Becket's "precious potty" project will become a reality at last, the Museum will have its precious storage space and a local treasure has been saved from the wrecker's ball.

The total project budget is projected at \$75,000. The City contributed \$14,000 and the rest came from our fundraising. Amazing cost to refurbish a building that cost \$850 to build 78 years ago!

The City of Davis is now in the process of soliciting construction bids, after which an award must be approved by the City Council. The process is still slow, but at least now it appears to be irreversible.

Meanwhile, the busy volunteers have mounted three new exhibits and entertained numerous trick or treaters on Oct. 31. On display now are a collection of promotional items from former downtown Davis establishments, a charming collection of antique christening gowns (complete with family baby pictures) and a collection of early 20th century hats.

Plan a visit today. The Museum is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 to 4. Admission is free. Well behaved children and grandchildren are welcome.



Looking for an old article published in the newsletter or upcoming events? Check it out on our website. www.yolo.net/ychs

Yolo County Historical Society
P O Box 1447
Woodland, CA 95776

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Dated Material

Vision Statement *The Yolo County Historical Society strives to preserve, protect and acknowledge the diverse history of Yolo County through education, communication and advocacy*