

Yolo County Historical Society



Prez Says

I was asked by members to post the speech I gave on April 3 for the Native Sons of the Golden West regarding the research that I did on the Chinese and the development of China Town in Woodland. You will find that lecture in this newsletter on page 2. We had approximately 50 people attend in the garage behind the Roth Building. Then we took a walk and saw where China Town was located. Dino Gay and I pre-walked it the week before. We used traffic cones to mark the alley. I am also including some of the graphics that were presented.

On another note, we had our first meeting at the Yolo County Fairgrounds office on Thursday, April 8. Seven historical societies were represented. We talked about choosing display cases (remember we helped the Native Sons purchase the cases from Woody's Jewelry Store). We also talked about redoing the floors and changing the lights. Everyone was enthusiastic. Dino Gay is the group's chair. We plan to have another meeting and hopefully the other partners will be able to attend.



John Cain and Merrily DuPree at the **Hattie Weber Museum** in Davis are searching for volunteers.

If you know of anyone who would like to join this small, but powerful group of historians, please respond to their request shown on page 6.

Celebratewoodland.org is an up-and-coming website. Please look at it and see all the books that the Yolo County Historical Society has published about the town of Woodland (click on the [history link](#)). It is awesome. We are a powerhouse!

As Always,
History Rules!

Kathy Harryman, President

Woodland Chinatown Lecture

by Kathy Harryman, April 3, 2021

Why the Chinese came to California

The Chinese came from the Pearl River Delta. Traditionally, it was an extremely poor district. Most of the wealth was at the capital, Beijing. China had a closed-door policy to the outside world. But with the recent inventions and explorations of western Europe, ships were traveling all over the world in search of raw materials for trade. In 1450, the Portuguese arrived and were allowed to set up a trading port on the island of Macau. In the 1800's the British arrived and tried to set up trading ports. The Chinese refused. The British then introduced opium to the Chinese which they picked up from India. The Chinese government tried to stop the importation of the poppy. They were not successful. The western invaders had better guns and modern equipment. This began the Opium Wars; one in the 1840's and one in the late 1850's. China lost the wars and trade was opened. Macau was now an official Portuguese territory and Hong Kong was established as a crown colony.

In 1864 the Taiping Rebellion started. This was a religious war with the purpose of overthrowing the government. Twenty million people were killed. The government held. The Chinese then suffered rising taxes, famine, land, and job shortages.

This is the environment that caused the Chinese to come to *Gum saam*, or "Gold Mountain." By 1851, 25,000 Chinese immigrants had left their homes to come to California.

The cost of coming to California was \$40-\$60 per person. Families pooled money and sent a son. Most of the men who came were teenagers. It took 62 days to cross the ocean and their diet consisted of dried beef, salt pork, and hard tack.

They were taken by ship through the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and then to San Francisco. There they boarded a boat headed up the Sacramento River and then taken by buckboard to the fields.

The Chinese immigrants soon found that Americans did not welcome them. In 1852, California placed a high monthly tax on all foreign miners, including Frenchmen, Mexicans and Chileans.

The Chinese were disliked because they would work for longer hours and at cheaper pay. Their peculiar dress and pigtailed marked them off from the rest of the population.

With the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, California had a huge unemployed Chinese population. Many of them settled in nearby cities and created businesses. Cooking and cleaning were considered undignified, so Chinese men did these chores to survive. One business that was we hear a lot of was the laundries. No one wanted to wash and iron clothes. Women were scarce in the west. It took two weeks to send laundry to Hawaii. In 1880, the Chinese comprised 80% of California's laundry workers.

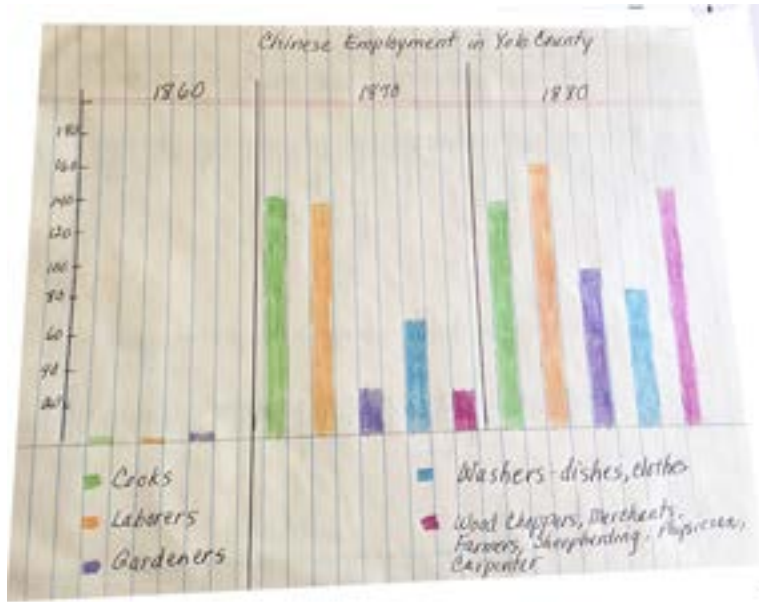
Some men moved into the rich agricultural land of the Central Valley to find employment.

Woodland's Chinatown is established

Since Woodland was the county seat, and the railroad was built, it became a major shipping point for agricultural products. There were two banks, seven hotels, three restaurants, many shops, a gas and waterworks, two breweries, a private college and a flour mill. It was the economic hub of Yolo County.

Continued on next page

continued - **Why the Chinese came to California**



Conclusion

Chinatown on China alley was a thriving subculture in Woodland. Here on their free days, the Chinese could find the comforts of a common language and common customs. They could play dominoes or mahjong, gamble, visit the Chinese doctors, or just visit with their friends. We only have a few remnants left of the original Chinatown, but we do have them and the history they brought to the town and the county.



Last building in China Town

CHINESE EMPLOYMENT IN YOLO COUNTY, 1870

1870 Census data with 1871 map by J.S. Henning

COTTONWOOD, 16

- 1 Washer
- 2 Farm laborers
- 6 Gardeners
- 7 Cooks

GRAFTON, 78

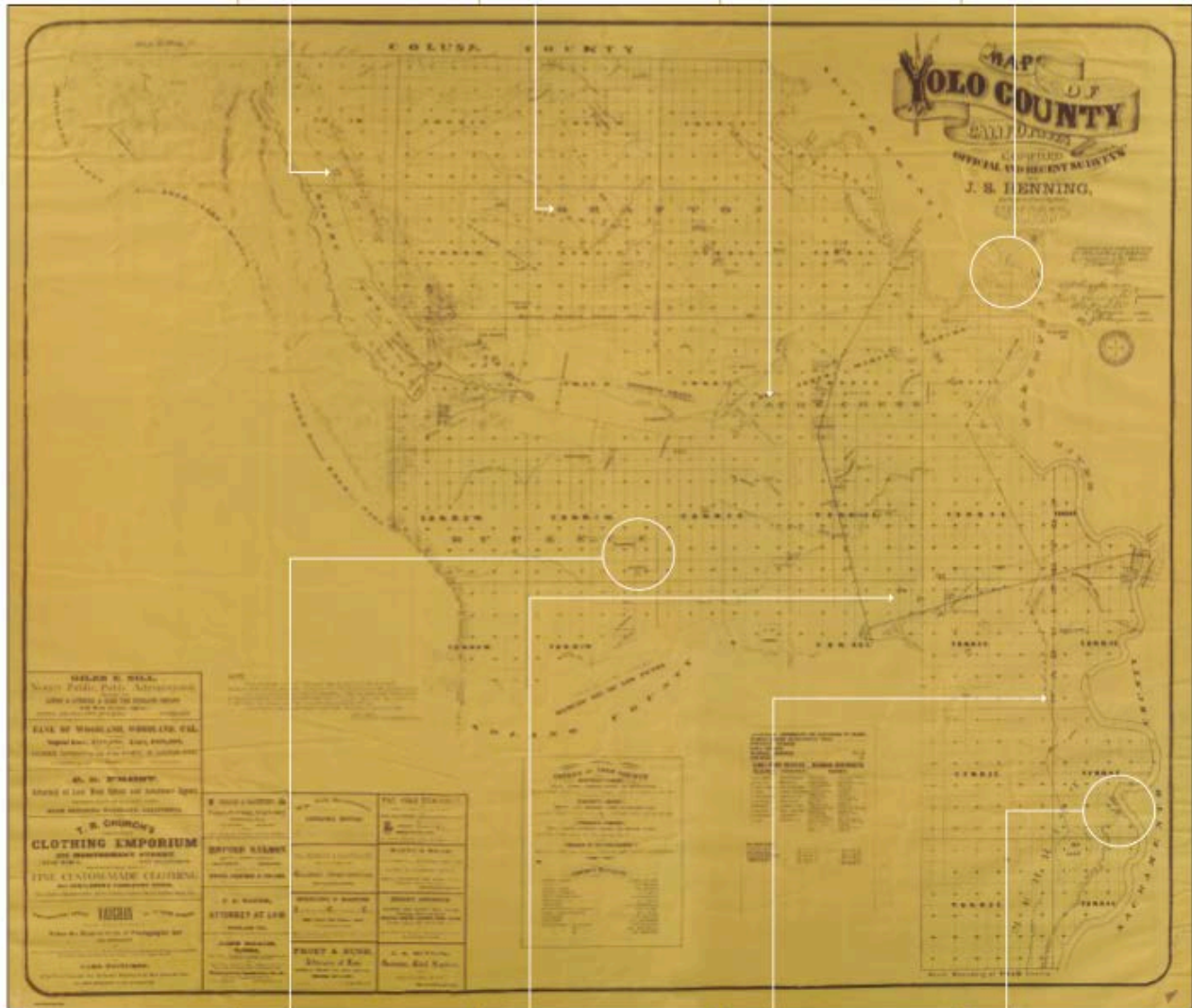
- 1 Dishwasher
- 1 Shepherd
- 2 Fishermen
- 5 Domestic servants
- 6 Gardeners
- 9 Washers
- 24 Laborers
- 30 Cooks

CACHE CREEK, 82

- 2 Laborers
- 2 Dishwashers
- 2 Domestic servants
- 9 Gardeners
- 11 Washers
- 56 Cooks

FREMONT TOWNSHIP, 2

- 2 Cooks



BUCKEYE TOWNSHIP, 26

- 5 Farm laborers
- 21 Cooks

PUTAH, 78

- 1 Dishwasher
- 8 Domestic servants
- 20 Laborers
- 22 Cooks
- 27 Washers

WASHINGTON, 65

- 1 Domestic servant
- 1 Gardener
- 10 Washers
- 11 Cooks
- 42 Laborers

MERRITT TOWNSHIP, 48

- 1 Cook
- 1 Farmer
- 2 Washers
- 44 Laborers

ATTENTION LOCAL HISTORY FANS

THE HATTIE WEBER MUSEUM WILL BE REOPENING SOON

Beginning Saturday, April 10th

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

The only requirements are an interest in the history of Davis and a desire to serve the community.

If you would like to volunteer, please call
Merrily DuPree (530) 757-6844

or

John Cain (408) 930-3549



The Hattie Weber Museum is filled with exhibits that highlight the history and development of Davis and surrounding regions. The museum itself is named after Harriet Elisha (Hattie) Weber, the daughter of George Weber, owner and saloonkeeper of Davis' first bar. Hattie Weber was the first librarian, serving from 1910 until she retired in 1953.

The building was constructed in 1911, and was originally located at 117 F Street, serving as a library. The library remained open until 1969 when the current library on 14th Street was completed. The former library was then saved, sold to the City of Davis, restored and relocated to the northwest corner of C and Fifth in Central Park. It re-opened as a city museum on March 28, 1992, the day after the city's 75th birthday.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- April 10 – *Big Day of Giving*
ongoing Donations to the new Yolo County Fair Museum floor

- April 10 **Hattie Weber** opens in Davis

- May 6 Meeting of **YCHS board**, Hattie Weber Museum, Davis
10 AM
- May 7 **First Friday tours** – Roth Building (Next to Father Paddy’s Restaurant),
6 PM Woodland.
- June 17 **Annual year end party** – Yolo County Fair Museum. Time TBA

- October 15 **150th Celebration** of Woodland. Activities TBA

Patrons

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

Starr and Jeff Barrow	John and Kathy Harryman	Meg and Tom Stallard
Don and Pat Campbell	Dan & Sarah Hrdy	Roz Stone
Odette & Dan Christenson	Geraldine Hunter	Mike Truitt Family
Katherine Ashley Cobb	Steve and Teri Laugenour	Phil & Kris Turner
Rob Coman	Sandy and Bill Marble	Ramon & Karen Urbano
Tom Crisp	Nancy Hatcher McCullough	Lydia and Steve Venables
Carol Danke	Jane Niehaus	Lynn Wilen
Jon and Barbara Durst	Claudia and Chuck Owens	David Wilkinson
Marc & Gerda Faye	Marjorie Pearce	Peggy Witham
Wanda Freeman	Jane Proctor	Ryan Baum & Alice Wong
Barbara Graham	Marsha Reemts	

Become a patron by contributing \$100 or more.

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

The House Dresser

Simas Family Vineyard

Corner Drug

Dahlin Associates

Local Inspirations

Yolo County Historical Society

P O Box 1447

Woodland, CA 95776

Dated Material

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

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

Editor: Barbara Sommer
basommer@ucdavis.edu