

# Vaca -Pena, Lagoon Valley & Vacaville Historic Timeline

Jerry Bowen – Vacaville Heritage Council

## Before 1800s:

- Physical environment—Tule elk, antelope, grizzly bears, coyotes, waterfowl, and predatory birds prior to influx of Europeans thick groves of oak trees (acorns) in the valleys prior to pioneer families clearing for grain; heavy brush on hills; upland soils on English Hills poor, but rich in spots, rich, recent alluvial soils in valley bottoms; mountains protect valleys from west winds and hills warmer than valleys so fruit, vegetables ripened. earlier; creeks originally shallow and slow, but hill culture intensified erosion and deepening of creeks.
- Don Parez Ayala, the Captain of the San Carlos was one of the earliest European visitors to the area when he made a stop at “Flat Island.” Mission Delores was founded in 1776 .

## 1800 to 1830s

### 1810

- Moraga expedition from S. Francisco against Suisun Indians.

### 1816-19

- Ululatos Indians being removed to missions (San Jose, S. F.)

### 1817

- Sanchez expedition against Suisun Indians.
- Lt. Jose Sanchez used rafts to cross from the area where Martinez is now to then non-existent Benicia.

### 1823

- Mission San Francisco Solano was founded at Sonoma and Friar Altamira visited the Rockville area. Sam Yeto, an Indian later to be anointed by Vallejo as Chief over most of the Indian rancherias between Petaluma and the Sacramento River became a Christian. He became known as Solano after being baptized under that name by Friar Altamira.
- Father Altamira reports Indians were from Lagoon Valley.
- Altamira expedition to survey Solano (general area) for mission site

### 1835

- Vallejo crossed the Mare Island Straits in search of his horse which eventually resulted in giving the island its name.
- Disastrous year for the local Indians when smallpox virtually wipes them out. One of the survivors, Chief Solano, as he was known then, petitioned for 17,752 acres

known as Rancho Suisun in 1837 and received the grant in 1845 from Pio Pico. Later, he sold the grant to Mariano Vallejo who in turn sold it to Archibald Ritchie.

### **1837**

- Smallpox epidemic exterminates local Indians.

### **1839**

- Armijo petitioned for the Rancho Tolenas Grant in 1839.
- Armijo gets first grant in Solano area for cattle, later (1841) brings in Sacramento Indians for labor.
- Encorages Vaca & Pena to settle in Upper California

## **1840s**

### **1841**

- Vacas & Penas Take Old Spanish Trail trade route established by Armijo to Los Angeles. No wagons possible on this trail. Used mules for transport of goods.
- The Vaca and Pena families arrived in Los Angeles with the Workman-Rowland wagon-train. Note: The term wagon train leads one to falsely believe wagons were used. Also this group was known as the Workman-Rowland wagon train because Workman gave first interview to Los Angeles newspaper and called it by that.name.

### **1842**

- John Wolfskill first known American settler in Solano Co.;
- The Vacas and the Penas settled in Solano County and petitioned for the Rancho Los Puto grant. Vaca/Pena Grant includes over 44,000 acres.
- The Vacas and the Penas build temporary “wattle” home also known as \*\*\*\* in today’s Andrews Park in the same location that Vacaville High School was built later in 1898.
- The Vacas and the Penas begin building their permanent adobe homes in today’s Lagoon Valley.

### **1843**

- Vaca/Pena granted the Rancho Lihuytos grant which was found later to overlap the Wolfskill grant. Wolfskill petitioned for the Wolfskill, AKA, Rio De Los Putos Grant.

### **1844**

- Vaca and Pena Adobes finally completed and families move in

### **1848**

- The first hint of the gold discovery was discussed at Benicia in Von Pfister's store in May, 1848 and in 1849 the Benicia Barracks were established

#### **1849**

- In 1849, the California Constitutional Convention was held, establishing 27 counties including Solano County with Benicia being chosen as the County Seat.

### **1850s**

#### **1850**

- Chief Solano dies; U.S. Census reports no Indians in Solano County.
- Solano County strongly Whig, while state Democratic; county shifts to pro-slavery Democratic party in 1850s and 1860s.
- Vaca deeds Daniel land. for town site; L. B. Mizner buys ½ the tracts Vacaville township established.
- Solano and.-Vacaville-selling cattle, grazing land used for cattle droves passing through, fruit, vegetables to miners through Sacramento—cattle remain most important
- Development of vegetable farming along Putah Creek by Putnam, while Wolfskill experiments with irrigation on Putah Creek, finding it unnecessary; transportation is a major factor.

#### **1851**

- California Land Act of 1851, to verify Spanish and Mexican grants.
- Plat for Vacaville filed by L. B. Mizner and William McDaniel.

#### **1852**

- Vacaville area being tied to waterways of Carquinez Straits and Benicia and the Sacramento River, and wharf and transportation of Suisun City after 1852.
- Luzena & Mason Wilson settle in the Vacaville area and set up a “tent” hotel, followed by a rude structure of wood later in the year.
- Solano County population., 2,835.

#### **1854**

- October 4, Arculus Hawkins and his wife Cornelia; James Janes, Thomas Janes and his wife Belle; Thomas Rogers and Mrs. McNear near Oiler's Grove organized the first church in Vacaville Township.

#### **1855**

- Tax rolls show 13,777 acres of land remaining unsold from the Vaca/Pena grant.
- James W. Anderson opens Ulatis Academy, Vacaville

- 1855-56 - Anderson is Superintendent of Public Instruction for Solano County— goes on to be President, California Educational Society (1873) and. State Superintendent of -Public Instruction (1891-95).

### **1858**

- Vacaville's Mason Wilson offers \$1,000 and four blocks of lots as inducement to move Solano County Seat from Benicia to Vacaville.
- County seat moved. to Fairfield from Benicia, reflecting rising population and importance of Inland (or upland) county areas; Vacaville voters support Fairfield, and Suisun City remains important trade center.

### **1860s**

#### **1860**

- U.S. Census reports 21 Indians in Solano County (none in Vacaville).

#### **1861**

- Pacific Methodist College located on the top of the hill that is now Andrews Park, opened with 15 students by the end of the year its student body had grown to 40.
- William T. Luckey is President of Pacific Methodist College, Vacaville, (supersedes Ulatis Academy built later in today's Andrews Park (College Hill)).

#### **1863-64**

- Ulatis Creek straightened for 1-½ miles; stream erosion cut 25-30 ft. deep in places.
- Wooden portion of College at Vacaville destroyed by fire on May 5.

#### **1864**

- Pacific Methodist College burns.

#### **1866**

- Chinese laborers employed in fruit culture, Vaca and, Pleasants Valleys.

#### **1867**

- Vaca Station (Elmira) is established.

#### **1868**

- Suisun gets into trade decline; Laguna Valley cherry orchards begin under J. M. Bassford.

#### **1869**

- Central Pacific Railroad reaches Suisun, and Vacaville and Pleasants Valley shift away from Suisun toward rail transportation (Cordelia)
- Vaca Valley and Clear Lake Railroad spur built from Clear Lake to Vaca Station (Elmira).
- Vaca Valley and Clear Lake Railroad incorporated by Stevenson brothers.

- Mason Wilson elected president of the Vaca Valley Railroad Company.

## **1870s**

### **1870**

- U.S. Census reports 3 Indians in Solano County (none in Vacaville).
- Railroad expansion opens distant markets for fresh fruit as grain cultivation loses main place and shifts out to more favorable areas
- First orchards In Vaca Valley by Davis and Allison
- Coal exploration In Vaca Mountains and English Hills.
- Baptists buy Pacific Methodist College and. call it California College

### **1872**

### **1876**

- Historian Munro-Fraser claims Indians but a memory.

### **1872**

- Mason Wilson leaves his Vacaville family and moves to Texas where he remained until dying Sept. 4, 1882.

### **1873**

- Major fire strikes Vacaville on June 7 with loss of half of buildings on the main street. Monetary loss was \$54,200, Luzena Wilson biggest loser.
- Second major fire strikes Vacaville on October 10. Town almost complete loss. Loss set at \$250,000.

## **1880s**

### **1880**

- Eucalyptus trees planted for shade, wood and fencing
- Hogs run loose on Main Street
- Rabbit drives to eliminate overabundance.
- Chinese laborers terrace English hills from 1880 to 1890
- Mrs. Elise Buckingham purchases 400 acres in Lagoon Valley.

### **1882**

- Vacaville area ships ten million pounds fruit
- Brougham's cannery markets 336,000 cans.
- Chinese Exclusion Act.
- Luzena Wilson's husband, Mason, dies in Texas

### **1883**

- Coyotes kill over 100 lambs on W. J. Pleasants ranch
- Eagle bounty upped to \$2.50, with 8 eagles killed by June Lewis
- Cloudburst causes extensive soil erosion in hills.
- M. R. Miller promotes Vacaville, constructs tenement homes, and six other builders at work.
- No fire department or jail in Vacaville, until first jail (wooden frame building - 12ft by 16ft), in this year.
- First use of wire fencing by Dr. Dutton
- State surveyor-general reports table grape profits -\$25 per ton, while wheat is only \$10 per ton as grain profits decline
- 5,000 acres planted in orchards out of estimated, 20,000 suitable acres
- Vacaville and Suisun townships assessed at 4100 per acre (Solano country only averages \$15 per acre)
- Controversy over Vacaville irrigated vs. non-irrigated fruit with Southern California
- Vacaville Fruit Growers Association established, G. N. Pratt, President, as growers seek to combat San Francisco packer/canner exploitation
- Growers protest unfair railroad rates.
- Bank of Vacaville established
- Vacaville Reporter founded.
- Davis House opened under new ownership.
- Some fruit growers express preference for white over Chinese workers.
- First graduation exercises in Vacaville Public School.
- Catholic Church erected.
- Pleasants Valley Lyceum active
- First local game of baseball in season
- Vacaville Band of Hope organized
- Oiler's Grove is a popular picnic and camping area.
- California College at Vacaville opened

## 1884

- Pack of mountain lions reported in hills west of Vacaville
- Extensive land clearing and settlement in chaparral hills.
- Prohibition movement enters politics, with local club organized under Prof. Carson
- Vacaville complains over unfair county tax assessments and distribution

- Senator Buck narrowly escapes censure by Democratic county convention
- Sen. Buck advises President Cleveland on California Chinese question.
- Solano County holds Prohibitionist convention, G. W. Thissell, president
- W. W. Smith is Prohibitionist candidate for third Congressional district.
- First telephone in Vacaville (J. W. Miller), Sunset Telephone Company in Elmira.
- Raid on Sam Sing wash house with fourteen Chinese arrested for opium smoking
- Complaints against Chinese New Year noise
- Chinese Tong active in Vacaville.
- California College boarding house burns (Was located on site of today's Town Plaza Library)
- College moves to Oakland
- New Vacaville Collegiate and Academic Institution founded.
- Promoters urge incorporation to improve utilities-sewage, streetlights, and fire protection
- Sidewalks are constructed on Main Street, but complaints grow against muddy roads, especially Main Street.
- Solano County Literary Society founded at Elmira
- Good Templars present "Ten Lights and a Barroom"
- Vacaville Brass Band organized
- Roller skating at Oiler's Grove.

#### **1885**

- Rivalry grows between Vacaville and Winters for Pleasants Valley trade.
- Trotting horse race track proposed.
- The *Judician* replaced the *Vacaville Reporter* newspaper

#### **1886**

- Vacaville Branch Fruit Union organized.—officers, Thurber, W. W. Smith, Dobbins, Buck, McKeavitt.
- Vacaville farmers speak out against anti-oriental agitation.
- Rise of Communism and Socialism triggers alarm in Solano County farming communities. Vacaville Temperance Union formed.
- *Vacaville Reporter* news is revived, replaces *Judician*

#### **1887**

- First carload early fruit sold in eastern market—shipped by Buck and Story.
- Large scale fruit drying yard begins in Vacaville.

- Buck Western Addition home sites developed by Frank H. Buck.
- Fire destroys much of the Chinese district in Vacaville.
- Second fire destroyed most of Vacaville business district.

## **1888**

- Ulatis Creek had become an open sewer and. beautification with tree planting urged
- Range fire In Gates Canyon sweeps toward Fairfield.
- Saloons fight incorporation
- November 8-Major fire in Dr. Dobbins' China houses destroys two blocks of Main Street.
- Butcher tract divided and sold in small (5-20 acres) farms by Mrs. E. P. Buckingham
- Vacaville Fruit Company organized—officers, Thurber, McKeavitt, W. W. Smith, H. Brinck, F. H. Buck.
- Peaches largest fruit crop produced; twenty per cent of Vaca Valley in table grapes, ten per cent in plums and prunes.
- VVCL railroad, extended to Capay Valley
- Vaca Valley telephone line established.
- First Japanese pickers in Vacaville.
- School district changes name from Ulatis to Vacaville.
- Congregational Church organized.
- Vacaville orchestra organized
- Square dance at H. Brinck residence with Winter's band, Owens caller.

## **1889**

- Ulatis and Alamo Creeks have large number of speckled trout, excellent fishing.
- Main St. is extended through to Buck tract.
- Fruit growers split, California Fruit Association organized by J. A. Webster, T. H. and. E. P. Buckingham, O Garliches, Robinson brothers
- W. W. Smith property attached by R. D. Robbins, mortgage holder, and. goes to receivers.
- Vacaville Water Company incorporated.
- IOOF Hall dedicated.
- Vaca Valley Enterprise newspaper started.

## 1890s

### 1890

- Natural gas located, nearby.
- Vacaville water company organized, reservoir, water mains, under construction
- Poor road conditions problem continues.
- Expansion of refrigerated cars follows experiments in late 1880s by Buck and Hatch.
- Vacaville Water and Light Company established, officers-Walker, Ball, Corn, Hacke, Clayton.
- La Grippe (flu) epidemic in Elmira.
- Volunteer Vacaville Hose Company organized.

### 1891

- Incorporation fight—town vs. township, but no action.
- County branch of Farmer's Alliance organized, James McCrory, President.
- County School Board encourages high school districts.
- Society of Christian Endeavor organized; new Presbyterian Church completed.
- Tennis Club organized.
- New Christian church erected on Catherine Street by George Sharpe for \$4,975.
- First Presbyterian Church of Vacaville was destroyed by fire.
- Barcar, owner of the *Judician*, buys out the *Vaca Valley Enterprise*.

### 1892

- April 19, major earthquake destroys much of downtown business district of Vacaville.
- Vacaville incorporated with population 1,500
- Vacaville gets first downtown electric lights installed.
- Vacaville Reporter absorbs all other papers
- Christian missionary activities among Japanese of Vacaville
- Chinatown continues to grow.
- California Collegiate Institution transferred, to Santa Rosa.
- New Christian Church completed.
- Free Public Library established
- Vaca Valley Driving Association organized., J. M. Bassford. et al
- Bowles Opera House opens

- New Methodist Church building was constructed at Parker and Main Streets and dedicated on February 25, 1892, with four hundred people witnessing the dedication service.
- Vaca Adobe damaged by earthquake and is razed and replaced by a frame structure owned by Portia Hill.
- John Wolfskill's stone home destroyed in earthquake.
- Much of Vacaville's downtown and Winters destroyed by earthquake.
- Vacaville receives electric power.
- Barcar buys *Vacaville Reporter*, combines it with the *Judician*, retains name *Vacaville Reporter*

### **1893**

- Building codes established in Vacaville.
- Vacaville Union High School District formed

### **1894**

- Railroad strike hurts fruit shipping.
- Ninety per cent of apricot crop is dried fruit.
- Vacaville suffering higher shipping rates than Suisun.
- Private Volunteer Hose Company formed in Vacaville.
- 12 businesses and 50 Chinese dwellings go up in flames at Vacaville.

### **1895**

- Vacaville and Winters Telephone Company established, officers—Thurber, Buck, Buck, Brunck, McKeavitt.
- Vacaville Union High School organized.

### **1896**

- Frame school building erected on College Hill
- First high school class graduates
- College building, damaged in 1892 earthquake. (collapses in earthquake??)
- Four year drought starts.
- Vacaville orchardists consider irrigation.
- Second hose company formed in Vacaville.

### **1898**

- Japanese reach Vacaville area in large numbers on contracts to pick fruit.
- Vacaville High School completed by George Sharpe.

## 1900s

### 1900

- Cement Hill plant opened by Pacific Portland Cement Co.
- Vacaville Oil Company organized.
- Vacaville's jail dumped into Ulatis Creek (Feb) (Check this-s/b1906)

### 1901

- Sewer Bond measure defeated in Vacaville.
- R. B. Stitt starts newspaper, the *Vacaville Leader*.
- Barcar buys out the *Vacaville Leader* news.

### 1902

- Town, Mill and quarry established at Cement Hill.

### 1903

- Fruit from Vacaville shipped to England.

### 1904

- Two hose companies established in Vacaville.
- Anti-gambling ordinance passed in Vacaville.
- Sewer Bond measure fails for second time in Vacaville.
- Voting machines make their debut in Solano County.

### 1905

- Improved air circulation in refrigerated cars.
- Saloon owners voluntarily close doors on Sunday in Vacaville.

### 1906

- Harbison House built at Nut Tree, Vacaville.
- Six stores in Vacaville control more than 90% of the Vacaville farm supply business

### 1907

- Pre-cooling of fruit prior to shipment.
- Cement Hill is one of largest cement producers in West. Water provided by wells in Vacaville near Merchant St.
- Gentlemen's Agreement against importation of Japanese laborers.
- Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church organized.
- Major flooding halts railroad travel and shipping at Vacaville.
- New town hall dedicated in Vacaville.

## **1908**

- Vacaville Fruit Company organized, officers—Buckingham, Blake, Hartley, Burton, Rogers, Uhl, Harbison. (Check this-May be 1909)
- Fire rages on Blue Ridge Mountains near Vacaville for two weeks.
- Chemical fire extinguishers purchased and distributed around Vacaville

## **1909**

- New banking law for California.
- July 11, 1909 the Presbyterian Church steeple was destroyed during the Hotel Raleigh across the street.
- July 11-Hotel Raleigh destroyed by fire. (Check date)
- Vacaville goes “dry.”
- New school built on old Ulatis School site in Vacaville

## **1910s**

### **1910**

- First National Bank established; Vacaville Savings Bank established.

### **1911**

- Japanese Buddhist Temple completed in Vacaville.
- Slot machines prohibited in Vacaville.

### **1912**

- Vacaville Fruit Growers Warehouse Association organized—Buckingham, Uhl, others.
- First State Highway construction begins through Solano County

### **1913**

- Northern Electric Railroad opens; provides service between Vacaville and Suisun.
- Mrs. Maria Inez Pena, resident of Solano County since 1849 dies.
- First Alien Land Law.
- Meeting held to form Vacaville Chamber of Commerce

### **1914**

- First State Highway through Solano County completes; bypasses Suisun

### **1915**

- Library building completed.

### **1916**

- Vacaville and Benicia purchase first motorized pumper fire engines

## **1918**

- Woman's Land Army arrives to aid, crop harvest.
- Vacaville Japanese American Association contributes \$1,150 to Liberty Loan Drive.
- Descendents of Manual Vaca move from the original Pena Adobe.
- Worldwide influenza epidemic reaches Solano County.
- WW-I ends.

## **1919**

- Frank Buck Company completes first packing house

## **1920s**

### **1920**

- Collapse of early fruit market in East and beginnings of depression in Vacaville area.
- Minimum wage for women in fruit business set at \$16 per week.
- 1920s - Slow spread of Irrigation to Vaca Valley
- Cement Hill operations begin to close as ore declines.
- 1920s - Bootlegging in English Hills.

### **1921**

- Nut Tree business established
- PG&E substation constructed.
- The majority of the Christian Church joined with the Baptists and Presbyterians to form the Community United Church.
- Vacaville rural schools consolidate.

### **1922**

- Casa Maria Restaurant opened by Nestora and Anita Lyon.

### **1923**

- Northern Electric Railroad ceases operation.
- Bank of Vacaville taken over by Bank of Italy.
- Major grass fire 30 miles long and 15 miles wide from Mix Canyon to Fairfield Cemetery, past Rockville to Napa "Y."

### **1924**

- Hoof and mouth disease invades Solano, Contra-Costa, Napa and Alameda counties.
- T. H. Buckingham dies.

## **1925**

- St. Mary's Catholic Church in Vacaville burns.
- Plans for Monticello Dam begin to form

## **1926**

- Clark Theater built in Vacaville.

## **1927**

- Pacific Portland Cement Plant shuts down.
- Vacaville Fruit Growers Assoc. builds packinghouse on Davis Street in Vacaville.
- Vacaville Board of Trustees becomes a City Council.

## **1928**

- Chamber of Commerce founded by merger of Boosters Association and Exchange Club.
- Klotz School of Aviation opens in Vacaville.

## **1929**

- On January 11, the front half of the College Street Christian Church was dedicated.
- Vacaville buys Seagraves fire engine.
- Portland Cement Company Plant closes completely and moves to Redwood City.
- Construction of new gym for Vacaville High School begins.
- Depression hits.

## **1930s**

### **1930**

- Cherries hurt by buckskin disease.
- 1930s - AAA-prohibits shipment of non-irrigated fruit as too small
- English Hills orchards abandoned.
- Brick school house erected on College Hill.
- Government standards cause many fruit growers to begin quitting the business; abandonment and decay of area's orchards is result.
- Buckskin disease decimates cherry orchards.
- Japanese Language School built in Vacaville.

### **1931**

- California packing Company abandoned dried fruit packing plant at Fairfield.
- Vacaville flooded.

- Buck Fruit Packing Shed destroyed by fire

### **1932**

- Frank McKeivitt and Pioneer Fruit Company sold to American Fruit Growers.
- Agricultural Workers Industrial Union and Pruners' riot in Vacaville when 300 Spanish prune workers strike.

### **1933**

- Buck Company acquired by Pacific Fruit Exchange.
- Frank Buck elected to U. S. Senate.
- Hume brothers acquire Uhl's 25-ton prune dehydrator.

### **1935**

- CCC active in the Peaceful Glen area north of Vacaville.
- Cherry shipments stopped.
- First spraying by air of orchards begin in the Vacaville area.
- Ann Tillman opens hospital on Elizabeth Street in Vacaville.

### **1936**

- Vacaville Fruit Company organized., directors-Swanson, Thomsen, Caliguiri, Burton, Flowers, Thurber, Hartley, Libonati.
- Fire guts Vacaville Hotel

### **1935**

- Basic Dehydrating Plant established

### **1934**

- Rep. Frank H. Buck re-elected.

### **1938**

- Grape shipments close down.
- New Vacaville Post Office opens.

### **1939**

- Merchants Association formed.
- Basic Vegetable Products moves to Vacaville.
- First zoning ordinances in Vacaville.

## **1940s**

### **1940**

- Fairfield./Suisun orchards survive, surpassing Vacaville as a center of agriculture.
- Vacaville flooded. Solano County Water Council formed.

- Vacaville Fire department moves to Main Street.
- Edwin Markham dies in New York.
- Juvenile delinquency on rise in Solano County.

#### **1941**

- Merger of Merchants Association and Chamber of Commerce.
- 1941-45 - New subdivisions open.
- Basic Plant In complete production during war years.
- WW-II begins.
- Japanese Buddhist temple in Vacaville shot at after attack on Pearl Harbor.
- Blackout regulations established.
- 1,500 acres burn in English Hills area.
- Vacaville purchases second motorized pumper.

#### **1942**

- Air observation post built by Future Farmers in Vacaville on Vine Street.
- Frank H. Buck dies.

#### **1943**

- The rear addition made to the Christian Church and the front entrance remodeled.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Michael Libonati, Jr. is first Vacan killed in WW-II.
- Cigarette drive for GI's by American Legion in Vacaville begins.

#### **1944**

- Port Chicago ammunition depot blows up. Blast felt throughout county. Extensive damage in Benicia and Vallejo and windows blown out in Vacaville.
- Major Elmira fire.
- Penicillin made available in Solano County.

#### **1945**

- Mechanized drier established in Fairfield.
- Expansion of Travis APB-major economic boom to Vacaville, Fairfield/Suisun region.
- Development of regional irrigation.
- Construction of Monticello Dam, Putah South Canal.
- Polio strikes Solano County.

#### **1946**

- Vacaville Fire Protection District forms.

- Resuscitator purchased by Vacaville Fire Department.

#### **1947**

- California Dept. of Corrections recommends Vacaville for prison site.
- Dial telephones make their debut in Vacaville.

#### **1948**

- Solano Irrigation District (SID) forms.
- Vacaville's first TV set installed at Brook's Place.
- Vacaville gets house to house mail delivery.
- Mrs. Maria Delores Vaca Lyon dies.

#### **1949**

- Korean War starts.
- Parking meters installed in Vacaville.

### **1950s**

#### **1950**

- Brig. Gen. Robert F. Travis killed in B-29 accident at Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Field; base renamed Travis Air Force Base later in the year.
- Armory building at Binghamton razed for the bricks.
- Diamond Match Lumberyard burned.

#### **1951**

- Construction of California Medical Facility.
- School expansion.
- Japanese Buddhist Temple at Vacaville destroyed by fire.
- Highway 40 expanded to four lanes from Carquinez Bridge to Sacramento.
- Original "Nut Tree" dies and is cut down.

#### **1952**

- First fire trails cut in the Blue Ridge mountains west of Vacaville.
- New Vacaville High School is completed.

#### **1953**

- Construction of the Monticello Dam begins.
- Vacaville's old Vacaville High School gym destroyed by fire

#### **1954**

- 5,000 acres burn from California Medical Facility to Travis Air Force Base.

#### **1955**

- Vacaville acquires 750 GPM VanPelt pumper.
- Great-great-grandson of Juan Felipe Pena, Salvador John Pena dies at the age of 79.
- Vacaville Medical Facility Prison opens.
- Nut Tree air strip opens.

### 1956

- Major flooding in Solano and other counties.
- Warren Hughes hired as first full-time paid fire chief in Vacaville.
- Volunteers begin building fire station on Dobbins Street in Vacaville.

### 1957

- General plan proposes ninety per cent coverage of Vaca Valley by urbanization.
- Vacaville Volunteer Fire Station on Dobbins Street dedicated.
- Air tankers used to fight fire on Mt. Vaca.
- Monticello Dam opens, Lake Berryessa formed. 1962
- Presbyterian Church property was sold to Safeway Stores who purchased the entire block. The last service in the Parker Street church was held on May 27, 1962,

### 1958

- Fears of atomic bombing rise. "Operation Chico" a Civil Defense exercise moves 1,000 people from Solano County to Chico for the weekend.
- SID starts construction of Monticello Dam and Putah creek water distribution system.

### 1959

- Vacaville Employees' Association forms.
- First full-time fire fighter hired in Vacaville.
- The Round House burns in Suisun.
- Monticello Dam water flows to Solano County fields.
- **Vacaville School Board rejects polio vaccine immunization.**

## 1960s

### 1960

- Junior Fire Department forms in Vacaville. Psychedelic sixties erupt in Solano County, drug use on the rise.
- Average price of regular gas in Solano County is 27 cents.

### 1961

- Ulatis Creek Flood Control project starts in Vacaville.

## **1962**

- New canal system, the Solano Project, begins delivering water into Vaca Valley

## **1963**

- Bartlett pear is forty per cent of fruit crop in Suisun/Fairfield area
- Very little Vacaville fruit.
- Dedication of the new Presbyterian Church at Eldridge and Hemlock on Sunday, October 13.
- Restoration of Pena Adobe begins.
- Vacaville's Leisure Town opens.

## **1964**

- Illegal booze still discovered in Vacaville.
- Parking meters removed from Vacaville.

## **1965**

- Christian Church was erected on Vine Street.
- Black Thursday," Fire rages north of Vacaville, many homes and buildings lost as well as cattle.

## **1966**

- Fire Station Number two opens in Vacaville.
- American Home Foods opens at Vacaville.
- First permanent traffic light installed in Vacaville.

## **1967**

- Vacaville population. 20,000.

## **1968**

- The 1929 Seagraves fire truck is retired by Vacaville Fire Department.

## **1969**

- Vacaville's civic center opens on Merchant Street.
- Vacaville Heritage Council forms.

## **1970s**

### **1970**

- California Packing Plant in Vacaville destroyed by fire.
- Vacaville Public Library moves to Merchant Street.
- Solano County takes title to Nut Tree Airport.

- Mini-skirts become the fashionable wear.
- Volunteers of the Vacaville Heritage Council restore old Vacaville Town Hall.

#### **1971**

- Vacaville's Fire Chief Warren Hughes retires.
- EMT training begins for firemen.
- Public schools are in the red for the first time.
- Growth becomes an issue.

#### **1972**

- Annexation of Brown's Valley to Vacaville approved.
- Lagoon Valley acquired for Regional Park.

#### **1973**

- Vacaville Community Center and pool opens.

#### **1974**

- "Odd-Even" gas rationing began in Solano County.

#### **1975**

- Telephone company experiences difficulty in keeping pace with growth.

#### **1976**

- Drought begins in Solano County.
- Vaca Valley Industrial Park opens.
- Strike at American Home Foods.
- Historic "Uhl" home, built in Vacaville in 1869 by Dobbins, torn down.
- Badly vandalized bust of President John F. Kennedy removed from Vacaville's Andrews Park in Vacaville.

#### **1977**

- Vacaville population. 33,000.
- "911" emergency phone system established in Solano County.
- Vacaville approves property tax for paramedic program.
- Drought ends.

#### **1978**

- Year-round schools measure defeated at ballot box.

#### **1979**

### **1980s**

#### **1980**

- City of Vacaville Fire Department and Rural Fire Districts formally split.
- Padan and Will C, Wood schools damaged by fire.
- Vacaville purchases second ladder truck.
- Move made to ouster slow growth council members in Vacaville.
- Gasohol make it's debut in Solano County

## **1981**

- Howard Wood becomes first full-time paid Fire Chief of the Rural Fire District at Vacaville.
- Atlas Peak Fire in Napa County threatens Solano County.
- Vandals \$20,000 damage to Sierra Vista School equipment.
- Longtime harness racer, Helen Davis dies.

## **1982**

- Canine police dogs hit the streets of Vacaville.
- Don Pippo ousts five-term County Supervisor Wallace Brazelton.

## **1983**

- Major storms and extensive flooding slams into Solano County.
- Extensive damage from fire started by fireworks north of Vacaville.
- Vacaville Reporter newspaper celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Vacaville Museum opens.
- CMF South (California State Prison) is built at Vacaville despite opposition.
- Vacaville's Black Oak Restaurant destroyed by fire.

## **1984**

- Cities battle over amount of garbage to be imported from San Francisco to Solano County.
- CMF South (California State Prison) is built at Vacaville despite opposition.

## **1985**

- The specter of the AIDS epidemic rises in Solano County.
- Basic Products Inc. decides to close doors in Vacaville.
- Proposed town of Manzanita defeated.
- Lifelong fruit rancher, Joe Cruces, dies.

## **1986**

- Basic Vegetable Closes its doors.
- CMF become nation's largest prison.

## **1987**

- Drought begins in Solano County.
- Travis Air Force Base opens Air Museum.
- No smoking ordinances passed in Solano County.
- Solano County reject Super-conducting Super Collider.

## **1988**

- Miller Canyon/Mount Vaca fire.
- Vacaville old-timer, Ed Uhl dies-4/3/1988)

## **1989**

- Vacaville Hispanic Chamber of Commerce organized.
- Loma Prieta earthquake rumbles through Bay area and Solano County. (VV-10/18/1989)
- Enhanced 911 service lines installed in Solano County.
- Georgie Duke Sports Center construction begins in Vacaville. (VV-7/5/1989)

## **1990s**

### **1990**

- Vacaville Fire Protection District upgrades equipment.

### **1991**

- Water conservation measure introduced as drought that started in 1987 continues.
- Solano County sends fire fighting units to fight major Oakland hills fires.

### **1992**

- MAC and SAC at Travis AFB combine into Air Mobility Command.

### **1993**

- Private water system proposed in English Hills near Vacaville.
- Decision made to close Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

### **1994**

- Solano County businesses rush aid to LA quake victims.
- Solano County orderly growth committees form.

### **1995**

- Bicycle helmet laws cause controversy.
- Heavy rains cause flooding in Solano County.

### **1996**

- Mare Island Shuts down.

**1997**

- Solano County braces for El Nino.
- Travis AFB celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with air expo.

**1998**

- Agricultural buffer zone created between Dixon and Vacaville.

**1999**

- Worries about possible problem related to Y2K abound.

**2000s**