

# Yolo County Historical Society



## Prez Says

Wow! Here we all are in November already and racing toward the holidays. What a ride it's been. Christmas is upon us all and we see holiday items all over the stores.

There are a few items that are happening within our historical society. The first item is that we have three new board members. I am very pleased to announce that Ramon Urbano, Ginger Day, and Janice Rose have joined the board. They each bring strengths to our group. I will have a brief biography of each of these members in the next newsletter.

I am officially retiring from the presidency of the Yolo County Historical Society. I have spent thirteen years as your president and have really enjoyed the dedication of the people I have met. I feel that I have done all that I set out to do. And it is now time for new leadership. I will remain on the board.

I will not go gently into the night, however. I plan to pursue a more historical China Alley in Woodland and work with the city to have more significant markers along the alley. I would like to work with the Chinese community and write a historical book about their contributions to the town. I also have a personal interest that I would like to pursue that is related to my family. I need the time to research. So yes, I will be busy with history but not like I was during my presidency.

I know we have fabulous people out there and I would hope that one of you will come forward and say "yes" to being president.

We are losing our treasurer, Seth Albin. He has done a great job but also has taken on more responsibilities in his personal life. So, if anyone would like to take over the treasurer's job, please let us know.

Again, as always  
History Rules!

Kathy Harryman



## Attention! Authors and Would-be Authors

One of the goals of our Society is to encourage the development of the appreciation of history through several different avenues. One avenue is through the publication of history books.

Several years ago, we received a very generous donation from Joanne Leach Larkey, who was very instrumental in writing our history books. The board decided to honor her by continuing her passion of writing about history in Yolo County.

We would like to encourage you or someone that you know to apply for help in publishing your work. We are enclosing a copy of a form that you can use to begin the process (see next page).



Feel free to use this page or [download](#) the PDF.

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

Name of applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Brief biography of the applicant

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Short summary of the subject matter

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Relevance to Yolo County history

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Proposed Title

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Estimated Number of Words of completed text \_\_\_\_\_

Timetable for completion \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated number of photographs/illustrations \_\_\_\_\_

Photos used with permission    Yes    No

Estimate of publication costs \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_

# Brief History of Service Stations<sup>1</sup>

Kathy Harryman

I recently received a 1937 photo of the Senator Garage located in Broderick, in West Sacramento.

As I was looking at the old gas station, I saw signs that advertised what they did other than pump gas. You could buy tires and tubes at the station. You could get your car 'greased' and buy Coca-Colas.

All of us remember when service stations did everything! I remember buying ice creams in the ice chests in front of the building. There were always old men sitting around and talking.

It's funny how a photo can trigger memories. In my years of travel I have seen remnants of old gas stations that look very similar to the Senator Garage in Broderick. I have seen gas stations that are one stop shops where you can buy anything you want. I sometimes forget that history does change even in gas stations. So, let's look at the development of gas stations in this country.



Gasoline in the early 1900's was purchased in pharmacies, blacksmith shops and hardware stores. As these stores were already handling flammable substances, it made sense that they would sell gasoline, a byproduct of refining kerosene for lamps and stoves.

Gasoline was sold in 5-gallon containers. The buyer would bring his container to the shop, buy the gasoline and then use a funnel to pour the gasoline into the tank.

I remember my dad filling up 5-gallon gas cans at the service stations. He'd use them when he went hunting.

In 1905, Sylvanus Bowser invented the first hand operated, self-measuring gas pump which made the process safer and more efficient than pouring from a can. On the left is a photo of his pump.

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*continued on next page*

**Service Stations - continued**

In 1905, the world's first dedicated gas station was built in St. Louis, Missouri. This new model allowed drivers to pull up and purchase fuel without transferring it from a canister.

However, it wasn't until 1913, when Gulf Refining Company opened the first drive-up gas station in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that the concept of a modern fuel station really took off. The station was designed by an architect with an overhanging roof for weather protection and had attendants to serve customers. They also distributed free road maps. On its first day, the station sold thirty US gallons of gasoline at 27 cents per gallon .



Why were these stations so successful? Well, again, we have to look back at history and ask some questions. Karl Benz, currently of Mercedes-Benz fame, built the first self-propelled vehicle in Germany in 1885. His invention started the frenzy for faster travel.



In 1903, Henry Ford began his motor company. Ford is credited with making cars affordable to the common man through the concept of the assembly line. His Model T was built from 1908 to 1927. It originally cost \$850 which was equivalent to eight months average salary. By 1927, the Model T sold for \$300, making it very affordable. The automobile had a 10-gallon fuel tank under the front seat, and it generated twenty horsepower with the top speed of 40-45 miles per hour.

As cars became more popular, the demand for more gas stations increased. Architects were hired to create gas stations.

Also, the demand for better roads grew. President Dwight D. Eisenhower is credited with creating the interstate highway system, which was established by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. His experience with Germany's *Autobahn* and a challenging 1919 cross-country military convoy convinced him of the need for a high-quality, high-speed highway system for national defense and commerce.

Today our gas stations have progressed. They have EV charging stations; car washes; snacks and food inside, offering a wide assortment of items to eat; rest rooms; and play areas.

Some of the large trucking stations even have showers.

Oh did I forget to mention, they also sell gas!

<sup>1</sup> Much of the information gathered in this article was AI generated.

## Visit the Hattie Weber

Are you a senior who would like to visit local museums but you lack transportation?

On **Tuesday, Jan 20, from 1-3 p.m.**, we will visit the **Hattie Weber Museum in Davis**. If you would like to go, call to make a reservation.

Walkers are permitted. Participants will be picked up from their homes. Phone 530-662-2189 to make a reservation.

Space is limited. Make your reservation before **Friday, Jan. 16**. Cost is **\$2.00** for gas. The museum is free.

Kathy Harryman

**WINTERS MUSEUM**  
**GRAND OPENING!!**  
**NOVEMBER 1, 2025**  
**1 - 5 PM**  
**the journey**  
**FROM SPAIN TO WINTERS**  
**STORIES OF HARD WORK, STRONG FAMILIES,**  
**AND GOOD FOOD**



**COME BY THE MUSEUM TO SEE OUR NEW EXHIBIT!**  
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**FAVORITE SPANISH COOKIE OR FOOD TO SHARE**

**13 RUSSELL STREET, WINTERS**  
**THURSDAY-SUNDAY, 1:00-5:00 PM**  
**wintersmuseum@gmail.com**  
**www.wintersmuseum.org**



## Patrons 2025-26

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

Odette & Dana Christensen

Katherine Cobb

Rob Coman

Tom Crisp

Paul Crist & Leila Stone

Ginger & Bob Day

Karen & David Dumars

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## Business Buddies

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They support YCHS.

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