

It's been a fun ride, but I'm ready to explore the West

By Jerry Bowen

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When I started writing Solano County history articles for The Reporter, I couldn't help wondering if there was enough history to write about different subjects for any amount of time. I must admit that while I was the editor and writer for the United Prospectors Inc. publications, there was plenty of fodder about the gold country but I wasn't sure about Solano County.

Well, eight years later, I find that I didn't have to repeat myself hardly at all and the more Sabine Goerke-Shrode (my fellow history columnist) and I would dig into the past, the more there was. Solano County is extremely rich in history!

It was also interesting to find how much of our accepted history was wrong through tedious research. Occasionally, I review my past articles and find items that I got wrong. Quite often it was because of you readers that contacted me and offered information so that I was able to correct some of my own mistakes. I've always appreciated that.

Another thing you readers provided me with were very interesting suggestions for articles. I learned much more of our history because of those suggestions and, once again, I thank you.

At the age of 70, I am finding it harder to continue to have to work to a schedule, and, with a new RV, the never-ending allure of exploring as much of the historic Western United States before that gets too hard to do has been a goal of mine for quite some time.

Also being involved with several history organizations, including the Vacaville Heritage Council (VHC), Pena Adobe Historical Society and the Solano County Historical Society, will continue to use a lot of my time when not traveling. The VHC is where I first gained my interest in local history under the guiding arm of one of Solano County's finest men I have ever had the privilege to know, Bert Hughes, and will continue to be my primary interest in serving our community's historical needs.

Bert's gone now to his just reward but working with fellow team members, Carol Noske, Brian Irwin and Bob Allen makes all the research and work involved with the VHC extremely worth while. They are the cream of the crop and always willing to go the

extra mile to serve the public.

In addition to our team at the VHC, working with video professionals Jesse Hayden and Ted Haskins, at Town Cryer Pro Video to record and produce videos of the history of Solano County, has expanded our reach to all who care about what came before us and the lessons that can be learned from the past. They are also a great part of our team at VHC.

Last, but not least, I am very grateful to the folks at The Reporter for their patience and professionalism that gave me the opportunity to delve deeper into local history and be published. My first foray into being published was while I was writing an article for Nevada Magazine. Reporter staffer Karen Nolan reviewed and edited the article that was eventually accepted. It was also her that gave me the final clue to the existence of the Santa Eulalia Mission building in Suisun Valley.

Reporter editor Diane Barney has always demonstrated great patience and professionalism in dealing with all my quirks and foibles during the history series. I can't thank her and the staff enough - even as times have become tough for the newspaper industry.

Well ... with all the above, I reckon most of you have figured out that the history column will also join the dustbin of the past and will end with Sabine's article next week.

For me, it has been a fun ride and I move on with a little sorrow, the hope that I've been able to contribute a little to the knowledge of the past, but with an eye toward a little bit of adventure as I get to roam around some of the back roads of this great country.

Thank you once again to everyone that made the column possible.

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