

# Yolo County Historical Society



## Prez Says

I hope you were all thrilled with the saga of the Cummins family trying to save themselves from the flood. Wow! The courage and the fortitude it took to live in the mid-1800's. I'd like to think we all had those qualities, but I am not sure I have them.

On an interesting note, one of our members read the story and called to tell me that they were her great grandparents, and she never knew how her grandmother got her name. Isn't it interesting that just reading something or looking at something, we connect. Seven degrees of separation really makes sense!

I would like to thank Katie Caldwell for sharing her husband Tom's story with my PEO group. She also shared a picture his family that I have included in this newsletter (next page).

I have included an article from a friend. Here is a copy of her email:

Hi Kathy,

So today was the big day! I was elected and installed as Governor of the Mother Lode Colony, part of The General Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of California, Inc.

I wrote this article a few days before the election, copying the format from your YCHS newsletter. Now it's official.

And I gave my PowerPoint of the Mayflower Heritage Tour, taking your advice to give a handout of the map of our itinerary and the Pilgrim travels. Everyone loved it!

Sylvia's article is on page 4. We are so lucky to have people in our community who have a passion for history. Thank you, Sylvia, for sharing your history.

The board met and we are looking for more board members. If you have an interest in history and would like to be part of our board, please let me know. We meet once a month.

No meetings in Dec, June, July, and August. We oversee the Spring Lake School House at the fair grounds and the Yolo County Fair Museum. We all love history and would like to have individuals on our board who love history too.

On that same note, another member **Ramon Urbano** is working on a history of Hispanics in Woodland. If you have any information that you would like to share, please let him know. His email is [rurbano@earthlink.net](mailto:rurbano@earthlink.net).

We have decided to have our last meeting on **Tuesday, May 20 at 6:30 p.m.** in the courtyard in back of **Savory Café**, Third St and Main Street, Woodland. We will have coffee and cookies. We will also have a special guest who will share the history of that section of town. More in the next newsletter.

Our Big Day of Giving is on the horizon. We have decided to ask for support for the schoolhouse programs that are beginning in April. More about that on page 5.

As Always,  
History Rules!

Kathy Harryman

## Player Piano for Sale

One of our members asked me to post this in the newsletter. If you are interested, please notify Ron at [rburch785@gmail.com](mailto:rburch785@gmail.com)

Brenda, from Western Supply Store in Woodland, has a player piano for sale. She says it still works. It is from a historic family in Woodland. He didn't remember which one. She is asking \$800.00 but he says there is room for negotiation.

If you are interested, please email Ron at the above email - KH.

# The Flood of 1861 - Part 2

by R. P. Wallace

*At the end of Part 1, we left the Cummins family in their small boat with rising waters, struggling to find their way to safety.*

Strain his eyes as he would, Cummins could see no signs of the habitation he so eagerly and anxiously sought, although he reckoned that sufficient time had elapsed to bring the boat within hailing distance. To complicate matters all the old landmarks which might have assisted him in shaping his course were underwater and he was compelled to rely upon instinct and luck. By this time, his own efforts had become merely mechanical, simply repetitions of the movements his muscles had so long been performing. His faculties were benumbed, and his muscles ached.

His poor wife had not ceased her bailing and the children, long since exhausted by weeping, lay sleeping in the bottom of the boat. Cummins knew how his wife must suffer and as he watched he saw her head droop and her form sway.

With an effort, she seemed to rally and resume her agonized toiling. Finally with an audible sign she sank into the bottom of the boat. The functions of the tired body had refused longer to perform the task set them and blessed oblivion had brought relief and rest.

Cummins was glad, even though he despaired. There was some consolation in the thought that if they were destined to meet a watery grave, it would come without the agonizing struggle of desperate hope. He prayed that his wife would meet it still unconscious and the babies – God bless them, would not awaken.

Cummins himself felt an all-powerful desire to lay down and sleep but with an effort he roused himself and obeying the habit acquired, gazed again into the impenetrable gloom which surrounded him. As he looked his heart ceased its beating and a low cry involuntarily escaped him. He rubbed his eyes to make sure.

*continued*



*continued* - **Flood**

Yes, there could be no mistake – a light gleamed out upon the water not a long distance from him. The sight gave him renewed strength and he plied his paddle desperately.

As he neared it, he could distinguish the outlines of a house and he knew that he was at last approaching the haven of safety they had fought so desperately to gain, the house of Mrs. Crenshaw. By the light he knew that its occupants were astir. Hope dawned in his breast, and he thanked his Savior.

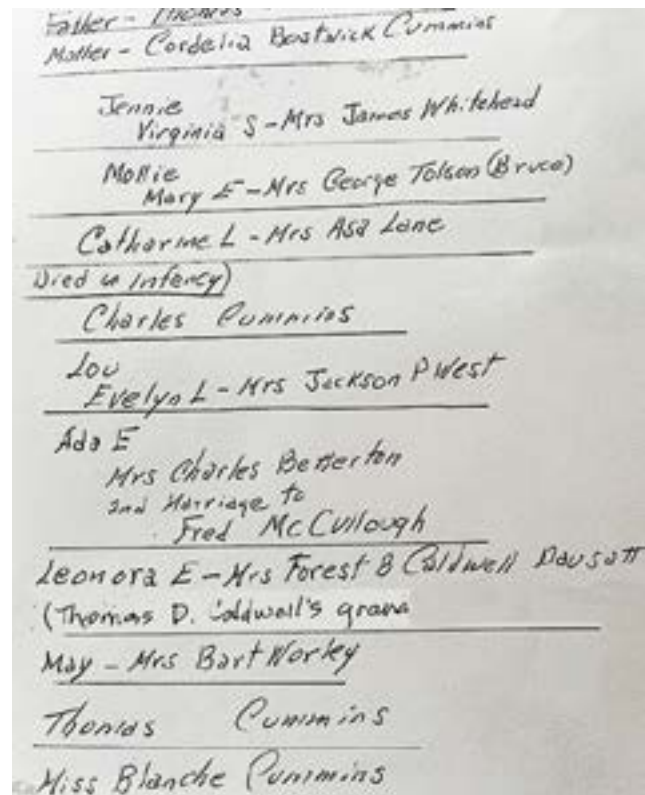
Not many minutes afterward, Mrs. Cummins and her babies were lifted from the boat which was then nearly full of water. They were put to bed between warm and dry sheets. Mr. Cummins himself slept the rest of the night and the sweet sleep of exhaustion with a conscience not disturbed with a lack of duty to either God or man.

On the following day, the storm broke and the wind abated considerably. With a skiff borrowed from a river steamer which was moored in the river a short distance below the Crenshaw place, Mrs. Cummins and a man employed by Mrs. Crenshaw, set out to rescue some families up the river which they knew to be without a boat. These were all brought safely away and in one instance the rescuers were just in time.

They found Amos Smith and his family in dire distress. The house was badly shattered from the force of the storm and the water was high upon the floors. The several small children were perched upon tables and chairs and Mr. and Mrs. Smith waded about the room in water which reached their knees. Soon after the family left the deserted home and while they were yet within sight of it, the house was shattered by the waves and in fragments they saw it floating in the river.

[There are a few pages missing] An old sow found a roosting place on the top of a tall stump which arose above the water. Mr. Cummins fed the sow for several days and as soon as the water receded, he took her back to the ranch where she became the mother, grandmother, and great grandmother of his new herd.

Published Woodland April 11, 1907 by R. P. Wallace.



## Web Site Redo

Barbara Sommer has updated our website. She felt that it was out of date and needed a new spring sprucing up! She has been working on it since January, and it is complete. Please check it out – [ychs.org](http://ychs.org).

N.B. Ignore the warning that might appear at the top. It means that the web site is not secure for encrypted transactions (e.g., credit card processing). Our online payments go through a separate and [secure site](#) - BAS

# Pilgrim-mania in California

by Sylvia Baldwin Dilgard

Most people who love history have an interest in genealogy. Where did I come from? Why did my great-grandfather rush to California? Which relative fought in the American Revolution? If my DNA says the majority of my ancestors came from England and Scotland, when did they first arrive in the New World?

I've known since childhood that I was a Pilgrim. At Thanksgiving, my paternal aunt would remind me and my sister that we descended from Stephen Hopkins, a passenger on the *Mayflower*. But was that just family lore, or could it be proven? My Auntie Margie actually became a member of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD) when I was in college. I was fascinated to learn that there was such an organization.



Sylvia giving program about Mayflower tour

Within the GSMD, there are state Mayflower societies. In California, there are over 2,000 members, and "cousins" are divided by region into fourteen colonies. These terms refer back to 1620 when Plymouth Colony was founded in what would become Massachusetts. When the *Mayflower* departed from Plymouth, England, there were 102 *saints* and *strangers* aboard the ship, in addition to about 30 crew.

The *saints* were known as the Separatists, originally leaving England to seek religious freedom. The *strangers* were those folks who were seeking adventure and a better way of life in the New World.

After their arrival in November 1620, these Mayflower passengers faced a very harsh winter. If it were not for God's providence and the Native Americans, especially Squanto, most of the Pilgrims would have died. History records that only 51 people from that Atlantic crossing survived to see the first Thanksgiving and expand their families. As one can imagine, among that first and second generation of colonists, there were lots of cousins born to the settlers.

Over the years, the General Society of Mayflower Descendants did massive research to formally publish Mayflower Families through Five Generations, commonly called the Silver Books. To become a member of GSMD, I had to prove my family tree back five generations from myself to reach the last ancestor in a Silver Book.

I became a member of the GSMD and the California Mother Lode Colony in 2021, after spending time doing ancestry research during COVID. Our group meets quarterly for a luncheon meeting in the greater Sacramento area. We enjoy programs about Mayflower passengers, colonial history, and California history. I recently was elected *Governor* of the *Mother Lode Colony*.



Paul and Sylvia Dilgard holding individual genealogy charts

## From the Hattie Weber Museum

by Merrily Dupree

Since our last report, we've welcomed two new volunteers, Donna Kono and Derek Hernandez. Donna is an M.D., who most recently worked at UCD's Student Medical Center. She's a Davisite, who attended UCD, and has much information about Davis in the 60s and 70s. Derek is presently a student at UCD with a major in History. His interest is in Davis during the Great Depression.

Our volunteer, Lulu Zhang has completed an exhibit, "Misconceptions About Chinese and Chinese-Americans from 1850 to the Present." She presents several common American myths about the Chinese, especially those in California, with her corrections.

We've recently had some interesting visitors to the museum. Two descendants of the pioneer Campbell family came in to research their family's houses. We were able to find two of them in our Davis Tax Assessments of 1933 file, which provides the name of owner and date of construction, along with a footprint and description of the house. They were very happy to have this new information.

Brian Young, a descendant of Louie Young, an early Chinese settler in Davis, visited us to donate several Davis High School yearbooks. He also talked with us about his family in Davis, dating back to the late 19th century. His aunt, Alice Young, recently contacted us about a donation of family materials. John Chiles, a Davis resident descended from the Chiles family of Davis, came in to talk about his family and our exhibit in which they're included.

Last Saturday, a member of the Davis Genealogical Club visited us with an offer to give us approximately twenty photographs of early Davis, collected by Warren A. Westgate, an important local photographer. John and I have made an appointment to look at them.

Our main project at this point is to revise several permanent exhibits: some have errors and others need more supporting information. For example, we've revised the Davis Library exhibit, adding a recently acquired dictionary dedicated to Etta Haussler, a teacher who

became the first librarian of a Davisville library, and some books Hattie Weber, the town's first paid librarian, secured for patrons during the '20s. We're planning next to move to our Native American exhibit, working with UCD to verify the provenance of our artifacts and to contact the groups involved for further information.

Visitor count for the past month: 2/8-**31**, 2/15-**29**, 2/22-**85** and 3/1-**68**.

## WE ARE BACK!!!! School House Update by Kathy Harryman

We are pleased to announce the opening of the School House program for our third-grade students. It has been a long time since we were able to offer the service to the students in Yolo County. First, we had COVID, and everything was shut down. Then several of our fabulous school marms retired from the program. It has taken a lot of determination and perseverance to restart the program.

Many thanks to Marilyn Scholz, a member, who has agreed to train our new teachers and Connie Crandall who has organized and printed the information that was sent to the schools. Connie also contacted several new teachers and asked them to be part of the program.

Connie and I delivered the packets to all the schools in Woodland. As we are having a soft opening, we decided to limit the invitations. The program will run two days a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the months of April and May. We are including a visit to the Yolo County Fair Museum if the teachers would like to extend their visit. Mary Aulman and I will staff the Museum.

We already have several teachers who have been waiting for the program to begin. This is very exciting for all our students.

I will go into the School House and make sure we have all the supplies. This is soooo exciting.

# YOLO HISTORY GRANT

**Joann Leach Larkey Historical Writing Project Funds** are available to assist local writers who wish to publish historical works of Yolo County. Use the form below, or download it in Word at our website under [\*\*Projects\*\*](#).

**Yolo County Historical Society**  
**Application for Joanne Larkey Writing Grant**

Mail to: Yolo County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1447  
Woodland, CA 95776

1. Name of applicant:
2. Brief biography of the applicant:
3. Short summary of the subject matter:
4. Relevance to Yolo County history:
5. Proposed Title:
6. Estimated Number of Words of completed text:
7. Timetable for completion:
8. Estimated number of photographs/illustrations:
9. Photos used with permission (circle one):    Yes    No
10. Estimate of publication costs:
11. Request for grant (circle one):    \$500    \$1000    \$1500

YCHS has the final say in editing the manuscript.

The author is responsible for working with YCHS to market and promote publications. Possibilities include websites, social media, placement in bookstores, and book signings.

Must submit a digital copy that is formatted to the contracted printers' standards.

Name:

Date:

## Patrons 2024-25

Thanks so much to the following for supporting the Yolo County Historical Society. We could not run this organization without your additional help.

You, also, can be a patron by **contributing** \$100 or more.

Ryan Baum and Alice Wong  
Don and Pat Campbell  
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## Business Buddies

Please support these local businesses.  
They support the Yolo County Historical Society.

### **Corner Drug**

Dahlin & Essex, Inc.

### **Legislative Intent Service**

Marco Brando

### **Pleasant Pheasant**

### **Zamora Hills Ranch Vineyard Venue**

# YCHS Newsletter

Yolo County Historical Society

P O Box 1447

Woodland, CA 95776

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.

We are a 5013c tax deductible organization

Tax id number: **23-7086043**

See our website at ***ychs.org***

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## Submitting letters and articles

Format articles in Word and send as email attachments to Kathy Harryman

*khwoodland@aol.com*

## Change of Address

Please notify Kathy Harryman *khwoodland@aol.com* of any address changes (it costs nearly \$1.00 to get your correct address from the Post Office and your newsletter mailing is delayed).

Sign up for delivery as an email PDF attachment (see above email).