

THE GREATER CAPAY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Focusing on the Greater Capay Valley, including towns and areas surrounding and leading to Cache Creek and up the Capay Valley. History is all about viewpoint...and *The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society* is intent on exploring them all! Reaching back into time and bringing the stories current.

Hello, Capay Valley! It is good to be "home"! A fourth-fifth generation Hungry Hollow girl, I am beyond delighted to have finally come home to roost—and to re-acquaint myself with this beautiful and special area I have always called "home." As I start the non-profit called *The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society*, I am publishing a bi-monthly journal series devoted to that area I call the *greater* Capay Valley, including the nearest towns and areas like Hungry Hollow to the north of Capay. This way, the material I am collecting is made public as it comes to me. I came back to the area recently to write about it and found such a wealth of intriguing history--and support and enthusiasm--that I decided to share it with the public through *The Greater Capay Valley*

Historical Society journal and eventual website.

I have as my goal several projects: audio-visual history interviews leading to short stories of the area; a companion book to Ada Merhoff's book, *Capay Valley The Land & The People 1846-1900*; as well as a local history of the following years; a republication of the memoirs of my grandfather, "Sunny Jim" Monroe, Yolo County Sheriff for 28 years, wild west years complete with murders, gun fights in our small town streets, bank robberies and bootlegging raids!

I hope to make this an interactive forum--and to thereby inspire many "old timers" and more recent locals to share their stories with me, and with you as well. I am also writing and collecting poetry and short stories of the area, some of which I will feature in this periodical.

Subscription & Donation Options:



_____ \$60 = 1 year membership with all 6 volumes of the journal

_____ \$110 = 1 year family membership with 2 copies of all 6 volumes of the journal

_____ \$500 or higher **tax deductible donation** = 2 of each volume *for 3 years*

_____ \$1000 or higher **donation** = all of above *plus*: 1 copy of any books published by TGCVHS *free*

Samples from volume 1:

Time periods:

1840s In 1842 the Mexican government granted William Gordon two leagues of land (the Guesissosi grant) on both sides of Cache Creek from the western hills to the Sacramento River. In 1846 the nine-league Rancho Canada de Capay, extending from the western edge of Gordon's grant through the north end of the Capay Valley, was granted to the three Berryessa brothers. Livestock production became the principal economic activity of rancheros and their followers.

Colorful characters:

Sheriff James William Monroe, referred to as "Sunny Jim" due to his jovial and accepting personality, married a "local girl," Elvira Grey Duncan of Hungry Hollow, in 1902. Soon afterwards he followed his adventurous heart to the Yukon Territory in search of gold before returning to his ranch in Hungry Hollow. He later ran for political office, leading to a stint as sheriff for 28 years. During that time, he covered much of the greater Capay Valley, and in the memoir published by the Daily Democrat newspaper at the end of his career, he tells some interesting stories of those times.

8000 year Tribal History in the Capay Valley:

While it is never without conflict when one group's existence in an area is interrupted by another's, it is unique for the cultures to somehow find a way to co-exist to the point they did--and do--in the Capay Valley. The local indigenous people of the Wintun Tribe have a rich 8000 year history in the area that is only now being fully explored by the tribe.

Historically significant African-American enclave in the valley:

Before statehood and even after, since California was a free state, there are enclaves throughout with sizable early pioneers of African Descent. One such area is the Guinda area in the Capay Valley. Local Black Historian Bill Petty explains that the Guinda area has a rich history of being well integrated from the beginning of early settlements.

History of the Annual Almond Festival:

The Capay Valley Almond Festival began in 1915 and has been a Northern California tradition. The only five town event in Northern California, the festival is a showcase of the Esparto/Capay Valley Region. It began in the fall after the harvest and moved years later to the spring, in order to show off the lovely blossoms. Of recent years the festival has received large amounts of rain and wind and this year the festival moved to the month of March.

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