



Past President's Corner

by Jim Metcalf

The Rio Vista Museum was founded in 1975 for the purpose of preserving the history and artifacts of Rio Vista, for the people of Rio Vista and all visitors.

In researching this article about our one and only lunch box in the Rio Vista Museum, I have learned a great deal about how people brought their lunch and dinner to work or school. The first lunch containers were actually oiled goat skins that were used to protect food from the elements. Their history goes back many centuries.

My purpose today is to talk about the history of the lunch container used most commonly in the United States between the late 1800s and today. Our lunch pail, donated to the museum by Linda Dutra, looks very similar to many 1890s metal containers that were used to hold coffee. Its second life was as a child's school lunch pail. Other typical metal containers of the period that were used to transport food were the Central Union cut plug tobacco tin and the handbag

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The Deep Water Channel

by Phil Pezzaglia

In this busy day and age, there are many things that we do not question, that we simply take for granted. Today, most of us really do not give much notice to the large oceangoing ships that pass by Rio Vista, unless we are in line waiting to cross the bridge while it is open awaiting an approaching vessel. So let us pose the question: When did the first oceangoing vessel travel up the river to the port of Sacramento?

That event took place in 1934, and there are probably only a few locals who can remember watching her go under the "old" Rio Vista Bridge. In the early 1930s, William G. "Bill" Stone, later to be known as "The Father of the Port" of Sacramento, had a vision of creating an inland port at the state's capital. A busy port would yield many benefits including lower freight costs, more jobs, and industrial development. In order to realize his vision, he needed to bring an oceangoing vessel in to Sacramento to prove its feasibility.

In 1934, Stone convinced a shipping line to bring one of its ships up the Sacramento River to Sacramento; thus the first oceangoing vessel arrived. That first ship to journey past Rio Vista on its way to Sacramento was the *Harpoon* of the Shepard Line. The little-known Shepard Line operated a small fleet of four steamers that sailed from Boston to Seattle via the Panama Canal. The fleet consisted of the SS *Harpoon*, SS *Sage*, SS *Timber Rush* and SS *Wind Rush*. Little information is available regarding this small fleet, but indications are that the accommodations were limited.

The success of that 1934 voyage led to the realization of Stone's vision. Over the course of the next three decades, the port was gradually constructed. Congress authorized the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel in 1946, and construction began three years later. The Port of Sacramento was officially opened to deep sea traffic in 1963. At that time, the second oceangoing vessel made its way up the river past Rio Vista to the state's capital.

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A Message from the President

I am thrilled to say that the Rio Vista Museum Association membership is on the rise. It is the membership dues which help us maintain our displays as well as the upkeep of the building, which began as a blacksmith shop around the turn of the century.

Thank you to all who came out for our Annual Membership meeting. We had a few new members from Trilogy there as well as many reliable "old-timers" who added their own anecdotes to the evening's presentation.

We have recently enjoyed showing off our collection to many tour groups, including a group of more than thirty American Field Service (AFS) students who were visiting Rio Vista.

The Rotary Club of Rio Vista recently enjoyed a dinner meeting at the museum. In attendance were both local Rotarians and Museum Board Members. Attendees enjoyed a slide presentation and stories of an earlier Rio Vista.

The panel of visiting architects, city planners, and others, who came to town as guests of Rio Vision, enjoyed a visit to the museum. They seemed to revel in learning some of the early history of the town whose future they are designing.

On June 29th, 1963, with 5,000 spectators waiting to welcome her, the motor vessel *Taipei Victory* arrived at the Port of Sacramento, and the port was officially open for business. The Nationalist Chinese flag ship, freshly painted for the historic event, was loaded with 5,000 tons of bagged rice for Mitsui Trading Co. Its destination was Okinawa. Carried on deck were 1,000 tons of logs for Japan. She was the first oceangoing vessel in Sacramento since the steamship *Harpoon* in 1934.

If you haven't sent in your 2014 dues, please do so now. Remember that the museum depends on dues and donations.

Regular.....	\$10	Benefactor.....	\$75
Family.....	\$15	Centennial.....	\$100
Sustaining.....	\$25	Life Member.....	\$250
Associate.....	\$50		

HAMBURGER FEED

MAY 19th

Desserts needed



Back in Stock!

**The Homicidal Handyman of Oak Park:
Morris Solomon, Jr.
by Tony Ray Harvey**

MUSEUM OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Phil Pezzaglia	President
Renee Tingey	Treasurer
Peter Hamilton	Recording Secretary
Gail Machado	Membership Secretary
Mary Anne Peterson	Corresponding Secretary
Jim Metcalf	Past President
Suzanne Goldberg	Newsletter Editor
Harvey Felt	Bob Bard
Joyce Metcalf	Beverly Bellows
Janet Blegen	Doug Tingey

Memorials

On behalf of the Rio Vista Museum, we would like to thank those who have made a memorial donation in 2014 in honor of their loved ones.

The following were so honored.

Jackson James Bailey

William A. Brann

Burrows Hamilton

Mrs. Harden

William "Curley" Hurley

James Stewart

tobacco tin. This latter was the favorite of men who worked in the industrial factories of the 1890s.

Since the 19th century, American industrial workers have used sturdy containers to hold lunches or dinner. This practice became common as the factories were located too far for men to go home to eat.

While the world's largest Lunch Box Museum is in Columbus, Georgia, the Smithsonian houses a collection of lunch boxes and pails among its many treasures. That museum's curator, David Shayt, describes the items.

Some of our earliest examples, from the 19th century, were woven baskets with handles. A meal would be wrapped in a handkerchief. Depending on your station, a fancy wooden box would be used by the wealthy. Tinplate boxes and recycled biscuit tins commonly were used in the early 1800s, and fitted metal pails and boxes began to appear around the 1860s.

The Thermos, a vacuum bottle which would keep beverages hot or cold, was introduced in 1904. It was not long until the Thermos was fitted to the lunch pail. Many of you will remember that the first Thermoses had cork stoppers and metal cups. Over the years the cups have changed to plastic and the bottles stoppers to rubber or a type of plastic. I can remember clearly the first metal Thermoses. No more complaints of broken vacuum bottles.

In 1935, Geuder, Paeschke, and Frey produced the first licensed character lunch box with Mickey Mouse gracing the top.

It was a lithograph oval tin with a tray inside that could be removed. It had a handle but no vacuum bottle.

In 1950, Aladdin Industries created the first children's lunch box, based on the television show, Hopalong Cassidy. From its introduction at back-to-school time 1950, it went on to sell over 600,000 units in the first year alone. The lunch boxes sold for \$2.39.

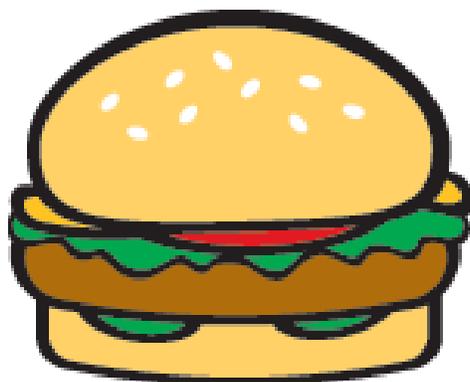
Vinyl boxes were introduced in 1959. The first use of plastic was the lunch box handle but later spread to the entire box. With the first molded plastic boxes produced in the 1960s.

Notes of Note

Museum Happenings

- ❖ The museum has received quite a few new items during the last few months. Many of the items will gradually begin to appear within the display cases of the museum. We have recently received military uniforms belonging to Ron Abreu; William "Curley" Hurley's Rotarian Jacket; several boxes of photographs, etc. from the Estate of Jim Stewart; a 1979 Riverview Panthers windbreaker jacket; and much more. Thank you to all the donors.
- ❖ The museum recently purchased several display cabinets, which had previously resided in a Sacramento Museum. With a few repairs and some cleanup, they will soon be filled with our ever growing inventory.
- ❖ The museum will be open on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26. If you have friends visiting from out of town, why not introduce them to the best little museum around?
- ❖ Would you like to be more involved with the museum? We are looking for volunteers to "sit" at the museum when we are open on Saturday and Sunday. Let us know if you are interested in being trained for this activity. Have fun talking with visitors. If you would prefer volunteering for other jobs at the museum, there are many areas of need. Talk to any board member.
- ❖ Have you checked out the museum's website (www.riovistamuseum.org) lately? There are historical photographs, information about books available for sale, and much more. In addition, recent newsletters are posted on the website. Perhaps you would consider going "paperless" in the future. We will be soliciting email addresses of members, and we can email a link to the newsletter when a new issue becomes available. You can help save trees and reduce museum expenses.
- ❖ Would you like to sponsor a special purchase or project at the museum? We are looking for "angels" to help defray costs. Perhaps you would consider funding the purchase of a film-to-digital converter (\$100-150). Or maybe you would like to make a one-time donation to help pay for repainting the museum sign. All donations are much appreciated.
- ❖ If you haven't visited the museum lately, you should make a point of coming by. Our dedicated board members and volunteers have installed a few new exhibits. Come see them!

Rio Vista Museum Hamburger BBQ



Donation: \$7.00

Date: Monday, May 19, 2014

Time: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Place: 401 Club, 401 Montezuma Street

Tickets available at the Door or at the RV Museum

Rio Vista Museum
16 N. Front Street
Rio Vista, CA 94571