

# Yolo County Historical Society



SEPTEMBER 2016

## Prez Says

It's already mid-September. Christmas is on the horizon. I feel like Dr. Seuss when he wrote, "How did it get so late so soon?" Summer is gone and fall is approaching. The leaves are beginning to fall and the flowers are trying to hold onto their last blooms. Harvest is upon us in Yolo County. Trucks loaded with produce clutter the freeways on their way to the cannery or to other markets. The farmers are plowing their ground and preparing for the next crop. Dust is everywhere. And the moon is huge; big, round, and yellowish-orange.

In this newsletter, 'Harvest' is our theme. We have an article written by one of our members, Carol Rose, who leads us down memory lane with her article on Rose Valley. We also have a sign I saw this summer in Esparto and a Dr. Seuss quote. "They say I'm old fashioned, and live in the past, but sometimes I think progress progresses too fast!"



Thanks continue to go to our membership. Vicki Giguere and her daughter Amy helped with the Schoolhouse during the fair; Jackie Scott and her husband Jim, is our extraordinaire repair person (antique items in the

schoolhouse); Trevor Harryman helped clean the schoolhouse; Marty Bagan organized our contribution to the Stroll. Her article follows.

**A Late Note.** I just received news of the death of Society members Bob and Lynn Campbell. Both were historian supporters extraordinaire. They will be missed. You will find out more information about them in the next issue. Our heart and prayers go out to their family and friends.

As Always,  
History Rules!

Kathy Harryman, President



## The passing of Robert N. Campbell and Lynn L. Campbell

Robert Campbell, 86, died August 28, 2016 at his home in Davis, following a long illness. Lynn Campbell, the love of his life, was at his side.

Lynn Campbell, 83, died September 15, 2016 in Woodland following a difficult diagnosis and complications from a short treatment. Brave and full of grace until the end, Lynn was surrounded by her children and grandchildren.

Robert was born November 16, 1929 to Loretta Shields Campbell, a Chicago school teacher, and John N. Campbell, a veterinarian who later became Professor of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota (U of M). Robert grew up in rural Fairmont, Minnesota, with his two siblings John and Marian.

Lynn was born January 27, 1933 to Della Celia Lindsten, a Minneapolis school teacher, and Wilbur Lewis Lindsten, a Minneapolis

school teacher, principal, and attorney. Lynn grew up in Minneapolis, and obtained a degree in home economics from the U of M.

Robert obtained his undergraduate degree in forest management at the U of M. He obtained his masters and doctorate (1957) in plant pathology at the U of M. He and Lynn met while they were students and they married on June 24, 1954. Lynn worked doing radio and TV spots for the Dairy Council to support the family while Robert completed his doctorate degree. They moved to Davis in 1959 when Robert was recruited by the Plant Pathology Department at UC Davis, and raised their three children on Linden Lane, which was then at the edge of Davis.

At UC Davis, Robert taught plant pathology courses, and mentored graduate students. He believed education and hard work were the keys to success for individuals and for society, and as an educator he dedicated himself to teaching students from around the world. His research focused on fungal transmission of plant viruses in vegetable crops, especially lettuce and sweet potatoes, which took the family around the world as he collaborated with researchers during sabbaticals in Cambridge, England, Torino, Italy, Avignon, France, and Angers, France. He retired in 1993.

Lynn was active in many community organizations including the League of Women's Voters, P.E.O., Gibson House Museum and 4-H. She chaired the advisory committee for the 1986 Yolo County Historic Resources Survey, a reference still in use. She also served on the Board of Trustees of Yolo County Historical Museum until 2008.

In retirement Robert and Lynn enjoyed reading, traveling, genealogy, volunteering, and most of all spending time with their children Jim (Karen Flory), Greta (Nicholas Goulden) and Carla (Taibou Dia), as well as their grandchildren Avery, Liam and Miles Henry Campbell, and Phoebe Goulden.

At Robert and Lynn's request, there will be no service.



## **Hattie Happenings** “The One That Got Away” and “A Centennial for the Causeway”

Your Museum volunteers are excited to have acquired two new images of Davisville's California Pacific Rail Road station as it appeared in 1868. One is depicted above and both are on display. The pair of nearly-identical photographs was taken by Oliver Denny, who was one of the several talented photographers who specialized in pictures of the West's ambitious railroad projects of the post-Civil War era. His studios were located at various times in Vallejo (headquarters of the “Cal Pac” in 1868), San Francisco, Grass Valley, and eventually Portland (where a museum has collected his work). The images we obtained from the web were in the form of a newly-uncovered stereo viewing card. High technology for the 1860s, two nearly identical pictures are mounted (binoculars-style) next to each other such that they appear to be three dimensional when you look through the viewer mechanism toward the light. Depicted are the depot/station, a cattle loading chute, a watering tank, an engine that just pulled four rail cars into the depot, seven well-dressed locals watching the photographer, six members of a family with their horse and carriage, and a half dozen rural buildings located in the background just west of the depot.

The original photograph itself was listed for sale on “ebay” for a ten-day period with the

auction to end at 8:07 p.m. on Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. The Museum Director was among the first bidders (offering \$250 on September 9<sup>th</sup>) and during much of the afternoon on the final day the Museum was still the high bidder at \$290. It was to be a donation to the Museum if our bid was the winner.

During the last few minutes before the auction was to be over, bidding quickly went to "\$349, then to \$420, then to \$666, to \$3,200, and finally to the winning bid of \$3,250. Thus, we didn't succeed in getting the original photographs. Someone really wanted those picture of early Davisville! Also, a take-away thought is that well- taken early photographs can be quite valuable. Search through your collections, old timers, and consider donating them to your local museum.

Also, Museum volunteers have been working on an exhibit that celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the completion of the Yolo Causeway viaduct in 1916. That impressive structure provided an important all-weather roadway connection between Davis on the west end and West Sacramento at the east end. The 3.2 mile long concrete trestle was 20 feet wide and 21 feet above the ground when in 1916 it constituted the longest such structure in the world. Although it paralleled a nearby mostly-wooden structure that since 1869 had carried Southern Pacific's Railroad tracks, the causeway was acclaimed as a tremendous upgrade in east/west connections across the Central Valley. Our exhibit features maps showing the project's position in the network of statewide highway improvements being planned and paid for through a statewide vote for increased highway taxes.

The Museum's exhibit also posts a copy of a spectacular colored poster that announced the four days of "Causeway Celebration" events.

Two previous and much less ambitious roads across the wetlands are depicted in our exhibit. A state-legislature authorized "Yolo Plank Road Turnpike" was constructed and from 1855 operated as a private enterprise. It relied upon abutting thick boards as the road

surface. A toll was required for crossing by pedestrians, by flocks or herds of animals, by horseback riders, by buggies, or by freight wagons. The plank road turnpike did not last long because rapidly rotting boards made service unsatisfactory. Within a short time (a decade?) "Tule Jake's Road" replaced the plank road. That was also a private enterprise with a license from the State Legislature. The Tule Jake Road was constructed and maintained by cutting of the tule reeds and regular compaction of the soil and the tules. The route was along a relatively dry path through the vast expanse of soggy natural terrain. Associated with the western terminus for both projects was "The Tule House" hotel and toll station, located some 3+ miles east of Davisville. It lasted in a location close to today's Road 30 until the 1916 Causeway viaduct structure replaced it.

The exhibit is fortunate to be able to include a four-page research article by Marc Hoshovsky that was published just this summer in "The Traveler" (the quarterly journal of the Lincoln Highway Association's California Chapter). The author wanted to establish the exact location of the Tule House. He collected and carefully overlays the 1907 topographic map and other more recent topo sheets, a 1879 atlas map of Yolo County, and today's Google maps. Especially important was an account of the amazing January, 1868, flood that temporarily dislodged the Tule House and required it to be towed back afterward to its original foundation. That newspaper story from 149 years ago specified exactly where the structure was located within the County's official "township and range" mapping system. You can view the maps in the exhibit at the Museum or you can see the maps on-line in the digital version of The Traveler (at <https://www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org/ca/traveler/2016-04/traveler-2016-04.pdf>). There seems to be nothing on the ground today at the Tule House's former site, but more careful field work along Road 30 might yet turn up more evidence of its location.





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

**L & S Printers, Main St.**  
**Larry Shapiro**  
**Bernard & Lynn Gough**



## Harvest

Submitted by Carol Rose

We are farmers; we grow and ship honeydew melons. The name of the company is Rose Valley Produce Company. With the millennium approaching, the name was modernized to Rose Valley Group. We were originally from the Milpitas/Santa Clara areas. There we grew peas, carrots, and apricots. Our customers were mostly food processors. The crops were grown on land we owned. In the early '40s we relocated to the Sacramento Valley.

My husband's grandfather came up to Woodland prospecting for available land. He and his uncle, his two sons, and a couple of farmer friends, decided the company would try growing melons, specifically honeydews. The soil was ideal, the water needs were minimal, and labor was easy to secure. He told his partners: "The best thing about this sure deal is the land—it is so cheap to lease, we won't have to purchase any acreage!" Whoever passed that tidbit of information on to him must have had a bridge in their back pocket!

The conditions were perfect for our melons. We grew bigger and bigger. We had several partners, all family, which proved to be a handicap. In the best of times we harvested from 2400 to 2500 acres. Our yields per acre were celestial. In the beginning, we were only packers and shippers. Most of the shipping in these early years was via the railroad. The growing was handled by a large agricultural corporation, River Garden Farms. The growing season varied but generally ran from July through mid-October. The packing shed was located on East and Main Streets at the Southern Pacific railroad spur. When the harvest was over, they literally turned the key in the door and locked it up. It was definitely the glory days. The profits were divided up according to the various percentages, and everybody left town. It was lush and we were living our destiny.

In 1985 we decided to grow our own melons. We owned no land, very little equipment, and occupied a different shed needing a conveyer belt set-up, providing a pathway to production, from field to shed to cartons to trucks. In spite of all this mechanization, it was still a very "hands on" operation. Crews were brought up from Mexico. At the time, we provided living quarters and meals for the workers. The labor in the fields was back-breaking but Rose Valley always paid well and gave a bonus if you completed the season. In the shed were at least fifty workers whose work schedules varied. If the melons weren't ready you didn't put in a full day but still got paid. Most of the positions required

some skills and many of the workers travelled the crop circuit from Arizona, up 99, the backbone of California with stops in Needles, Fresno, Modesto, Turlock and North to Woodland and sometimes beyond. It now became a 12-month business.

The partners were unhappy, especially the partners who had never worked a day in their lives. To them, a honeydew melon popped out of the ground, creamy chartreuse in color and when you sliced it open it oozed cash. They were not happy about anything; they wanted us to buy them out and brought in their own estimator. We took out an immense loan from the Last Chance “Not in Business Anymore” Bank and proceeded to drive the business towards bankruptcy.

The main man, my husband, died in 2007 and my two sons and I proceeded to relearn the expression “sink or swim”. After the bank left our lives, my sons took over the operation. They trimmed the excess and tightened their belts.

Here were, and still are, the four rules: (1) Only sell to your best customers; (2) bosses work alongside everyone else; (3) cater to the Japanese markets and hope they continue to pay well for our melons; and (4) get rid of the high-priced help. The employees, including my sons, worked the fields in the morning and went inside the shed to pack those same melons in the afternoon. We were able to go over a field more than once because we didn’t have that many acres. My boys each had different talents and their bond was one of communication and respect.

At first, no one wanted to lease us land so our acreage was a proverbial drop in the bucket compared to the glory days. In 2015 we only had 237 acres. One of the best yield years was in 2012 when we only planted 187 acres and the yield was 958 cartons an acre. That’s an amazing crop. Of course I can recall years when we would ship out a million of those Rose Valley boxes. Now I am relating to a much smaller, more controllable number. The operation still pays the bills and supports me and my boys.

We don’t go to those wonderful growers’ conventions in Las Vegas or Hawaii. We don’t hire any fancy produce brokers. No big end of the season catered parties, gifts, or bonuses. You pay your employees well and treat them with respect and they will return for a job the next year. And, oh, yes, Japan continues to pay well for our product. Harvest Time is a happy time.



**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

### **2015-2016 Patrons**

- Donald & Pat Campbell
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## Stroll Through History Update

By Marty Bagan

How truly fortunate we are to live in Yolo County which is so rich in history and has a commitment to the preservation and appreciation of the past. One outstanding example of their appreciation is the annual Stroll thru History where community members come together to share their homes, experience and knowledge.

This year the historical society hosted Diane Adams and Dave Wilkinson's house. It was one of the 5 homes featured this year, each very unique and outstanding. If you did not have the opportunity to view this year's homes, you can read a brief history with highlights of each home on the Stroll thru History website.

Built in 1885, this Victorian Cottage, with Eastlake-Stick styling, was designed and built by Woodland contractor William H. Carson for the purchase price of \$1,800. The all-redwood house has been well preserved, although the owners rebuilt the front porch and handrails, turned by a lathe to match the balustrade on the front porch. The house design has cross-gables joined by a central hipped roof, capped with a flat widow's walk. The cut-away front gable extends over the angled bay window. There is a side entrance to the home, which was customarily used by Victorian families. Guests arrived at the front door and were ushered into the front parlor. The architecture is accented by a palette of five colors of paint applied by Don Eastman.

Diane and Dave purchased the home in 1986 and have lovingly renovated the home over their years of stewardship. One of the outstanding features was the gorgeous Bradbury & Bradbury wallpaper in the front entrance, second bedroom, and kitchen. They also created small hallways to access

the bedrooms versus entry between rooms thru the bathrooms. The half-bath was enlarged to include a shower and tiled with border tile from a Julia Morgan mold. Absolutely gorgeous! The kitchen was very large, as the house never had a formal dining room. It was exquisite with bead board backsplashes, beautiful cabinetry and a wonderful formal eating area. The Victorian answer to today's open concept. Everyone was surprised and delighted with the ambience and size. I personally thought their home was the most livable of the homes I viewed.

My personal highlight of the day was talking to a sweet 90-year-old woman, who had on a white summer frock. When I asked her about her dress she told me that it was her mother's maternity dress. How special is that!

Diane could not have been more gracious in taking the docents thru her home sharing their renovations, artwork, and efforts to retain the home's original flavor, while still adding modern day amenities. They are to be commended for their generosity.

Thank you also to Ruth and Matt Fitch, Harriett Chermack, Judy Zatz, and Georgia Workman for giving their time as docents. Other thanks go to Pat Campbell, Jane Niehues who were docents at Yolanda, and Steve and Lydia Venables who were docents at the Keystone house.



CALIFORNIA PACIFIC RAILROAD.



OLIVER DENNY,

ARTIST.



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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*