

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER summary
West Sacramento Historical Society, P.O. Box 1202, West Sacramento, CA 95691

APRIL - MAY - JUNE 2020

**THE WEST SACRAMENTO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD AND
CHAIR MEMBERS WISHES YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY GOOD HEALTH AND
PLEASE REMAIN SAFE DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

"You know that being an American is more than a matter of where your parents came from. It is a belief that all men are created free and equal and that everyone deserves an even break."

President
Harry S. Truman

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Behind the History of Bryte



The community of Bryte (formerly named Riverbank) was named after Mike Bryte, (*photo at left*) an early dairy farmer. Mike was born in 1828 at Clearcreek Township in Ashland County, Ohio, to parents John and Elizabeth Bryte. At the age of 21, Mike's father, a Dayton schoolteacher, sent him to study law with his uncle, who was governor of Ohio. However, he had other plans. In 1850, Mike left for California "to get rich quick." Along the way he became sick and nearly died, but a kind-hearted stranger, whose name is unknown, stopped and took care of him and together they came on to California.

In Sacramento Mike met a man named Schaad who owned a dairy on 2,000 acres in Yolo County and went to work for him. Here, Mike met his future wife, the daughter of Schaad, 18-year-old Elizabeth. Born in Germany, Elizabeth barely spoke English. In 1855 they were married at Washington Township (later Broderick) in

Yolo County, California. His father-in-law later moved to San Francisco and Mike purchased the dairy farm and named it Ashland Dairy.

Mike had a dairy contract with the California Steam Navigation Company to transport his product by river steamers to regional markets. In 1862, his dairy was flooded and only a few dairy cows survived. By 1879, he owned nearly 1,500 acres of land, raised 150 cows and 100 young stock, and farmed 2,500 acres in Sacramento County. Mike and Elizabeth had ten children, but only five survived to maturity, including George who would later establish Bryte.

In 1872, Mike moved his family to Sacramento and built a house on 11th and E streets. Mike was elected sheriff of Sacramento and served two terms. He continued owning dairy cows and won many prizes at the State Fair. He suffered a stroke in 1882 and died in 1887.¹

Bryte Marker



Now a barbershop, the historic Bryte Post Office at 1548 Lisbon Avenue is located west of Yolo Street. The plaque, top left, was erected 1965. The inscription reads:

Because of its location on the Sacramento River, it was first called Riverbank. When the post office was established 10 March 1915 the present name - for George Bryte, Sr., a local dairyman, son of Mike Bryte (early sheriff of Sacramento) - was chosen in order to avoid confusion with Riverbank in Stanislaus County.

Presented in commemoration of its 50th anniversary 10 March 1965, by his second cousin Col. Walter Bryte, Jr., U.S. Air Force²

In 1920 Bryte has around 200 homes, occupied mainly by immigrant families of workers in the railyards of Sacramento. The resembled a European village, with small houses surrounded by vegetable gardens. One regularly heard, Italian, Portuguese, and Russian spoken on the streets.

West Sacramento developed slowly, with fewer that 200 homes sold by 1920. Many of the householders commuted to jobs in Sacramento; the rest farmed or worked in local businesses. South of town was “the district,” R.D. 900, where sugar beets, rice, tomatoes, and vegetables were grown.³

¹ Taken from an article in the *West Sacramento News Ledger*, August 6, 2003, researched and written by the Verna Ellis and Donald Nielson, the great grandson of Mike Bryte.

² Taken from *HMdb.org*, *The Historical Marker Database*

³ *Yolo County-Land of Changing Patterns* by Joann L. Larkey and Shipley Walters, pp. 81-82; 1987

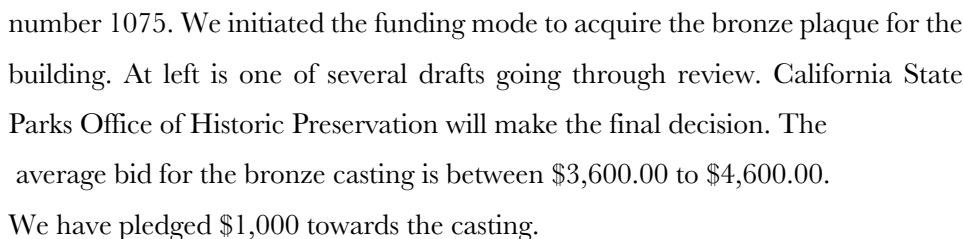
During the early 20th century (between 1880 and 1920) many Italians immigrated from Italy to the United States. Southern Italy suffered from a combination of unemployment, overpopulation, and natural disasters, but primarily they came seeking economic opportunities not available at home.

The 1900s saw another group of immigrants. The Portuguese came to the United States from the Azores, Madeira and Cape Verde islands. King Charles I and his heir were assassinated, resulting in a civil war. The new government expelled several religious orders and disestablished the Roman Catholic church. Drought, economic and political instability caused many families to leave for the United States between 1910 and 1920.⁵

The revolution in 1917 and the overthrow of Russia's imperial government by socialists called Bolsheviks (or red Russians) many families began fleeing to other countries. Tens of millions of people were caught up in the anarchy, bloodshed, and widespread property destruction. Of more than 2 million fled the country, more than 30,000 made their way to the United States. They were also known as the white Russians differing them from the Soviet (Red) Russians.⁶

Mostly separated by ethnic neighborhoods, Bryte is one of many communities in California these families call home. Both Broderick and Bryte share the same mailing zip code, 95605.

We have received our assigned State Historical Landmark marker number for the Bryte VFW Memorial Hall. It is marker



During the 1950s, Sacramento and surrounding regions were mega-baseball places of various baseball leagues. Some of these leagues were the Municipal Spring Baseball, the American Legion, Jr. American Legion, and Sacramento Rural

⁶ <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/polish2.html>

Baseball. Division were the National, American, Southern, Coast, and Federal divisions. Bryte VFW post belonged in the Federal Division. The West Sacramento VFW belonged in the Coast Division.



Back row left to right:

Anthony Fonseca Sr., John Fonseca Sr., unknown family friend, and Daniel Fonseca.

Bottom row left to right:

Fred Fonseca and John Fonseca Jr.

Photo use courtesy Jaime Lanouette

If you have additional information regarding baseball teams during post WW-2 era, (specifically Bryte and West Sacramento VFW teams), leagues, and divisions in Northern California, please contact us so we can complete this story.

Sacramento Bee, July 5, 1950

Box scores courtesy Sacramento Public Library online archives.

Municipal Spring Baseball League			
NATIONAL DIVISION			
	W	L	Pct.
Noveltys	2	0	1.000
Perinall Tigers	1	0	1.000
Druids	1	1	.500
Matts	1	1	.500
Dreamland	0	1	.000
Mexican AC	0	2	.000
Results Yesterday			
Perinall Tigers 6, Druids 4.			
Noveltys 15, Mexican AC 4.			
Matts 12, Dreamland 2.			
AMERICAN DIVISION			
	W	L	Pct.
Camenzinda Tigers	2	0	1.000
Clarksburg	2	0	1.000
Bakers Union	1	1	.500
Plumbers & Steamfitters	1	1	.500
Used Car Dealers	1	1	.500
Mexicali Rose	1	1	.500
Southside AC	0	2	.000
Eddies	0	2	.000
Results Yesterday			
Clarksburg 5, Mexicali Rose 5.			
Used Car Dealers 6, Southside AC 5.			
Plumbers & Steamfitters 10, Bakers Union 4.			
Camenzinda Tigers 6, Eddies 5.			
SOUTHERN DIVISION			
	W	L	Pct.
Reyes Trucking Co.	4	0	1.000
Campbells	2	1	.667
Post Office	2	1	.667
Arizona Eagles	1	1	.500
Lathers Local 109	1	0	.250
Blakes	0	4	.000
Results Yesterday			
Post Office 8, Blakes 5.			
Reyes 14, Campbells 10.			
Arizona Eagles 6, Lathers Local 5.			
COAST DIVISION			
	W	L	Pct.
West Sacto. VFW	2	0	1.000
Jordans Diggers	1	0	1.000
Made Rite Hustlers	1	0	1.000
Ed's	1	1	.500
Rusty's Hobos	1	1	.500
Manhart Legion Sr.	0	2	.000
City Lines	0	2	.000
Grahams	0	0	.000
Results Yesterday			
West Sacto. VFW 14, Manhart Legion Sr. 4.			
Made Rite Hustlers 12, Ed's 6.			
Rusty's Hobos 9, City Lines 0.			
Grahams 5, Jordans Diggers 2 (first half championship).			
FEDERAL DIVISION			
	W	L	Pct.
Bryte	2	0	1.000
Clippers	2	0	1.000
Del Paso Giants	2	0	1.000
Federateds	1	1	.500
Clovers 4	1	1	.500
L&P	0	0	.000
Floor Coverings	0	0	.000
Daredevils	0	0	.000
Results Yesterday			
Clippers 6, Daredevils 2.			
Del Paso Giants 5, L&P 2.			
Bryte 7, Federateds 2.			
Clovers 11, Floor Coverings 2.			

VFW Post 9498

The current Bryte VFW Post was authorized on July 19, 1947. Those charter members were veterans of World War II.

Charter Members:

George E. Kilmore, George D. Forshay, Boris Kristoff, George W. Kristoff, Celestino (Tino) Freitas, Rick L. Lenoveiff,

John P. Nazarov, Eugene N. Smith, William K. Balakin, Michael J. Donovan, Barney J. Casselta, Gene A. Coen, Marcel L. Coen, Robert D. Russell, Charlie Augustina, Frank Paul, Fredric J. Tugaoff, Thomas A. Cardoza, Eugene F. Taricca, Lewis W. Sanford, Herbert A. Leathe, Ted K. Hailey, Robert L. Domasky, Raymond W. Fisher, George M. Roberti, James L. Glenn, George T. Roe, Walter J. Roberti, Herbert W. Laird, Walter W. Samcoff, Earl H. Shaw, Manuel A. Paulo. Frank G. Carvalho, Charlie J. Carvalho, Lawrence C. London, John Fisher Jr., Ernest E. Dotson, Floyd Brochhaus, Anthony J. Frates, Kark R. Loutner, Charles G. Lockenauer, P.E. Burgess, George W. Kozvan, Andrew Foorman, William E. Keeler, Herbert E. Russell, Charles J. Schad, and Joseph J. Cognasi.

A HISTORICAL “WALKABOUT” through the TOWN first known as RIVERBANK, then BRYTE and now WEST SACRAMENTO

From Dennis Freitas and San Pedro Association, April 18, 2009, Walking Tour

The west side of the Sacramento River began to grow when the McDowells and the Conrads settled in the Washington area later known as Broderick. The riverfront town thrived and the farms/dairies spread west into the area known as Riverbank. The largest dairy owned by Mike Bryte soon expanded to over 2,000 acres. Early in the 20th century, Mike Bryte property was subdivided and when the U.S. Postal Office initiated mail delivery, this area became known as the community of Bryte to avoid confusion with another Riverbank near Modesto.

Years later, columnists for the West Sacramento newspapers would write about the various ‘colonies’ and ‘villages’ that made up the small geographical area of Bryte. Within a bend of the Sacramento River, there were no more than ten streets running north and south with four streets going east to west. The lots were narrow, about 50-feet wide by 150-feet long. The first settler’s bought lots for \$7.50 down and \$7.50 payments when they could. This small area was settled by ethnic groups firmly divided into ‘colonies.’

The first section of Bryte to form an ethnic identity was the area bound by Bryte Avenue on the east, Hobson Avenue on the south, Yolo Street on the west up to Lisbon Avenue. Judson B. Lee and his many brothers (Homer, King Hiram, Rueban and William Henry) grew up in Washington on the corner of Margaret and Third Streets. Weary of the winter’s flooding of their homes, they eagerly bought up many lots when first offered by the D. W. Hobson Company. One of the first to move in was Judson, who purchased five lots together on Yolo Street. He took apart a house near the river which had been flooded several times, transported the pieces by horse drawn buckboard and then rebuilt the house for his family on his lot. The house is still standing today. His brothers all had homes within this one large city block and one nephew, Howard Lee, had already purchased the nearby Hobson Avenue Grocery.

In the 1920s and 1930s, families from Mexico settled down both sides of Mikon Street, with a few moving over to Citrus, Elm, Pear Lane, and Reed Avenue. A block west, a small Japanese village was constructed with boardwalks and little bridges. At pear harvest, large tents would appear to house the additional Japanese workers. Then, due to World War II, this flavor of old Japan faded away. The Italian Heart of old Bryte was located roughly at Bryte’s geographic center from Anna Street bounded on the east by Todhunter Avenue, the south of Hobson Avenue and west by Bryte Avenue. The Albericci, Garibaldi, Traversi, and Rava families farmed the fields and sold vegetables, set up the town’s garbage collection service, volunteered for the fire department, started up Boy Scout troops, and participated in Little League. Apartments, housing units and churches now stand where these Italian families worked the fields.

The Portuguese immigrants from Madeira island settled the area bound by Sunset (Highway 16) to River Bank Road, south down Water Street to Lisbon Avenue. The Portuguese grocery opened by Joanna Jardim Pinto Ramos came first with the

Bryte Spot Café, San Pedro Park, and Jordan Ramos' movie theater (now Bryte VFW Post 9498) filling in the area just down the street from the elementary school. Nearby on the corner of Water and Lisbon, the Cote family from Russia opened their market, worked on building their church a block away and helped many other Russian families to find homes in their section of this fast-growing town. Sprinkled among these families were a few families from Poland, Germany, Cape Verde Islands, and Hawaii.

As columnist Ray W. Fisher said, "Bryte was a composite of several communities, a melting pot of people of heterogeneous antecedents that, despite the melting has preserved identifiable roots into the past."

Vice President Maestas completes 6 years as California Association of Museums (CAM) board member



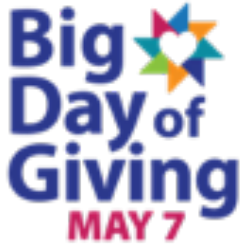
*Far left:
Recognition
Award
Right:
Past CAM board
member, Ileana
sitting in the front
row, third from
left.*

WSHS Vice-president Maestas attended the 2020 California Association of Museums (CAM) annual conference in early March. As the concerns for the COVID-19 pandemic were just beginning to be felt, the conference went forward with the hotel and CAM providing an abundance of hand sanitizer and signs encouraging handwashing while discouraging hand shaking. The conference was held at the Los Angeles Omni Hotel. Ileana was able to attend workshops on museum interpretation through landscape, California Indian interpretation in museums, creating museum programming for older adults and the overall strength of California museum. Also attending the conference was Iulia Bodeanu, Museum Curator of the Yolo County Historical collection.

The WSHS has been an institutional member of CAM since 2016 and board members have been attending conferences since before that time. Membership in CAM provides the WSHS access to the most current California museum content as well as discounts on museum programs like collections care, fundraising, advocacy and best practices. The WSHS is also a member of the American Alliance of Museums, the national professional museum organization. The board of the WSHS recognizes that membership in professional museum organizations keeps the society relevant and aware of current issues in our field.

Ileana sat on CAM board for three consecutive terms (the maximum allowed by CAM by-laws) and at her last board meeting in March received a big thank you. The CAM Board of Directors represents the diversity of museums in California, which vary greatly in size, discipline, geographical region, and mission. (<https://www.calmuseums.org/>)

FUNDRAISERS AND OTHER EVENTS



BIG DAY OF GIVING Sacramento Region Community Foundation

The 24-Hour fundraising event of the year

Big Day of Giving is an online event from 12 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. on May 7, 2020: during that time, gifts are made at www.bigdayofgiving.org and news and updates are regularly posted to BDOG social media sites. The minimum gift is \$15, and MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express credit and debit cards are accepted forms of payment. Each gift you make is 100% tax-deductible and irrevocable, and all donations will be granted for unrestricted use.

Keep in mind that, following Big Day of Giving, the charge on your debit or credit card statement will read "BIGDAYOFGIVING," rather than the specific organization(s) to which you donated.

Only 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that have met the eligibility and participation requirements may participate in Big Day of Giving.

Sunday Board Meetings

ALL DATES ARE TENTATIVE

- April 5: Meeting held via Google. Closing LGBTQ exhibition reception moved to June.
- May 7: Big Day of Giving and Membership Recruitment.
- June: Closing reception for LGBTQ exhibition date and time TBD.
- July 26: Meeting, place and time TBD. May consider online meeting.
- September 20: Meeting and Anniversary, place and time TBD.
- November 18: Meeting, place and time TBD. May consider online meeting.
- December: Holiday Gathering and Membership Meeting, date, place, and time TBD.
- October, Sacramento Archives Crawl, date, place, and time TBD.
- December, Holiday Gathering and Membership Meeting, date, place, and time TBD.

West Sacramento Historical Society Board Members and Chairs

- Alfonso Voychez, president
- Ileana Maestas, vice-president
- Billi Hanlon, treasurer
- Jackie Rossi, secretary
- Don Schatzel, immediate past president
- Cecilia Vasquez, board member
- Jane Yeung, board member
- vacant, board member
- Mickey Fausett, committee chair
- Thom Lewis, committee chair

Contact Information: phone (916) 374-1849; e-mail WSHistoricalS@gmail.com

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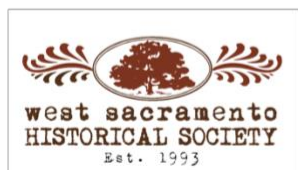
or

<https://www.facebook.com/WestSacHistoricalS1849/>

www.westsachistoricalsociety.org/



Big Day of Giving MAY 7



Starting April 20, you can schedule gifts in advance of Big Day of Giving using the “Schedule Your Gift” function of the website. Please note that gifts given in advance of April 20 will not count toward BDOG totals.

All donations are tax-deductible.

Minimum online donations begin at \$15.

ONLINE DONATION LINK: <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/westsachistoricalsociety>

For those NOT wanting to use credit card, especially online, you can still donate through cash or check. However, it will not be counted with the overall BDOG 24-hour event. *Although additional prizes are great, your personal support is more important, so please consider this alternative.*

Make checks out to:

West Sacramento Historical Society (WSHS)

P.O. Box 1202

West Sacramento, CA 95691

Check memo section: May 7, BDOG

Federal Tax ID: 68-0322388