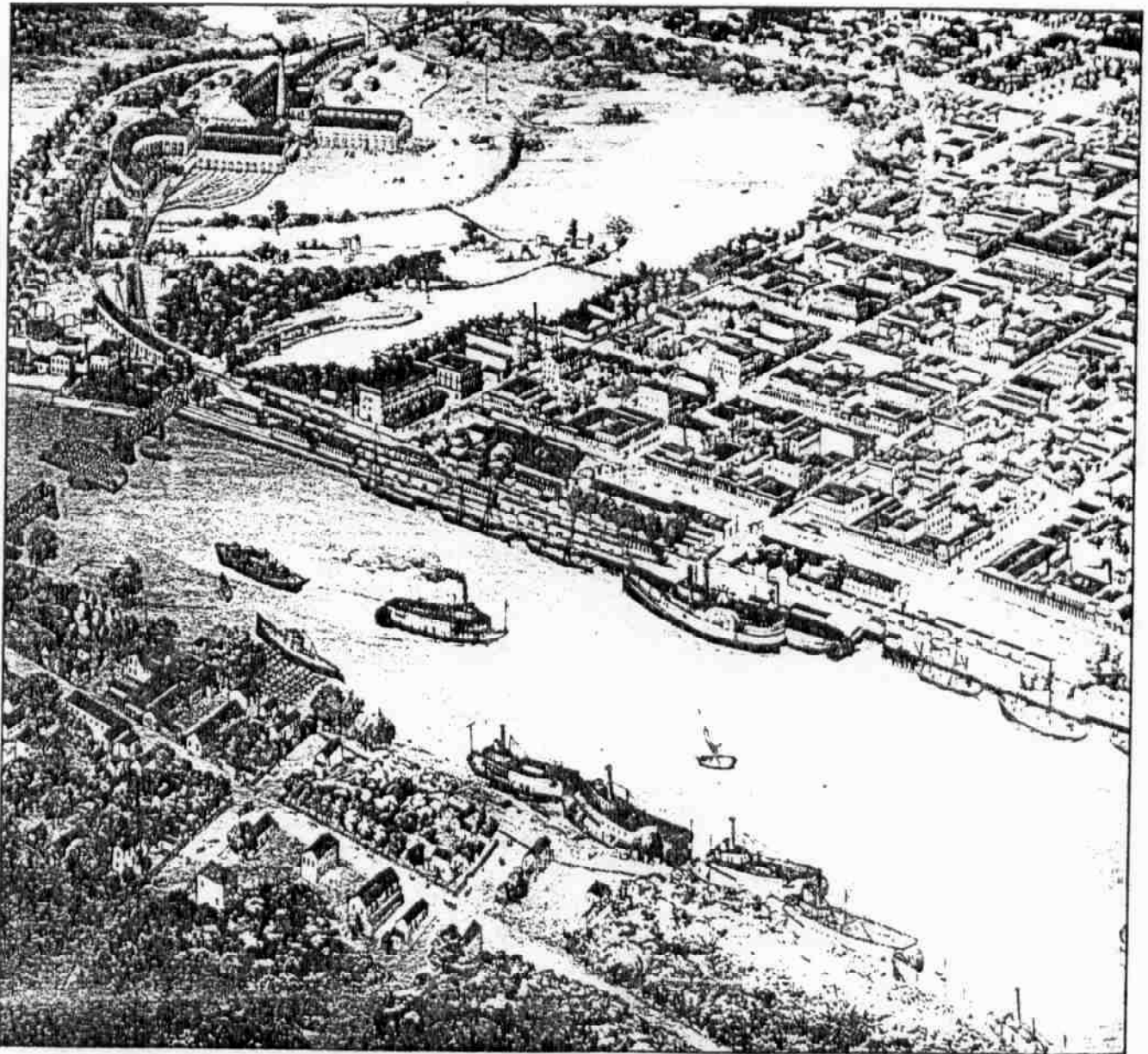

WEST SACRAMENTO

THE ROOTS OF A NEW CITY

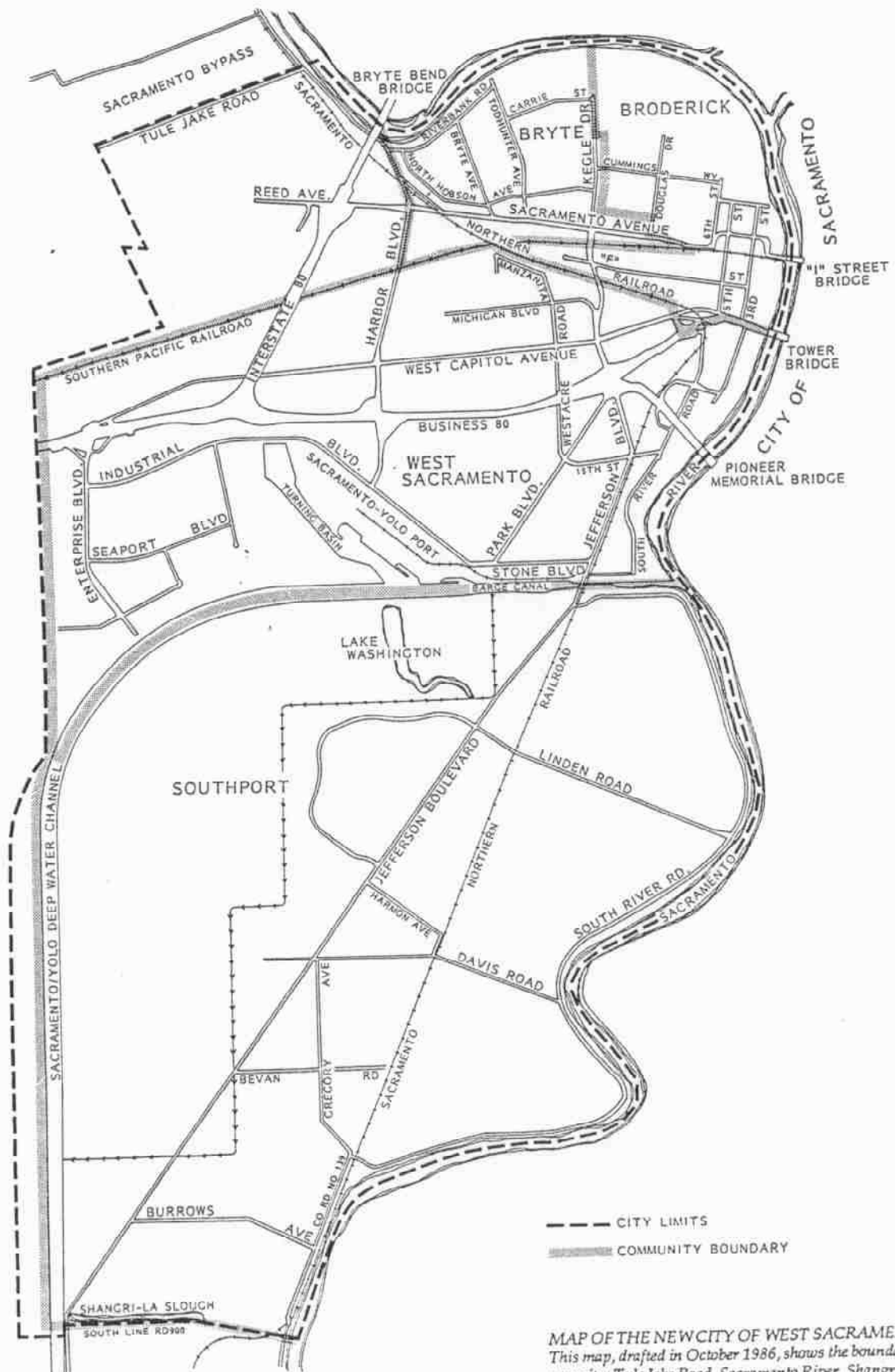
by Shipley Walters



Yolo County Historical Society
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MAP OF THE NEW CITY OF WEST SACRAMENTO.
 This map, drafted in October 1986, shows the boundaries of the new city: Tule Jake Road, Sacramento River, Shangri-la Slough, Deep Water Channel; major streets and highways; railroads, waterways, bridges, etc.
 (Drafted by Kerry Wohlfrom)

INTRODUCTION WEST SACRAMENTO: THE ROOTS OF A NEW CITY

In 1850 a reporter, writing in the early newspaper *Alta California*, described the wooded west bank of the Sacramento River opposite the city of Sacramento as "one of the most beautiful locations for a town in the Sacramento Valley. It is a little retired from the bustle and noise of our thriving city and will make for a private residence one of the most pleasant places in California."

West Sacramento is still a pleasant place for a private residence. It is also much more: apartments and farms, motels and bars, schools and churches, warehouses and storage yards, industrial plants and businesses, billboards and neon signs, parks, playgrounds and marinas, and dominating all, the Sacramento-Yolo Port, with its docks, ships and immense quantities of grain, rice and wood chips. Streets, highways, railroad tracks and a large canal cut across and through West Sacramento. Guarding its frontiers, levees extending as far as the eye can see hold back the water and make the land habitable.

West Sacramento today is a city with boundaries stretching from Tule Jake Road in the north, south along the Sacramento River to Shangri-la Slough, and west to the west bank of the Sacramento Deep Water Channel. Twenty-five thousand people live in the new city, which includes the formerly unincorporated communities of Broderick (the oldest, once known as Washington), Bryte (once known as Riverbank) and West Sacramento, and the new subdivision of Southport. West Sacramento covers twenty-three square miles, and thus is the largest, though not the oldest, city in Yolo County.

The official 1850 map of the city of Sacramento showed the city of "West Sacramento" on the west bank of the river opposite downtown Sacramento. Despite this documentary evidence and the early Sacramento reporter's optimistic appraisal of the area's potential as a town, it would be 137 years before the city of West Sacramento became a reality. Why did this area, which is blessed with ample level land, fertile soil and frontage on an important navigable river, and which moreover is located next door to the state capital, develop so slowly into a city? Let us dig into the city's roots to find some answers.



EARLY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

The surface of West Sacramento today is the result of vast engineering projects of the early twentieth century which channeled the water, reclaimed the land and created a complex network of transportation arteries. But the roots of the city's history go back to a time long before modern machines carved indelible patterns on the land.

Millions of years ago, all the land that lies between the city of Sacramento and Suisun Bay was an inland sea. As the Sierra Mountains on the east pushed up to their present heights, rivers cut channels down the mountain sides, carrying off the winter snow and rains and gradually filling the lower valleys with sediment. In time this land supported life, first the simple grasses and rushes (tules) that could grow in water, and later an abundance of all kinds of flora and fauna.

Because the river flowed slowly when it reached the level land of the valley, it could not quickly carry off sudden increases of water during winter rains or spring thaws. Thus the land next to the river was subject to frequent flooding even before humans arrived. Over time, the river created natural levees, five to twenty feet high, above the flood plain. It was these natural levees that attracted the first human inhabitants to the area we now call West Sacramento.

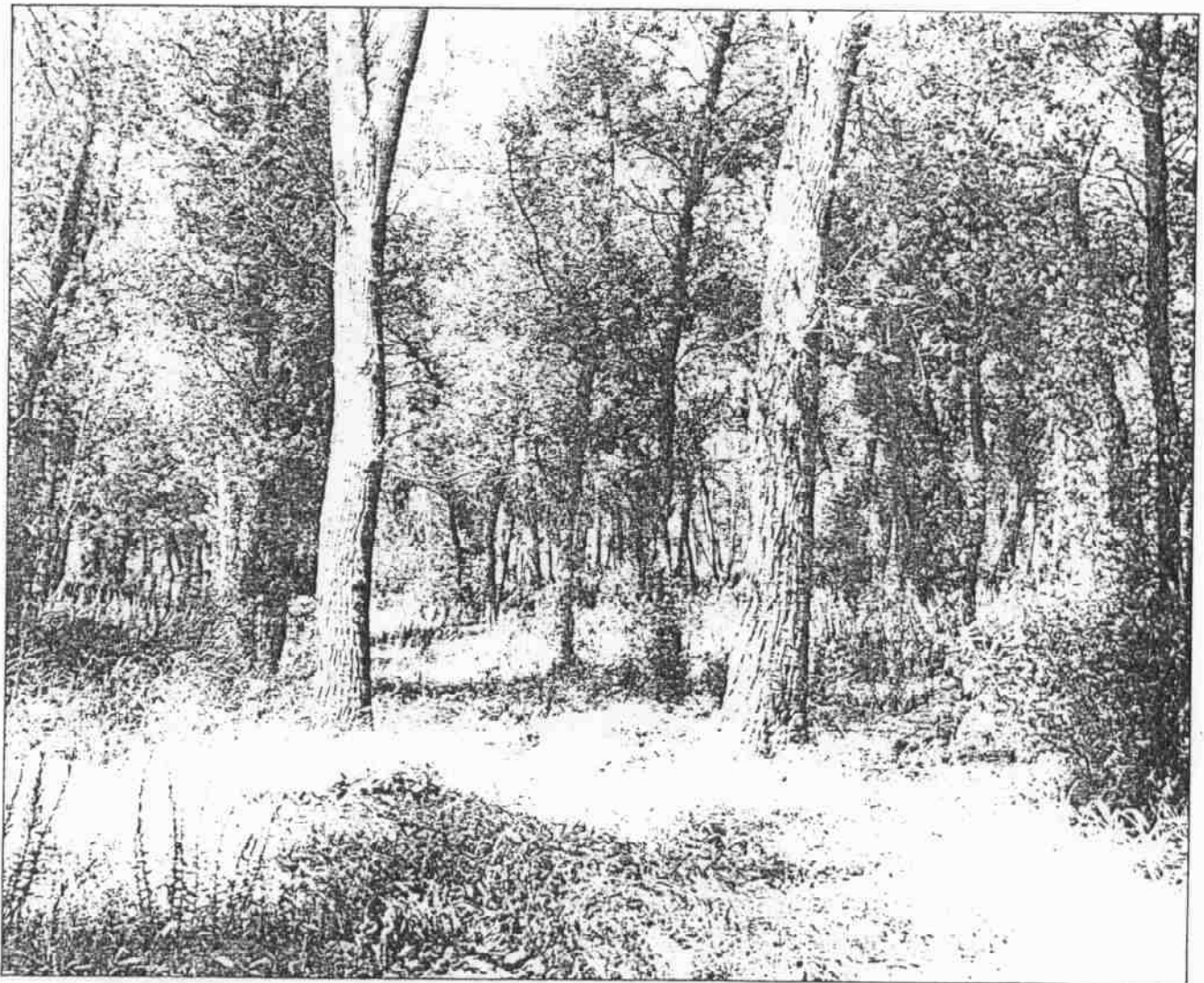
The first known inhabitants of West Sacramento were the Patwin Indians who arrived perhaps 4,000 years ago. They lived in what is now Yolo County, west of the Sacramento River. Other native peoples, Miwok and Nisenan, lived east of the river, but the boundary between these early peoples was not fixed because the river periodically overflowed its banks and shifted its channel, and the people crossed and recrossed its waters in tule rafts to engage in commerce or warfare.

Although most evidence of the lives of these early peoples has been destroyed by the machines which reclaimed the land they once occupied, archaeologists have learned from excavating burial mounds in Broderick, Linden Acres and Green's Lake in the Yolo Bypass that there were several aboriginal villages in the area. These villages were situated on the high ground close to the river where there were dense riparian woods. In winter when the river overflowed, these people moved to high ground, beyond the great tule marshes which lay to the west of the river.

The native peoples lived in a veritable Eden, for deer, elk, antelope, rabbits and other animals lived on the dry land; the wetlands attracted ducks, geese, swans and other birds; and the river teemed with salmon, sturgeon, eels, other fish, crayfish and clams. The staple of their diet was the acorn, which they ground into flour for their bread, and there were also roots, berries, grapes and mushrooms in abundance. They cut willows, tules, tough grasses and vines to make baskets, fishing nets and boats or rafts.

No written records and very few artifacts remain to provide information about the culture of these early people. They lived apparently untouched by Euro-American civilization until the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time California was under Spanish rule, and Ensign Gabriel Moraga was sent by the Spanish Governor in Monterey on a mission to look for Indian *rancherías* (the Spanish word for aboriginal villages), to capture runaway Indians and to find a site for a Catholic mission. Moraga led his men inland, reaching the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers in September 1808. He reported finding no suitable site for a mission, and he named the principal rivers of the valley: Jesus Maria (Sacramento), Sacramento (Feather) and Las Llagas (American).

Other Spanish expeditions, led by Luis Arguello, came up the river from San Francisco in 1817 and 1821, and the first American explorer, Jedediah Smith, arrived in 1826. Soon American, English and French hunters and trappers, attracted by the profusion of fur-bearing animals in the Sacramento Valley, were plying their trade in the area. These visitors brought with them diseases against which the native population had no defense, and in 1833 a great epidemic believed to be malaria swept over the entire valley, killing thousands of the natives. Whole villages were wiped out, and survivors retreated into the hills. When white men came to settle the area a few years later, the few remaining Indians became their employees or slaves, and Patwin culture ceased to exist.



RIPARIAN WOODS.

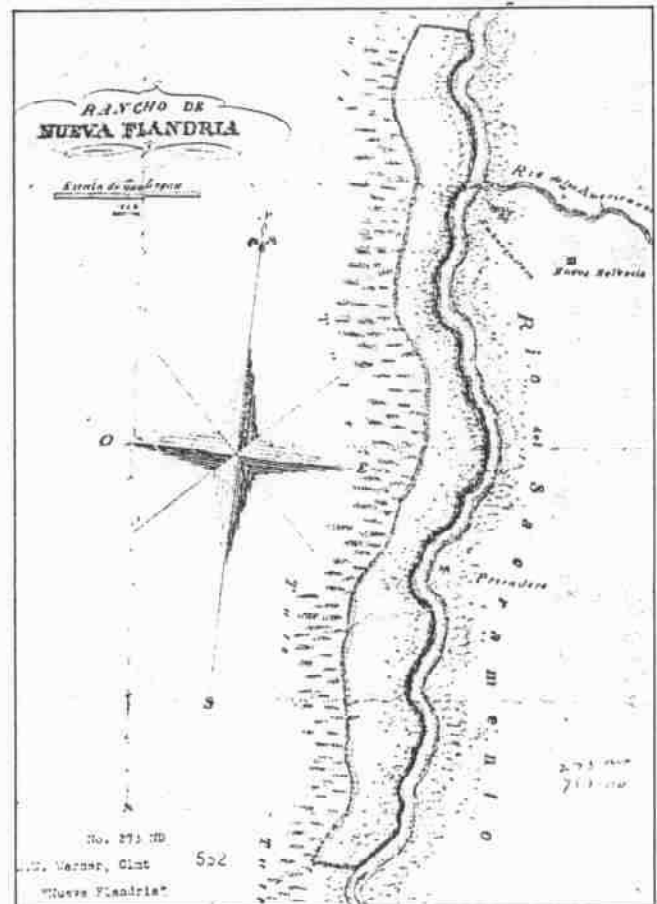
Forest along the west bank of the Sacramento River just east of Lake Washington. These woods of giant oaks, sycamores, willows, cottonwoods, alders, hanging vines and thick underbrush provided shelter, food and fiber for the native peoples, and those who moved here later. The forest was logged during the Depression and the land was cleared for farming and for housing. (Barbara Cameron Collection)

MEXICAN LAND GRANTS

The first white settler in the lower Sacramento Valley was John Sutter, a Swiss who came upriver in 1839 to what is now the city of Sacramento. Sutter was formally granted seventy-six square miles of land on the east side of the Sacramento River in 1841, by the Mexican Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado. There he built a fortified village that became a welcome refuge for a growing number of travelers who were coming west across the deserts and mountains from the United States.

One such traveler, the Flemish Jan Lows de Swart, or John Schwartz as he was also known, arrived in Sutter's Fort in 1841 with the Bartelson-Bidwell wagon train from Missouri. Swart remained in the area for several years, doing odd jobs and fishing for salmon, and he picked up a smattering of English, Spanish and Patwin. In 1843 or 1844 he became the first white person to settle in the West Sacramento area when he built a shack on the west bank of the Sacramento River six miles south of the confluence with the American River. With Sutter's help, Swart applied in 1845 to the Mexican Governor Manuel Micheltoarena for a grant of land one mile wide and twenty miles long, on the west bank of the river from what is now Bryte south to Merritt Island. Swart named his three square leagues (13,000 acres) *Nueva Flandria* in honor of his homeland.

Swart's brother George joined him three years later, and the two men developed what was known locally as the Salmon Fishery. They employed local Patwin to help them catch and dry or pickle salmon. They also kept some livestock and raised potatoes and melons. When the Gold Rush was on and hungry miners would pay high prices for food, the Swart brothers were ready to profit from their labors. Bayard Taylor states in *Eldorado*, the account of his travels in California in 1849, "Before reaching the town of Sutter, we passed a ranche, the produce of which, in vegetables alone, was said to have returned the owner—a German by the name of Schwartz—\$25,000 during the season."



DISENO OF RANCHO NUEVA FLANDRIA.

In the 1840s, when California was under Mexican rule, Mexican citizens could apply to the government for land on which to settle. They submitted a petition and a map (*diseño*) that described the property to the governor. This is the map Jan Swart submitted in 1845 for 13,000 acres of land on the west bank of the Sacramento River.

(Robert H. Becker, *Disenos of California Ranchos*, No. 4)

Swart's *Nueva Flandria* does not appear on John Bidwell's Sacramento Valley map of 1844, but *Rancho de Belamy* does. This rancho, also referred to as *Five Leagues on the Sacramento River*, overlapped part of Swart's claim. It consisted of five square leagues (21,600 acres) lying along the west bank of the Sacramento River between what is now Knights Landing and the Sacramento-Yolo Port. Governor Micheltorena granted the land to William Matthews of Monterey and his Mexican wife Josefa Martinez in the spring of 1844. They apparently never lived on the land, and George W. Bellamy, a former associate of Matthews, gave the rancho his name, claiming that Matthews had sold him the property in 1844.

In those days, the seat of government was the Mexican Territorial Capitol in far-away Monterey. Moreover, the *disenos*—maps submitted to the government with a request for land—were hand-drawn and often vaguely defined. So it is not surprising that Swart and Bellamy claimed to own the same land at the same time. In 1845 Swart was too busy fishing for salmon, bossing his Patwin employees and raising vegetables even to be aware of Bellamy's claim. A few years later, however, he would discover that ownership of his valuable land next to the river was a matter of life and death.

Swart was soon to have a neighbor. One of the travelers who arrived at Sutter's Fort in 1845 was a rowdy jack-of-all-trades named James McDowell. McDowell, who was born in Kentucky in 1803, came to California from Missouri with his wife, the former Margaret Piles (1823-1883) and three young daughters. Looking for further adventure, McDowell promptly went off to fight in the Mexican war, leaving his family at the fort where Margaret could care for their children in safety and relative comfort. When McDowell returned late in 1846, he was apparently ready to settle down. He sought out Swart and, according to Bancroft's *History of California*, bought 600 acres of land from him in what is now Broderick, fenced off one acre, built a log house and moved in with his family. (Bancroft's account was refuted in 1856 by the California Supreme Court, which ruled in a land case that there was no evidence that McDowell had actually owned any land except for the one acre on which the family lived.)

The Swarts and McDowells battled mosquitoes, grizzly bears, flood waters and loneliness in their attempts to build civilization on the banks of the Sacramento. But in the winter of 1848 two events occurred whose consequences would radically change not only their lives but their isolated valley for all time. Gold was discovered at Sutter's sawmill on the American River on January 24, 1848, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war with Mexico, was signed on February 2. Under the terms of the treaty, California became American territory. When news of the discovery of gold reached the United States and the rest of the world, a steadily growing stream of energetic and adventuresome men, and a very few women, began the long journey to Sacramento and the hills.

THE GOLD RUSH

It is hard to overstate the effect of the Gold Rush on the Sacramento Valley. One hundred thousand Argonauts poured through the area on their way to the mines in the first two years after gold was discovered. They came by land over the mountains from the east, down from Oregon, up from the southeast. They came by ship to San Francisco and up the Sacramento River on anything that would float. Some came upriver to Benicia and then overland through western Yolo County.

These travelers soon became a source of wealth for early entrepreneurs. Swart sold them his fish and vegetables, and Col. Joseph B. Chiles and his son-in-law Jerome C. Davis ferried them across the Sacramento River. Chiles, who had come to California in 1841 with the Bartleson-Bidwell party and had journeyed overland to his home in Missouri four times in six years, returned to Sacramento in October 1848 to find thousands of eager gold seekers crowding both banks of the river. He and Davis established a rope ferry near where the I Street bridge is today, and they ferried a man and two animals across the river for six dollars cash.

For two years the ferrymen charged what the traffic would bear and they grew rich. But in 1850, the year California became a state and Yolo County was established, things changed. The Court of Sessions, the county's first governing body, immediately began regulating ferries. The court granted licenses, set tolls, and required that ferries be at least one mile apart. The Chiles-Davis ferry ceased operation on July 8, 1850, when Isaac Newton Hoag and William Carlyle were granted a license to operate a steam-powered ferry between the town of Washington (Broderick) and J Street, Sacramento. The ferry was originally located at the foot of Harriet Street, but was moved on January 7, 1851, to the foot of Mary Street.

Food and ferryboats became sources of profit during the Gold Rush, and so did land. Many of the men who had rushed so eagerly to the mountains returned to settle in the valley within a few months. Some bought land and others took it. Books have been written about the Squatters Riot of 1850 in the city of Sacramento. West Sacramento also had its share of land squabbles, as its early settlers were soon to find out—to their dismay.

In the spring of 1849 there were only three landowners in West Sacramento—the Swart brothers, Bellamy and the McDowells. The Swarts, who came first, eventually lost everything. Jan Swart died on December 3, 1849, of unknown causes. That same day, according to the Yolo County Book A of Deeds, Swart sold one-third of his land grant to William W. Warner for one dollar. A bargain price, indeed, for 4,333 acres! Two days later Swart (though deceased) sold Adolph Palm and Wilhelm Kramer each 160 acres for \$200. The story behind these facts is not known, but many similar stories are told about those days of land squatters and profiteers.

Swart's brother and heir, George Swart, continued to live at his Salmon Fishery, but he lost title to *Nueva Flandria* in 1853 when his claim to the land was rejected by the U.S. Board of Land Commissioners for lack of proof that his brother had been duly granted the land by the Mexican government. The men who bought Swart's land fared better. Warner apparently went into the ferry business, for Lieut. C.J. Ringgold's map of 1850 shows Werner's (Warner's?) ferry running from the land Warner purchased from Swart across the Sacramento River to the mouth of the American River. Adolph Palm became a successful farmer who built a factory on his property, where he roasted and ground chicory to sell as a substitute for coffee.

The second landowner, George Bellamy, also had difficulties with his *Rancho de Belamy*. Despite Bellamy's claim that Matthews had sold the entire five square leagues to him in 1844, Yolo County's Book A of Deeds shows that on January 12, 1850, Matthews sold a piece of the five leagues, one-half mile wide and one-half mile long, to the ferryman Joseph B. Chiles for \$3,000. In July of 1850, Matthews received another \$3,000 for selling the same five square leagues to George W. Bell. That same year Matthews sold Bell 160 acres about one mile north of the American River for \$1,000, even though that parcel was part of the original five leagues.

Matthews then disappeared from the scene, and Bell quickly began selling his five square leagues. Between 1850 and 1851 Bell sold 160 acres to Presley Welch for \$4,000, about 50 acres to William L. Hunt for \$1,500, and 21,390 acres to Milton Little for \$3,000. Then Bell settled on his 160 acres where he farmed and became a valued member of the community. He was elected County Supervisor from District 1 in 1862 and served six years.

Milton Little, who had purchased one-third of the original five square leagues, submitted a claim to the U.S. Board of Land Commissioners to gain legal title to his land. His claim was rejected for lack of evidence in 1855 and again in 1858. In 1856 George Bellamy re-entered the land market and sold half of the same five square leagues to William R. Bassham for \$5,000. Clear title to much of this area was not established until after 1868 when laws were passed allowing large parcels of swamp and overflowed lands to be purchased cheaply and legally.

James McDowell, the third of the original settlers of West Sacramento, became a casualty of the violence which raged during the Gold Rush. He died of gunshot wounds on May 26, 1849. His death was reported in that day's *Placer Times*:

A man named McDowell, a gunsmith of this vicinity, issued from a liquor shop on the (Sacramento) landing brandishing a knife and before the bystanders were conscious of his presence or purpose, he had inflicted a terrible gash in the side of one, and shortly after stabbed another man. He was evidently in a fit of drunken madness, and all efforts to arrest him proved unavailing. While in pursuit of a third man he was shot by him with a pistol, the ball of which penetrated the left breast and passing transversely lodged in the right arm. The names of the men stabbed are Smith and Steward, who were doing well yesterday. Coral, the young man who while pursued discharged the pistol, appears to have acted solely in self-defense. He was put under bonds and is to take his trial in a few days.

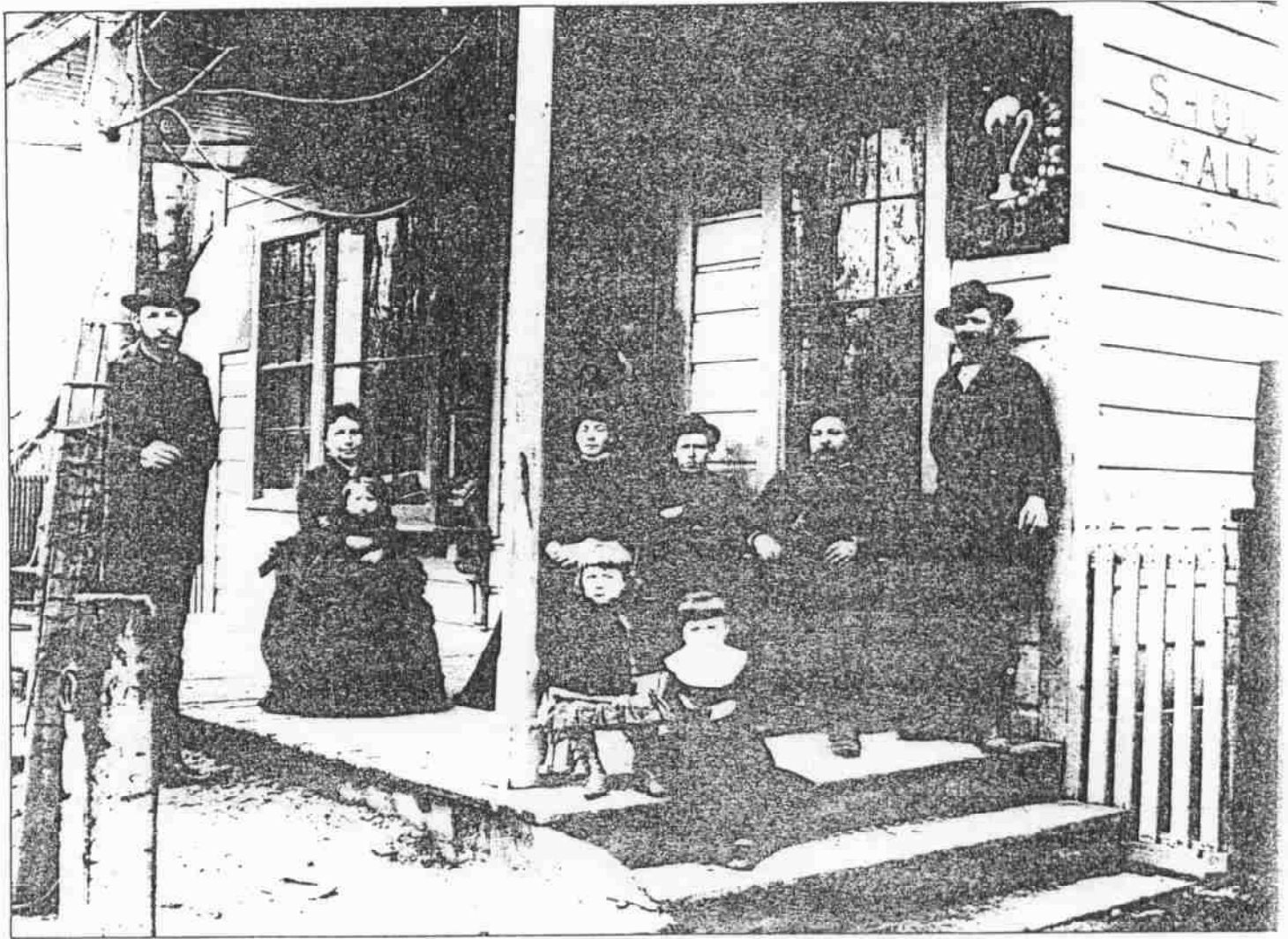
MARGARET MCDOWELL AND THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON

In 1849 James McDowell's wife Margaret was left a widow with only a house and garden, and five children to raise. She first took in boarders to help support her family, and then embarked upon a course which was to make her the founder of a town. In August 1849 she hired a surveyor to map 160 acres of land adjoining her garden. In October she legally established the boundaries of her property, and on her 160 acres she had a town plat of forty-one blocks designed for a town which she called Washington (present-day Broderick). On November 10, 1849, she sold her first town lot to August W. Kaye for \$500. The following February she bought three lots from Presley Welch for \$2,500, and he quitclaimed his other holding in Washington, leaving her the only person in the town with land to sell.

Washington's town plat was not officially recorded in 1849, and the town was called by other names at first: "Margaretta" by Prince Paul of Wurtemberg who wrote an account of his visit to the area in the fall of 1849, and "West Sacramento" by the city of Sacramento in 1850. Mrs. McDowell's choice persisted, however, and by 1851 the town was generally known as "Washington." That name would be used for the next fifty years.

Mrs. McDowell could not read or write, and she asked the County of Yolo to appoint an administrator to look after her property. In June 1850 the county appointed a local lawyer, Mahlon Coon, her legal administrator, and he served in this capacity until October, when, according to California Supreme Court records, he "absconded from the state" with money embezzled from the McDowells. Ferdinand Woodward, an Associate Justice of the Yolo County Court of Sessions, was appointed administrator in Coon's place, and soon he too was tempted by the opportunity to get rich selling the McDowell's land. He sold town lots as Mrs. McDowell's agent, but he also sold some of the lots in his own name and kept the money.

In 1851 Mrs. McDowell's fortunes improved when she married Dr. Enos C. Taylor, a respected medical doctor from New York. The Deed Book shows that "Taylor and wife" were selling lots by December of that year. Three years later Dr. Taylor sued Woodward to regain his wife's exclusive right to handle the sale of town lots, and the California Supreme Court settled the case in her favor in 1856. Woodward's career does not appear to have been adversely affected by his legal difficulties, for he served on the Court of Sessions until November 1854, and was elected District Attorney on September 5, 1855.



WASHINGTON SALOON.

Thirsty travelers found refreshment in the saloons of Washington in the days of travel by horse and buggy. Saloons were typically two-story buildings. The bar, and in this case, Shooting Gallery, were downstairs, and the living quarters for the family of the bartender were upstairs.
(California State Library.)

In the fall of 1849, Dr. J.D.B. Stillman, a visitor to the area, described Washington as "dust, men, mules, oxen, bales, boxes, barrels, innumerable piles everywhere in the open air. The trees were all standing--magnificent great oaks--and a crowd of ships were fastened to the trees along the bank. We pitched our tent on the west bank to escape from the dust and confusion on the other side."

A year later there were 294 men and 26 women living in Washington and a reporter in the December 22, 1850, *Alta California* commented on the improvement in the village:

We are told that there are now located there many families of the first respectability. No place offers greater inducements to families who wish to secure a small piece of land upon which to cultivate a garden and build up a permanent home than this. It is within a short distance of a thriving city where everything can be obtained, and at the same time in a rural district where land can be cultivated, the little niceties of a farmer's life enjoyed.

WASHINGTON BETWEEN 1850 AND 1870

Washington was still basically rural in 1850, and quite different from the thriving city of Sacramento. During the next ten years, however, Washington would begin to develop into a river port, and its fate would be determined to a large extent by circumstances in the boom town across the river.

The Sacramento River was crowded with steamships, sailing ships, barges and rowboats in 1850, and Washington's quiet riverbank directly across the river from the city of Sacramento invited development. The California Steam Navigation Company, a consortium of steamship companies founded in 1854, was the first to recognize the riverbank's potential value. On February 4, 1859, the Company bought from Humphrey Griffith, for \$2,500, one and a half lots on Levee Street, between Harriet and Mary Streets, and established a shipyard where riverboats could be built and repaired. This shipyard became Washington's most important local business, and it continued in operation, under various different companies, for nearly 100 years.

The river was the major highway to Sacramento and the digs for goldseekers who came to California by boat to San Francisco. But there also were roads leading to Sacramento from the north, south and west, which passed through Washington. The newly formed Yolo County government in 1850 declared its first public highway--the road from Washington north to Fremont, the county seat which was situated at the confluence of the Sacramento and Feather rivers. The next year the county named two more public roads: one going south along the river to Merritt's Slough and the other going southwest to Lake Washington and Putah Creek.

In 1857 Gen. William Minis, the County Surveyor, bought the Tule House which was located six miles west of Washington at the junction of the roads from Benicia, Buckeye and Colusa. The Tule House had long been popular as a stage stop and "deadfall," a place where travelers could water their horses while they took a drink at the bar. It was also the western terminus of the Yolo Plankroad Turnpike, a toll road built across the tules in 1855. The Tule House was destroyed by the floods of 1852 and 1861, rebuilt twice and finally torn down on October 20, 1877.

The tules and the river proved to be formidable obstacles for travelers trying to get to Sacramento and the gold country from the west, and some enterprising men and women in Washington made a good living by catering to the needs of those who stopped there for a drink, a meal or a bed. The Olive Branch Hotel and the Bridge House Inn offered meals and rooms for the night, and four saloons supplied drinks for the thirsty. Those wanting to avoid paying the high ferry tolls could leave their



WASHINGTON TOWN PLAT.

Margaret McDowell had the town of Washington surveyed in the fall of 1849 and a town plat drawn. Several of the streets were named for members of her family. The original map no longer exists, but this copy, dated February 16, 1869, was certified to be a true copy of the original. Notice that there is no bridge across the Sacramento River, for the first bridge was built in 1858. (Yolo County Clerk-Recorder's office)

horses at Todhunter's barn when they crossed the river. In addition there were stores, laundries, a blacksmith shop and a steam sawmill which made wine casks along with other wooden products.

Other Washingtonians made their living supplying the markets of Sacramento and San Francisco. Fishermen caught salmon, sturgeon, catfish, eels, crayfish and clams in the river and sloughs. One such fisherman, William Hume, came to California from Maine in 1853 and found he could make fifty to one hundred dollars a day fishing for salmon or hunting game birds. After several years, Hume was joined by his half-brother George and a tinsmith named Andrew S. Hapgood, and they decided to expand his salmon business. In March 1864 they established the first salmon cannery on the Pacific coast on a lighter tied to the west bank of the river opposite the city of Sacramento.

The Humes' eighteen-year-old brother Robert Deniston Hume, who joined them and became their cook, wrote an account of their experience. He reported that their first year was not a great success because the salmon run was light, more of their cans were bad than good, and their lighter sank one night because it was too heavily loaded. The brothers persevered, however, and did better with their canning the next year. But after a poor spring run of salmon, the Humes left the area in October 1866 to try their luck in the Pacific Northwest. All three brothers later made fortunes in canning, and William Hume's salmon cannery in Eagle Cliff, Washington, was a charter member of the Alaska Packers Association which was to play an active role in the development of West Sacramento in the twentieth century.

It was the soil, more than the river, that came to be the real source of wealth for the people of Washington. Most everyone in town had a small plot where corn, melons, cucumbers and sweet potatoes could be raised to sell for good prices in Sacramento. Outside the town, farmers attracted by the rich soil, plentiful water and convenient markets cleared the land, built homes, moved in their families and began to produce the agricultural products for which the county would become famous.

Cows thrived on the tule-covered land, and with milk selling for one dollar a quart in Sacramento, Jerome C. Davis, who was running the local ferry with Joseph B. Chiles, established the first dairy in the county in 1849. The next year, however, after Davis lost his ferry franchise to Hoag and Carlyle and his cows in the winter floods, he moved west to Putah Creek and settled on the present site of the University of California at Davis.

The second dairyman-ferryman in the area was Peter McGregor. In 1852 he ran a ferry across the river to Sutterville from his dairy farm which was located near where Linden Road meets the River Road today. More dairies were established in the years following, and by 1879 there were thirteen dairies on the west bank of the river between McGregor's and the town of Fremont.

The best-known local dairyman was Mike Bryte (1828-1882), whose property was subdivided in the twentieth century and became the community of Bryte. Bryte came to California in 1849 from Ohio and tried his hand at gold-mining and other enterprises for several years. In 1853 Bryte bought the small dairy C.H. Cooley and Wallace Cunningham had established just north of Washington. When the California Steam Navigation Company was formed in 1854, Bryte began selling milk to the steamships and soon was able to increase both his land and his stock holdings. By 1879 he owned 1,500 acres of land in the area, on which he raised 150 cows, 100 young stock and 30 head of horses and mules. Bryte later farmed 2,500 acres in Sacramento County, where he was elected to the County Board of Supervisors and served a term as Sheriff.

Another successful local agriculturalist was Charles Wesley Reed (1834-1896). Reed came to California in 1851, and in 1855 he established the Washington Nursery next to the river, south of the town of Washington. Despite periodic flooding, Reed's plants flourished. The *Knight's Landing News* of January 23, 1864, reported that Reed had "300,000 fruit and ornamental trees and plants, evergreens, shrubs, roses, etc., comprising a general assortment of Nursery articles, for sale, at low prices."

Reed had agents who sold his nursery plants and the fruits from his orchard in the major towns of Northern California. And when the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, Reed was one of the first California orchardists to ship fresh fruit to the East by rail. He accompanied his first load of fresh Bartlett pears to Chicago and triumphantly reported their safe arrival on July 29, 1869, after a week of travel. By 1873 he was growing 20,000 fruit trees on 140 acres, and the Reed Orchard was so successful that Reed gave up his nursery business altogether.

By the summer of 1851, when it was made the Yolo County seat, it appeared that Washington might develop into a "thriving city" like Sacramento. A year earlier, when Yolo County was organized, the county seat had been established at Fremont. But severe floods in the winter of 1850-51 washed away most of the town of Fremont, and prudent heads decided to move the government and its official records to Washington.

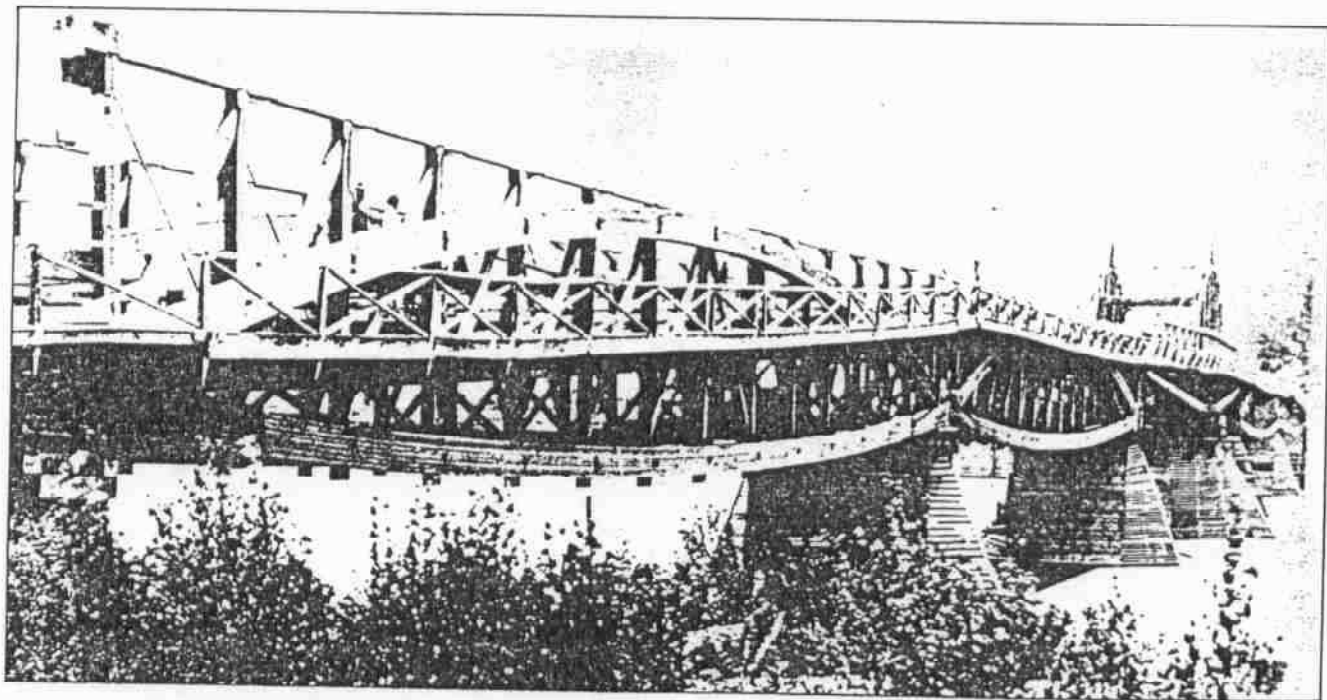
Washington then had a population of 320 and, with new residents moving in every day, the town petitioned for a local post office. The Washington Post Office was established on April 18, 1854, with Amos Waring as the first Postmaster. But the building burned down two years later, and to the distress of the townsfolk, the post office was officially discontinued on July 14, 1856. For the next thirty-three years, Washingtonians had to go to Sacramento for their mail.

A public school was the town's next priority. There had been a private school operating in the area for several years, but unfortunately no records remain to provide any details about it. In 1856 local residents organized the Washington Public School District, which was the third in the county, and built a school building on two lots on Elizabeth Street. The land had been sold to the district for one dollar by Dr. and Mrs. Taylor on December 11, 1856. Within the next ten years there were two more public schools in the area: the Monument Bend School, organized November 5, 1861, five miles upriver from Washington; and the Sacramento River School, organized November 7, 1864, about three miles downriver, near McGregor's ferry.

The town of Washington was less than ten years old when it suffered the first of many blows to its civic pride. It lost the county seat! Increasingly troubled by the town's almost annual flooding, Yolo voters in 1857 elected to move the county seat to

Cacheville, a town well away from the Sacramento River on the north bank of Cache Creek. Three years later they reversed their decision, for Cacheville proved to be a small and rather isolated village, and all the trappings of county government were moved back to Washington. Bad luck struck those in Washington who planned to capitalize on the town's position as the seat of government when heavy snows in the mountains in December 1861, followed by twenty-three inches of rain in December and January, caused particularly devastating floods in the spring. A special election was called on April 21, 1862, to settle the county seat question once and for all. To the chagrin of Washingtonians, the county seat was moved permanently to Woodland.

Washington also suffered an economic blow in 1858 when the Sacramento and Yolo Bridge Company built the first bridge over the Sacramento River. Located where the I Street Bridge is today, the wooden swingspan bridge for pedestrians and wagons cost \$60,000. The bridge was sorely needed, for it provided a quick and reliable way to cross the river even in bad weather. However, after it was built fewer travelers stopped to spend money in Washington, and Washington ferrymen lost business because the bridge tolls (five cents for pedestrians and one dollar and twenty-five cents for a loaded wagon) were considerably cheaper than the ferry tolls.



FIRST BRIDGE OVER SACRAMENTO RIVER.

This wooden swingspan bridge was completed on June 27, 1858. Located about where the I Street Bridge is now, the bridge was 800 feet long and cost \$60,000. Different tolls were charged for pedestrians, horses, wagons and livestock. (Elmer Reuter Collection, East Yolo Friends of the Library)

A few years later, local businessmen and women had a new reason to be optimistic about their future. The railroad was coming to town! The California Pacific Rail Road Company, commonly called the "Cal-P," was building a railroad from Vallejo to Sacramento, via Suisun, Fairfield, Dixon, Davisville and Washington. When the tracks reached Washington in November 1868, Washington residents expected to profit from their town's position as a railhead.

Margaret McDowell Taylor, the founder of Washington, intended to make her fortune selling land along the route of the railroad. First she had to make sure that the land was really hers to sell. She filed suit in Sixth Judicial District Court in Woodland on November 19, 1868, against her husband, claiming that she was the sole owner of all unsold lots in the town of Washington. She asked the court to prevent Dr. Taylor from selling or transferring any property in Washington and to appoint "some suitable person" to manage her property for her.

In her testimony Mrs. Taylor stated:

...the California Pacific Railroad has just been completed to...Washington, which circumstance has caused plaintiff's (her) property to increase greatly in value and to need the immediate care, skill and attention of a prudent man of business by whom it could be made to produce a large revenue...the defendant (E.C. Taylor), once possessing correct habits, has of late years neglected his business and contracted the habits of drinking, hanging about barrooms and gambling to such an extent as to render him incapable of properly attending to or managing plaintiff's property.

Taylor's newly acquired habits apparently did not entirely dull his business sense. While awaiting the outcome of the case, he applied to the State of California for guaranteed title to Swamp and Overflowed Land Survey No. 962, the plat of which is identical to that of the Town of Washington which Margaret had had drawn in 1849. He was successful in his efforts, and he was granted a patent to the land, signed by Governor Henry Haight, on February 3, 1869. Two weeks later, on February 16, he filed a map with the Yolo County Recorder which has been recognized ever since as the official map of the town of Washington.

Mrs. Taylor was only half-successful in her suit. On March 17, 1869, the court ruled that as a married woman she was entitled to *half* the unsold town lots, and it appointed Lucius C. Carpenter as her trustee.

Unfortunately for both the Taylors, as well as other sellers of land in the town of Washington, the anticipated land boom did not materialize. Individual lots which had sold for \$500 or more in 1849 during the Gold Rush, sold for only \$250-\$300 in 1870.

Mrs. Taylor apparently divorced Dr. Taylor after this, for by February 14, 1872, she had regained the right to sell her property as a "femme sole" (single woman). She still had nearly thirteen blocks of unsold land in the town which she continued to sell, lot by lot, until she died at the age of fifty-nine on August 9, 1883.

By 1870, Washington's dream of rivaling Sacramento in importance was fading. Potential business had been diverted from the town in 1869 when the railroad junction at Davisville was completed and the northern rail line to Woodland, Knights Landing and Marysville opened. That same year the Cal-P took over the old Sacramento and Yolo Bridge Company franchise and began replacing the twelve-year-old wooden bridge with a new bridge strong enough to carry railroad cars. When the first train crossed the new bridge to Sacramento on January 29, 1870, Washington permanently lost its position as a railhead.

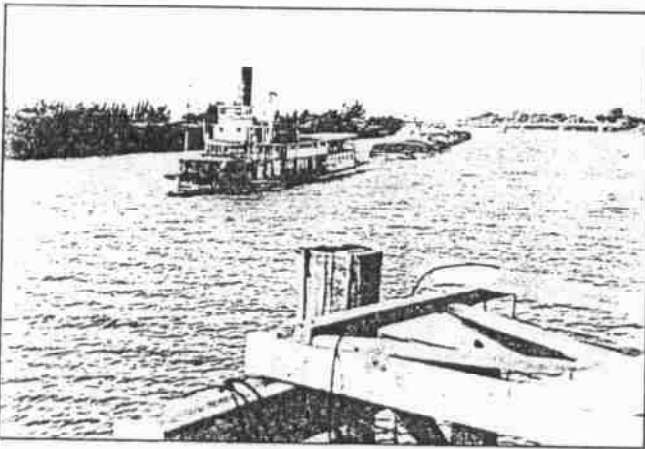
Washington's political and economic problems were made worse by its perennial natural problem—flooding. The floods of 1861-62, which had cost Washington the county seat, had convinced the city fathers of Sacramento that they needed to build higher levees and raise the level of their streets if the city were to survive and grow. By 1871 Sacramento had raised its downtown streets an average of nine and one-half feet, and the city was ready to take full advantage of its new position as a major rail center. The new levees gave added protection along the east bank of the river, but they increased the danger of flooding on the west bank. Washington lacked the capital to finance expensive engineering efforts, so it repaired its levees annually, built two-story houses with living quarters upstairs, and endured the floodwaters.

In 1879 the historian Frank Gilbert described Washington as "a village overshadowed by a city, from which it is separated only by a river. Its people attend church in Sacramento, they go there to buy and to sell, their societies and public amusements are there, and when dead their remains are taken to the cemetery in that city for burial."

A VILLAGE BY THE RIVER IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The population of Washington remained almost constant during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1880 there were 1,155 people living in Washington township, the legally defined area that lay between Fremont on the north and Babel Slough on the south. In 1900, there were 1,398. Despite the continuing growth of the city of Sacramento, whose population reached 29,282 in 1900, Washington was to retain its character as a small rural town until its land was reclaimed and subdivided early in the twentieth century.

Life was anything but sleepy in the village during this period, however. On the bank of the river the shipyard was flourishing. Despite competition from the new railroads, riverboats were still the principal means of transport for freight up and down the Sacramento River, and Washington continued to be the principal boatbuilding and repairing center in the Sacramento Valley for the next seventy-five years.



SAN JOAQUIN NO. 4, AMERICA'S MOST POWERFUL INLAND VESSEL.

The Sacramento River was the main highway in the nineteenth century for people living and farming in the valley. Farmers had landings on the river where boats would stop to load and unload passengers and freight. Boats would stop for even one bag of potatoes. Here is the San Joaquin No. 4, a stern-wheeler built in 1885. It could tow five loaded barges at a time.

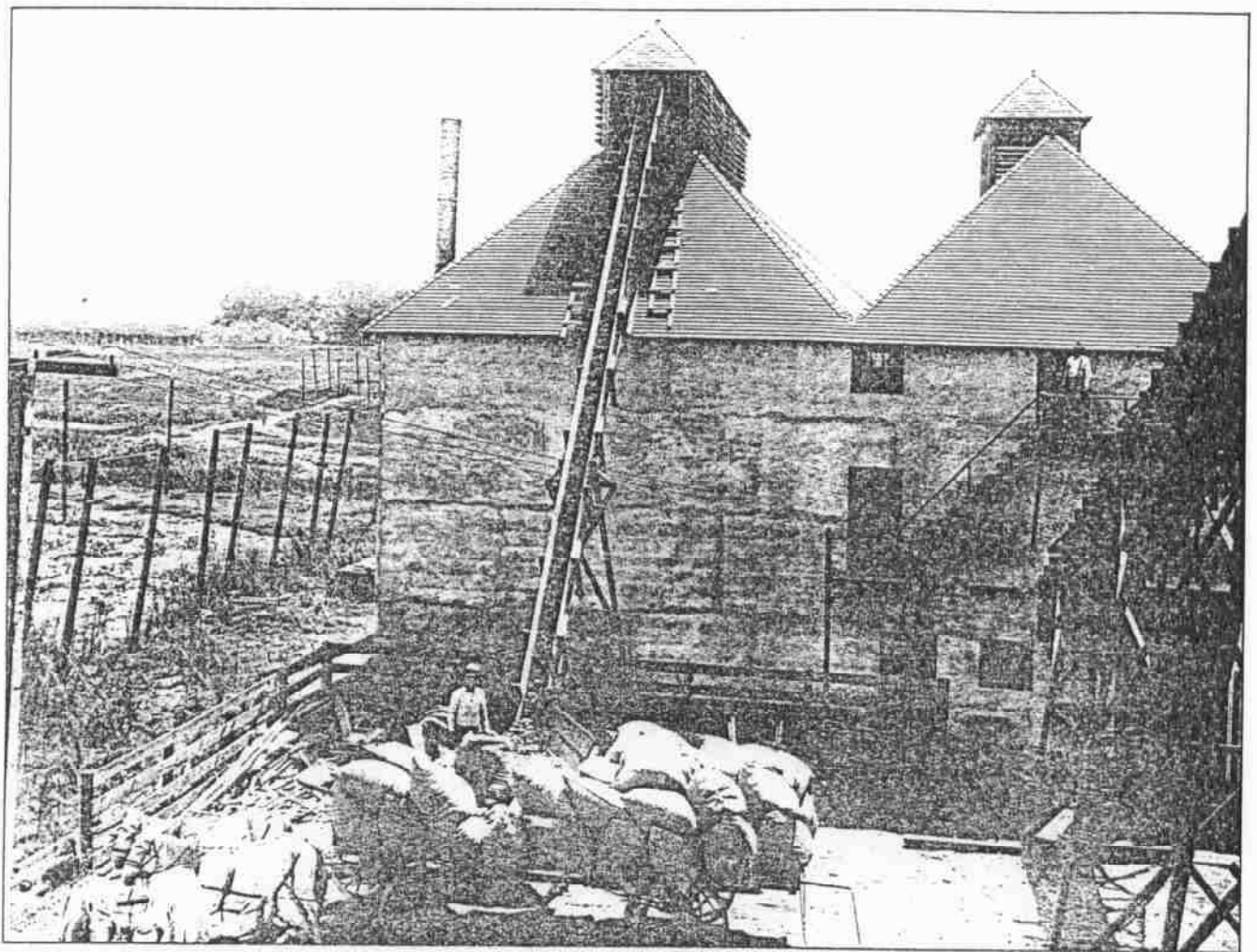
(Elmer Reuter Collection, East Yolo Friends of the Library)

The shipyard was taken over by the Sacramento Wood Company about 1872. This company had been formed May 1, 1869, by Thomas Dwyer and five associates who were chopping and hauling firewood on the upper Sacramento River. (Great quantities of wood were needed to fuel the steamships which ran regularly up and down the river.) They were charged such high freight rates by the steamship companies that they decided to build their own vessels to tow their barges. The first ship they built in Washington was the *Varuna*, in 1873. She cost \$50,000 and could carry 800 tons of cargo. One of their boats, the *San Joaquin No. 4*, a stern-wheeler built in 1885, could tow five barges at one time and when built was reputed to be the most powerful inland vessel in the United States.

In 1882 Dwyer renamed his company the Sacramento Transportation Company. The company built, repaired and operated steamers and barges which hauled all types of cargo between San Francisco Bay and Red Bluff. Over the years Dwyer bought out or merged with other shipping lines, and in 1920 he formed the Sacramento Navigation Company which continued operations on the river until after World War II.

Others in the town of Washington also looked to the river as a source of wealth. Local fishermen continued to find plenty of ready markets for their fresh and dried fish, and for a few years for their locally canned salmon. The ever-resourceful Mrs. Taylor operated a salmon cannery just north of the shipyard, which was valued at \$400 in 1878.

It was the farmers, however, who were the mainstay of the town's economy. They supplied grain, fruit, vegetables and dairy products to the markets of Sacramento and San Francisco, and they shipped increasing quantities of fresh and dried fruit east by train. When Capitol Packing Company opened the first successful fruit cannery in the Sacramento Valley in Sacramento on January 1, 1882, Washington had cause to rejoice. Not only did the cannery buy local produce for canning, but it provided jobs for local workers, particularly women.



HOP KILN NEAR BRYTE.

Hops were grown in Yolo County near the Sacramento River from 1875 to the 1930s. After hops were picked, they were cured in a kiln for ten to twenty hours to reduce moisture so that the hops could be stored without deterioration. Inside the kiln the hops were treated with sulphur to improve color and to destroy bugs. The cured hops were shipped to breweries to be used in making beer.

(C.L. Eddy and Sons Collection, Yolo County Archives)

In 1875 Washington township had a new and profitable cash crop—hops. Reuben Merkley was the first to plant hops in the Monument Bend district northwest of Bryte. Others followed his example. They found that the sandy and silty soils next to the river were ideal for growing hops and the abundant willows on the river banks made convenient hop poles. Patwin, Chinese and later Japanese workers supplied cheap labor for picking the hops. In 1878, 225 acres in this area produced 1,201,025 pounds of hops, almost half of California's total production of 3,059,005 pounds.

For the next fifty years, hops grown on the Beardlee, Lovdal, Blauth, Leeman, Harbinson, Casselman, Merkley, Fourness and Bandy ranches in the Elkhorn district were an important part of the local economy. In 1911, for example, Harbinson earned \$14,134 from his ten and one-half acres of hops when hops were selling at thirty cents a pound. Hop-growing in the area came to an end in the 1930s when it was no longer profitable. Local growers cut production in the twenties when Prohibition lowered demand for hops. After Repeal they increased production and glutted the hop market, with the result that in 1935 the price of hops dropped to twelve cents a pound.

As the farms along the Sacramento River grew more prosperous, they grew more vulnerable to the river's flooding which had worsened annually. Hydraulic mining along the Feather, Yuba and American Rivers, which had begun in 1853, was booming in the 1860s. Tons of debris washed down into the valley, raised the normal water level and combined with the normal run-off from winter storms to cause floods even more severe than the one in 1862. In January 1868, when the American River tore away the levee north of Washington, flood waters eight feet deep swept through the Tule House and along the Yolo Basin to within three miles of Woodland. In the winter of 1871, the railroad track between Davisville and Washington was washed out, and trains did not run on the line again until September 1872.

Bad floods occurred every year or two after that. In the flood of 1881, Mike Bryte was able to keep his sense of humor even though his dairy ranch was almost entirely underwater. He told a *Sacramento Bee* reporter,

In the morning we look out of the second story to see if any of the valley is still in sight. If it is, I go downstairs and take soundings in the cooking stove. If it's full of water I call down the boys and we set to work on the pumps...We keep bailing until the meal is cooked and grub eaten. Then we swim out to the barn and twist a cow's tail so that she turns over to be milked. When we finish we give a reverse twist and right'er...Next year we hope to teach the cows to swim up to the house to be milked.

Flooding, of course, was more than a local annoyance; it was a problem for the entire valley. State laws passed in 1861 and 1868 provided that landowners could join together to form a reclamation district for the purpose of building levees and drainage canals to protect their land. It was the hop-growers and Mike Bryte who organized the first reclamation district in Washington township. R.D. 537, called the Lovdal District for Olaf Anthony Lovdal, the hop-grower who was its principal organizer, was formed on September 10, 1891. It included about 3,000 acres of mostly hops. Though the district built and maintained levees along the river, flooding of the area was not effectively controlled until the massive reclamation efforts of the twentieth century.

In 1890 there were 1,247 people living in Washington township, and the town of Washington was becoming a true community. The year before, residents had petitioned for a local post office. Their petition was granted on November 6, 1889, and Mrs. Christina Fourness who had lived in Washington with her machinist husband Dyson Fourness since 1873, was appointed Postmaster. Since there was another post office named "Washington" in Nevada County, the name "Boruck" was arbitrarily assigned to the town's new post office. The citizens of Washington were indignant over the new name, which they neither liked nor understood, and the post office lasted only six months. The town was again without a post office for over three years, until finally, on October 25, 1893, the Broderick post office was established. Except for brief periods of closure in 1895 and 1909, it has served the area ever since.

Broderick was named for David C. Broderick, a hot-tempered California Senator who had the dubious distinction of being the last man killed in a legal duel in California, on September 13, 1859. There is no evidence that Senator Broderick ever lived in Washington or had any particular connection with the town. Local residents continued to call the area Washington until the next generation finally accepted the name Broderick in 1914.

Along with a post office, Washington in the 1890s was acquiring some of the other amenities of urban life. Water, for residential and commercial use, was a basic local need. The Washington Waterworks had supplied water to the town since 1870, but now citizens were demanding a better water supply. Local citizens, led by Eli Fourness, the son of the Boruck Postmaster, were granted a franchise on July 8, 1885, to form a new company to erect and maintain water works. They sold shares and raised \$6,000 capital, and on January 29, 1897, the Washington Water and Light Company formally incorporated. It was to supply water, lighting and electricity to the Town of Washington for fifty years.

The water was desperately needed for fire protection in a town where most of the houses and businesses were made of wood. The citizens who worked to get the water company also established the Washington Fire District in 1896. Fire-fighting was pretty much a neighborhood activity until 1902 when a volunteer fire department was formed with Jerome D. Barry as the first fire chief. Their equipment, a hand-drawn cart with 500 feet of hose and a 31-foot extension ladder, was stored in Valentine Hauser's barn at Second and D streets.

Though Washington was a community with considerable civic pride, it was not a city. Its governmental services were supplied by Yolo County. Law and order were maintained by the Justice of the Peace and the Constable, and local roads were the responsibility of the County Supervisor. It did have a town hall, however, and when the old one had to be replaced in 1906, local residents and the county shared the \$2,520 cost of constructing a new one. The new two-story building, topped with a distinctive steeple, was located on D Street, between Second and Third streets. The Fire Department and Justice Court were housed downstairs, and there was a large auditorium upstairs which was used for meetings and social gatherings.

Washington residents finally had a local newspaper in 1901 when Peter A. Fitzgerald began publishing the *Yolo Independent*. The paper was financed by liquor interests principally to fight the Anti-Saloon League which was actively promoting temperance and closure of establishments selling alcoholic beverages. Fitzgerald did print local news, however, and was soon advocating "home rule" for the community.

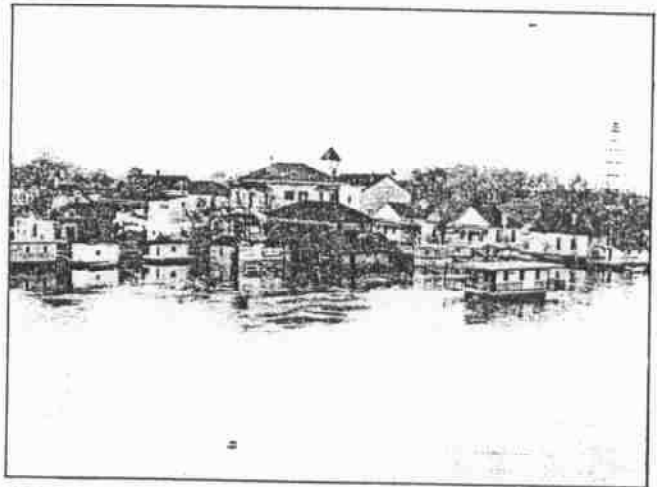
The idea of "home rule," or incorporation for Washington did not originate with Fitzgerald. Some people favored annexing the town to the city of Sacramento, and serious but futile efforts to accomplish this were made in 1861, 1878, 1908 and 1911. Others favored incorporation. In 1893 a petition was circulated among the 700 voters of Washington advocating the incorporation of a city to be called "Blaine." This effort failed, as did similar efforts in 1901, 1914 and 1917 to incorporate a town of Washington. No clear consensus on the need for incorporation ever emerged, perhaps due to the lack of strong local leadership and organization. The dream of incorporation was not to vanish completely, however, and in the second half of the twentieth century, it was to emerge again as a major community issue.

YEARS OF RECLAMATION AND CHANGE

Around the turn of the twentieth century wealthy outsiders began eyeing the Sacramento Basin as an area ripe for investment. The Commonwealth Club of San Francisco made a study of the Sacramento Valley in 1903. The report of their findings, issued in May 1904, indicated that fortunes could be made there in land development if flooding were controlled and the land reclaimed.

The first company organized to reclaim and develop land in eastern Yolo County was the West Sacramento Land Company which incorporated on February 6, 1907, with a capital stock of \$600,000. The company's principal shareholders were San Francisco capitalists—members of the Lilienthal, Sloss, deSabra and Hammon families—who had developed the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. At this time they were financing the Northern Electric Company which was building an electric interurban railroad in the Sacramento Valley. They were interested in purchasing land across the river from downtown Sacramento for their railroad terminal and for subdivisions along the route of their proposed railroad.

By an unfortunate coincidence the worst flood in the history of the Sacramento River occurred that winter, in January 1907. Water in the river flowed at the rate of 600,000 feet per second, 100 times the normal flow. The levee broke wide open on the Kripp property, near present-day Fifteenth Street and Jefferson Highway, and water twelve feet deep poured through the break. Young boys, looking for adventure, explored the once-familiar roads in rowboats. E. "Fish" Curry, a life-long resident of Broderick, was twelve years old at the time, and he recalled rowing into the ground floor of the home of one of his Italian neighbors where barrels of red wine were stored. He removed the bung from one of the barrels to take a forbidden taste, and was horrified to find that he could not replace the bung. He rowed away as fast as he could, leaving behind a telltale red stream which flowed until the barrel mercifully emptied.



FLOODING IN WASHINGTON.

Washington suffered from almost annual flooding until the massive reclamation efforts of the early twentieth century. Some residents protected their belongings by keeping them on the second floor of two-story homes; others lived on houseboats in the river. This picture, probably taken during the flood of 1907, shows the Washington Town Hall in its original location on D Street, between Second and Third.

(Mattie Manchester Collection)

The floodwaters finally receded, and the developers resumed their operations. While the ground was still wet, F.J. Woodward bought 663.86 acres of Swamp and Overflowed Lands just south of the town of Washington for less than \$100. He turned over the land to the West Sacramento Land Company for \$331,940 in cash and stock, and at the company's first stockholders' meeting on February 6, 1907, he was elected president of the company. Woodward agreed to be the seller of the land which the company agreed to put into "marketable condition."

Draining the swamps and clearing off the tules to make the land "marketable" proved to be a costly business, however, and the West Sacramento Land Company did not have enough capital to get the job done. After three years of financial problems, a new company, the West Sacramento Company, was

formed to try to complete the work. The new company incorporated on February 17, 1910, with \$2,000,000 capital, and shareholders of the old company were offered one share of the new company for 2.80 of their old shares. After a majority of the shareholders approved the sale, the West Sacramento Company took over all the land and assets of the old company, which was formally dissolved on July 8, 1912.

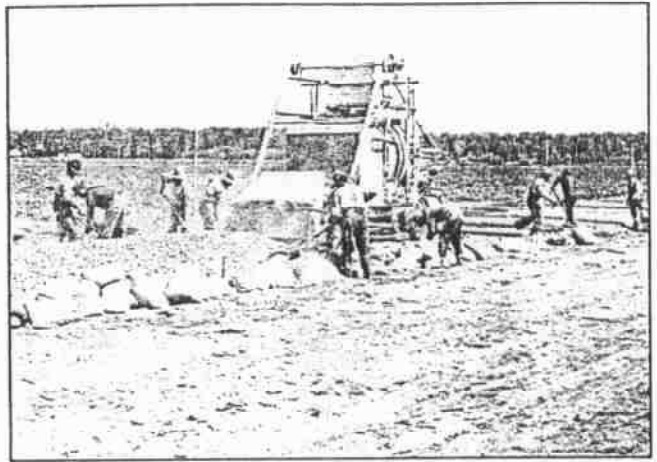
The directors of the new West Sacramento Company had big plans. Within the next two years, they nearly doubled their holdings in the area to 11,202 acres, and they petitioned the state legislature for permission to organize a reclamation district. Despite opposition from some of the small landowners in the area, R.D. 900 was established on March 22, 1911.

The same capitalists who backed the West Sacramento Company also financed the development of the Elkhorn and Clarksburg districts in Yolo County, and the Natomas area in Sacramento County. Their proposals to reclaim the Yolo and American Basins, without taking into consideration the need for overflow channels in flood time, pressured the state government into approving the long-debated Sacramento Flood Control Plan. The plan, which was adopted in 1911, called for joint efforts of the state, federal government and private enterprise to build high levees along the river and a series of weirs to divert excess waters into bypasses in the Sacramento Valley.

Reclamation of East Yolo took six years and cost \$2,500,000. It began April 5, 1910, with the formation of a reclamation district, R.D. 811, to reclaim 1,069 acres in the Bryte area. Actual construction of levees was begun by R.D. 900 on April 15, 1911. Mammoth clamshell dredges of the engineering firm of Haviland, Dozier and Tibbetts were used, and the land was changed for all time.

The West Sacramento Company's Annual Report for 1912 presented figures that convey the ambitious scope of their project: 574,000 cubic yards of dirt excavated to create the main drainage canal; 3,037,183 cubic yards of fill dredged up to build thirteen miles of levees along the Yolo Bypass and the river; 530 acres of stumps and brush cleared, yielding 3,359 cords of wood for sale and enough brush to protect three and one-half miles of riverfront levees; 3,500 American elm trees planted along Jefferson Boulevard and 7,500 weeping willows on the shores of Lake Washington; and seventeen square miles of level dry land reclaimed for farms, homes, factories and warehouses.

All of this work was done in a surprisingly short time. By 1916, five years after construction began, most of the levees along the river and the eastern side of the Yolo Bypass were built. During the same period, state, federal and other reclamation districts



CLEARING THE TULE LANDS.

After the levees were built and the swamps were drained, the land was cleared. Tules, the rushes that grew ten to fifteen feet high in the swamplands of East Yolo, were flattened by steel cables pulled between two tractors. Trees and large bushes were cut down and their roots pulled out by tractors, as seen in this photo. The wood was sold for lumber or firewood, and the brush laid on the levees to prevent erosion.

(Barbara Cameron collection)

were working on other projects in the area: the Yolo Causeway, completed in 1916; and the Fremont and Sacramento weirs and Sacramento and Yolo by-passes, all completed by 1917. With the completion of these projects, the normal flow of the Sacramento River was confined between high levees, high waters were shunted harmlessly through weirs into bypasses, and the land behind the levees was reclaimed for agriculture and development.

Included in the plans for residential and commercial development of this area were railroads that would carry commuters cheaply and conveniently to and from Sacramento. On August 28, 1911, a Northern Electric Company subsidiary, the Sacramento-Woodland Railroad, began building an electric interurban rail line from Sacramento 17.93 miles to Woodland. The route crossed the Sacramento River at M Street, ran west to Washington, northwest to Elkhorn and then west across the Yolo Bypass on a wooden trestle. The company also built a new bridge across the river, the M Street Bridge, to carry its trains and State Highway 175. The railroad, which began operation on July 4, 1912, was sold to the Sacramento Northern Railroad in 1918 and was commonly known as the "Sacramento Northern."

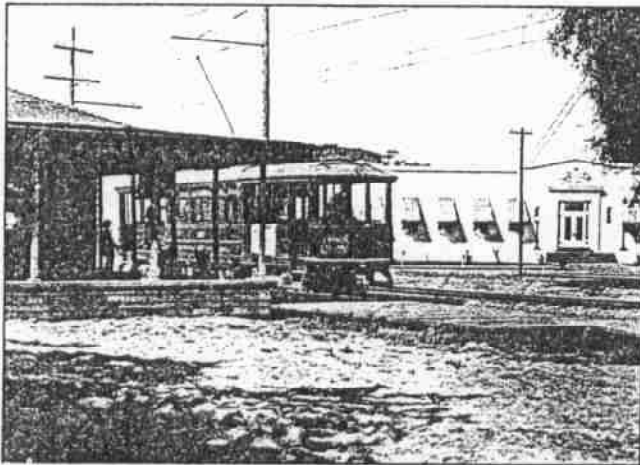
Soon local area residents, who were accustomed to taking a Southern Pacific train or a riverboat to Oakland and the Bay Area, had another means of transportation. In 1913 the Oakland, Antioch and Eastern Railroad built a new electric interurban line from the west through Contra Costa County, across the river by ferry at Chipps, and north along the Suisun marshes to West Sacramento and Sacramento.

Known as the "Sacramento Short Line," it ran seven trains daily in each direction and stopped at new platforms in West Sacramento called "Westgate," "Jefferson," "Bevan" and "Riverview."

The West Sacramento Company, eager to attract buyers for their family homes in West Sacramento, built an electric streetcar line out from downtown Sacramento in 1913. The company operated the line for two years, then sold it to the Sacramento Northern which operated it from 1915 to 1924, when it was abandoned as too costly.

The West Sacramento Company also planned to encourage commercial and industrial development in East Yolo by building a belt line from West Sacramento to Rio Vista to transport freight. The company organized the Westside Railroad in 1911 and started laying track. The railroad had financial and other difficulties right from the beginning, and only 600 feet of Westside track were laid south of the Westgate station. However, the railroad did run as far as Riverview on Oakland, Antioch and Eastern tracks. The company sold the railroad in 1925 to the Western Pacific Railroad which built a branch line that was still carrying freight south to Clarksburg and Oxford, in Solano County, in the 1980s.

The Southern Pacific, which had been California's principal railroad since 1869, also was spending money in East Yolo during this period. Increasingly heavy rail and automobile traffic across the Sacramento River led the company in 1911 to replace the old red railroad bridge with a new double deck steel truss. The new I Street Bridge, still in use in the 1980s, was built with railroad tracks on the bottom



CAR 26 AT THE WEST SACRAMENTO STATION.

The West Sacramento Company built a streetcar line in 1913 to attract commuters to the new community of West Sacramento. This picture, taken in 1915, shows the streetcar arriving at the station opposite the newly completed headquarters building of the West Sacramento Company at Fifteenth and Jefferson. The streetcar was taken over by the Sacramento Northern in 1915. It operated until 1924.

(Julius Feher Collection, News-Ledger)

deck and State Highway 16 on the upper deck. The company also built a new approach to the bridge on the Washington side, and moved the five-year-old Washington Town Hall to a new location on Third Street between C and D streets.



ROADBUILDING IN 1912.

The County Supervisor was responsible for most road-building in the county, and his crews used gravel or macadam to surface the roads. The West Sacramento Company experimented with Portland cement to build 3,000 feet of road in the Bryte area in 1912. Though this experiment was successful, it was expensive, and cement was not widely used in the county for many years. (Julius Feher collection, News-Ledger)

During this period the number of automobiles crossing the river on the new bridges was increasing daily, and the roads on the west bank were not adequate to handle the traffic. Building and maintaining roads had been a county government responsibility since 1850, but now the state and private companies also were doing their part to improve the roads in East Yolo. The county macadamized and oiled the county road west of Washington in 1911, and the same year the state began construction of a paved road from the M Street Bridge to the eastern edge of the Yolo Basin and an elevated two-lane causeway across the Yolo Bypass. The Yolo Causeway, which was 3.1 miles long and cost \$400,000 to build, was completed in 1916. A three-day celebration held that year from May 12 to May 15 heralded the opening of the first all-year, all-weather road across the tules.

The West Sacramento Company was also working on behalf of the motorist. In 1912 the company built an experimental road 3,000 feet long in Riverbank (Bryte). It was paved with Portland cement and sand because, as the company reported at the time, "Conventional water-bound macadam roads, while meeting successfully the general requirements of horse drawn traffic, are not well adapted for tractive vehicles, especially heavy auto-trucks and fast driving automobiles." The experiment proved successful, but it would be ten more years before the major roads in the area were adequately surfaced.

COMMUNITIES DEVELOP IN EAST YOLO

Between 1900 and 1920, the population of what is now called West Sacramento doubled, from 1,398 to 2,638. During this period, also, three distinctly different communities began emerging in the area.

BRODERICK

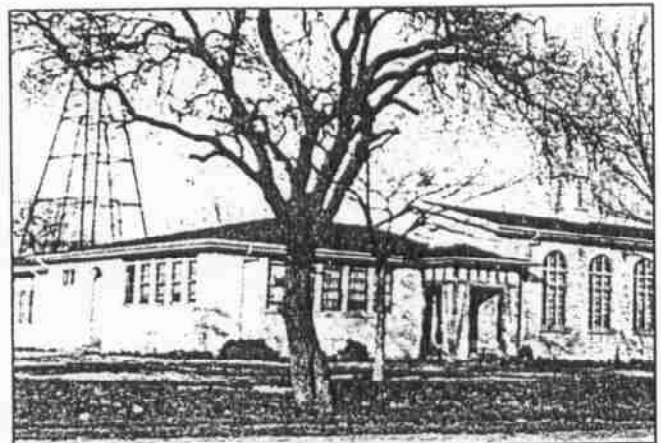
The oldest community, Washington, which Margaret McDowell had founded in 1849, adopted the name Broderick in 1914 at the urging of the Washington Improvement Club. The club had been started six years earlier by young women interested in beautifying their town. Their first step was to number all the houses. By 1912 the club had male and female members, and it was backing candidates for the local school board and promoting improvement of the city's streets.

In 1916 when plans were announced for the grand opening of the Yolo Causeway, Improvement Club members wanted to make sure that their town would make a good impression on visitors, and they urged all property holders to clean their premises thoroughly. The club then enthusiastically joined with the Riverbank Improvement Club to build a float for the dedication parade. On it were proudly displayed the products of the area—hops, fish, boats and alfalfa.

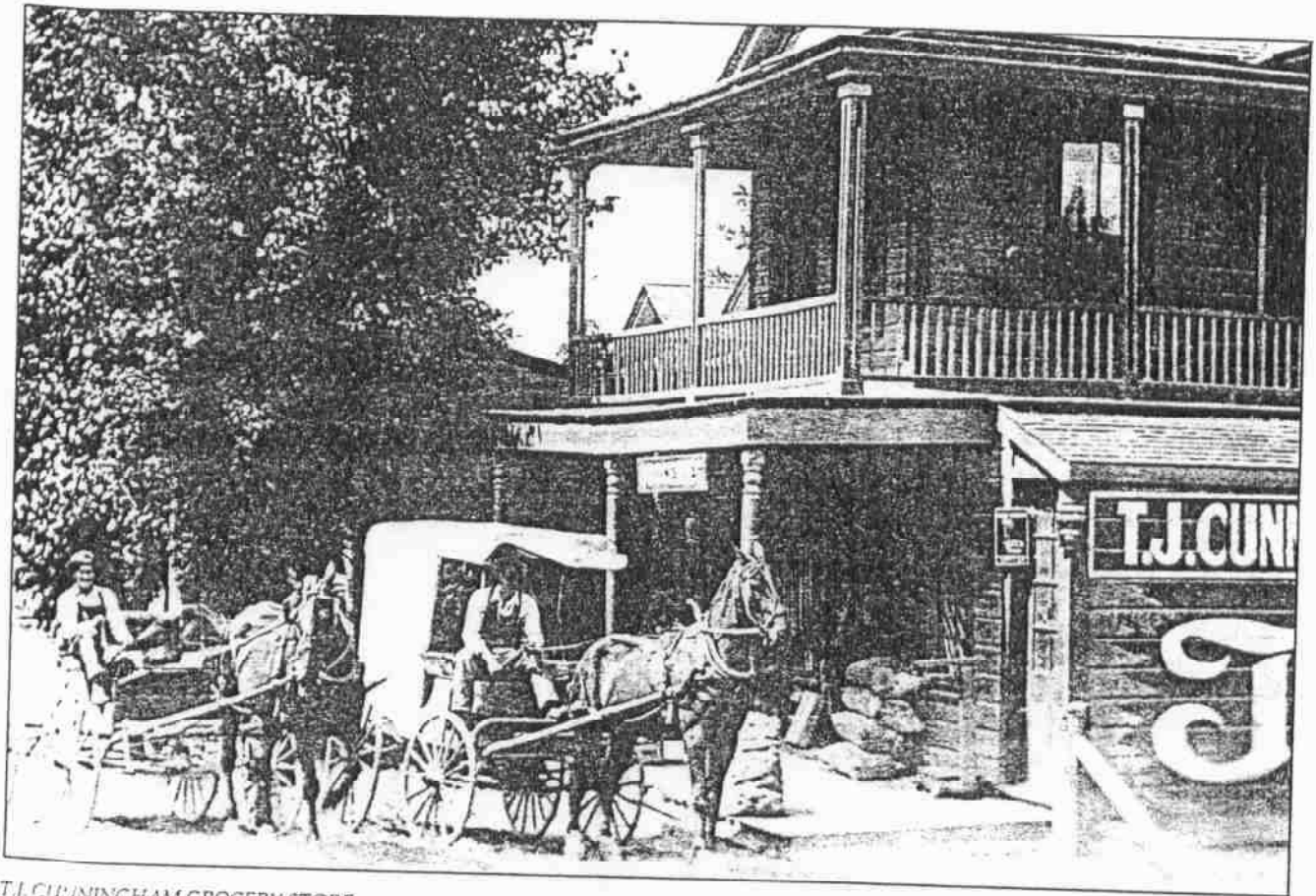
The parade route was to cross the I Street Bridge and pass through Broderick en route to the Yolo Causeway. On May 11, 1916, the morning before the parade, club members decorated the bridge with welcoming banners and roses in a special gesture of friendship. But on the morning of the celebration, the parade passed over the *M Street Bridge* and through West Sacramento, "thus giving the people of Washington a direct slap in the face which they will likely never forget and which they will resent on every occasion hereafter," the *Yolo Independent* reported the following week.

Who were the people of Washington and where did they come from? In 1915 there were 1,000 people living in Broderick. Some were descendants of the people who had bought some of the original town lots from Margaret McDowell Taylor: immigrants from the American Middle West and East, from England, Germany and other northern European countries. Others came later. There were Chinese, mostly single men, who had been brought to this country to work on the transcontinental railroad. After the line was completed in 1869, some of them moved into Washington and found work as levee-builders, farmworkers, cooks or laundrymen. Italians began arriving, too, soon after the turn of the century, from Tuscany and Piedmont and they stayed to run boarding houses, restaurants and saloons.

The town in which these people lived was a pleasant place with tree-lined streets and attractive two-story homes. The town hall was the center of many of the town's political and social activities, and people went to the local post office not only to get their mail, but also to check out books. (A branch of the County Library had been established in the



THE WASHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL.
In 1917 the residents of Washington built a new elementary school for their children. The building, which cost \$40,000, was located on C Street between Third and Fourth streets.
(Elmer Reuter collection, East Yolo Friends of the Library)



T.J. CUNNINGHAM GROCERY STORE.

Farmers and townsfolk alike shopped at this store, which was located at 410 Second Street in Broderick. Horses and buggies were still the principal means of transportation here in 1915, though 100 cars a day passed through the town on the highway from Sacramento. This number increased to 6,000 cars a day by 1920. (Mattie Manchester collection)

building on October 10, 1910.) Children went to school in the old Washington Grammar School on Third Street, which had been built in 1857, until 1917 when district voters, led by the recently formed Parent-Teacher Association, approved a \$40,000 school bond issue and built a new elementary school on C Street.

It was in 1915 that the first two churches were built in Broderick. Before that time Catholics and Protestants alike went to church in Sacramento or listened to itinerant preachers in makeshift quarters. That year the Catholics built the Church of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament on E Street between Third and Fourth, and the Protestants built the Community Baptist Church on Fourth Street.

The business district of Broderick was sixty-five years old in 1915 and still dominated by the river. The Sacramento Navigation Company shipyard remained the major local industry, although for a time it had a local competitor in the Pankost Fish and Boat Company. Samuel Peter Pankost, a Pennsylvania Dutchman, had established a fishing

and boat works on the river bank north of the I Street Bridge in 1909. For ten years his company sold fish, wood and fishermen's supplies and built, serviced and operated towboats and barges on the river. After a fire in July 1919 destroyed the boat works, Pankost and his family gave up the business and moved away from Broderick.

The other businesses supplied the needs of local residents and travelers. The *Yolo County Directory* of 1914 lists the Washington Home Bakery, two barber shops, the Washington Meat Market, a blacksmith shop, E.R. Hanson's hotel, three merchandisers, one newspaper, and six saloons. (George Beale established his well-known grocery store in 1916.)

The fact that Broderick had six saloons in 1914 is significant, for the temperance movement in Yolo County was strong in the years between 1890 and 1920. When the state legislature passed the Wylie Local Option law in 1911, which enabled the voters of a supervisory district to decide whether or not to close saloons, the only district in the county which voted to keep saloons open was District No. 1 (East Yolo). The vote was no surprise, for Washington saloon keepers had been supplying travelers with drink, food, lodging and entertainment since the days of the Gold Rush, and the town's only newspaper was staunchly pro-saloon.

Next to the river, away from its quiet streets of respectable homes, Broderick had buildings that housed businesses which did not wish to attract opposition from the neighbors or attention from the law. Sometimes reports of gambling and prostitution in these establishments outraged public opinion, and action was taken to suppress them. In January, 1902, for example, the Yolo County Grand Jury investigated E.L. Kripps' Washington House after the *Yolo Semi-Weekly Mail* called it "this notorious Monte Carlo." Their findings forced the Board of Supervisors to close down the games and to pass an anti-gambling ordinance, but the place was reopened almost immediately by Chinese gamblers who conducted a lottery for their Chinese patrons.

RIVERBANK

Before 1911, Washington was the only town in East Yolo. The rest of the area was woods, tule swamps and farmland with a few widely scattered homes. Then in 1910, the D. W. Hobson Company, a San Francisco real estate firm, bought part of the old Bryte ranch in the western part of R.D. 811, and subdivided it. Hobson's first map of Riverbank was filed March 6, 1911. It showed small town lots and farm plots of two to three acres which the company offered for sale at \$500-\$600 per acre.

The West Sacramento Company also owned land in R.D. 811, and it filed subdivision maps for 133 acres east of Bryte Avenue in December 1911 and October 1912. By the end of 1912, 430 lots in the original subdivisions had been sold, and two extensions were planned. Some of the first buyers were Southern Pacific Railroad workers who took advantage of the easy terms of "nothing down, \$7.50 a month."

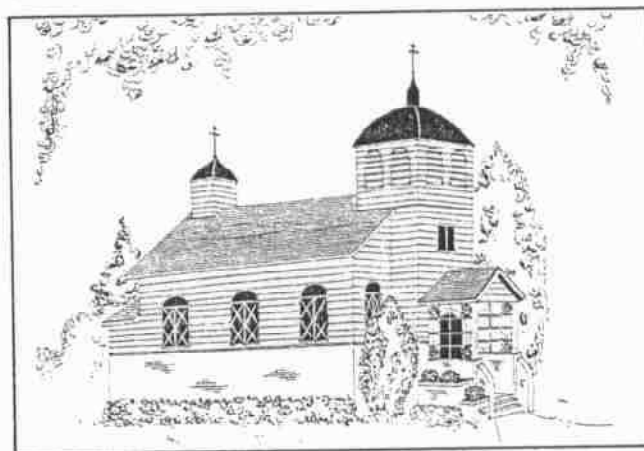
From the start, Riverbank looked more like an Old World village than a California subdivision. People from many countries, fleeing poverty, war or oppression in Europe and Asia, moved to Riverbank and found there a place where they could live in peace and retain their own language and customs. There were Italians who had seen the ads that promised "Matchless truck garden land—thoroughly reclaimed. 5 acres will make a good living."

Portuguese came too—fishermen, farmers and dairymen from the Azores, Madeira and Cape Verde Islands—who had heard about Riverbank's cheap, fertile land from their countrymen who had settled next to the Sacramento River a generation earlier.

And there were Russians. Five Russian families settled in Riverbank in 1911, and soon others followed. Some were families and friends of the first settlers, and others were recent immigrants to the United States who responded to the West Sacramento Company's ads in Russian-language newspapers in New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

In time the Japanese came too. Since U.S. laws prevented them from owning land, they leased vacant land between Riverbank and Broderick from the Todhunter and Fourness families. There they planted truck gardens, built homes and raised their families.

Though the subdivision was called "Riverbank," the town began to be called "Bryte" after its post office was established on May 10, 1915. Since there was already a Riverbank post office in Stanislaus County, a new name was needed, and "Bryte" was chosen in honor of George Bryte, Sr., son of the pioneer dairyman Mike Bryte.



CHURCH OF THE HOLY MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN, BRYTE.
In 1925 a small group of Russians of the Orthodox faith who lived in Bryte petitioned their bishop in San Francisco for permission to build a church where they could worship in their native language. The women raised the money, a sixteen-year-old student named Nicholas Koshell designed the structure, and the men worked on their days off to build this distinctive church. It was consecrated on May 15, 1927, and is still actively used. (Yolo County Historical Society)

Soon other institutions were developed which in time would make Bryte a true community. In 1914 the Riverbank School opened on Lisbon Street to educate children from kindergarten through eighth grade. That same year a branch of the Yolo County Library was established in a local store. Two years later, on June 16, 1916, Catholics celebrated their first Mass in the new Church of the Sacred Heart of Mary. The Protestants held their church services in the school until the Bryte Community Church was built in 1924. The Orthodox Russians worshipped in Cote's store for several years until the Russian women succeeded

in raising money for the construction of the distinctive Church of the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women, which was consecrated on May 15, 1927.

Civic-minded citizens founded the Riverbank Improvement Club in 1914 and worked unsuccessfully for the construction of a road between the Riverbank Station and the State Highway in West Sacramento. They did, however, cooperate successfully with the Washington Club to build the area float for the Yolo Causeway celebration two years later.

The club tackled a number of local problems with varied results. It pushed for better fire protection, and a fire department manned by thirty-five volunteers was organized on February 6, 1917. That same year it secured lights for the county road between Bryte and Broderick. In 1921 the club purchased a lot on which to build a town hall, and parties and dances were held for several years to raise money for its construction. During this period club members also talked of incorporating the town of Bryte, but in the end Bryte was not incorporated and no town hall was built.

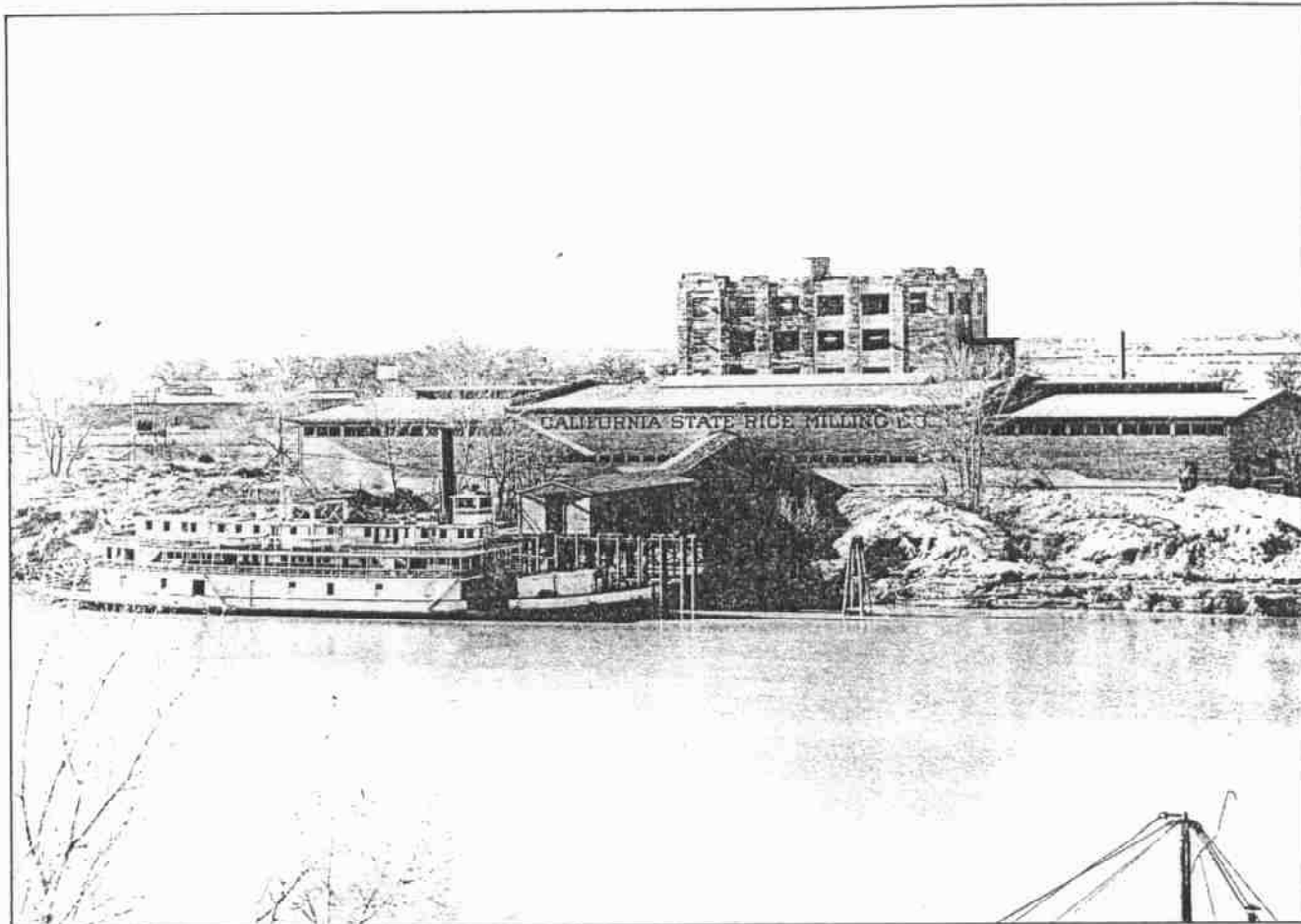
WEST SACRAMENTO

What was West Sacramento like seventy-five years ago? The West Sacramento Company's 1912 promotional brochure described it in these words:

The properties extend west and south, a vast stretch of eleven thousand two hundred acres enclosed by great dikes – a virgin country unoccupied save by a few green farms along the river's course. In the interior of the reclamation district thousands of acres, almost absolutely level and once covered with tules or waterweeds, are being put to the plow. Nearer the river thick forest growths, cottonwoods, willows and often great oaks, have been cleared leaving picturesque tree groupings to enliven the landscape.



PROSPECTIVE BUYERS VISIT LAKE WASHINGTON. This picture, taken in 1913, shows some of the limousines used by the West Sacramento Company to bring prospective buyers to West Sacramento to inspect land for sale. This area had just been cleared of trees and tules. (Julius Feher collection, News-Ledger)



The "few green farms" belonged to the families who had pioneered the area: Reed, Conrad, Kripp, Atkinson, Caffero, Van Tassel, Borchers. Most of them eventually sold out to the West Sacramento Company which put on the market 1,300 acres of agricultural land in 1913. The land was subdivided into five to ten acre parcels and sold for \$500 per acre. To help the farmers, the company built a model farm and a soils laboratory. It also established a nursery to supply plants and trees for the entire district.

The company filed the first map for a subdivision called "West Sacramento" on December 1, 1913. The city, which originally had 1,665 town lots, was designed by the architects Lewis P. Hobart and Charles Cheney. It was to be "a model in every particular," with paved streets and sidewalks, a modern water and sewer system, civic center, children's playground and agricultural high school. Its complete system of radial boulevards and traffic arteries, all leading to a central plaza, was patterned after those of Paris and Washington, D.C., and the city was to be connected to the city of Sacramento by five bridges across the river.

CALIFORNIA STATE RICE MILLING COMPANY, WEST SACRAMENTO.

West Sacramento's frontage on the Sacramento River was an ideal location for this large mill in which rice from the Sacramento Valley was processed. The sacks of rice were shipped downriver to the Bay Area in large stern-wheelers that carried both freight and passengers.

(California State Library)

With high hopes, West Sacramento Company personnel moved out of an office in Sacramento into their new town. They operated out of the old Kripp House for a short time, and in 1914 they moved into a new building at the corner of Fifteenth Street and Jefferson Boulevard.

Unfortunately the year 1914 proved to be disastrous for the company, which was already plagued by debts incurred in the purchase and reclamation of land. Winter floods damaged the new levees, the war in Europe disrupted the world economic market, and the Northern Electric Company, in which the company's major stockholders had invested heavily, declared bankruptcy. By the end of 1914, the railroad men, E.R. and B.P. Lilienthal, Louis Sloss and E.J. deSabra, Jr., were out of the company, and J.H. Glide was in. Glide was a wealthy sheep-grower and land-owner from Sacramento who owned 3,300 acres of land in R.D. 900. He offered to rescue the

company with his money, and he was elected President. With the infusion of Glide money, the company's land was thoroughly reclaimed by 1917, and the development of West Sacramento continued.

The company had better luck at first selling farms than it did developing a city. Farmers bought or leased thousands of acres of the newly reclaimed land in the years before 1920. There were enough farmers in the area in 1917 to organize a Farm Bureau, which held its meetings in the Company headquarters building. They raised onions, beets, carrots and other vegetables for seed, and in 1918 they planted sugar beets for the first time in the area. That same year, the Company showed its first net profit from land sales, leases and farm income--\$17,378.09.

The West Sacramento Company also was actively seeking industries to occupy the valuable waterfront property across from the state capital. Within the next few years a bean warehouse, a large rice mill and a hop-distributing plant were built south of the M Street Bridge.

There was considerable local interest when Dr. D.B. Boyd leased ten acres near the Company headquarters for the winter headquarters of the Boyd, Ogle and Hosking Circus. Boyd trained animals there, and he also kept a menagerie of wild animals which he had purchased in the Orient. In 1927 when the William Land Park Zoo in Sacramento was established, some of Boyd's wild animals were included and Boyd was hired as the first zoo superintendent.

By 1918 fewer than 200 of the lots had been sold, but the town was beginning to take shape. It had a post office, established January 20, 1915, in the company headquarters building. The following year it had a church when the Holy Family Catholic mission church was built on Jefferson Boulevard south of town.

In 1923 civic-minded residents organized the West Sacramento Improvement Club, which worked actively with the company to attract new industries and home-buyers to the area. Club members built a Community Clubhouse on the corner of Alameda Boulevard and Maryland Avenue and they worked to get a neighborhood school for their children. The existing Sacramento River School, built in 1864, was several miles south of town. After passage of a \$3,500 bond issue in 1923, the school was moved to a site across from the Catholic Church, repaired, enlarged and renamed the West Sacramento Elementary School. Three years later sixty children in the northern part of the district who had been attending the Washington School were able to attend the new West Acres Elementary School, which was built on West Acres Road just south of the state highway.

1920 was a critical year for the West Sacramento Company. After reporting modest profits in 1918 and 1919, Company President Glide reported a deficit of \$505,663.93 on December 31, 1920. He explained that the early fall rains had ruined the bean harvest and rice crop, and that renters and buyers were defaulting on their payments. A committee of the Company's bondholders, charging Glide and his board of directors with gross mismanagement, secured approval by a majority of the stock and bond holders, on September 1, 1921, of a plan to reorganize the company. As part of the plan the Alaska Packers Association, which had invested heavily in Company bonds, agreed to exchange its bonds for land. Thus the Alaska Packers Association, whose founders got their start canning salmon on a lighter in the river at Broderick in 1864, now owned 2,200 acres of prime soil in West Sacramento.

The company's reorganization was completed on January 19, 1923, when its assets were sold at public auction to the Bondholders Committee for \$741,137.76, the amount of the total indebtedness of the company. A new board of directors elected P.I. Manson chairman, and he turned over the management of the company to Arthur F. Turner who had been hired in 1913 as a bookkeeper. Turner spent the next fifty years actively promoting the development of West Sacramento.

THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

By 1920 the din of machines digging canals, building levees and laying railroad tracks had quieted. The annual threat of flooding was over, although Albert Joneneel, an Alaska Packers Association employee who lived in West Sacramento in the twenties, recalled that during the first years, before the levees were wholly stabilized, canvas sails from his firm's fishing ships were sometimes used to reinforce the levees in bad weather. Nearly nineteen square miles of land which had been covered with water, tule swamps or forests had been reclaimed and put into a "marketable condition."

Despite the vast sums spent on reclamation and the best efforts of the subdividers and salesmen, East Yolo did not develop rapidly into a city to rival Sacramento. While Sacramento's population increased from 65,908 to 105,958 in the years between 1920 and 1940, East Yolo's grew from 2,638 to 5,185. The area remained primarily rural, and local farmers were blessed with rich soil and plentiful water, and convenient transportation for their produce.

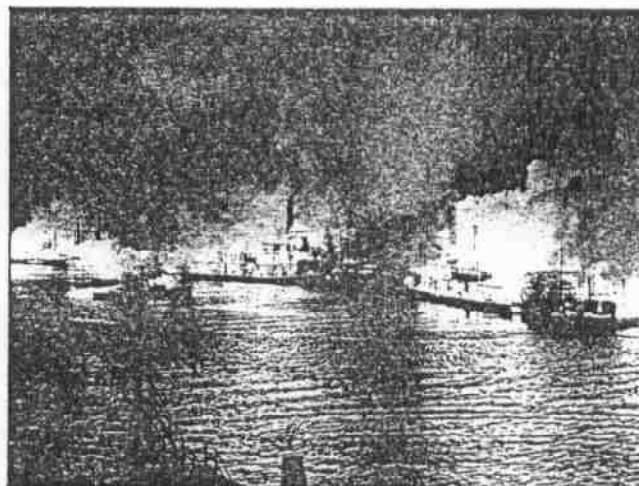
TRANSPORTATION IN THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

Shipping via the Sacramento River was still the cheapest way to send freight to San Francisco, for one boat could carry the equivalent of twenty-two railroad carloads of freight. During the twenties the Sacramento Navigation Company shipyards were kept busy overhauling and repairing river vessels. In 1922 the Broderick yard was thriving, with enough work to keep forty employees busy.

By the mid-twenties competition from the railroads and trucks was hurting the river freight business. The California Transportation Company attempted to lure passengers back on to the river with two luxurious paddlewheelers, the *Delta King* and *Delta Queen*, built in 1927. But, despite the

success of these two riverboats, the Great Depression of the thirties proved almost fatal to the shipping lines. Three of the riverboat companies, the Sacramento Navigation Company, California Transportation Company and Fay Transportation Company, sought survival in consolidation. In January 1932 they formed The River Lines, Inc.

Seven months later disaster struck the River Lines. A spectacular fire which broke out at midnight on August 28, 1932, destroyed ten of its vessels—eight riverboats and two barges. Fourteen river vessels—the *Flora*, *Colusa*, *San Jose*, *Valetta*, *Sacramento*, *Jacinto*, *Dover*, *Red Bluff*, and the *San Joaquin Nos. 2 and 4*, along with the U.S. government tug *The Fall*, P.A. Hart's tug *Sentinel* and small barge, and W.E. Curry's *Robert E. Lee*—were chained together in the river just below the I Street Bridge. The fire started with an explosion on the *Valetta*, and the flames spread quickly to the other boats. The fire raged for



DISASTROUS RIVERBOAT FIRE AT BRODERICK.
On the night of August 28, 1932, a crowd of 15,000 people watched a fire destroy thirteen riverboats and barges that were chained together in the river at Broderick. The fire began with an explosion on the Valetta, and the flames spread quickly from one wooden vessel to another. After the fire most of the new boats that operated on the river were made of steel instead of wood. (Elmer Reuter collection, East Yolo Friends of the Library)

four hours, and only three boats were saved: the *Dover*, *Red Bluff*, and *Robert E. Lee*. It was widely suspected but never proven that the fire had been deliberately set, for most of the boats which were lost were obsolete and unprofitable. The River Lines' loss was \$527,000, and only half of its vessels were insured.

After the fire the River Lines replaced the old steam-powered wooden ships with diesel tugs and steel barges and continued to haul gasoline, fuel oil and rice on the river until after World War II. The company operated the *Delta King* and *Delta Queen* until 1941 when the ships were leased to the U.S. Navy to be used as troop transports on San Francisco Bay. After the war, the *Delta Queen* was sold and used as a tour boat on the Mississippi River. The *Delta King* was moored in the river opposite Broderick for many years and was allowed to deteriorate. It was later hauled to Suisun Bay where it remained until 1984, when it was returned to Sacramento and restored as part of the historic rehabilitation of the riverfront.

If the steamboat whistle was heard less and less often in East Yolo in the twenties, the train whistle was still a familiar sound. Every day the Southern Pacific ran twenty trains through Broderick on its main east-west line, and the Western Pacific, which had absorbed both the Sacramento Northern and the Sacramento Short Line, ran nine trains daily north to Woodland and five trains south to Chipps Ferry and Oakland.

Motor traffic through the area grew steadily during the twenties, for the route of the main coast-to-coast highway, U.S. 40, ran directly through Sacramento, across the M Street Bridge and through West Sacramento to the Yolo Causeway. Traffic on U.S. 40 increased dramatically after the opening of the Carquinez Bridge in 1927 and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in 1936 cut the trip from Sacramento to San Francisco to less than four hours. In 1933 the Yolo Causeway was widened to forty-two feet to handle more cars, and three years later the section of highway between the Sacramento River and the Yolo Causeway was widened to three lanes.

The increased traffic on the two bridges across the Sacramento River led to the widening of the auto lanes of the I Street Bridge in 1934 and the tearing down of the M Street Bridge. It was replaced by the spectacular Tower Bridge, which was opened with an elaborate ceremony on Dec. 15, 1935. The twin-towered bridge was built with a center section that could be raised to permit the passage of ships on the river. It was designed to carry the single track main line of the Sacramento Northern Railway in the center, two lanes of auto traffic, and two sidewalks.



ALEX VERASOFF'S UNION 76 STATION, BRYTE.

In the 1920s service stations began replacing the old blacksmith shops, as the automobile replaced the horse. This station, located on the road between Broderick and Woodland, was operated by one of the first Russians who moved to the Bryte area. (Louise Vessel collection)

Since the 1850s the business people in East Yolo had catered to the needs of travelers, and they now began serving motorists. Fraser & Doyle opened the area's first "filling station" at Third and Ann streets in Broderick on April 2, 1923, and they began supplying gas, oil, grease, water and air to "transients, home folks and tourists." In the next few years John Frates, Tony Silva, Tony Sanchez, John Nazaroff and Alex Verasoff opened stations along the county road in Bryte. Soon the "service station" was as familiar a sight beside the road as the horse trough and hitching post had been a few years before.

Motoring tourists wanted a place to park their cars near where they stopped to eat or to spend the night, and West Sacramento proved ideal for such accommodations. It offered plenty of cheap, level land just outside the city of Sacramento, and its big trees provided welcome shade in hot weather. Joe Pereira was the first to recognize the commercial possibilities of an auto camp in the area, and he opened the West Sacramento Automobile Camp at 520 Fifth Street in the fall of 1923. By modern standards his camp was modest. He advertised in the January 1, 1925, *Independent-Leader*: "Cottage Camp. Gas, water, electric light, shower baths, kitchen. A 2-room cottage of your own. No interference with neighbors."

Soon there were others. The 1928 *The Sacramento City Directory* listed eight auto camps in Broderick. One of these, John Silva's Welcome Grove Auto Court, was built in 1927 in a grove of oak trees near the Sacramento Northern Underpass. It was still in operation at that location in the 1980s. More and more auto camps, then auto courts, motor hotels and finally motels were built in the area. In 1954, when the Yolo County Hotel-Motel Association was founded, it erected a billboard touting East Yolo's "44 motels."

The most elaborate motor hotel built in West Sacramento before World War II was the Hotel El Rancho, which opened on August 6, 1940. The hotel cost over one million dollars to build, and its distinctive Spanish architecture, lush landscaping and luxurious rooms attracted travelers from all over the world, including a number of Hollywood movie stars. During the forties and fifties, El Rancho's ballroom was a favorite spot for high school and college proms.

Restaurants and night clubs flourished as more and more motorists discovered East Yolo. A popular spot on the river was Petrushka's in Bryte, where customers could eat, drink, and dance to the music of the Russian balalaika. Petrushka's was a favorite of local residents as well as tourists until 1947 when it was torn down during the widening of the river levee.

On Jefferson Boulevard south of West Sacramento was another popular establishment, later known as the Club Pheasant. It was originally built in 1913 by the West Sacramento Company as a laboratory where the soils of the area were analyzed for the benefit of local farmers. In 1926 the property was sold to Gemma Puccetti who converted the building to a speakeasy and brothel, first called the Tiger Inn and then Hideaway Inn. In 1935 George and Louisa Palamidessi bought the building and 9.94 acres around it. George farmed the land and Louisa ran the bar, which they renamed Hideaway Cafe. In 1946 they remodeled the building, opened an Italian restaurant and changed the name to Club Pheasant.

Between 1920 and 1933 it was illegal to manufacture or to sell intoxicating liquors in the United States, but strict enforcement of the law was impossible in areas where large numbers of people considered the law unreasonable. One such area was East Yolo, and the Yolo Hop Company of Bryte advertised openly in 1921, "Home brew tastes better when you use Yolo hops." In many a respectable home, enterprising souls were making and selling beer, and the Italians and Portuguese who had always made their own wine continued to do so. And in hotels and cafes like Joe Beltrami's, J. Novelli's

Bridge Saloon, the Washington Hotel and Hoffman's, customers could enjoy drinks of all kinds, disturbed only occasionally by raids by the Sheriff or the federal Prohibition enforcement officers.

The motion picture industry discovered East Yolo during the twenties. Jesse Lasky, Frank Lloyd, and Metro Pictures Corporation found the Sacramento River and the old town of Broderick—with its picturesque town hall, big trees, levees, wharves and steamboats—an attractive location for filming their movies. Local residents welcomed the move crews, for the filming was exciting to watch and locals were occasionally hired as "extras" in the crowd scenes. The movie companies also poured money into the local economy by renting land and equipment, buying lumber to construct their sets and frequenting the local restaurants and cafes. Some of the movies filmed in the area were *Youth to Youth*, starring Billie Dove and Cullen Landis, *Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Pony Express* with Wallace Beery, *Show Boat*, *Dixie*, *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*, starring Buster Keaton, and in 1935 *Steamboat 'Round the Bend*, the last film made by Will Rogers.

COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE TWENTIES

The communities of Bryte, Broderick and West Sacramento already displayed distinct differences by the twenties. These differences have persisted for sixty years and are one reason why it has been difficult for East Yolo as a whole to work together to find area solutions to common problems.

In 1920 Bryte was a quiet, self-sufficient village of 200 homes, and it remained virtually unchanged for twenty years. Rose Mather Reed, whose husband Hayward Reed owned the 150-acre Rose Pear Orchard in Bryte, wrote this in 1925 about the community in which she lived:

Bryte was one of those country suburbs that hover close to a town... You find the post office, grocery store, and Catholic Church to be the center of activity... There is a struggle in most every household... that comes from limited means and causes every member of the family to count pennies both going and coming. The homes are unpretentious. Only a limited number (of the men) have trades or hold steady positions. The majority do hard labor and shift from one job to another. Road work, the beaneries, the canneries, the surrounding orchards and hop ranches each in turn make their

offerings on the labor market and are straightway taken up, completed and succeeded. There is little evidence of opulent prosperity, though the entire little community breathes an atmosphere of thrift. No landscape gardener puts the finishing touches on the gardens, but there are flowers and fruit trees that reveal the loving touch of a feminine hand and the masculine hold on the hoe and spade.

Broderick, still called Washington by long-time residents, was the old established community in 1920. Many of its families had lived there for generations and were proud of their peaceful town, with its substantial two-story homes and quiet tree-lined streets.

The quiet appreciated by some Broderick residents was bemoaned by an anonymous writer in the August 24, 1923, *Independent-Leader*:

Washington has been dormant for a considerable time, or really since the Southern Pacific bridge was built with its overhead passageway. That really is the worst detriment that could ever have been inflicted on the people.

As a residence section, it has not built up as it should, and as a business center, it has not flourished as other suburbs of Sacramento have flourished.

The "roaring twenties" apparently infused new energy into the old Washington Improvement Club, for it was reorganized on April 12, 1924, as the Washington Boosters Club. The club pushed for better streets, sewers, natural gas for homes, Town Hall repairs, and a public wharf on the west bank of the river between the two bridges. The members also urged incorporation as the best way to achieve their civic goals.

Some of the old problems that had afflicted Washington since 1850 persisted. At many times in its history, Washington had served as a repository for unwanted visitors from Sacramento. A vacant lot near the M Street Bridge had for years been a magnet for hoboes, and in the twenties *The Independent-Leader's* Fitzgerald "cried out for retribution against this conglomeration of invaluable itinerants."

The *Independent-Leader* also reflected the prejudices of Broderick residents against the Chinese. A number of Chinese businessmen with shops in downtown Sacramento had to relocate in 1923 when the area between Third and Fifth Streets was cleared for the construction of the new Union Depot. Finding empty buildings available for lease in Broderick, these men quietly moved in. The Chinese men who had lived in Broderick since the 1870s had been tolerated, and the periodic raids on Chinese gambling dens had aroused only minor interest, since the Chinese catered primarily to other Chinese. But local tempers flared when the town became aware that the entire block of Ann Street between Second and Third streets, except for the post office, was being leased to Chinese. Stones were thrown, windows were broken, and arrests were made. No criminal charges were proven and things gradually calmed down. In time the Chinese, who maintained little contact with the neighbors, were absorbed into the fabric of Broderick life. They remodeled the Washington Hotel and other old buildings near the riverfront, including what was believed to have been the old County Courthouse. Hop Lee operated his laundry in the building until 1932, when it burned down.

West Sacramento in 1920 was developing into a remarkably stable town of residences, bounded on the south by the farms of "the District" (R.D. 900) and along the river by industrial development. Among the newcomers to settle in West Sacramento were Germans who moved into the subdivisions bordering the Davis Highway; Greeks, some of whom had originally been brought to the area to construct the electric railroads; and Hungarians who made up a good portion of the town's population in the 1920s and 1930s. Many residents commuted by train or automobile to businesses and government offices in downtown Sacramento and returned home to enjoy the benefits of small-town life.

West Sacramento grew slowly during this period, despite Arthur F. Turner's ambitious plans and personal enthusiasm. He was in charge of selling the seventy-six acres the West Sacramento Company developed between 1922 and 1941—subdivisions called Riverloam Acres, Little Poultry Farms, Sutter Garden Acres, Tower Tract, Westacres, Wright & Kimbrough Tract No. 37 and Unit 2 of West Sacramento City.

In 1924 Turner sold 250 acres of land in West Sacramento to the McAnulty Brothers Company, a real estate company with offices in several states. The McAnultys launched an extensive advertising campaign to sell residential, commercial and industrial lots in a town they named "Westgate." The name Westgate was used for several businesses and the train stop, but was never generally adopted for the area.

WORLD WAR II COMES TO EAST YOLO

East Yolo's economy improved noticeably during the war as farm prices rose and river traffic, particularly barges hauling petroleum products, increased to meet wartime demands. The major employers in the area, the State Box Company, the Rice Growers' Association rice mill and Leinberger's slaughterhouse, had plenty of work. Although the local businesses were doing well financially, there were few new buildings constructed during the war years because of the scarcity of building materials.

The war did have a direct effect on the people of East Yolo, however. Although most farmers were exempt from the draft, farms at harvest time were short of workers, as were all the local industries, because most of the able-bodied men and women had left for the armed services or the high-paying shipyards of the Bay Area.

On November 28, 1941, before the United States had declared war on Germany, a Russian-American Society was organized in Bryte "to assist through all lawful means, all nations and governments engaged in the fight and struggle against German fascism." Local Russians, dressed in their colorful traditional costumes, held parties to raise money to buy medical supplies for the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain.

The Japanese of East Yolo suffered the same fate as all Japanese in California: they were placed in internment camps by order of the U.S. government early in 1942. At the same time the government closed down the private Japanese-language schools which had been operating on the Todhunter property in Broderick and on Evergreen Avenue in West Sacramento. Few of the Japanese families returned to the area after the war.

Many activities were canceled "for the duration." One of the most popular of these was the Portuguese San Pedro Festival which had been held annually in Bryte for twenty years. The festival was resumed after the war, with a special celebration on June 28, 1947.

THE POSTWAR BOOM

The population of East Yolo in 1940 was 5,185, and it changed very little until the war ended in 1945. Then the people began to pour in as they had during the Gold Rush a hundred years before. The population doubled to 11,225 in 1950, and by 1960, the first year the designation "East Yolo" was used in the census reports, to 25,032.

One major reason for the boom was the construction of the Sacramento-Yolo Port.

THE SACRAMENTO-YOLO PORT

In Gold Rush days, the Sacramento River had been the principal highway from San Francisco to and from the mines, and the city of Sacramento had become an important port. One hundred years later, trains and motor vehicles were transporting almost all freight and passengers in and out of the valley and Sacramento's old port was little more than a memory. When World War II was over, the city began dreaming again of being a port, this time for ships that could transport freight to and from the countries bordering the Pacific Ocean.

The Sacramento Chamber of Commerce had proposed the idea in 1902. The chamber's proposal called for construction of a deep water channel adjacent to the Sacramento River on the Yolo side, which would terminate in a harbor at the city of Sacramento large enough for ocean-going ships to turn around. Chamber member P.J. Van Loben Sels gave a speech at the chamber's annual banquet entitled, "Sacramento: a Seaport," in which he said, "The federal engineers even now announce that they will only assist in procuring a channel of a depth of five feet, claiming there is no demand for a greater depth. Gentlemen, that notion had better be knocked out of them, and proper representation made to Congress that what Sacramento wants is a channel of twenty-six feet depth, and nothing else will satisfy us."

Despite these brave words, it would be sixty years before the ship channel was built. Port feasibility studies were made in 1916, 1925 and 1933, and in 1935 the California Harbor and Navigation Code was amended to enable Yolo and Sacramento counties to create a bi-county port district to construct a port at Sacramento. Then came World War II. No action was taken on the port during the war, but in 1946 the U.S. Congress approved federal participation in a "Deep Water Channel Project" for the area.

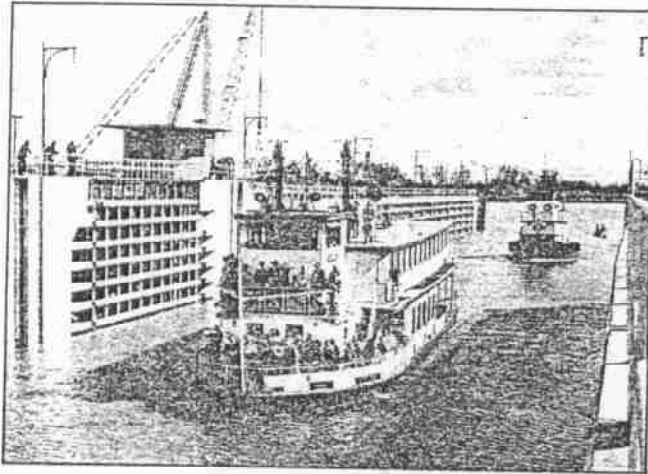
The Deep Water Channel Project was to be a mammoth undertaking. It would involve construction of a 42.8 mile ship channel, thirty feet deep, from Collinsville in Suisun Bay to West Sacramento. In West Sacramento the port would consist of a sixty-acre deep water harbor and turning basin at Lake Washington, port facilities for handling bulk, quasi-bulk and general cargo, and a barge canal between the harbor and the Sacramento River, equipped with a lock for navigation and a bridge over Jefferson Boulevard.

Before construction could begin, local voters had to approve creation of a Sacramento-Yolo Port District. Yolo County voters were divided on the issue, with a majority of them opposed to paying for a project which they perceived would benefit only the eastern part of the county. The matter was debated for months by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors before a compromise was reached. The board finally approved an election on April 15, 1947, in which only Yolo County's Supervisorial District 1 (East Yolo) would join all of Sacramento City and County in voting on the port measure. Creation of the port district was approved by a vote of 27,309 to 7,516, and a five-member Port Commission was elected.

The port district joined with the federal government and the State of California to construct the port. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was responsible for initial construction and maintenance; and the state and port district secured rights of way, relocated utilities, provided highway and railroad

access, and constructed terminal facilities. Ground was broken for the project on August 7, 1949, and it was scheduled to be finished in 1953.

The Korean War prevented construction work by the Corps of Engineers between 1950 and 1956, but other work continued. In 1953, 4,937 acres next to the port were set aside for industrial development, and the first major port-related facility, the \$2,500,000 Farmers Rice Growers Cooperative rice mill, dryer and storage plant, was dedicated on September 27, 1955. Construction by the Army Corps resumed in 1956, and the port was officially opened to deep sea traffic on July 29, 1963, when the Chinese freighter *Taipei Victory* ceremoniously docked in West Sacramento.



OPENING OF THE BARGE CANAL, MARCH 2, 1962.
The Barge Canal was opened to traffic for riverboats a year before the first ship arrived in the Sacramento-Yolo Port via the Deep Water Channel in 1963. The lock was formally dedicated on June 4, 1971, to William G. Stone, the first Port Director who served from the creation of the Port District in 1947 until 1963. (Julius Feher collection, News-Ledger)

By the time the port opened in 1963, it had cost federal, state and port district taxpayers approximately fifty-five million dollars. Bonds totaling an additional \$12,800,000 were approved in 1966 and 1972 to build and expand bulk cargo handling facilities. Viewed as "the major boondoggle of the year" in 1963 by one national magazine, a 1983 report on the first twenty years of the port's operations showed that its business had exceeded all expectations. During that period the port handled 2,577 vessels from forty-one nations, carrying nearly thirty million tons of rice, wood chips, grain and feeds, fertilizers, minerals, automobiles, newsprint, lumber, machinery, canned goods, dried fruits and nuts. The port and adjacent industrial park had generated 7,200 new jobs and 135 million new dollars for the local economy.

THE BEGINNINGS OF GROWTH

In the years immediately following the war, East Yolo began to attract some of the investment capital that was flowing into the Sacramento area. Personal and corporate investors recognized the potential advantage of the area's location and excellent transportation facilities. Persons employed in Sacramento found the area an attractive and accessible place to live, and commercial and industrial firms liked the acres of cheap, level land so close to the State Capitol and to the soon-to-be-completed port.

The appearance of East Yolo began to change dramatically as large-scale commercial and industrial buildings sprouted where once there had been only farmhouses and barns. The port, rice processing plants of Rice Growers Association and Farmers Rice Cooperative, and the State Box Company were the biggest developments, but there were others as well. Trucking firms, warehouses and other businesses requiring extensive space spread out over the vacant land near the river, and West Sacramento soon became a major distribution center for the central Sacramento Valley. *The East Yolo Record* reported in 1952 that there were fourteen trucking concerns, six major oil company wholesale distributors, nineteen service stations and five trailer sales lots in West Sacramento.

One of the new trucking firms to move to East Yolo, Delta Lines, had deep roots in the area. The company was chartered in 1946 by Tom Dwyer of the River Lines Shipping Company. When Dwyer and his associates decided to go into the trucking business, they abandoned the Broderick shipyard which had been in continuous operation since 1859. After operating for several years in Sacramento, Dwyer built a \$310,000 terminal in West Sacramento near the river south of the Tower Bridge and moved his fleet of trucks there in 1957.

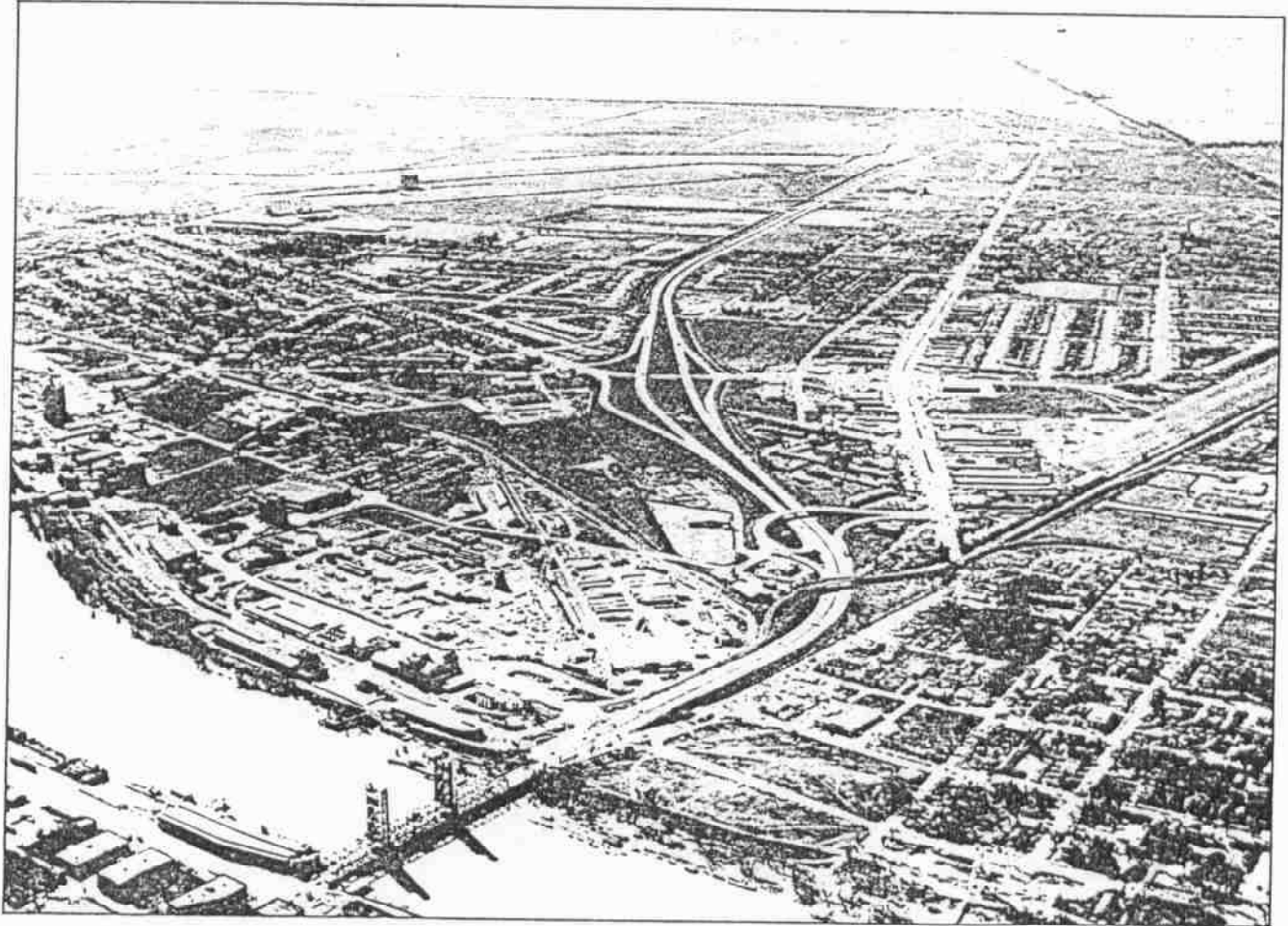
Not all the new buildings were located near the river. There was also considerable construction along the Davis Highway (U.S. 40). There was enough vacant land there for an airport, and in 1946 Bob Watts and Jack Rich, two wartime pilots, built the Capitol Sky Park next to the golden-domed Capitol Inn. Their airport had two runways and could handle sixty-six small recreational, agricultural and aerial survey planes. It served as the "Downtown Sacramento Airport," and in the late 1950s it was the busiest private airport in the United States. In 1960 the two partners moved their operation to Sacramento Executive Airport, and a trailer park and bowling alley were built on their former property.

A mile west of the Sky Park was the \$40,000 Capital Stadium, which opened on May 25, 1947. It was the Sacramento area's first track designed for midget auto racing, and it offered fifteen acres for parking.

ROADS AND BRIDGES

Once wartime gas rationing was ended and new cars were available to buy and drive, millions of Americans took to the highways and passenger service on railroads rapidly declined. The electric interurbans which had carried passengers through East Yolo north to Woodland and south to Oakland since 1912 stopped running in 1940 and were not revived after the war. Everyone, it seemed, was going by automobile. New and better roads were essential, and during this post-war period a network of highways was built across East Yolo that became a dominant feature on the land.

In 1947 the people of East Yolo were pitted against the California Highway Commission in the battle over construction of a new four-lane divided highway between Tower Bridge and the Yolo Causeway. The *Yolo Independent* called it "a masterpiece of bad design and poor planning." The County Board of Supervisors, the West Sacramento Improvement Club and the West Acres PTA protested that it would cut the community of West Sacramento in half and would endanger schools, churches and businesses. Despite local objections, however, construction of the new freeway south of the old highway began in 1950, and it was officially opened to traffic on June 14, 1954. It was three and one-half miles long, cost \$4,500,000 and formed the last link in an unbroken four-lane highway stretching sixty miles between Sacramento and the Carquinez Straits. Two years later it was designated part of Interstate 80.



WEST SACRAMENTO IN THE 1950'S.
This aerial view, looking west from the city of Sacramento, shows the Tower Bridge, the developing grid of freeways in East Yolo, the turning basin of the Port and the flooded Yolo Bypass.
(Army Corps of Engineers)

One immediate effect of the opening of the new freeway was a drop in business of the motels and restaurants located along West Capitol Avenue, the old Davis highway. The owners of these businesses formed the Yolo County Hotel-Motel Association in 1954 "to promote and encourage the waning business of East Yolo" caused by the rerouted traffic. Since then the association has promoted its motels and restaurants with newspaper advertisements and billboards paid for at first by donations and membership fees, and later by funds from the county motel tax.

The new freeway generated greatly increased traffic across the river and made improvements in the bridges necessary. The train tracks were removed from the Tower Bridge in 1963 to make more room for automobiles, and the Western Pacific trains which formerly ran on the bridge were rerouted to the Southern Pacific tracks on the I Street Bridge. Within the next ten years, two new bridges were built across the river to link the Yolo County portion of I-80 with the freeway which circled the center of Sacramento: Pioneer Bridge in 1966 and the Bryte Bend Bridge in 1971.

After the Bryte Bend Bridge was built, the California Highway Patrol built a training academy on 454 acres northwest of Bryte near the approach to the bridge. The \$13.5 million facility, which was dedicated on September 17, 1974, houses 335 men and women and provides training in the safe operation of automobiles, boats, weapons, helicopters and motorcycles.

NEW HOMES, SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

As soon as money and materials became available after the war, East Yolo virtually exploded in a frenzy of construction. The time had arrived when the dream of creating a grand new city would finally come true. Besides the port, highways, bridges, warehouses, storage facilities, processing plants and businesses, workmen were building houses, apartment buildings, trailer courts, offices, schools and churches. In 1959 alone Yolo County issued building permits for \$4,510,320 in East Yolo, a record for the unincorporated areas in the county.

New residential subdivisions sprouted everywhere. Linden Acres, Westfield Village, Westmore Oaks, Elkhorn Village and Arlington Oaks were developed between 1947 and 1955. East Yolo got its first government housing in 1953 with the construction of River Fork Homes, a fifty-unit complex for low-income families, near the river in Broderick.

The farmland that lay between Broderick and Bryte also was developed during this period. This land had belonged to the pioneer Todhunter family, which leased much of it to Japanese truck farmers. There was also a practice track for race horses and a Japanese-language school on the land before the war. The Japanese families who had been interned during the war did not return to the area afterwards, and, after formation of the Bryte Sanitary District in 1947 made new residential development in the area feasible, Leavitt H. Todhunter sold 1,400 acres to G.W. Williams' American Homes Company. In 1950 Williams began developing a residential community he named Elkhorn Village. In 1967 he added an eighteen-hole public golf course and clubhouse which became the Riverbend Golf and Country Club.

The first community to be developed in the farmland south of West Sacramento was Arlington Oaks which was begun with the filing of its subdivision map on October 23, 1952. Young families, many of them related to port construction workers, were attracted by its convenient location and reasonable prices. A new three-bedroom house for sale in Arlington Oaks was advertised in the July 8, 1953, *Sacramento Bee* for \$7,450 total price: \$470 down and \$53 per month.

The most recent residential area to be developed in East Yolo is Southport, located south of the barge canal where once there were only the "green farms" of R. D. 900. The first development, Frederick South Port's Touchstone subdivision, began in the late 1960s on thirty acres west of Jefferson Boulevard. The West Sacramento Land Company developed its subdivision, River Country, south of the ship channel in the 1970s. The County Board of Supervisors officially designed Southport a "town" on January 12, 1970.

With the new subdivisions came increased demand for new schools. When the war ended in 1945 there were four public elementary schools in East Yolo: Bryte School in the Bryte School District, Washington and West Acres Schools in the Washington School District, and the West Sacramento School in the West Sacramento District (Southport). There was no local high school. Students living in the Southport area went to Clarksburg High School, and those living in Bryte, Broderick and West Sacramento went to Woodland High School.

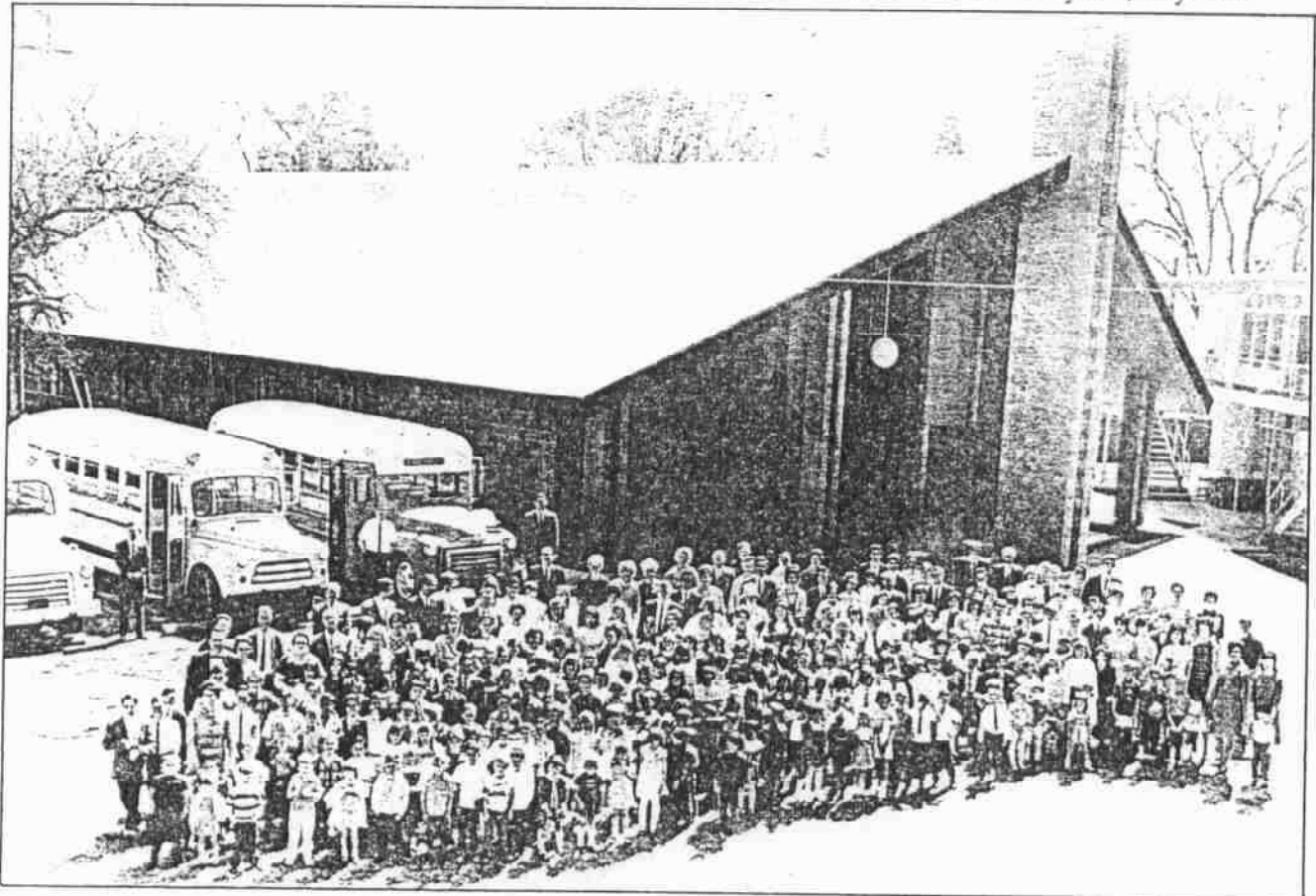
To accommodate the new school children, the West Acres School was enlarged in 1946 and again in 1948, and between 1949 and 1960 nine new elementary schools were built in East Yolo. The Bryte District built a new Bryte Elementary School in 1954. Washington District built six schools: Westmore Oaks in 1952, Westfield Village in 1954, Elkhorn Village in 1954, a new Washington Elementary in 1955, Evergreen in 1958 and Alyce Norman in 1960. West Sacramento District built a new West Sacramento Elementary in 1949 and Arlington Oaks in 1956.

The first high school in East Yolo, James Marshall, was built in West Sacramento by the Woodland Union High School District in 1952 after voters in Woodland, Bryte, Broderick and West Sacramento approved \$975,000 in bonds for its construction. A second high school, Washington, was built in Broderick in 1962.

All over California in the 1950s schools were being built as quickly as possible for the many "war babies" and the thousands of children who were migrating to the state each year. With the proliferation of schools came the statewide

movement to consolidate school districts and to eliminate little, inefficient schools. In East Yolo school consolidation began on July 1, 1956, when the Washington Union District was formed by the joining of the Bryte and Washington elementary school districts. One year later Washington Union joined with the Marshall High School area to form the Washington Unified School District. Ten years later, on July 1, 1966, voters in the West Sacramento District voted to annex to Washington Unified, and one single school district for the entire East Yolo area was created. That fall high school students from the Southport area attended Marshall High School for the first time. West Sacramento Elementary school was closed, and Arlington Oaks was the only school left south of the barge canal.

Churches, like schools, also struggled to keep up with the influx of population in the post-war era. The Orthodox Russians in Bryte continued to worship in their Church of the Myrrh-Bearing Women as they had since 1927. Russian Protestants had worshipped in homes during the thirties. Their congregation was enlarged by a new group of Russians who immigrated to Bryte around 1950. After meeting in private homes for several more years, they built



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, WEST SACRAMENTO. Many new churches were built in East Yolo in the boom years of the fifties and sixties. The members of the First Baptist Church in West Sacramento stand proudly in front of their new church building. (Julius Feher collection, News-Ledger)

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

the Russian Church of Evangelic Christian Baptists in 1965 just down Solano Street from the Orthodox church. The Baptists later printed a weekly Russian-language religious newspaper, *Our Days*, which was sent to every state in the United States and to many foreign countries. The church also had a recording studio in its building from which Russian-language religious messages were beamed to Russia.

The Catholics of East Yolo replaced their small, outgrown church buildings with two new ones. Our Lady of Grace Church was built in 1948 on Park Boulevard to serve West Sacramento. A rectory was added in 1956 and a parish school in 1960. The Bryte and Broderick churches combined and formed one parish, Holy Cross. The parish built a school first in 1957 on a spacious block in Bryte, and then a new church building next to it, which was dedicated in November 1960.

The Protestants were faced with similar problems of outdated facilities and shifting population. In Broderick many of the younger families had moved out of the old town into the new subdivisions and had left the old Broderick Community Baptist Church on Fourth Street. In 1950 the church opened the Broderick Christian Center in its old building to meet the social needs of its neighbors, the very young, the old and the poor. The Center proved to be so needed in the community that on September 24, 1952, a fund drive was launched to raise \$10,000 to build a new building for the Center. With the help of volunteers and a donation of lumber from the recently dismantled West Sacramento Community Clubhouse, a large new building was constructed in 1953. In 1955 a new Community Baptist Church was built at Sixth and Andrew streets, and the old church building was sold to the First Mexican Baptist Church. In 1963 the Community Baptists merged with the Bryte Community Presbyterian Church and built a new church in Elkhorn Village, the Elkhorn Baptist Church.

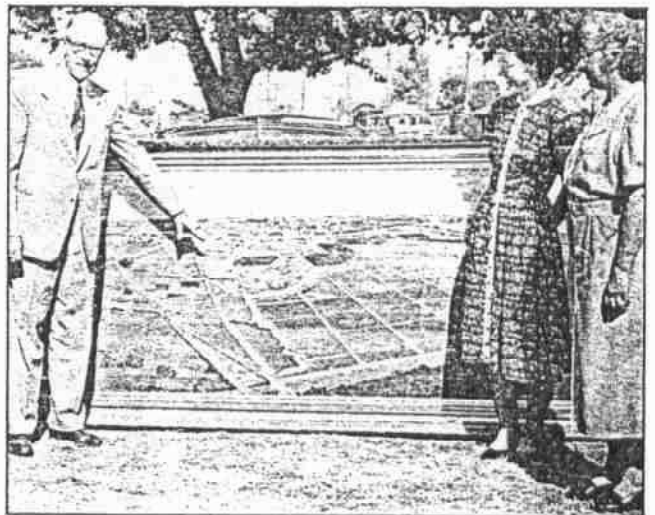
In West Sacramento Protestants had organized West Acres Community Church during the war, on April 18, 1943. Ten years later the congregation changed the name of the church to West Sacramento Trinity Presbyterian and built a new church building which was dedicated on May 9, 1953. Churches of other denominations were built in West Sacramento after the war, among them the Evangelic Assembly of God, First Assembly of God, First Baptist Church, First Southern Baptist Church, Christ Lutheran (later called Community Lutheran) and Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Though there were many churches, there was still no cemetery in East Yolo into the 1980s. There apparently never was one in the area, possibly because of the recurrent danger of flooding in the early years. Traditionally the dead were taken to Sacramento for burial.

There was little new commercial development in Bryte and Broderick in the decade after the end of World War II. These communities were primarily residential, with few large parcels of land that could be leveled and built upon cheaply. In Bryte, local businesses were mainly eating and drinking places and small stores which supplied the basic needs of the community. They changed little in the postwar period.

One new business had a short life. Arthur W. Sanders and Gordon Ramos opened the Bryte Theater on August 4, 1946 on Lisbon Street. They showed films in English and Portuguese, and although their ticket prices were reasonable—fifty cents for adults and twenty cents for children—they were out of business by the end of the year. The building was bought by Post 9498, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and dedicated on June 19, 1947. It has been used as a meeting place for that organization and for the community ever since.

In Broderick the old auto camps of the twenties and thirties gave way to mobile home parks, and a laundry and a few new offices and stores were built for the growing population. George Beale, who had owned a grocery store in Broderick since 1916, built a new \$100,000 shopping center at 313 D Street after his old store burned down on February 27, 1946. The new center, which opened on December 14, 1946, housed a grocery, hardware store, the Rendezvous Cafe and the Broderick Post Office.



ARTHUR F. TURNER AND THE CITY OF WEST SACRAMENTO
The original plan for the city of West Sacramento was designed by San Francisco architects Lewis P. Hobart and Charles Cheney. Here Arthur F. Turner of the West Sacramento Land Company displays the architects' drawing of the city to Dana Dawson and Cecilia T. Lowe. Miss Lowe was Mr. Turner's secretary and was the librarian of the West Sacramento branch library for many years. (Julius Feher collection, News-Ledger)

If there was little new construction in Bryte and Broderick, the same could not be said of West Sacramento. Most of East Yolo's postwar commercial development occurred there, much of it along the highway. The advertising of the Hotel-Motel Association in the 1950s was effective in bringing the area to the attention of the public. New motels and restaurants catered to increasing numbers of people who drove through the area for business or pleasure, and new businesses supplied the needs of the residents of the new subdivisions. In 1955 there were ninety-five businesses of all kinds in West Sacramento: stores and offices, motels and restaurants, service stations and mobile home parks. By 1964 the number had jumped to 238.

Arthur F. Turner, who had been selling land and houses in the area since 1923, worked hard to create a commercial district for the town of West Sacramento during this period. He helped organize the West Sacramento Chamber of Commerce in 1947 and served as its first president. Five years later he built an office complex on the corner of Merkley and Jefferson and persuaded the Anglo California National Bank to open the first bank in East Yolo there on October 15, 1952. Turner moved his West Sacramento Land Company office into the complex, and the offices of the Washington Water and Light Company, the West Sacramento Chamber of Commerce and R.D. 900 followed. The West Sacramento Post Office moved into a new building at 828 Merkley Avenue in 1951, and postal business in the area increased so rapidly that on July 23, 1960, the post office moved into a much larger building at 1601 Merkley.

GOVERNMENT

In the postwar period, West Sacramento changed from an agricultural to an urbanized area, but it still was not a city. Instead the County of Yolo supplied many of the services usually provided by city government. Since 1850 the area had been in County Supervisorial District No. 1, with one representative on the County Board of Supervisors. When the 1960 census figures showed that District No. 1 had 44.16 percent of the county's population, John Henderson of Elkhorn Village sued the Board of Supervisors for failing to reapportion the county into supervisorial districts which were equal in population. He won the suit, and the board approved a new plan on January 27, 1964, which divided East Yolo into two districts, with two supervisors. District One, comprised Broderick, part of West Sacramento, Southport and Clarksburg; and District Three, comprised part of West Sacramento, Bryte, Monument Bend and areas north and west.

In the absence of a local city government, the county had begun in 1939 to exert some control over the way East Yolo developed. That year Yolo County adopted its first Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of the county, which covered all but the incorporated cities of Woodland, Davis and Winters. The first zone map covered 7,000 acres of East Yolo and included Bryte, Broderick and West Sacramento. Under the new ordinance the development of the land for residential, commercial and industrial purposes was planned, and for the first time building permits were required for new construction.

During the war years, 1942-1945, there was very little building in East Yolo, but the formation of the port district in 1947 and the anticipation of large-scale port-related development led the county to make a new land use survey of East Yolo in 1947 which included an additional 5,000 acres contiguous to the port site. Much of the new construction after the war was on this vacant land in West Sacramento.

After the war the county faced not only the need for planning for new development in West Sacramento, but also the problem of replacing its old inadequate buildings in Broderick. The picturesque old town hall was torn down in 1952 because it was structurally unsound, and in its place the county built a new \$30,000 one-story concrete structure to house the Justice Court. The old jail on the rear of the lot, which the *East Yolo Record* in 1955 called "a disgrace to humanity and to Yolo County," was finally replaced by a new structure two years later. The county also purchased the Washington Elementary School building on C Street to house its growing public health and mental health services. The old school had been closed when a new school was built in Elkhorn Village in 1955.

Even with these improvements, when the Yolo County Urban Renewal Agency was established in 1957, downtown Broderick was designated the county's first "blighted" area. (Urban renewal was a nation-wide effort to rehabilitate the downtown areas of cities which had been neglected when city residents moved to the suburbs after the war.) The renewal agency prepared a redevelopment plan which called for the expenditure of \$410,000 in federal, state and county funds to refurbish downtown Broderick. Despite the support of the West Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, the Elkhorn Civic Improvement Association and the East Yolo Planning Council, the County Board of Supervisors voted down the plan because they were persuaded that it cost too much and it was an unwarranted interference in the local affairs of Broderick. The result was that downtown Broderick continued to suffer from neglect.

Meanwhile county government was trying to cope with an unprecedented number of requests for building permits from every corner of the county. In 1959 after a comprehensive economic survey, Yolo County adopted a new Master Plan which contained guidelines for land use, streets and highways, park and recreation areas, and schools and public buildings for the whole county, including East Yolo.

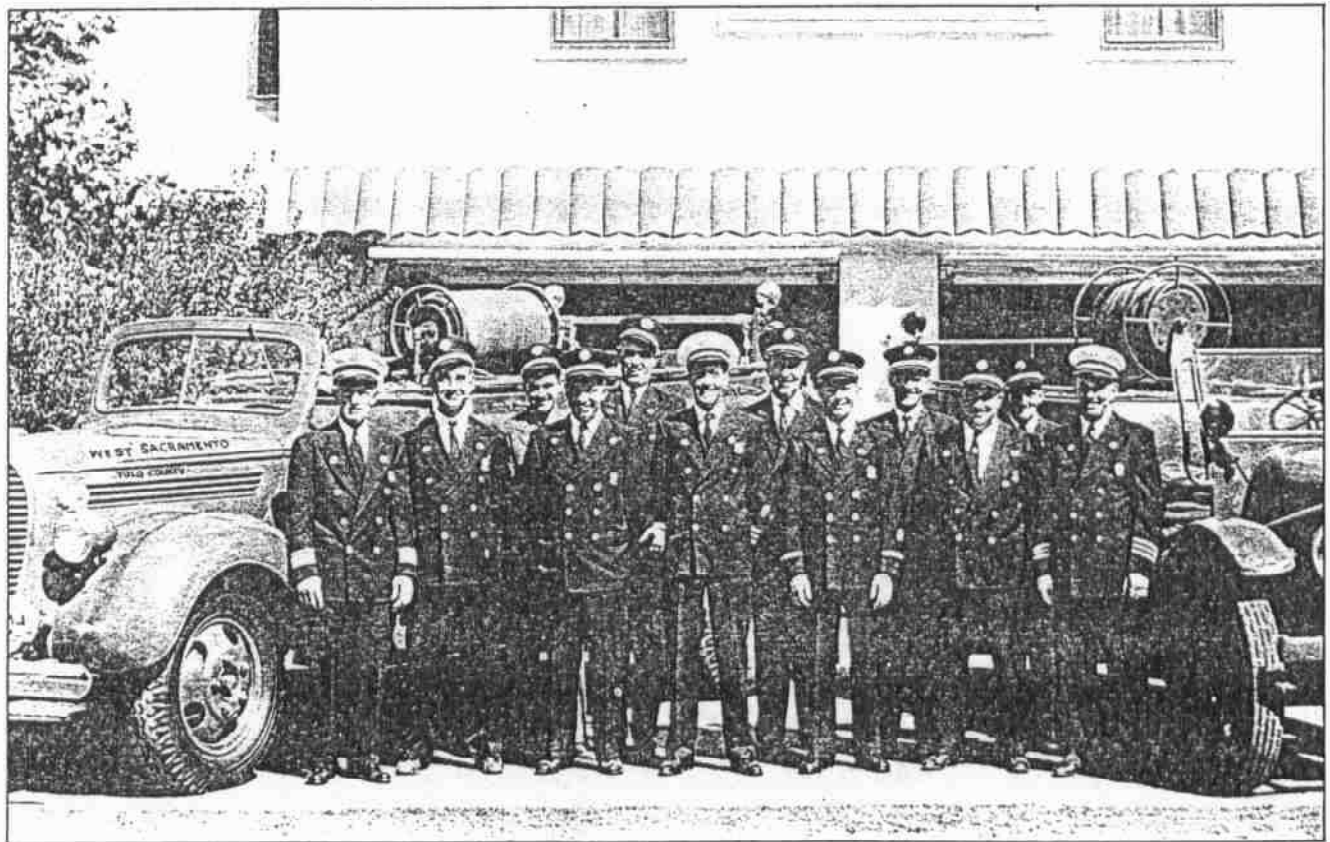
The building boom in West Sacramento went on unabated, and by 1970 it was apparent that the 1959 plan, with its optimistic but overly general statements, was hopelessly outdated. A General Plan Review committee of East Yolo residents was appointed, and after a year of study and meetings, a new East Yolo General Plan was completed in May, 1976. The new plan contained eight elements—people, housing, parks and recreation, open space and conservation, seismic safety, scenic highways, circulation and land use—and it described in detail the area as it existed in 1976 and as the community envisioned it in the future. A similar plan for the Southport area was prepared in 1982. Though these plans were thoughtfully prepared and widely

debated before adoption, they did not immediately solve the problems of blight in the older areas or create the attractive, balanced communities the planners envisaged.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

Besides land use planning and zoning, Yolo County also was responsible for maintaining law and order in East Yolo. County Sheriff's deputies provided police protection and staffed the local jail. The local court, presided over by an elected Justice of the Peace, handled minor civil and misdemeanor cases, but felony, juvenile and major civil cases were taken to Superior Court in Woodland for trial. The court was redesignated a Justice Court in 1962 and a Municipal Court in 1977, with the scope of its judicial authority increasing each time.

Public health and mental health services were provided by the county on an out-patient basis from its offices in Broderick. Several efforts by local civic



WEST SACRAMENTO FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Members of the West Sacramento Fire Department stand with their trucks in front of the fire station at 132 15th Street. Back row: Dutch Snyder, Huitt, Leonard Overhouse, Dale, Clover, Jerry Valine. Front row: Travis, Goodurn, Walt Nichols, Jr., Valine, George Newhall, John LaChesse, Walt Nichols.

(Barbara Cameron collection)

groups at various times to establish a hospital in East Yolo failed, and there was still no hospital in the area in the 1980s. Residents requiring hospitalization had to go to the county hospital in Woodland, the University Medical Center in Sacramento, or a private hospital elsewhere. Salud Clinic was established by the county in Broderick on October 19, 1976, to provide physical examinations, immunization, family planning and prenatal services.

In 1958 three separate agencies provided fire protection in East Yolo. The oldest agency, the Washington Fire District, was established in 1896. It had two fire stations in Broderick manned by six full-time and seventeen volunteer firemen. In Bryte, volunteers organized a fire department in 1917, which was reorganized in 1941 as a county fire protection district. With the development of Elkhorn Village in the 1950s, more fire protection was needed, and two new fire stations were built with bond monies between 1965 and 1968, one in Elkhorn Plaza and one on Lisbon Avenue in Bryte.

In West Sacramento, a fire district called Westgate was formed in 1933 by volunteers. It was established as a county fire protection district in 1939. Over the years as West Sacramento grew, fire stations were built at three locations—in 1939 at 132 15th Street; in 1968 at 2410 Jefferson Road; and in 1970 at 1561 Harbor Boulevard, near the entrance to the Sacramento-Yolo Port.

After the passage of State Proposition 13 in 1978, which limited taxation on property, financial difficulties led the three fire districts, which were dependent upon the property tax, to join together for survival. They entered a joint powers agreement on May 15, 1979, and combined their fire protection services. At that time the Broderick and Bryte fire stations were closed. The fire districts operated under this agreement for four years. Then on September 1, 1983, the East Yolo Fire Protection District was created by the County Board of Supervisors, and the three old fire districts were dissolved.

Broderick and Bryte had used county library services since their early days when branch libraries were established in their post offices. Arthur F. Turner established the first West Sacramento branch library in 1925 in the West Sacramento Company headquarters building. The library was moved in 1952 and again in 1961 to different locations on Merkley Avenue. In 1973 the Turner family donated a large lot at 1212 Merkley to the county for a new library. On it the county built a new \$400,000 building which was designed by Ronald Folsom. Turner died in 1974, and the new library was dedicated to his memory on May 23, 1976. The Bryte and Broderick branches were closed in 1978, after the passage of Proposition 13, leaving the Turner Library to serve all East Yolo as a center for reading and community activities.



DEDICATION OF THE TURNER LIBRARY, MAY 23, 1976. The West Sacramento branch of the Yolo County Library was constructed on a lot donated by the Arthur F. Turner family. After Mr. Turner's death in 1974, the new building was dedicated to his memory. Here Arthur Edmonds, County Supervisor from West Sacramento, hands a certificate of appreciation to Mrs. Arthur F. Turner, as Supervisors William Duncan and David Barton look on. (Julius Feher collection, News-Ledger)

The county also developed the parks in East Yolo. The first was Memorial (Little League) Park, built on a block on Euclid Street in West Sacramento, that had been given to the county in 1948 by the West Sacramento Company. After the West Sacramento Little League was organized in 1955, the park was used for baseball games and maintained by the Little League teams. Sam Combs Park, which was named for Sumner W. (Sam) Combs, Sr., a former County Supervisor from District One, was developed by the county in 1955 on land rented from the Port District for one dollar a year. Pennsylvania and Meadowdale Parks were also developed by the county, as was the Broderick Regional Park and Boat Ramp. The park, which was completed in 1977, cost \$265,450 in federal, state and county funds.

Some basic municipal services in East Yolo were supplied by special districts, agencies initiated by residents of an area who tax themselves to pay for one or more government services which the county cannot provide. In East Yolo the schools, the port, reclamation (storm drains and levees), mosquito abatement, street lights and sewer systems were all built and operated by local special districts.

After World War II when investors were beginning to show interest in developing East Yolo, developers and residents alike realized that the area could not grow unless its existing sewer systems were enlarged and improved. In one year, 1947, three new sanitary districts were established—in West Sacramento, Broderick and Bryte—and bonds were approved to build a new sewage disposal plant which would accommodate a population of 25,000. The plant, which cost \$350,000, was built in 1950. After operating as separate agencies for twenty years, the three sanitary districts were consolidated on July 1, 1967.

WATER

Probably the most controversial single issue in East Yolo's long history has been the provision of an adequate amount of clean water for fire protection and for domestic, industrial and agricultural use. Local residents perennially complained about the water, particularly about low water pressure during the hot summers when demand for water is high. On July 11, 1919, for example, the *Yolo Independent* complained that the Pankost and Enright homes in Broderick had burned down because the firemen "didn't have enough water to throw a stream farther than two feet from the end of the hose nozzle."

At the end of World War II there were four water companies serving the area: the Washington Water and Light Company, which supplied water to Broderick and Bryte; the West Sacramento Water Company, the Port Water Company and the Yolo County Waterworks District, which supplied the Linden Acres subdivision.

In 1954 controlling interest in the Washington Water and Light Company was sold to Arthur F. Turner and Eugene Williams, the principal developers of Westfield Village, and by the 1960s all four water companies were merged into the Washington Water and Light Company. In 1968 the company was purchased by the Citizens Utility Company of Connecticut for one million dollars, and the name was changed to Washington Water Company.

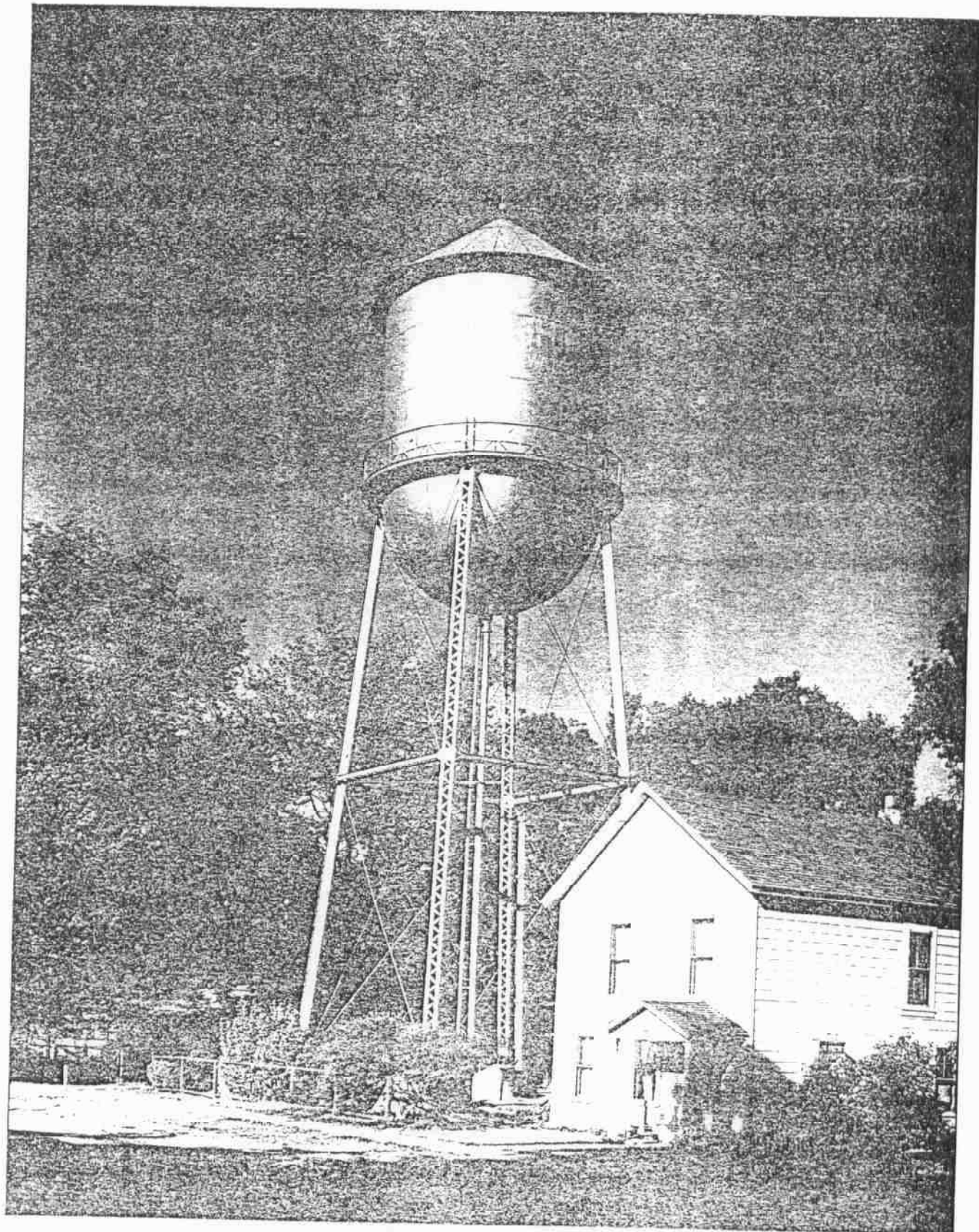
By the 1970s the major problems of the water system were its inability to supply sufficient water during peak demand periods because of inadequate storage facilities and undersized water mains, and customer dissatisfaction with the poor quality of its well water.

In 1973 the water company hired the engineering firm of Brown and Caldwell to study the water system and to make recommendations for its improvement. Their report, which recommended continued use of well water because it was reliable

and less expensive than treated Sacramento River water, was widely criticized locally. When the water company failed to deal satisfactorily with the problem of water quality, local residents became so frustrated that they decided to work together to take over the water company.

After two years of often frenzied community activity, the East Yolo People for Better Water, a group formed in 1975, petitioned for an election to form a Community Services District (CSD) which would eventually take over the water system. Local voters approved formation of the CSD on June 8, 1976. Three years later, on September 4, 1979, they passed a \$17.5 million bond issue to buy the water company. Law suits delayed the actual purchase until June 9, 1983, when the CSD paid the Washington Water Company \$5.9 million and took over the ownership and management of the water system which served all of East Yolo.

When the CSD began operating on September 2, 1976, it had two major responsibilities: sanitation and recreation. The new district took over the functions of sewage and solid waste disposal from the old consolidated West Sacramento Sanitary District, and the construction and maintenance of local public parks and recreational facilities from the county. Three years later the CSD took over all street lighting in the area. With the take-over of the water company in 1983, the CSD finally had the authority to do what the voters had overwhelmingly approved seven years earlier.



WASHINGTON WATER TOWER
The Washington Water Tower rises high above the town of Berkeley, a tangible reminder of the important role water has played in the life of the residents of East Yuba.
California State Library

INCORPORATION

The formation of the CSD and the centralized control of several major urban services were hard-won victories in a very long struggle for local self-government in East Yolo. Almost every decade in its history produced efforts to incorporate all or a part of the area. The various petitions and campaigns in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not lead to an election on the issue, but incorporation was finally put on the ballot for the first time on November 5, 1968. That measure, which proposed incorporating Broderick, Bryte and West Sacramento into one city, was defeated by a large majority, 4,784 to 2,828. Four years later, on November 11, 1972, local voters again rejected, 3,057 to 1,944, a move to incorporate the single community of West Sacramento.

Why did these efforts to create a city in East Yolo fail? The answer may lie in the nature of East Yolo rather than in the often repeated claim that the voters in the two elections were convinced that city government would cost the local tax payers far more than the existing fragmented system of governmental services. The report of a study of the feasibility of incorporation of East Yolo conducted in 1978 by the Institute of Governmental Affairs of the University of California at Davis stated:

A unified community with a cohesive leadership group and a strongly shared sense of identity is a critical resource, contributing immeasurably to ease of formation, transition and operation of an independent local government. Because of persistent factionalism, East Yolo has not enjoyed this resource, although at the time of CSD formation, the poor water issue and the leadership of People for Better Water served as a focal point for citizen concern and action.

Proponents of incorporation lost the battles of 1968 and 1972, but they finally won the war. A new attempt to get local city government was begun by the directors of the CSD in 1983 when they asked the Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission to make a new study on the feasibility of a city for East Yolo. LAFCO's report was favorable, and in May, 1985, a group called the Coalition for Incorporation This Year (CITY) began a successful effort to get the issue on the June 1986 ballot. The Coalition's campaign advertised four reasons to vote for incorporation: "Taxes will NOT go up. A city means action on water quality and cost. Better law enforcement, safer streets. A better quality of life." On June 3, 1986, the city proposal, Measure E, was overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 5,170 to 1,809. At the same time, the voters selected the name "West Sacramento" for the new city which would come into existence January 1, 1987. They also elected the first city council: Mike McGowan, Fidel Martinez, Bill Kristoff, Ray E. Jones and Thelma Rogers.

Why did East Yolo approve incorporation by a seventy-two percent majority in 1986 after soundly defeating other proposals in 1968 and 1972? Some people claim that it was because of the strong campaign by the Coalition. Others cite local dissatisfaction with the level of services provided by the county, changes in laws relating to city and county taxes, ambitious plans for new developments which would improve the area's appearance and assessed value, and other factors. It will be many years before all the reasons are apparent.

EPILOGUE

This history has attempted to describe how the tiny waterfront town of Washington, which was founded 137 years ago, developed into the new city of West Sacramento. Though now legally one city, West Sacramento is actually four communities: Bryte, Broderick, West Sacramento and Southport. The communities are separated from each other by railroads, roads, highways, waterways and industrial development, and also by the educational, ethnic, political, social and economic differences of the people. Until the mid-1980s no person or group ever emerged to provide leadership strong enough to overcome these differences and create the "strong shared sense of identity" required to create a city.

Though the city is part of Yolo County, it has always been closely bound to the city of Sacramento, and decisions made in Sacramento have played a major role in the city's growth or lack of growth. There have been periods in the city's past—during the Gold Rush, in 1868 when the railroad came to town, in 1913 when the West Sacramento Company was dreaming of creating the "Paris of the West," and in the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s—when local residents hoped that West Sacramento would soon face its neighbor across the river as a rival, not a poor relation. Floods, world economic conditions, politics, and bad luck dashed those hopes. However, the floods were controlled, the land was reclaimed, the port was built, the city was incorporated, and once again ambitious plans are being made for new development along the river and the ship channel. Hopes are high again, and this time West Sacramento may succeed.

SELECTED REFERENCES

In preparing this history of West Sacramento, I used many sources of information, written and oral. The most useful of these are listed below. A number of persons were kind enough to share their written materials, photographs, research and personal recollections with me. I am particularly grateful to Julius Feher, Ray Fisher, Susan Hardwick, Howard Turner and Al Walton for giving me so much of their time, encouragement and valuable information.

Much of the general background historical information, particularly pre-1900, came from these general histories:

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McGowan, Joseph A., *History of the Sacramento Valley* (1961)
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THE RIVER

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"Bryte" in *Sacramento Bee*, (March 6, 1977)

Collins, Reid, "A Quiet Freedom" in *Sacramento* (1980)

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I found newspapers a rich source of information and local color. These were particularly good for the period 1850-1900:

Alta California

Knight's Landing News

Mail of Woodland

Placer Times

Sacramento Bee

San Francisco Morning Call

These were good for the twentieth century:

River News

Sacramento Bee

Woodland Daily Democrat

Yolo Mail

The East Yolo newspapers were invaluable:

East Yolo Record (1952-1980)

Esp. Dave Poole's columns "Yolo Recollections" and "The Good Old Days," a 1974 special edition

Yolo Independent (1901-1911) and its successor

Independent-Leader (1922-1952)

Yolo Senator (1937-1940)

News-Ledger (1964-date), esp. Ray Fisher's columns, "From My Window" and the "Pages Out Of The Past" reprinted from the *Independent-Leader*

The Sentinel (1981-date)

When feasible, I consulted official records for documentation of events.

Government records:

United States: Census reports, Corps of Engineers reports

California: Common Schools Reports, Articles of Incorporation in the State Archives, Department of Transportation reports and correspondence, Supreme Court cases reprinted in *California Reports*.

Yolo County: Assessment rolls, Board of Supervisors' minutes, Civil Cases, Court of Sessions' minutes, Deed books, East Yolo General Plan (1959, 1976), LAFCO reports, Map Books, Parks Dept. reports, Planning Department and its successor, Community Development Dept., records; Public Works Dept. records; Sacramento-Yolo Port District Plan and reports; Southport General Plan (1982); Superintendent of Schools reports.

Private records: Correspondence, meeting minutes and reports of the West Sacramento Land Company and the West Sacramento Company kindly made available to me by Howard Turner.

I was privileged to read some unpublished reports and papers that contained much valuable information about East Yolo:

Don Derbyshire's articles on Sacramento riverboats

Ray Fisher's "History of East Yolo Government" (1966) and "A Spectator's View of East Yolo History" (1981)

Isao Fujimoto's A.B.S. 151 student reports (1979-1981)

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Joseph A. Pitti's article on movies of the 1920s

I also gained facts, opinions, anecdotes and perspective in interviews with Earl Balch, Gregg Campbell, "Fish" Curry, Don Derbyshire, Peter Dwyer, Sr., Art and Norma Edmonds, Julius Feher, Ray Fisher, John Gabri, Susan Hardwick, Herb Hotchner, Ray Jones, Albert Jongeneel, Rose Reed Manfredi, Alice Merkley, Anna Palamidessi Mesquita, Jake Misfeldt, Frank Norton, Grace Ohlson, Virginia Ortiz, Willard Pankost, Bruce Pierini, Mercedes Poole, Tony Pinto, Elmer Reuter, Melvin Shore, Robert Silva, Bill Stritzel, Howard Turner, Louise and Raymond Vessell, Michael Van Baaren, Al Walton and Bob Watts.

This project has brought me new friends, great pleasure and an appreciation for the difficulties involved in researching and writing local history. I thank those who have helped me and beg forgiveness from those I may have offended by my errors of commission and omission.

I intend to donate for the use of others my research notes to the Yolo County Archives when my local history projects are completed.

This history is my gift to the people of the new city of West Sacramento. I wish them well.

ShIPLEY Walters, October 1986

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