



Rehabilitation Planning Proceeds

John Marsh Historic Trust News Update

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Restoration of the South Wall

Siegel & Strain, Architects, have finished the preliminary plans for the exterior rehabilitation of the Marsh House. The final, detailed plans are expected to be completed by October 2008. Donations from the Friends of John Marsh and money from the second round grant provided by the Committee for Cultural and Historic Endowment has funded this important work.

Condition of the south wall is a huge concern to the JMHT. State Parks and the city of Brentwood working under a round one grant from the CCHE are expected to rebuild the brick interior of the south wall. However they are not planning to rebuild the beautiful stone work under the round one grant.

The John Marsh Historic Trust believes that one of its primary goals now should be to restore the south wall. Funds raised at the upcoming Gala and donations by the Friends will help make this ambitious dream a reality.



The north wall was saved through the efforts of State Parks and the generous donations by the Friends of John Marsh. The north wall of the Marsh House had been in immediate danger of collapse similar to the sad condition of the south wall today.



South wall of the Stone House before its collapse in the 1970s. Photo c 1930s. Courtesy of Carol Jensen



Bill Mero, JMHT Board member and newsletter editor, records the deterioration of the south wall of the historic Marsh House. Photo by J. Chapman/staff, courtesy of Discover the Delta, Bay Area News Group.

Summer 2008

William Mero, Editor

Save the Date! 3rd Annual Gala Planned for Fall

Marsh House Featured

During the past winter and spring the Marsh House and story was featured on a television show and two newspaper feature articles.

The TV program, *California Gold* with Hugh Howser, devoted 15 minutes to visiting the Marsh House. The program was broadcast throughout California on most PBS stations.

The local east county newspaper supplement, "Discover the Delta" featured the Marsh House and Marsh's importance in a full page spread.

The Brentwood Press also told the story of early efforts by Bob Gromm, JMHT Board, to raise restoration funds for the Stone House.

Joan Butler Memoriam

Mrs. Butler was a long-time supporter of restoring the John Marsh house. Her husband was a direct descendent of Marsh and once served on the JMHT board. The family, in lieu of flowers, asked Joan's friends to donate to the JMHT. As a result, the Trust has received numerous donations in her memory.



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Memories of the Stone House

Editors Note: Larry Rodrigues, a Friend of John Marsh, was kind enough to share his memories of visiting and working on the Marsh Ranch during WWII. Larry attended the 2007 Spring Gala and now lives in Sacramento.

We lived in Antioch, where I was born in 1933. My uncle, Joe Joseph, was the ranch tender of the Marsh Ranch for the owner, Henry Cowell, for a number of years. Mr. Cowell owned the cement factory in the town of Cowell and five ranches in total. The Marsh Ranch was the smallest, approximately 5000 acres. On it were a few chickens and cows, about a half-dozen saddle horses and herds of beef cattle. I got to ride a horse and “herd cattle” when they were moved from one pasture to another.

When I was 13, my father, mother, brother and I went frequently to visit my Aunt Myrtle, Cousin Barbara Jean and Uncle Joe. They lived in the wooden structure on the immediate south side of the stone house. My aunt said they had a rocking chair that would rock by itself at

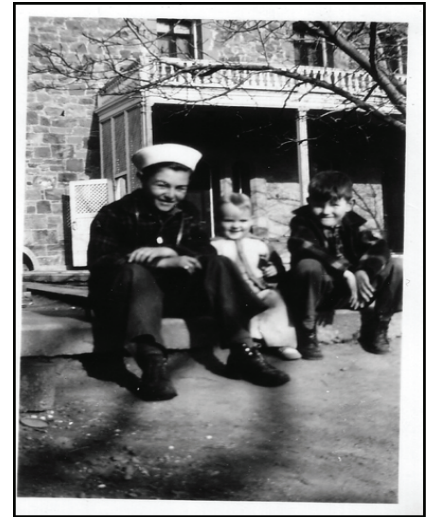
times. She believed Abby Marsh was visiting. “The Ranch” was always good to visit because there was plenty to eat during WWII. There was lots of beef, eggs, milk, cream and fresh butter, items that were rationed during the war.

Nearby in Byron there were plenty of vegetables, fruits and nuts. We were money-poor, but ate very well! About this time of year we picked saucer size mushrooms in the pasture across the creek dam bridge. My Aunt Myrtle fried them in fresh butter and served a mountain of them to us when they were available each spring. I wandered through the stone house many times but it was empty and scary. I liked looking out the high tower windows. I rode a horse over most of the property and often visited the colorful sand caves in the hills east of the stone house. The pure sand that was removed and sold more than paid for the ranch, I was told.

In the small creek, across the road to the west, I found a number of stone bowls the Indians used to grind acorns. I still have one that I will give to the future artifacts display. Once an archaeologist came from University of Berkeley and I helped him dig up Indian artifacts.



The Marsh House in 1946



Larry, cousin Barbara Jean and brother Jerry taken in 1946. Courtesy of L. Rodrigues



Working on the dictionary with Marguerite. Courtesy of the Ft. Snelling Museum

In 1825, John Marsh took Marguerite Decouteaux, a half French—half Sioux girl, as his common-in-law wife. Living together at Fort St.

Historical Snapshots, Dr. John Marsh Wrote The First Sioux Language Dictionary

Anthony on the old Northwest frontier, John Marsh taught Marguerite how to read and write. By all accounts she was both beautiful and extremely bright. Marguerite was soon reading and writing in both English and French.

John discovered that no English-Sioux dictionary had ever been written. Marsh had become fluent in the Sioux language while

serving as the temporary Sioux Indian sub-agent. With Marguerite’s help he made the first compilation of the basic Sioux and cor-

I introduce here what I wish to say concerning the Sioux language, derived from Mr. John Marsh, late sub agent residing at Prairie du Chien. He is a man of learning, having been graduated at an eastern University.

Rudiments of the Grammar

OF THE

SIoux LANGUAGE.

ETYMOLOGY.

The Sioux or Dakota language has two sounds not found in English, viz: the Spanish guttural and the French nasal. The guttural is pronounced very strongly by the men and less so by the women. I have expressed it by the combined sound of kh, as in Takkinga, a deer. It is worthy of remark: that this sound is more used when the language is intended to be dignified or impressive, as speeches in council. The nasal sound as in Wakon, Mazakon, Rhokun