



The Wilsonia News

Published six times a year by the Wilsonia Historic District Trust for all Wilsonia cabin owners, their families and friends. Volume 1, Issue 4, July 2021. Jim Spitze, Editor; Doug Bartsch, Designer.

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Celebrating 25 Years

WE DEDICATE WILSONIA – For some unrecorded reason, the successful creation of the Wilsonia Historic District in March of 1996 wasn't celebrated until a full year later, on July 4th, 1997. On that date in the Wilsonia Clubhouse that we all so dearly love, a bronze plaque was dedicated noting the designation of Wilsonia as a National Historic District. This July 4th let us recall that service of dedication:

SERVICE OF DEDICATION July 4, 1997

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Leader | In memory of its past; in respect for its present; in hope for its future; |
| Audience | We dedicate Wilsonia. |
| Leader | For the majesty of its trees; the songs of its birds, the color of its wild flowers, the blue of its sky, the glory of its mountains; |
| Audience | We dedicate Wilsonia. |
| Leader | For the joy of family and friends; for parents and grandparents; for children and grandchildren; for generations and generations to come: |
| Audience | We dedicate Wilsonia. |
| All | In thankfulness for its past, present, and future; In appreciation of its beauty - in all its many forms; In recognition of its families who bring it life and joy; |
| | We dedicate Wilsonia. |

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN – Finally, our nation is returning to normal! My ongoing thanks to our readers for your support and encouragement. As a reminder, our issues are intentionally not copyrighted. Readers may freely copy and reuse our content. This issue contains:

- **“We dedicate Wilsonia”** – from *The Wilsonia Experience* by Fern Tripp
- **Upcoming Events** – updated as of 6/13/2021
- **WHDT’s Wilsonia Roster Project** – update
- **WHDT’s Sound System Project** – update
- **Recommended Wilsonia Service Providers** – the list is growing
- **Wilsonia Village Inc. (WVI)** – It’s history, purpose, and current leadership
- **The Cabin on the Rock** – from *The Wilsonia Experience* by Fern Tripp
- **California’s Constitutional Convention of 1849** – from *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* by Jim Spitze
- **Recommended Reading** – a categorized list of almost a hundred good books for reading while at Wilsonia (selected by The Editor)
- **A Bit About My Book** – a few words about *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*, the 4th of your editor’s books on various aspects of California history
- **Our Concluding Mental Challenge** – and the answer to Issue #3’s “Who is this?” quiz

Ye Olde Combined and Consolidated WHDT+WVI Calendar of Upcoming Events

Please note the following changes:

- **Susan Stocking Harper’s Wildflower Walk on July 3rd will start at 10am, not at 9am**
- **There will be a WHDT Board meeting on July 5th, all are welcome**
- **Regarding the July 17th Meet & Greet at the Collin’s Compound:**
 - **Time is now 4:00-5:30pm**
 - **Expected attendees will now include representatives of all three of Wilsonia’s Boards: WHDT, WVI and the Masonic Tract**

June

- June 26th – Clean-up Day, 8am-5pm with a 12noon lunch for the clean-up participants at the Wilsonia Community Park, 83632 Hazel Lane.
- June 27th – 1pm: WVI Board of Directors meeting at the Wilsonia Community Park, 83632 Hazel Lane, open to all

July

- July 3rd
 - **10am-?? Wildflower Walk**, led by Susan Stocking Harper; meet at clubhouse steps, hosted by WHDT. Might last a bit over an hour; depends on the participants.
 - **2-4pm Valley Liberty Band Concert** location to be announced
 - **6-8pm Potluck Dinner**, at the Wilsonia Community Park, 83632 Hazel Lane, hosted by WVI
- July 4th
 - **10am Grand TRADITIONAL 4th of July Parade** – all are welcome to participate; for route info, see below

- **1:30pm Ice Cream Social**, another of our community's grand traditions; hosted by Jean & Debbie Faszholz
- July 5th – WHDT Annual Meeting, 10 am on the Sorensen deck. 83731 Hazel Lane. All are welcome
- July 12th – 16th: **Quilters & Crafters Retreat**; starts at the Clubhouse. For more info contact Mel Peters dicknmel@netptc.net or Penny Burgin chuckpen@gmail.com For info regarding the Pine Cone Wreath or Cross projects, contact Carley Metcalf rustyacres93@gmail.com
- July 17th – **Meet & Greet Wine Evening** at the Collin's cabins; 4-5:30pm; the Boards of WHDT, WVI and the Masonic Tract invite the Wilsonia community to meet Wilsonia's leaders and hear (briefly we hope) about what they are doing for our beloved community; hosted by the several Wilsonia families, six as this goes to press, others welcome, the more-the-merrier. Rumors are emerging of some truly *gourmet* nibbles, free and open to all.
- July 24th – WVI "**Taste of Wilsonia**"; a fundraiser, tickets \$25 each (\$10 for children 12 and under), for reservations and more info, contact Neal Mixer

August

- August 7th – **1pm** WVI Board of Directors meeting (clubhouse), open to all, **6-7pm** BBQ Dinner, **7-8pm** WVI's annual General Meeting & election of members
- August 14th
 - **10am WAT Business Meeting**, in the clubhouse; NPS representatives will be in attendance for Q&A; open to all and "all" are very much invited
 - **7:30pm The Perry-Hallock Duo** blues, rock & and folk music, in the Clubhouse
- August 21st – **1-3pm: WHDT Educational Event** – Brief talk and book signing with author Jim Spitze on *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*, open to all, at the clubhouse
- August 21st – **8pm Wilsonia Treasure Hunt**, Moonlight Edition

September

- September 4th – **6pm Fiesta d'Taco** led by Jean Faszholz and her friends with encouragement and support from the WHDT, at the clubhouse
- September 5th – **8-11am Pancake Breakfast** at the clubhouse, **1pm WVI Board of Directors meeting** at the clubhouse, open to all
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NEXT YEAR(!)

July – with details in later issues as the planning for this Spectacular Event evolves ...

- July 2nd – **25th Anniversary Celebration** of the founding of the Wilsonia Historic District; a dinner+program event at the clubhouse ... with a *very* special speaker.

WINES FOR THE JULY 17th MEET & GREET WINE EVENING – The following list is far from final but will give you an idea. Some of the 1980s wines are likely to be "over the hill" but it will be fun to open them anyway.

- A *historic* Ch. Mouton Rothschild 1982 with the famous label by John Huston
- Several other wines from the mid 1980s plus a Jeroboam of merlot from 1995
- Two other "large format" bottles, a Breggo 2010 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (Jeroboam), and a Navarro 2006 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, Methode a l'ancienne (Magnum)
- Five Zinfandels (two "vertical tastings")
- Four lovely Cabernet Sauvignons (one from Anderson Valley and three from Paso Robles)
- An "interesting" 2017 Red Blend from the Hearst Ranch winery
- plus at least six more wines (two sparklers and four others).

THE WILSONIA DIRECTORY – Carley Metcalf is making progress on a Wilsonia Directory and has in-hand the information needed to get started. Content will be: (1) Wilsonia cabin address, (2) owner/contact name, (3) phone number(s), (4) email address. Usage will be explicitly limited to “non-commercial” (a restriction found in many club directories).

Carley’s team will plan to visit each cabin this summer to obtain all the necessary information. At that time if you choose not to be a part of the directory just communicate that to us and your phone number and email address will not be included. All participating cabins will receive a copy of the directory when this project is completed. Please keep in mind this a community project that will benefit all cabin owners in time of a crisis or emergency. Thank you to the owners who have sent their information to us already. That has been a great help.

If you have any questions or concerns or want to schedule a meeting with a team member, please feel free (and encouraged) to contact Carley via her email rustyacres93@gmail.com or by phone at 559-573-4700

THE WHDT SOUND SYSTEM PROJECT – While the WHDT fundraising effort has not quite met our \$10,000 goal, we have raised enough, using some rainy day funds from our treasury, to purchase and install the new sound and video system in the Clubhouse. Nathan McGuigan is ordering all of the components and should be ready to install sometime in June. We are still accepting tax deductible donations in hopes of meeting our goal. If we are able to raise additional funds we will purchase a new portable sound system as well. Many thanks to all who have made donations to what WHDT believes is a worthwhile project for the community of Wilsonia.

To make a tax deductible donation to this worthy cause, you may donate electronically by visiting WHDT’s website www.wilsonia.org or you can write a check payable to WHDT and send it to BJ Spitze, WHDT Treasurer, 1484 S. Frankwood Ave., Sanger, CA 93657.

RECOMMENDED WILSONIA SERVICE PROVIDERS – We invite all readers to submit their recommendations. We expect this list to “grow & blossom” and to become a “go to” source. Here is the current list:

- Estrada Tree Service, Tree Removal and Trimming, Gilbert Estrada, 559-393-3607, two quite positive recommendations.
- Paul Finck, general contractor, similar reputation to Mark Vetter, 559-358-5797. He currently has a waiting list. finckwilsonia@gmail.com
- Tee Zee Painting – Many happy Wilsonia customers. Eddie Romero, 559-270-1558
- For other help with cabin restorations: Zamora Electric, Richardson Flooring (get details from Doug Bartsch)
- Willies Chimney Service of Clovis, CA, 559-593-0444, good work and much less expensive than others. [might be a bit “dated” as work was done four years ago]
- Jana Botkin “I use pencil, oil paint, and murals, to make art people can understand, of places and things they love for prices that won’t scare them. I do custom art and love to draw cabins.” www.cabinart.net 559-561-7606
- Sequoia Outdoor Power, just off Highway 180, 0.1 mile south on Alta Ave.; repairs to outdoor gas/does; powered lawnmowers, etc. 559-840-7174 fast, competent, friendly, inexpensive. One of the owner’s sons is the *Chairsaw Artist* behind the wooden bears seen in Wilsonia.
- Doug Hoopes of D&H Pest Control; comes once a year to Wilsonia (end of June or early July); sprays for carpenter ants; already serving seven Wilsonia cabins; office address is 1187 N. Willow, suite 103, Clovis, CA, 559-974-5707

Some service providers charge for travel time. If you need help with something (chimney?), let the editor know and he will keep a list of those having similar needs. If a service provider were to know that he could do several jobs while here, he might reduce the travel time fee; perhaps divide it equally.

WILSONIA VILLAGE INC. (WVI) – It’s history, purpose, and current leadership as compiled from Fern Tripp’s book *WILSONIA Yesterday, Today and Forever*, pages 16 & 17.

Wilsonia’s first community-wide organization was the *Wilsonia Club*, founded in June 1923 with 114 charter members. The main endeavor of the club was to raise money to build a Clubhouse. During years 1923-1927 a Clubhouse was built on lots donated by A. D. Ferguson. Sadly, this Clubhouse burned to the ground in 1928 and in a few years anew Clubhouse was built at the same location. When this Clubhouse collapsed under snow in 1932-1933, the persevering club members built a 3rd.

While much of the clubhouse building and rebuilding was going on, the Wilsonia Ladies Club kept changing its name ... to the Wilsonia Women’s Club, then the General Grant Park Boosters Club, the Grant Grove Community Club, and then back to the Wilsonia Women’s Club. Whatever its name, its ongoing purpose was “to promote sociability among the people of this community and in every way possible enhance their welfare and happiness.” This club took a major role in planning the Clubhouse and held many money making events when the need was especially great during The Great Depression ... sponsoring dances, card parties, etc. One interesting goal never quite bore fruit, the creation and maintenance of a Wilsonia Museum. They wrote to Washington to increase the meager appropriation for Grant Grove Park, pushed the park for better road signs, donated athletic equipment for Wilsonia’s young people, encourage our property owners to plant redwood trees, annually provided a music camp scholarship for a deserving student, pushed for Park church services, a new Park Headquarters, and a new Post Office. They managed to get help for some of their projects from the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corp (the CCC) which had a camp in the Park on Wilsonia’s west boundary.

When the CCC was disbanded in 1942, the Park encouraged the people of Wilsonia to provide their own fire protection. It took awhile but in 1947 a *Wilsonia Property Owners Association* was set up to handle the community’s basic civic needs while the still existing *Wilsonia Club* remained a social club. In 1949 it seems that the *Wilsonia Club* morphed into *Wilsonia Village, Inc.* and absorbed the tasks previously handled by the *Wilsonia Property Owners Association* - horse & stables, roads, recreation for all, water problems, fire prevention, garbage disposal, and more broadly, to maintain Wilsonia’s unique family atmosphere. With few changes, it remains much the same in 2021.

WVI’s officers as of July 1,2021 are:

- Chuck Burgin, President
- Katie Wilson, Vice President
- Mary Anne Smith, Secretary
- Neil Mixter, Treasurer.

If you have the time and interest to help WVI regarding this, please contact its President, Chuck Burgin at wilsoniatimes@gmail.com Volunteers are *always* welcome.

THE CABIN ON THE ROCK – by Martha J. Everhard, from page 16 of the book *The Wilsonia Experience* by Fern Tripp.

In the early 1900's Richard Edwin French (always known as Ed) was a logger in the great Sequoias. He fell in love with the beauty of the giant redwoods, the meadowlands, and all the wild creatures.

He lived in Visalia after his marriage to Mayme Seibald. They had a farm and later moved into town where he was well known as the best photographer in the county.

Their only child, Annie Elizabeth French, grew into a brown-eyed beauty and was courted by Franklin H. Minck as they both attended Visalia High School which was just across the street from Annie's home on Main Street.

They were married in the Visalia Christian Church after Franklin graduated for U.C.L.A. He then took his young wife "back east" while attending Lexington Theological School and Yale Divinity School. After graduation they returned to California and he became the minister of the First Christian Church in Orange.

Ed began to think about a special gift for his daughter. In 1929 he built the French cabin on the highest point in Wilsonia. For eleven summers Annie and Franklin spent their vacation in the wonderful one room cabin. Their four daughters grew to love it and looked forward to a time away from the busy schedule of a minister's family. The cabin had no well, so each morning the robust, barrel chested Franklin strode down the steep road to fill two buckets with water for the day's use. To demonstrate how strong he was, he would swing the buckets in a great arc just as he reached the top of the hill. Never did he spill a drop as his daughters cheered his success.

Annie kept busy preparing meals on a wood burning stove, washing diapers for the newest daughter, while Franklin sat on the porch reading and preparing sermons for the fall season of the year.

I, the second born daughter, covet warm memories of saving money for an entire year so that I could have my yearly one hour ride on a donkey with my father leading me down the paths. I felt so grown up when I graduated to horses and could ride myself.

Each Sunday morning we would go to Sunday School and then Church service at the Church of the Sequoias. Our father would preach the sermon, and if there was no ther pianist there, our mother would play the piano. The piano was kept in a small storage shed behind the platform. I understand it is now used as housing for some of the women who work at the Grant Grove corral.

Ed and Mayme would come up for the afternoon on Sunday and share a meal with us but never spent one night in the French cabin.

One of the most interesting parts of the French cabin is the front door. It has served as a "Guest Book" and bears the names, heights, and dates of visitors. It brings pleasure to us to see the names of our parents and all the times they were here written by our Mother in her perfect school teacher handwriting. Her Maid of Honor, Virginia Cornell of Fresno, signed the door. My father's Best Man, Claud Grant of Visalia, also has his signature there.

Now our children and our children's children sign the door when they come. Five generations have enjoyed the peace, the beauty, the tranquility as they have come to the "Cabin on the Rock".

CALIFORNIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1849 – from *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* by Jim Spitze and continuing from where we left off in Issue #3:

Among the other representatives were John A. Sutter (of Sutter's Fort and Sutter's Mill fame), Henry W. Halleck (later Chief-of-Staff of the U.S. Army and U. S. Grant's superior and, later again, subordinate during the Civil War), Thomas O. Larkin (U. S. Consul in Monterey), William M. Gwin (later to become California's first elected Senator, Col. John C. Frémont being the second), and William E. Shannon (of whom more later)

The convention meeting in Colton Hall in Monterey, was opened on September 1 with a prayer by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Hopkins Willey, who went on to alternate with Padre Antonio Ramirez to open each of the succeeding sessions. Of the convention's most far-reaching decision, Willey later wrote:

September 10, 1849 – At that point, Mr. Shannon moved to insert, as an additional section, the following –

“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, unless for punishment of crimes, shall ever be tolerated in this state.”

No objection was made to the section. The sentiment of the country was so well known upon the subject that debate was unnecessary. One member wanted to amend by prohibiting the introduction of free negroes, and some others raised the question as to what particular portion of the constitution the prohibition of slavery should appear in, which, on motion, was determined to be the Bill of Rights, and some questioned whether it would not be well to submit the matter to the people in a separate article; but when it came to a vote, the section was adopted unanimously.

There was no sign of the amazing importance of that decision, so easily reached in that little far-off town on that day.

The convention went on about its ordinary business as if nothing unusual had happened. The outside world was quiet; the forenoon sun had melted away the usual morning ocean fog, and the deep, unceasing roar of the surf came up from the circling shore of the bay, and everything seemed peaceful, - but something had taken place there, that morning, that was soon to convulse the nation! But no one comprehended it then. Men only spoke of the convention as having got rid of its most perplexing question, and said that henceforth it would be plain sailing.

It was, by almost any measure, an amazing convention. On September 11, the following section was discussed at some length but not accepted:

“As the true design of all punishment is to reform and not to exterminate mankind, death shall never be inflicted as a punishment for crime in this State.”

On September 13 in a late night session the following section was considered and accepted:

“No lottery shall be authorized by this State, nor shall the sale of lottery tickets be allowed.”

On October 13, the convention completed its work, and proceeded in a body from Colton Hall to General Riley's home. Captain John Sutter, on behalf of the Convention, addressed General Riley:

... and for John Sutter's words and General Riley's response, you will need to go to *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*, chapter III, page 47.

RECOMMENDED READING – What might be nicer than getting up in the morning in your Wilsonia cabin, pouring yourself a fresh cup of coffee and cozying down with a good book? ... nothing too serious or profound, maybe a good mystery or perhaps a well-written biography. Here are a few suggestions:

- **MYSTERIES:** *The Rasp* by Philip MacDonald (especially recommended), *Trent's Last Case* by E. E. Bentley, *Was It Murder?* by James Hilton (who also wrote *Lost Horizon*)



Mountains by Theodore Roosevelt

- MYSTERY SERIES: almost any of the Adam Dalgliesh books by P.D. James, the Lord Peter Wimsey books by Dorothy Sayers, the Roderick Alleyn books by Ngaio March, the Judge Dee books by Robert van Gulik, the Inspector Napoleon Bonaparte books by Arthur W. Upfield, and *perhaps* the Brother Cadfael books by Ellis Peters and the Rumpole books by John Mortimer
- SPY THRILLERS: *The Thirty-Nine Steps* by John Buchan, *The Riddle of the Sands* by Erskine Childers
- PURE RELAXATION: any of the Bertie Wooster and Jeeves books by P.G. Woodhouse
- BIOGRAPHY: *Abraham Lincoln* by Lord Charnwood (stunning, highly recommended), *John Marshall* by Harlow Giles Unger, *Yankee From Olympus: Justice Holmes and His Family* by Catherine Drinker Bowen, and of course almost any of the excellent biographies by David McCullough or Joseph I. Ellis or Doris Kearns Goodwin
- WESTERNS: *The Log of a Cowboy* by Andy Adams, *The Virginian* by Owen Wister, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* and *Hunting Trips on the Prairie and in the*

- POETRY: *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* edited by Thomas H. Johnson – a revelation! uplifting! a joy to read, especially poem 324. A visit to her home in Amherst, Massachusetts, and to the bright, cheery room where she wrote her poems is much recommended.
- TWO CLASSICS: *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (well deserves its rank as *The Great American Novel*; fun to read), *Two Years Before the Mast* by Richard Henry Dana, Jr.
- SERIOUS/IMPORTANT: *American Diplomacy 1900-1950* by George F. Kennan, *The First Congress* by Fergus M. Bordewich
- AND EVERY CABIN SHOULD HAVE: *The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada* by John Muir Laws and *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* by James M. Spitze

With the exception of my book, all of the above are easily available from AbeBooks at <https://www.abebooks.com>

A BIT ABOUT MY BOOK – *TREASURES en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* has just been published. A much respected California historian said the following on seeing the final draft, *TREASURES is just blooming' beautiful! Hoorrrrraaaaaahhhhhh and congratulations!*

It's a big book, almost 300 pages hardbound on heavy 80# white matte stock (said to be especially good for color photographs), 9" wide x 12" tall and a full inch thick, 142 illustrations many in full-color and with many of those (especially the wildflower photographs, as at left) taking a full page.

It's fun to read *and* to view, the latter because of the many never-before-published photographs ... an entire chapter devoted to Yokuts and Western Mono woven baskets and another chapter to the beautiful wildflower photographs-as-art of Pamela Coz-Hill. It tells the story of our early cattlemen and farmers by letting them speak for themselves – using quotes from their letters, diaries, and other sources of their time.

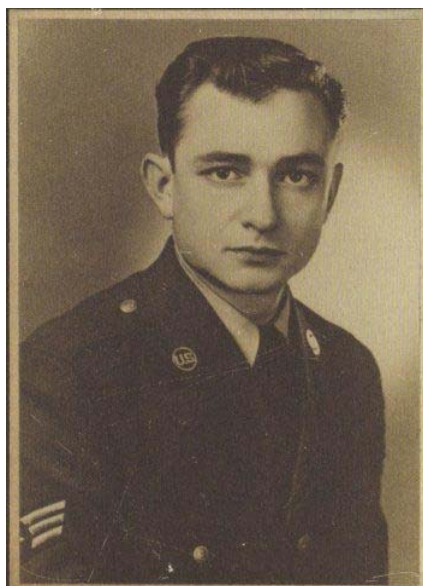
Zumwalt Meadow, where highway 180 ends, would today be hidden beneath the surface of a vast reservoir had it not been for the opposition of a few with courage and vision. *Treasures* tells their story in their own words – as found in the National Park Service correspondence archives of a hundred years ago, published here for the first time.

Signed copies will be available for purchase at WHDT's August 21st Educational Event.

California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)

AND IN CONCLUSION ... In Issue #3, did you recognize those guys? Gus Collin on the left, Jim Spitze in the center, Drew Sorensen on the right ... all standing in the center room of Jim's barn/workshop after a March 31st planning meeting at the Spitze family home just northwest of Mt. Campbell. Jim and BJ were "gifted" with the totem pole fifteen or so years ago by a friend who accumulated such things.

Now, who is this person? Clues: passed away almost twenty years ago; a much respected country & western singer, nickname "The Man in ...". Go to WHDT's website www.wilsonia.org and click on ??? for the answer or wait for the answer a few weeks when it will be published in Issue #5 of **The Wilsonia News** which will be sent out on September 1st.



Your editor wishes to thank the surprisingly large number of readers who have sent him their very positive comments. Only one "grump" thus far with that being well countered by the some forty or so Thank You's ... sort of makes it all worth it. My special thanks to Doug Bartsch for his creative design and well selected illustrations and to my wife, Betty Jean, for creating and maintaining our email list and our hard-copy USPO list. Those receiving this via email now stands at 154, almost double from issue #1 with almost all of that growth being at the recipient's request.

I HOPE YOU ALL HAVE A GRAND 4TH OF JULY!

As always, our best to you all.