

Delta Voice

The voice of those who
live, work and play
in the Delta.

Fall 2014

Contents

Culture - Delta Narratives
page 1 The Delta story has
fascinating angles that
need to be told together.

Ag News - The Current Crop
page 4 Pears are in and will
sweeten your autumn!

Recreation - Abandoned Vessels
page 3 The Delta Protection
Commission partners up
to address the problem.

History - Did You Know...
page 5 ...the West Coast's first
salmon cannery was
100 miles inland?

Gala Apples, courtesy of the
CA Apple Commission



Settler's Cabin Exhibit,
San Joaquin Historical Society Museum, Lodi

Delta Narratives

A plan to showcase the Delta's
place in history begins...

Bob Benedetti is not a historian per se. He is a political scientist, a student of government, holding degrees from Amherst College and the University of Pennsylvania - but he's San Francisco born, Peninsula-bred, and he holds the history of the Delta dear.

Recently retired from the University of the Pacific where he was Dean of the College and now Professor Emeritus, he is currently Visiting Professor at California State University, Sacramento's Center for California Studies. With funding from the Delta Protection Commission, Bob and former Delta Protection Commission Executive Director Margit Aramburu have begun the first phase of an ambitious plan to organize a coordinated plan for all of the cultural and historic exhibits in the Delta to be made available to the public. (continued on page 2)

Continued from Page 1

“The idea is to get the different groups, each who holds part of the Delta story, together with museum professionals and designers to create a coordinated exhibit of ALL of the Delta’s interwoven stories, most of which haven’t been told from a regional perspective,” Bob told us. “The Delta is one of the most historically important areas in the West, or even the country, for many, many reasons.”

One of those reasons is people - the Delta has been occupied by human beings continuously for over ten thousand years. Thus, more people have lived in the Delta than in many other regions in North America.

Then there’s the Gold Rush, which brought thousands to San Francisco and from there created a water highway through the Delta - to Stockton and the southern mines, and Sacramento and the northern ones. The river fed and outfitted floods of people heading east and west, as serviceable roads had yet to be built.

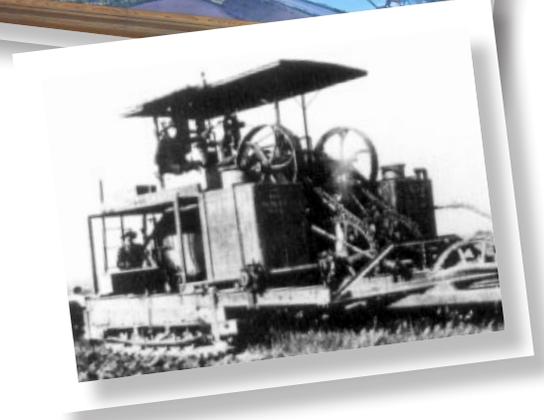
After the Gold Rush

When the former miners came back down to the valley, they tried their hand at farming or fishing, creating ethnic communities bound together by their shared heritage and way of life. Chinese and Japanese laborers, Italian and Portuguese fishermen, discouraged East Coast adventurers and others settled down and built schools and churches, their towns connected - and isolated - by the river until cars and new highways reduced the importance of river travel.



Above: Marty Stanley Mural in the Dutra Museum, Rio Vista.

Right: an early Holt tractor, predecessor to the Caterpillar.



The Second World War

With World War II came intensive farming of the newly reclaimed land...and the US military. Very few people know there was a prison for high-profile military prisoners - like Guantanamo Bay - in Brentwood. And don’t forget the history of the industries: beet sugar, canneries, earth-moving equipment, food processors and more - that have also shaped the Delta.

Collecting the Stories

Benedetti and Aramburu know that valuable pieces of all of these stories are still preserved in the Delta. Local historical societies and museums have contributed greatly, each saving a part of the picture. The Delta Narratives project aims to create a way that they can all be presented together, showcasing the Delta region for what it really is - one of the most historically important regions in the United States, fundamental to the development of the country’s most populous state.

Creating the Vision

At this early stage the exhibit vision includes four themes: *River as Highway*, focused on the role of the Delta in intrastate travel and shipping in the 19th and early 20th century; *Communities*, describing the towns both existing and extinct that lined the rivers, their people and personalities; *Reclamation and Restoration*, narrating the motives for the changes in the landforms and ecosystem past and present; and *Imagination*; an overview of the Delta as the subject of a great body of creative work by well-known authors, poets, painters and photographers, encompassing the power of the Delta to inspire.

If you’d like to share your piece of the Delta story, contact dpc@delta.ca.gov or call Blake Roberts at (916) 375-4237.



“You Left it WHERE?”

The Abandoned Vessels Working Group takes on the problem of derelict watercraft in the Delta.

We’ve all seen one. A dilapidated houseboat, listing into the levee...a cabin cruiser stranded on the rocks with the ebbing tide...or most confusing, a newish sailboat, inexplicably settling into the green waters of your favorite slough.

The Delta Protection Commission has been working on Marine Patrol, Boater Education and Safety issues since our inception in 1993, as part of the Commission’s larger legislative role to facilitate a strategy for a coordinated marine patrol system Delta-wide that will preserve, protect and maintain navigation, improve law enforcement and better optimize the use of resources by all jurisdictions to ensure an adequate level of public safety.

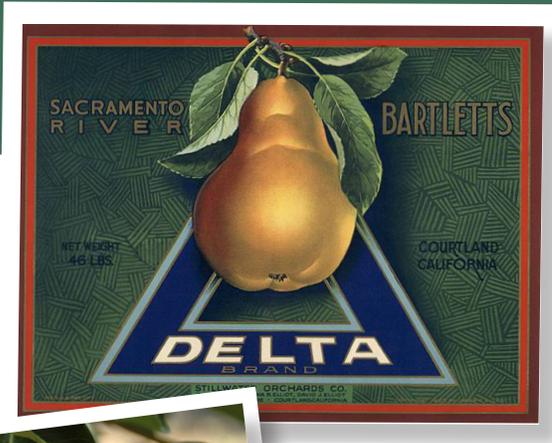
One of our key programs in this realm is the Delta Protection Commission’s Abandoned Vessel Working Group, formed to address the ongoing problem of abandoned vessels in the Delta region. A troublesome issue that was exacerbated by the economic downturn, abandoned vessels cause a myriad of problems such as obstructions to navigation, risks to public safety and serious environmental hazards, including the release of sewage, oil, gas, household chemical waste, marine battery acids, lead paint, asbestos, solid waste and plastic into the Delta waterways.

This past year the Commission reconvened its Delta-focused Abandoned Vessel Working Group after a one year hiatus while the State Lands Commission worked to revamp the adjudication process for taking possession of abandoned vessels prior to initiating the removal process. With this Group, the Commission acts as a facilitator by convening regional stakeholders to promote the removal of abandoned vessels and address obstacles in the process.

Participants include the five Delta Counties’ Marine Patrol Units, the U.S. Coast Guard, State Parks’ Division of Boating and Waterways, State Lands Commission, Recreational Boaters of California, Bay Conservation and Development Commission and Cal Recycle.



In the past year, the Commission has kicked off several initiatives, including an effort to identify and map Delta abandoned vessels, partnering with U.S. Coast Guard to develop a database that will assist in documenting and quantifying the problem. The Department of Water Resources Delta Levees Program has committed to providing the technical assistance needed for this mapping project, while the Commission will house and administer the database. Future projects include working with county Marine Patrol Units and the Department of Motor Vehicles to enhance the boat registration process to reduce the opportunities for abandonment of vessels. For more information on the Abandoned Vessels Working Group, please visit our website at www.delta.ca.gov/vessels.htm.



Delta Farm Feature

What's tasty in the Delta right now?

PEARS! That's right, pears. There are over three thousand varieties of pears, which are members of the rose family. The most popular variety grown in the Delta is the green Bartlett.

"Pear Season" starts in July, and in the Delta the picking is usually winding down by September. Pears have become a featured "fall" fruit, with magazines printing pear recipes right up to Thanksgiving, but that is a benefit we owe to modern refrigeration, not nature. Pears are a *climacteric* fruit; that is, a fruit that will continue to ripen after picking. Other climacteric fruits include apples, bananas, avocados and mangoes. Picking begins when the pears are still green and firm (which protects them during the packing process as well) and then held chilled in the packing shed coolers and shipped throughout the fall.

How cold do they keep pears to keep them from ripening until we are ready to buy? 32° F - due to a pear's sugar content, it won't freeze until the temperature hits around 28 degrees. Once the order comes in, the pears are shipped, timing the trucking and merchandising so that ripening will be taking place in the grocery store and your home, just in time for your enjoyment.

How to tell when your pears are perfectly ripe? Check out the California Pear Advisory Board website - they have a great descriptive tool for each variety so you can tell just when to bite in for that perfect sweet, creamy and delicious Delta pear experience! www.calpear.com.

Poached Delta Pears in Cabernet

4 Delta-Grown pears, peeled and trimmed to sit upright
 (Bartlett, Comice, Red, or Bosc all work equally well)
 2 cups Delta Cabernet Sauvignon
 such as Bogle, Miner's Leap, Lange Twins or any Delta winery!
 1/4 cup and 1 T. sugar
 Juice of one orange and one stick cinnamon bark

Combine wine, sugar, juice and cinnamon in a 4 quart saucepan, bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Place the pears into the liquid and continue to simmer, turning often and basting with syrup, about 20 minutes or until the pears are cooked but firm. Remove from heat and chill in syrup. To serve, reduce syrup by half over medium heat and pour over chilled pears. A light and delicious dessert!

Delta Pear and Spinach Salad

10 slices thick bacon, diced and cooked until crisp.
 6 T olive oil
 1/4 c. balsamic vinegar
 1/4 tsp coarse sea salt
 fresh ground pepper to taste
 4 cups loosely packed Delta spinach
 1 ripe Delta Bartlett pear, cored and sliced lengthwise
 3/4 cup grated Asiago cheese
 1/2 cup red bell pepper, diced
 2 T. shallot, finely minced

Combine oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Toss the spinach with half the dressing, then arrange on four plates. Top with pear slices, then sprinkle with bacon, cheese, red pepper and shallot. Drizzle with remaining dressing and serve.

- Recipes courtesy of www.epicurious.com

Top Right: Hemly House at Sunrise

Photograph by Michael Pieretti

Bottom Right: "On the Sacramento River"

Painting by Gregory Kondos, courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento.

The Hemly House - a Delta landmark that graces the eastern levee along Hwy. 160 north of Courtland - has been in the pear-growing Hemly family since 1876. When Doug Hemly and his wife Cathy moved in, they found all the original receipts for the building materials and canceled checks neatly stored in the basement.

The Hemly family grows Bartletts, Comice and Bosc pears - and several varieties of apple - both organically and conventionally. They also graciously allow their historic home to be painted and photographed by the many Delta artists who find it irresistible.





First Salmon Cannery on the West Coast

A floating cannery in what is now West Sacramento mined the Delta's silvery bounty.

This plaque and storyboard on the River Walk replaces the original National Historic Landmark plaque which disappeared before the construction of Raley Field and the creation of the River Walk park.

Since the original barge was gone and the appearance of the riverbank had been altered, the Secretary of the Interior withdrew the National Historic Landmark status of the site in 2004.

It took another five years of campaigning for the West Sacramento Historical Society to obtain California State landmark status for this important site.

Thanks to the generosity of the River Cats Foundation, the City of West Sacramento, the West Sacramento Chamber of Commerce and the West Sacramento Historical Society members, this piece of Delta history will be remembered for years to come.

Stroll along the River Walk in West

Sacramento on a Delta autumn evening, and you will notice a plaque commemorating California Registered Historical Landmark number 1040, north of the Tower Bridge. The plaque marks the original site of the Hapgood, Hume and Company's salmon cannery, the first salmon cannery established on the West Coast.

Built on a barge moored to the bank in 1864, the cannery processed salmon caught on the river by cooking with a boiler, rather than salt packing as was more common at the time. William and George Hume are believed to have lived in a cabin nearby, but the precise location isn't known. At the time, salmon were so plentiful that it is recorded that cannery fish were caught mostly with gill nets and - believe it or not - *spears*.

By 1866 - less than three years later - the Humes moved their operation to the Columbia River in Oregon, as the salmon runs in the Sacramento River were already beginning to decline. The decimation of the river fishery was swift: in 1881 there were 20 canneries in Northern California, six in 1885 and by the turn of the century California ranked last in West Coast canned salmon production with only three canneries in operation, two on the Sacramento River and one on the Klamath. The state where salmon canning began saw its last cannery close in 1919.

Once the easy pickings in the river were depleted, commercial salmon fishermen concentrated their efforts on fish in the ocean heading home to spawn - a practice that continues today. Only a few West Coast canneries remain, located in Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

Sources:

West Sacramento Historical Society (www.westsachistorical.society.org)
 The Historical Marker Database (www.hmdb.org)
 The U. S. National Park Service (www.nps.gov)

DELTA FLOOD SAFETY FAIR

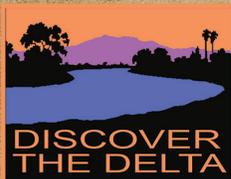
BE AWARE, BE PREPARED, TAKE ACTION!

**SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 25TH
NOON TO 4 PM**

**DELTA FARMERS' MARKET,
HWY 12 AND HWY 160 IN ISLETON**

Join the Delta Protection Commission and Discover the Delta for a day of family fun and useful flood preparedness safety information tailored for Delta residents!

FIRST RESPONDERS | RESCUE TEAMS | CONSERVATION CORPS
BARBECUE | FARMERS' MARKET | DELTA WINE TASTING
DELTA FLOOD HISTORY | SAFETY INFORMATION | LIVE MUSIC



For More information visit DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION - www.delta.ca.gov/BePrepared.htm

Delta Events

October

- 4-31st: Pumpkin Maze, Dell'Osso Farms, Lathrop. www.pumpkinmaze.com
- 11th: Sacramento Archives Crawl History Event www.sacarchivescrawl.blogspot.com
- 11th: Delta Days Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg. www.oldsugarmill.com
- 10-12th: Bass Derby & Festival, Rio Vista. www.bassfestival.org
- 25th: Delta Flood Safety Fair, Delta Farmers' Market www.delta.ca.gov
- 28-30th: Bay Delta Science Conference Sacramento Convention Center, Sacramento. www.scienceconf2014.deltacouncil.ca.gov

November

- 7-9th : Sandhill Crane Festival, Lodi. www.cranefestival.com
- 8th: Delta Days Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg. www.oldsugarmill.com
- 18th: Sacramento River Delta Historical Society Meeting, Walnut Grove. www.srdhs.org
- 20th: Delta Protection Commission Meeting Clarksburg. www.delta.ca.gov

December

- 6th: Delta Reflections Lighted Boat Parade Marina West Yacht Club www.mwyc.org
- 8th: Bethel Island Lighted Boat Parade San Joaquin Yacht Club. www.sjyc.org
- 13th: Delta Days Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg. www.oldsugarmill.com
- 13th: Discovery Bay Lighted Boat Parade Discovery Bay Yacht Club. www.dbyc.com



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