From the Native Americans who lived in the Delta 10,000 years before Europeans to current day community traditions like the Pear Fair, the Delta is rich in heritage. “The imprint of every stage in California’s history is visible along its shores: the fur-bearing animals that attracted trappers and traders, the ports of call for those rushing for gold, the transportation and reclamation technology that made farming successful, the factories built near its coal reserves to construct ships and process the area’s agricultural bounty, and the communities created by diverse immigrant groups whose labor fueled the Delta’s cyclical economic success.” (Delta Narratives). These stories from the past, along with today’s farmers, builders, artists, writers, and Delta dreamers continue to shape transportation, agriculture, recreation, and community to weave a story that is both suspended in time and ever-changing.

In this Special Edition of Delta Voice we have shared a few threads from the Delta’s heritage tapestry. Some of those stories you may know well and some may be new to you, but they are all part of the wealth that makes up this truly unique region in which all Californians depend on and enjoy.

SAVE THE DATE
FRIDAY, JULY 20, 2018

Jean Harvie Community Center, 14273 River Road, Walnut Grove

Join us for a full day event focused on efforts to preserve and tell Delta stories, opportunities for partnerships and collaboration, and networking. Invitees will include cultural organizations, federal, state, and local officials, business and civic organizations, and those interested in Delta heritage.

Sign up for updates on the Delta Heritage Forum and other heritage-related activities at www.delta.ca.gov/delta_heritage
THE DELTA AND STOCKTON: THE HEART OF THE FILIPINO AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Despite Filipinos being the first Asian Pacific Islander (API) group to arrive and settle in the US, the largest API group in California, and the second largest API group in the US, most Americans know little about Filipino American experiences.

The story of Filipino Americans is fundamentally intertwined with Stockton and the Delta. The Delta became a destination for Filipinos in 1924, when Congress restricted immigration from most Asian countries, but not the Philippines since the islands were an American possession. Filipinos quickly became an important part of California's and the Delta's agricultural workforce, particularly for labor-intensive crops such as asparagus. Stockton eventually became home base for migrating workers and the hub of Filipino-American culture in the US. Filipinos coming to town from the farms where they worked tended to congregate on the street called El Dorado, meaning a place of fabulous opportunity.

The four-block Little Manila neighborhood, which was initially a mixed Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese neighborhood, was centered on El Dorado and Lafayette Streets. The city and surrounding area had the largest Filipino population outside of the Philippines. While most Filipino immigrants arriving in Stockton were from the Ilocos region on the northern island of Luzon, there was a diversity of dialects and distinctive cultures in Little Manila. The neighborhood was a bustling, energetic place filled primarily by men (at one time, the ratio of men to women was 14:1).

In the fields, Filipinos became an important part of the farm labor movement that emerged in the 1930s and became nationally known during the 1960s. Filipino farmworkers often faced tiresome, backbreaking work, choking dust from the Delta peat soils, and low wages. These conditions led Filipino farmworkers to develop a strong sense of solidarity on labor issues.

Much of Little Manila was demolished in the 1960s when the Crosstown Freeway was built. Despite this loss, a new generation is preserving the legacy of the neighborhood and Filipino Americans in the Delta, through rehabilitation of historic buildings, the establishment of the Little Manila Foundation, the new Filipino American National Historical Society Museum (see sidebar), and other efforts.

For more information on Little Manila, visit: www.pbs.org/video/kvie-viewfinder-little-manila-filipinos-californias-heartland

Ryer Island, Sacramento County, California. Ranch housing for Japanese and Filipino asparagus workers in world's largest asparagus growing district. Seen across asparagus field. The Japanese barracks in the building to the left. Housing for the Filipino field crew in building to the right. (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

STOCKTON IS HOME TO THE NEW FILIPINO AMERICAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FANHS) MUSEUM

Since Stockton – and downtown Stockton in particular – is the heart of the Filipino American experience, it is fitting that the FANHS museum is in downtown Stockton. The museum, which opened in October 2016, presents educational programs and hosts permanent and rotating exhibits that celebrate the history of Filipino Americans.

337 E Weber Avenue, Stockton
Open Saturdays and Sundays
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or by appointment
www.fanhsstockton.com/fanhs_museum
(209) 932-9037
Erle Stanley Gardner was a seasoned yachtsman who had a love-hate relationship with sailing the Seven Seas. The hatred came from dreadful seasickness, which he described himself as an expert in. Nonetheless, his adventurous spirit persuaded him to embark on many nautical journeys. He sailed to places such as Hong Kong, Manila, Alaska, the peninsula of Baja California, and into the Sea of Cortez to name a few. He loved the thrill he got from sailing to strange lands and visiting foreign ports. When he wasn’t seafaring away into choppy waters (and hurling into a bucket), he practiced law and wrote prolific amounts of pulp fiction novels. His writing is best known for creating the fictional lawyer Perry Mason, but he also wrote of his maritime travels for fun. In his later years, he settled for more peaceful ventures on the Sacramento Delta. He wrote three books about his leisurely days drifting down the thousand miles of inland waterways in the Delta: “The World of Water”, “Gypsy Days on the Delta”, and “Drifting down the Delta”. The books are not to be considered travel guides, nor stories of breath-taking adventure, but more of journal entries about a man’s simple days exploring along the smooth waters. He frequently mentions Giusti’s Place as his favorite Delta hangout because he loved the delicious home cooked meals, as well as the family that owned and operated the restaurant/bar. His books also tell about the early history of the area when riverboats were the means of commerce between San Francisco, Stockton, and Sacramento. As you turn through the pages you will see copious amounts of Erle’s personal photographs of friends, watercraft, and scenery of a Delta past.
"There may have been a time when preservation was about saving an old building here or there, but those days are gone. Preservation is in the business of saving communities and the values they embody."

- Richard Moe, National Trust for Historic Preservation

The story of the Delta’s past, present, and future is told through its buildings and landscapes. The agricultural processing plant that shifts not only from one crop to another but one economic model to another, the community gathering space that is transformed into a museum, the former public building that becomes a hot new restaurant. In the Delta’s fast-growing suburbs, historic preservation allows the community to connect to its past and unique character despite the tremendous amount of new development. In the Delta’s small, rural communities, historic preservation provides a boost for commercial districts and neighborhoods.

The term “adaptive reuse” describes the process of taking a building built for one use and redesigning it for a new use while preserving the building’s historic elements. Here is a sampling of adaptive reuse projects in the Delta over the last few years:

**Clarksburg**

One of the most famous examples of adaptive reuse in the Delta is the Old Sugar Mill (see the Winter 2018 issue), but there are other projects in Clarksburg. The name of the town’s general store - Husick’s – stayed the same when the building reopened in 2007 after a renovation, but instead of hardware, they now sell barbeque and beer (Image 1). The Friends of the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse have been leading an effort to relocate and restore a historic schoolhouse as a possible museum and/or event space. The project has received considerable community support as well as financial and professional assistance from the Commission and Yolo County.

**Hood**

Another restaurant that retains its building’s original general store name is Hood Supply Company, which opened in 2015 as a fine dining establishment. Across Highway 160 is the River Road Exchange, a 100-year-old complex of buildings that originally served as a fruit shipping and processing facility. Portions of the property have been restored, including the Willow Ballroom event venue.

**Locke**

Two of the most recent adaptive reuse projects in this National Historic Landmark are museums. The Boarding House Museum honors the town’s many working men that called Locke home, while the Jan Ying Museum celebrates the important contribution that the Jan Ying fraternal organization had for the community.

**Oakley**

The Del Barba Family has owned a property in Downtown Oakley for more than 100 years. When a street reconstruction...
project took the front facade of the building, the family decided to construct a new facade and will be expanding the building to the rear, creating space for a new restaurant.

**Pittsburg**
The New York Landing Historic District in Old Town Pittsburg is home to two recent historic preservation projects, one completed and one in progress. The 1920 California Theater, which reopened in 2013, received a 2016 Governor’s Historic Preservation Award (Image 2). The Burlessas Building, the city’s first JC Penney’s, is undergoing exterior and interior improvements to accommodate commercial uses on the ground floor and eight apartments on the second floor. The building is reportedly haunted...

**Ryde**
The Mission of Grace Foundation is seeking to transform the former Beaver Union Elementary School, located west of Ryde, into the Grand Island Mission, a Christian conference, retreat and event center.

**Tracy**
Another successful theater restoration in the Delta is the Grand Theatre Center for the Arts, which began as a 1923 vaudeville theater and now hosts an array of programming.

**Isleton**
Several adaptive reuse projects have focused on the historic Chinese Commercial District. The most prominent is the 1926 Bing Kong Tong Building, which served as the center of the Chinese community. The first phase of the project stabilized the foundation and structure and restored the exterior. The Isleton Brannan-Andrus Historical Society is currently working on the interior in anticipation of creating a museum. A few doors down on either side is the Isleton Chamber of Commerce building, which is undergoing renovation, and the Mei Wah Beer Room, which opened last October in a former Chinese gambling hall, brothel, and opium den (Image 3).

**Walnut Grove**
Walnut Grove’s Chinese and Japanese historic districts have had several adaptive reuse projects, including the Miyazaki Bathhouse, the only functioning historic Japanese bathhouse in the US, The Tong Fine Art & Gift Gallery in the former Chinese Masonic Temple (Image 4), and the Walnut Grove Iron Works in the former Imperial Theater. A proposed project is the restoration of the Japanese Methodist Church as an artist live/work space.

**West Sacramento**
West Sacramento has experienced a surge of development along the riverfront. The former Washington Firehouse houses a Burgers and Brew on the first floor and the Station 1 Jazz Club and Bar on the second floor (Image 5). The City is considering potential development options for the 200-acre area around the historic Stone Lock, located between the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Canal and the Sacramento River.
Located on Grand Island three miles south of Walnut Grove, the legendary Ryde Hotel has a lively history that belies its bucolic surroundings along the Sacramento River. First built in 1886, the first hotel burned to the ground in 1911 in a massive fire that consumed much of the town as it then existed. In 1918 the second Hotel Ryde, also called the Hotel McAdam, rose from the ashes on the same site. By the mid-1920s the hotel was hugely popular, so much so that owner Severina Gianetti commissioned Sacramento architect Jens Petersen, the principal architect of the Sacramento Main City Library (1922), to design a new, larger Mission-style stucco hotel next door. The current Ryde Hotel opened its doors in 1927 boasting a sleek, Art Deco motif with black-lacquered bar, ornate wooden booths and stylish rooms that offered celebrities like Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, Lon Chaney and Rita Hayworth a secluded hideaway complete with convenient speakeasy supplied by liquor smuggled in off the river through a tunnel. During this time there were some notorious headlines in the news about the Ryde - including the beating of a couple of “Dry Agents” who happened to pick the wrong place for dinner one night. The older hotel was converted to a grocery store and eventually torn down in the 1930s.

Even when Prohibition ended in 1933, the hotel remained a popular waystation in the Delta. The hotel has hosted musicians from Al Jolson, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong in the early days, to Jimmy Hendrix, The Rolling Stones, and The Doors. These days it hosts a popular Sunday brunch and a welcoming venue for weddings and other special occasions.
Since Sacramento was founded by John Sutter in 1839, there was constant boat traffic between San Francisco, settlements along the River, and Sacramento. Travel through the Delta increased with exploration, new trading opportunities, and the Gold Rush. Cargo boats began navigating the Sacramento River to provide provisions to miners and people living in Sacramento. When boats got to Sacramento the crew would often abandon and head to the gold fields. The abandoned vessels were turned into saloons, stores, warehouses, jails, and hotels, and became the Sacramento waterfront.

Using old newspapers, the State Lands Commission inventoried potential shipwrecks and their locations. Eighty-three sinkings were reported for the lower Sacramento River, fifty-five occurring between 1849 and 1885. Types of boats include the Commodore, a three-masted schooner, that sank in 2 minutes - in 10 feet of water after being rammed by a steamer 3-miles south of Freeport, and the sloop Wasp which sank in Steamboat Slough.

Near the foot of "J" street large portions of a sailing ship were found in 1984. Protruding from mud is a bow section thought to be the Sterling which sank in 1855. Copper sheeting covers the hull and part of the anchor chain dangles; everything on board is likely well preserved. Silt from hydraulic mining covered her quickly, making salvage unsuccessful. Fast moving water, lack of visibility for divers, and silt continue to make recovery unlikely.

Boats that sank in deeper water tended to be sailing vessels that didn’t make it to shore. Steamboats could usually make it to shore, offload people and cargo, and be repaired if worth it - like the 282-foot Yosemite (pictured above) whose boiler exploded in Rio Vista killing 55 people in 1865.

There was much competition between operators to shuttle people and cargo. Accidents mostly occurred from two causes – boilers exploding and boats hitting snags. Boilers exploded due to their strain; so many boats raced on the river. After hydraulic mining started, the river kept filling with silts making it hard for steamers to make it to Sacramento.
APRIL

April 6 - Delta Century Bike Ride - STOCKTON
www.stocktonbikeclub.org

April 6-14 - Creek Week & Delta Waterway Cleanup
www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov/waterway-cleanups-0

April 14 - Opening Day Pittsburg Yacht Club – PITTSBURG
www.pittsburgyc.com

April 20, 21 & 22 - San Joaquin Asparagus Festival - STOCKTON
www.sanjoquiniasparagusfestival.net

MAY

May 12 - Asian Pacific Heritage Festival - LOCKE
www.locke-foundation.org

May 13 - Mother’s Day Picnic - CLARKSBURG
wwwoldsugarmill.com/events.html

May 17 - AMGEN - STOCKTON
www.amgentourofcalifornia.com

JUNE

June 1 - First Fridays - WALNUT GROVE
www.visitcadelta.com/events

June 6-10 - CA Invasive Species Action Week
www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Action-Week

June 9 - Second Saturday’s Explore Isleton – ISLETON
www.isletonchamber.com

June 21 - Third Thursdays - RIO VISTA
www.visitcadelta.com/events

"The trading boat Neponset No. 2 at Knight's Landing on the Sacramento River in California. The boat was built in 1884, lost when snagged in 1921. It was 224 tons, 125.1 feet long."

Photo courtesy of the Dave Thomson Collection at Steamboats.com