

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM

1333 Butte House Road

P. O. Box 1555

Yuba City, CA 95991

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS BULLETIN

VOL. 3 No. 1

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA

JAN. 16, 1962



CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT 1860 JUST BEFORE MR. LINCOLN
LEFT FOR WASHINGTON TO BECOME THE 16TH PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES.

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
January 16, 1962
Tuesday Evening - 6:30 P.M.

PLACE: Grace Methodist Church
Walton Avenue just south of Barry Road
Dinner served by ladies of Grace Methodist Church
Price \$2.25

PRESIDENT: Mrs. Florence Arritt
PROGRAM CHAIRMAN: Randolph Schnabel

PROGRAM

SPEAKER: Mr. "Ted" Bagleman
TOPIC: Historical Spots in California through the
Eyes of an Artist

MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 2, 1962

The Board of Directors of Sutter County Historical Society met in regular session January 2, 1962 in the office of the County Superintendent of Schools.

Those present were: W. A. Greene, Mrs. Ida Littlejohn, James Barr, Mrs. Nanne Brown; President, Mrs. Florence Arritt and Secretary, Mrs. Bernice Gibson.

The meeting was called to order by President Arritt.

The treasurer reported a cash balance \$675.93.

Mr. Greene reported for the by-laws committee. The recommended changes will be printed in the Bulletin for January. Action will be taken on the recommendations at the general meeting.

Possibilities of money raising activities were discussed by Mrs. Nanne Brown, Ways and Means Chairman.

It was recommended by the Board of Directors that the Sutter County Historical Society sponsor an essay contest on local history in the American History classes of the four high schools. Details of the contest would be worked out by the school department. The purpose of the contest would be to develop an interest in local history by our young citizens.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernice B. Gibson, Secretary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDING BY-LAWS
SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ARTICLE I – Meetings of Members of Corporation

Sec. 1. The annual meeting of the members shall be held in each year at the office of the corporation or such other place as the directors may choose in the County of Sutter, State of California.

ARTICLE II – Directors

Sec. 1. A Board of Directors shall be chosen biennially by the members at their biennial meeting. Their term of office shall be for two years. The number of directors shall be eleven.

Sec. 2. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held quarterly at such time and place as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. Notice of meetings shall be required.

Sec. 4. A majority of the Board of Directors or a majority of officers plus one director shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 5 Vacancies on the Board of Directors shall be filled by appointment made by a quorum of the remaining directors. Each person so elected to fill a vacancy shall remain a director until his successor shall have been elected by the members, who may make such election at their next biennial meeting or at any special meeting duly called for that purpose.

ARTICLE V – Membership and Dues

Sec. 1 Any person who is a resident of the United States may become a member by paying regular dues. Any organizations, firm or corporation may become a sustaining member. Dues shall be payable in advance on the first day of January for each year. Dues shall be paid to the treasurer who shall give a receipt for the same. The corporation shall have the following classes of members: The designation of such class (es) and the qualifications and rights of the members of such class (es) shall be as follows: Honorary Life 525.00 total, Sustaining \$5.00 per year, Active \$2.00 per year.

Sec. 2 Any member who fails to pay dues during a current year shall be automatically dropped from membership until the member renews his membership by paying the dues for the year during which he rejoins the society.

Sec. 4. Any member may withdraw from the corporation by presenting his resignation in writing to the Board of Directors.

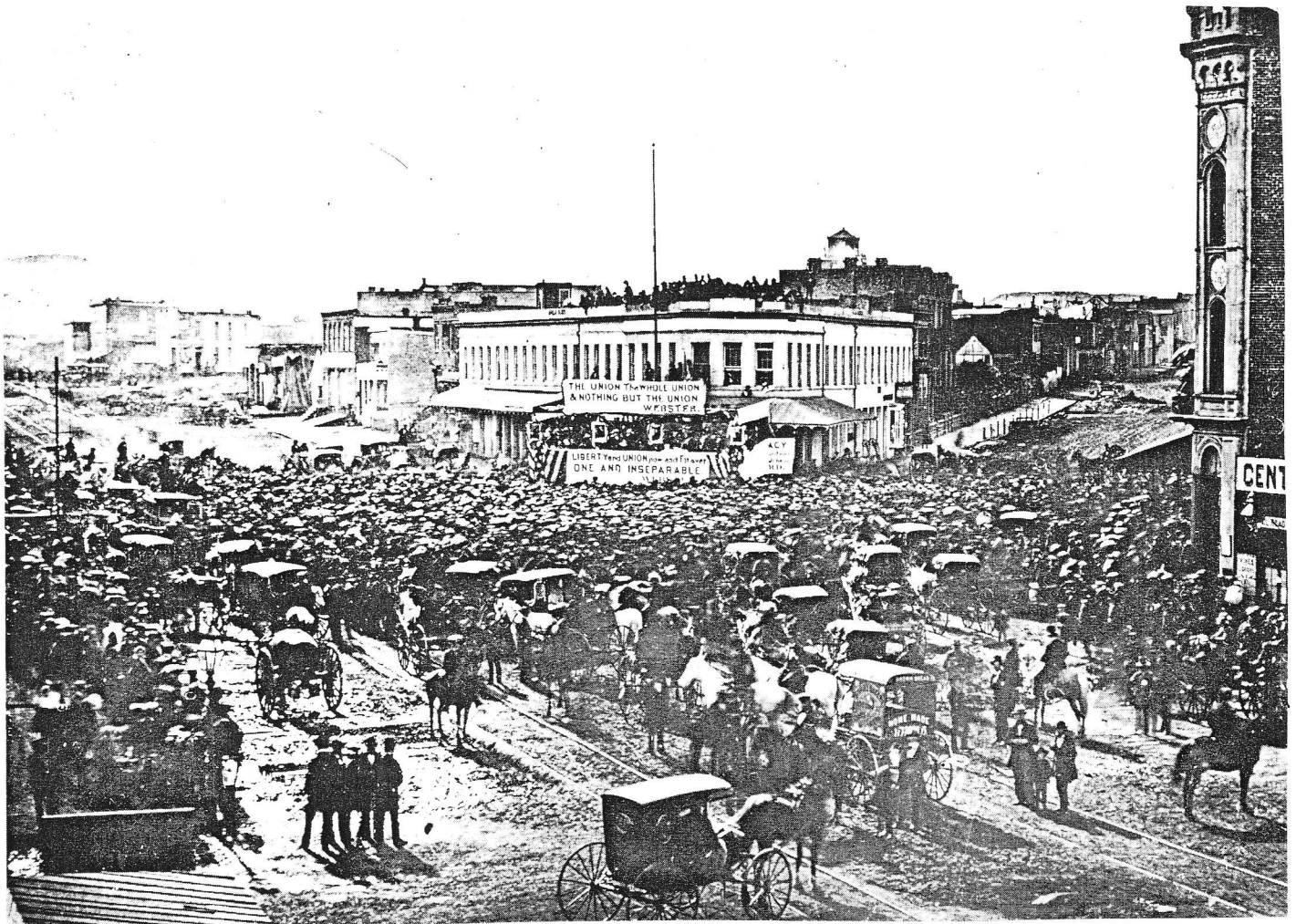


ZACHARIAH MONTGOMERY
DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL LEADER



GEORGE MAJOR HANSON
1799 - 1878

LEADER OF REPUBLICAN PARTY
OF SUTTER COUNTY



UNION MASS MEETING 1861 AT SAN FRANCISCO

THE ELECTION OF 1860
IN
SUTTER AND YUBA COUNTIES
by Earl Ramey

The burden of this article is to give a description of the campaign of 1860. We are in the midst of a five year celebration of the centennial of the Civil War of 1861-1865. But the Civil War really began with the election of Lincoln in 1860. For that reason the topic is quite seasonable.

The political setting of 1860 is perhaps the most complicated in our history. And even though we are concerned immediately with the campaign as it was carried on in Sutter and Yuba counties, we have to describe the local activities in terms of the national setting because local communities, however isolated, took a far greater interest in national politics in 1860 than they did in 1960. Therefore, we must begin with a short reminder of the national political background as it existed then.

The Democratic party was in control of the federal government and most of the state governments. The Whigs and Knownothings had faded out of the contest leaving only the young Republican party which had made its national start in 1856. But the Democratic party was breaking up over certain northern and southern interests. The peculiar interest of the southern states was slavery, and that of the northern states was expansion into the western territories. And these two interests were antagonistic.

Stephen Douglas of Illinois had assumed leadership of the Northern Democrats, and James Buchanan, who had been elected president in 1856, was the titular head of the administration or southern Democrats. The conflict between these two factions centered on the matter of extension of slavery into the territories and new states. Not much of the new territory was suitable for slave labor agriculture, but the slave states dreaded the tendency of new free states coming into the Union with two senators and at least one representative placing the South further in a minor position in congress.

The Douglas wing championed what was known as popular sovereignty which meant, in the beginning, that the residents of a territory through their legislature could control (prohibit or allow) slavery. But the southern wing contended that, inasmuch as the territories were common property of all of the states, a slave owner ought to be free to take his slaves into a territory until the territory became a state at which time the matter of control could be settled. And the southerners were encouraged in this stand by the famous Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court which had declared that a slave remained property of his owner even when taken into a territory. Both Democratic wings were pledged to uphold laws of congress and decisions of the courts, but they differed in their interpretations of this decision and thereby added to the complication and tension.

The Republican party denounced slavery as an institution but disclaimed any intentions of trying to abolish it in the states where it already existed. However, they were determined to prevent its extension into the territories. And they openly advocated action by congress to prevent the extension.

A fourth party existed, the Abolition party, whose members believed that slavery was a crime. They advocated the immediate abolition of the institution wherever it existed. They were really advocating confiscation of private property and were considered subversive as are embers of the Communist party of today.

Now rather curiously politics in California had anticipated the national alignment two or three years. The Whigs and Knownothings were gone, and the Republicans were growing in strength. But the Democrats had already split. Again the setting is rather involved, but one must have some acquaintance with it in order to follow the local contest.

The Democratic party of California had split under the leadership of two very ambitious and astute politicians of the fifties – William M. Gwin and David Broderick. Gwin was from Mississippi and Broderick was from New York; so quite naturally they represented the southern and northern wings of the Democratic party – wings which were commonly referred to in California as the Chivalry and the Tamany respectively.

Slavery was not an issue in California, but these two leaders and their followers were obsessed with control of the federal patronage. To control the patronage one had to be senior senator, and to be senator he had to control the state legislature where senators were chosen. So the battle between the Chivalry and Tamany was carried down to the districts where members of the state senate and assembly were elected.

On the 13th of September 1859 David Terry, a southern Democrat, had killed David Broderick in a duel. This duel had been provoked by statements made by both of these men during the heated campaign of 1859. Broderick's forces had merged to some extent with the Republicans hoping to defeat the Chivalry but had been unsuccessful. As he lay dying Broderick was quoted as saying "They have killed me because I was opposed to the extension of slavery and a corrupt administration." His death served to fix the two wings of the Democratic party in California as irreconcilable rivals. And thus Broderick's followers were preconditioned to embrace the program of Douglas and the Northern Democrats nationally.

There were a half dozen issues which were controversial and pertinent to the affairs of California and which had been before the public long enough to allow all citizens and officials to take a stand. And the stand taken by candidates on these issues determined many votes in November, 1860. The three national issues, but which were of extreme interest to all of the West, were the proposed Pacific railroad, a daily overland mail service, and the free homestead bill.

An issue of interest within the state was the so called "Limepoint Swindle." The War Department had decided to construct a fortress on the Marin side of the Golden Gate. Certain speculators with advance knowledge of the decision acquired the nearly worthless land needed for the fortress and were trying to sell it to the government for an absurdly high price with the assistance of the Democratic congressmen from California.

Another scandal in California politics was the Bulkhead bill which would have had the state government pay for the construction of a sea wall along the water front in San Francisco which improvement would have made valuable water lots which were privately owned. And in the mining districts there was much resentment caused by a tax of thirty dollars required to sell produce which was not produced by the seller. The prohibitive tax prevented stage drivers from carrying fruits and other

products to the mountain districts. But perhaps the most heated issue was that of reelection of Senator Gwin because he was held personally responsible for much of the alleged corruption within the administration wing of the Democratic party.

So with the foregoing very inadequate and oversimplified background we are ready to consider the campaign from the viewpoint of Sutter and Yuba counties. As was the case in both state and federal governments the southern wing of the Democratic party held all of the offices in the two counties excepting the few held by individuals who later joined the Douglas wing. But the Chivalry or Administration Democrats as they were called (and later Breckinridgers) were on the defensive regarding most of the issues listed above. The southerners in congress including Senator Gwin had opposed the railroad, the overland mail, and the homestead bill. And within the state, as has been stated, they had facilitated the Limepoint and Bulkhead deals which carried some stigma of corruption and scandal; and they had passed the license act. And of course they had to defend Senator Gwin who was proscribed by both the Douglas Democrats and the Republicans.

Marysville was the political center for the two counties. There were three daily newspapers published in the city. And these papers served the entire two counties because Sutter county had no paper at the time. The California Express, owned and published by W. F. Hicks and Company, was the administration or Breckinridge organ. The National Democrat, published by A. S. Randal and Company, which had served as organ of the Broderick faction naturally became the official organ of the Douglasites. The Marysville Daily Appeal was the youngest of the three having been established in January 1860 as an independent journal. But in June of this year a group of Republicans, known as the B. F. Avery and Company, purchased it and dedicated it to the Republican cause.

These three journals under the guidance of their very capable editors were the main factor in the campaign of 1860.

Even as late in the history of California as 1860 a large fraction of the residents of the state had come from the eastern and midwestern states as adults and, consequently, had brought to California much of the culture and philosophy of their native sections. So it is possible in many cases to account for the convictions of these pioneers when we know something of their personal history. For this purpose we shall find useful a brief biography of several of the leading actors of Sutter and Yuba counties in the campaign of 1860. As has already been stated the editors of the three papers were the principal actors.

John F. Linthicum was born in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1830. His family was well to do, and he received a better than average schooling. He began to teach school when only eighteen, and while teaching he read law and prepared for the legal profession. Later he moved to Mississippi where he was engaged in the banking business. He migrated to California in 1858 and came directly to Marysville where he became editor of the California Express. Obviously his background and experiences qualified him as a spokesman for the southern wing of the Democratic party.²

John R. Ridge, a Cherokee Indian, was born in the old Cherokee nation in the state of Georgia in 1827. His father and grandfather were leaders

of the Cherokee as they moved westward from Georgia while John R. was a child. His father established a prosperous plantation on which he used his many negro slaves. The father had been sent to New England where he had received a good education; so he in turn sent his son John R. to New England to receive the best of schooling. Ten years later the son was studying law in Arkansas.

There had developed a tragic feud between two factions of the Cherokee during the movement westward. The father and grandfather were murdered as victims of this vendetta. John R. Ridge killed a member of the opposing faction and was obliged to flee the nation coming to California in 1850. After failures to make more than a bare living in the mines and keeping stores, he turned to literary work for which he was exceptionally well qualified. He worked on several newspapers in Northern California and for a time served as deputy to the Recorder and Auditor of Yuba county in Marysville. During the fifties he contributed many poems to several papers writing under the pen name Yellowbird, which was his Cherokee name.³

Ridge was southern in all of his background excepting his schooling in New England. His father and grandfather had owned slaves, and lie himself had owned a few while in Arkansas. The members of his family and his faction of the Cherokee later joined forces with the south in the Civil War, and many of them served in the armies of the Confederacy. But during the Gwin-Broderick contest he had preferred the Broderick side and had become editor of the National Democrat which from its beginning in 1858 was dedicated to the Broderick cause. Ridge continued as editor of the Democrat as the official organ of the Douglas wing. So here we have a case of a person with a southern background taking sides with the north.⁴

Benjamin P. Avery was born in New York City in 1828. His father died when he was four years of age, and his mother was left to provide for six young children. As soon as lie was old enough he was apprenticed to an engraver and printer in which craft he became a journeyman. He received very little formal schooling, but by taking advantage of his trade he became quite literate.

Avery came to California in 1849 and spent his first Years as a miner and store keeper. In 1858 lie established and edited the Hydraulic Press at North San Juan; and, as has already been noted, in June 1860 he, with several partners, purchased the Marysville Daily Appeal making it an official Republican journal. His diction and logic, as well as dignity and courtesy which characterize his writings to be found in the Appeal, impress the reader as the accomplishments of a superior individual And his wit and humor which he mixed into his daily coverage of the news and his editorials must have been relished by all of his readers even including his rival editors.

A presidential campaign had to begin early in California in order that delegates to the national conventions could be selected and instructed at least a month ahead of eastern delegates, this month being needed for the trip overland or by Panama. So the state central committee of the Democratic party called a convention for February 20 and ordered county organizations to choose delegates. And this is when the campaign really began in Sutter and Yuba counties because the state committee also

ordered a "test" for those Democrats who would be eligible to choose delegates to Sacramento. Only those who had voted for a majority of the "regular Democratic state ticket of which Milton S. Latham was at the head at the last general election" would be allowed to vote in the precincts for delegates to the county conventions where delegates to the state convention would be chosen.⁵ This test would result in only administration delegates at Sacramento which, in turn, would result in the California delegation being instructed to vote for an administration candidate at Charleston where the National Democratic Convention had been called for April 23.

Ridge protested this test for Democrats in his editorials, and he and Linthicum debated the item during the month of January. Ridge compared the action to that of a general dismissing a brave regiment while advancing to meet an enemy. But Linthicum replied that the followers of Broderick had not acted as a brave regiment in 1859 when they had deserted and voted with the Republicans. He called them traitors not to be depended upon to support the candidate chosen at Charleston. The test worked as planned, and the California delegation was instructed to vote for an administration candidate. Sutter and Yuba failed to place a delegate although Henry P. Haun's name was placed in nomination at Sacramento.

The Republican state convention had been held at Sacramento the last part of January when delegates to the national convention to be held in Chicago in May were chosen. George M. Hanson of Yuba City and John C. Fall of Marysville had been delegates in 1856 to the first Republican convention, and their friends of Sutter and Yuba counties expected them to be returned in 1860. Hanson's name was placed in nomination, but he was not elected. Fall was not nominated and later joined the new Union party.⁶

There was the usual lull in the campaign during the months of March, April and May because there was little to do until the candidates and platforms were known. But the residents of Sutter and Yuba were partially entertained by the continued wrangling between Ridge and Linthicum over such questions as which paper was the official organ of the Democrats, and even which wing of the party was the regular one. The debate went so far as to introduce the matters of disunion and secession and the question of which faction would be responsible if the southern states were provoked to secede. Naturally the Republicans relished this fratricidal warfare.

News from the conventions had to come to California by telegraph as far as St. Joseph, Missouri; then by Pony Express to Sacramento (or to points east of Sacramento as the telegraph line was being extended eastward) in eight to twelve days and from Sacramento to Marysville by stage or boat. Most news was twelve to fifteen days old when it appeared in newspapers. The first news from Charleston arrived in Marysville on May 8 telling how the Douglas Wing was winning the battle for a platform against the southerners who wanted strict guarantees for slavery. Then on May 15 came the word that the convention had failed to nominate because the southern delegates had walked out, and that those remaining could not get a two thirds majority, although Douglas had the greatest vote of 152.

Later information came telling how the convention had adjourned on May 3 to meet again in Baltimore June 18. So the campaign had to be postponed a month or more. The only diversion was the news which came on May 23 that a new party had been formed called the Constitutional Union Party which had held a convention May 5 and had nominated John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for president and vice president.

Another diversion came June 3 when the editor of the Appeal announced that he was to end his editorial duties because, he wrote, "The Republicans are upon us and we surrender without discretion. Mr. Avery succeeds us... The tripod of the Independent Appeal is upset and demolished." And in the same issue the owners, G. W. Bloor and Company announced that they had sold the material and goodwill "purely on commercial principles" because they had received a liberal price.

On June 5 the new publishers took charge and stated that the Appeal would be independent Republican. They would avoid partisan servility and would speak of faults of both friend and foe but would avoid personalities and vituperation. Politics were not to interfere with publishing a good newspaper. Then there followed their creed which was to dictate the policy of the journal:

 Holding of man as property was wrong and undemocratic. Human slavery was a stupendous evil.

 But they did not advocate abolition of slavery where it existed. Slavery was a local institution.

 Rights of states were to be respected.

 The Union must be preserved.

 Territories were common property.

 Territories must remain free of slavery.

 Slavery must not be extended.

 Slavery was inimical to free labor.

 Republicans should secure control of government to check the spread of slavery.

Ridge and Linthicum welcomed Avery into the fraternity of editors in polite editorials, but Linthicum warned that he expected to exchange blow for blow with the new Republican organ. Avery expressed gratitude for the kind reception given him and declared that if he were "knocked our he would "surrender the belt." This last phrase was a reference to a recent international heavy weight championship bout which had been fought in England. The American contender, Heenan, had defeated the British champion, Sayer, but Sayer had refused to surrender the belt.

News from the Republican convention in Chicago was delayed because Indians were disrupting the Pony Express service. So it was not until June 12 that reports by overland mail came by way of southern California and by telegraph from Visalia bringing the information that Lincoln and Hamlin were the nominees.

Not until July 13 was there any word from the second Democratic convention at Baltimore. By overland mail it was learned that the southern delegates had again refused to accept the certain results of a combined convention and had again withdrawn. But three days later the results of the nominations of both wings came through. The northern wing nominated Douglas and Johnson and the administration Democrats chose vice president Breckinridge to run for president and Joseph Lane

of Oregon as his running mate. The Douglasites fired thirty-three guns in Marysville to celebrate the news and the Breckenridgers fired 100 guns, the so called guns being really powder and anvils. So the campaign was ready to begin in earnest with a four way fight for the votes. The Abolitionists did not have an organization in California and presented no ticket.

Before we go further with the narrative of the campaign we should identify a few of the candidates and party workers as has already been done in the cases of the three editors.

The most prominent, statewide, politician of Sutter county was Zachariah Montgomery. His father was of a French family which had come to Maryland during the colonial period, and his mother was from an Irish family of Virginia. His parents had migrated to Kentucky where Montgomery was born in 1825. He received his first education in a log school house but later attended St. Lawrence school which was taught by Thomas Bidwell, a brother of John Bidwell, the pioneer of Chico. He read the account of John Bidwell's trip to California in 1841, and from it developed an interest in California. In 1844 Montgomery entered St. Mary's College which was run by Jesuits. Then in 1846 he transferred to St. Joseph's College where he received the bachelor's degree in 1847 and the master's degree in 1848. After teaching and reading law he began practicing in Bardstown, Kentucky until May, 1850 when he joined an overland party to California, arriving in Sacramento in July of that year.

He practiced for a year in Sacramento and then turned to mining in Butte and Shasta counties. In the late fifties he settled in Yuba City with offices in Marysville. He owned two square blocks on the south side of B Street in Yuba City including the present location of the armory. He also owned part of the lot on Second Street where the library is now located. On this lot was the town's most popular saloon, the "City Saloon", which was also owned by Montgomery although he did not operate it personally. His residence was on B Street just west of the Hall of Records.

Montgomery was an uncompromising administration Democrat and although his family had never owned slaves, he justified slavery and defended southern culture generally. He was especially noted for his debating skill and oratory. The state convention of the administration wing named him one of the four electors on the Breckinridge ticket. At that time electors were chosen for their ability to campaign, not only in their own districts, but in all parts of the state. He filled many speaking engagements from San Jose and Stockton to the extreme northern counties. His name appeared on so many programs that his opponents referred to him as the "ubiquitous Montgomery." As we shall note in a later chapter his zeal for the southern cause made it very difficult for him to adjust to a condition of war as a citizen of a state on the wrong side.⁷

George M. Hanson was another prominent party worker of Sutter county – even more prominent locally than Montgomery because he had been in the community since 1849, and besides being active politically was, during the fifties, Sutter county's leading industrialist. He was born in Virginia in 1799, and, consequently, was twenty-five years older than most of the residents of the two counties. He moved to Kentucky in 1821 where he operated a store; then by 1826 he had moved his growing family to Illinois where they remained until 1849. During his residence in Illinois he served as postmaster and member of both the State Senate

and Assembly being at that time a member of the Whig party. The family were neighbors of the Lincoln family.

In 1849 Hanson moved with his wife and eight children overland to California arriving in Yuba City in November of that year. During the ten years from his arrival until the campaign of 1860 he built and operated the first hotel in Yuba City, established the first ferry connecting Yuba City and Marysville, built the first bridge across the Feather River and erected the finest residence in the town. And also during this period he helped to form the first Republican party organization in the county, In 1856 as a delegate to the first Republican National Convention he nominated Abraham Lincoln to be the candidate for president before the convention chose Fremont.

It is doubtful that Hanson at any time had any desire to profit personally from his political activity after coming to California. His brother owned slaves in Virginia, but he acquired a hatred for the institution at an early age. He was a sincerely religious man, and we have good reason to believe that he had embraced the Republican cause with moral motives alone.⁸

The most energetic and versatile politician of Sutter county was General Albert M. Winn who was born in Virginia in 1810. He was one of twenty-one children in his family. His father had served as captain in the War of 1812, and his grandfather as a soldier in Washington's Revolutionary Army. He received good schooling in Virginia but did not follow the professions; rather he learned the carpenter's trade. He moved to Ohio in 1829 where he married and established a family. In 1836 he and a partner chartered a flat boat which they loaded with lumber, and, with their families on board, floated down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to Vicksburg, Mississippi where he settled. On the way down the rivers they worked their lumber into windows and doors which they sold along the way.

In Mississippi Winn engaged in a general construction contracting business and became active in the state militia advancing the several ranks until he became a colonel. In the early part of 1849 he left with a party to go overland to California. But he, with a few companions, left the party and went by way of Texas and Mexico to Mazatlan on the Pacific coast where they took a ship to San Francisco arriving in June several weeks earlier than a party could have made the trip further north.

Only a few weeks after his arrival in California Winn began a career of political, military, economic, and social activity which was to continue for over thirty years. He went first to Sacramento where in July 1849 he was elected to the new town council. He was selected by the members of the council to serve as chairman; so he really became the first mayor of Sacramento. Next he organized the Odd Fellows who were in the town into an emergency corps to relieve the sick and bury the dead resulting from an epidemic which broke out among the miners returning from the mountains. And later, after having been appointed brigadier general of the state militia, he helped put down the squatters' riots in Sacramento.

After John Sutter moved to Hock Farm in 1850 Winn became his agent acting with power of attorney to sell property which Sutter owned or claimed. When Sutter entertained large groups at his farm Winn was often master of ceremonies at the banquet table. And while in this position of agent he organized a syndicate made up of his son-in-law E. F. Gillespie

J. S. Fowler, John McDougal, Wake Bryarly and Henry E. Robinson which group purchased three fourths of all of the land which Sutter claimed in Sutter county. Later Winn bought a one fifth interest in the holdings of the syndicate for himself. Then in 1856 the members of the syndicate, of which there were ten by that time, partitioned the land, and each member took individual title to certain lots. Winn was allotted eight separate pieces scattered over the county and totaling 2700 acres. After much selling and trading he established what was known as Winn's Ranch on the east bank of the Sacramento in sections 26 and 35 of township 13 range one east. Many river boats stopped at his place which became known as Winn's Landing, but which is now called Poffenbergers Landing between Kirkville and Cranmore. Winn moved his family to the ranch in 1857 and became a resident of Sutter county. As we shall see later he had an active part in the campaign of 1860.⁹

There are several other prominent politicians of Sutter county whose biographies would perhaps be equally pertinent in this discussion of the campaign, but there is not a space available in this paper. Brief identification of them will be made as their part is presented.

The most colorful politician of Yuba county of the period (though not necessarily the most prominent one) is Charles E. DeLong. He was of French descent born in New York state in 1832. He grew up on a farm and received very little schooling. He came to California in 1850 and spent the first years in the upper diggings around Camptonville and North San Juan, part of the time mining and some of the time keeping stores with little success at either occupation. In 1855 he became a deputy sheriff of Yuba county collecting miner's tax and attending minor cases in the several justices courts. This experience gave him an interest in and a slight acquaintance with legal procedure; so he read and studied law and in 1857 was admitted to the bar in Marysville where he established a practice. This achievement is especially notable in view of his low degree of literacy with which he had to begin.

DeLong was elected to the state assembly from Yuba county in 1857 but was defeated for the senate in 1859. He became a follower of Broderick in state politics and naturally went with this wing into the camp of Douglas. He was a fiery debater and being a very frail and short man he gained the sobriquet of "bantam cock." He said of himself that he owed his success partially to impudence and luck. But this impudence in debate made him a favorite orator with the pioneers because many of them preferred to be entertained rather than enlightened. DeLong is of special importance to a study of this kind because he kept a diary from 1854 to 1863 which gives many items of information which are not to be found in newspaper accounts of the time.¹⁰

There were twenty-five or thirty active and experienced politicians in Yuba county in 1860, many of them having been in the community since 1850, but there is not room here to give biographies of them. However, some of them will be identified as they appear in this narrative.

In addition to the three partisan newspapers there were three other agencies which functioned in the campaign. These were the party convention which did the work which the present day primary elections do, the party clubs which carried on a program of propaganda and organization, and

the public meetings and rallies.

As stated above the selection of candidates for state and county offices was carried out entirely by party machinery in committees and conventions. The chairman of the county central committee could take the initiative and call a meeting of the central committee which then could call a county convention for a stated purpose, and order the precinct committees to hold elections to choose delegates to the county convention. These precinct elections were semi-formal and could be carried out by any rules which the party cared to enforce.

Accordingly the chairman of the Democratic Central Committee of Yuba county called a meeting for August 8 but only two members came, T. B. Reardon and Joseph Payne, both of whom were Douglas followers. But they held the meeting and called a county convention to be held at the Sixteen Mile House on September 1. They also instructed the precinct committees to hold elections for delegates on August 28, and made the condition for voting a pledge to support Douglas and Johnson.

The Democratic Central Committee of Sutter county met on August 11 with five members present, Wilson, Richards, Drescher, Parks and Brittain. A county convention was called to meet at Nicolaus August 28 and elections in the precincts ordered for August 25. Just when a resolution was offered calling for the pledge to support Douglas and Johnson as a condition for voting, Parks and Brittain, who were Breckinridge followers, withdrew from the meeting. Just the remaining three, Douglas Democrats, passed the resolution.

A convention of the Union party of Yuba county was held August 28 in Marysville and twelve delegates were selected to attend a state convention in Sacramento, but no county ticket was nominated.

As ordered by the central committee the Sutter county convention of Douglas Democrats met in Nicolaus August 28. Colonel M. Boulware became chairman and Mr. Davis was secretary. After choosing five delegates to the state convention and thirteen delegates to meet with Yuba county delegates to nominate a joint senator, the convention nominated General Winn for Sutter county's one assembly position. Mr. Davis was nominated for assessor, the only county office to be filled at the time.

The Breckinridge Democrats of Sutter county, or "the unterrified Democracy" as a cynical reporter referred to them, had called a separate county convention which met in Rider's Hall at Nicolaus September 1. They proceeded to attend to the same matters which the Douglasites had attended, nominating Zachariah Montgomery for the Assembly and Wm. Campbell for assessor. C. L. Vaughn presided and C. E. Wilcoxon served as secretary. The reporter declared that the meeting was harmonious and "slightly enthusiastic."

In the meantime the Breckinridge Democrats of Yuba county had called their separate convention which met in Marysville August 30. There were 94 delegates, the largest county convention to be held in Yuba county up to that time. In 1860 Yuba county had five assemblymen, one senator of its own, and one joint senator with Sutter county. Colonel N. E. Whitesides of Parks Bar was nominated for senator. He had come to California from Illinois where he had been active in state politics. He was a lawyer with his office at the time at Parks Bar, but he was very active in the Democratic party of Yuba county having been elected to the

Assembly where he served as speaker in 1858. He and DeLong were Political rivals, a fact of especial interest because they became brothers-in-law later when they married sisters from a prominent Marysville family.¹¹

For the Assembly Magruder, Haun, Kungle, Lowler and Hanson were nominated. Thirteen delegates to the state convention were chosen and nine were selected to meet with the Sutter delegates to nominate a joint senator.

The Sutter delegation appeared and the two groups chose W. H. Parks of Yuba City for joint senator. Parks had been a member of the senate before and had supported the movement for a state owned free bridge across the Feather River. Also he had favored a swamp land bill which would have given certain tule lands to the counties which in turn could give them to railroad companies as subsidies to encourage the building of railways into the counties. These bills had placed him under suspicion of Planning "deals." But the Democrats knew he could draw votes as later election results proved.

The several resolutions which were adopted pledged the Breckinridgers to support Montgomery for elector, to oppose the Bulkhead Bill, and to repeal the produce license act. They declared that Breckinridge and Lane represented the "true Democracy," but the resolution which called for support of John B. Weller for United States Senator failed. Both Ridge and Avery tried to interpret this refusal to endorse Weller as a tacit acceptance of Gwin for reelection. The meeting became disorderly towards the end, but just before adjourning the delegates gave three loud cheers and a tiger¹² for Breckinridge.

The Douglas Democrats of Yuba county gathered in convention on September 1 at the Sixteen Mile House which was operated by Joseph Payne, one of the two committeemen who had called the meeting. Judge W. T. Barbour presided and George W. Stanton was secretary. They nominated the popular Charlie DeLong for Senator. And for the Assembly positions they obviously tried to select candidates who could pull votes. John Collins, who had come to California from Ireland in 1854, was a superintendent of mining and construction operation. It was expected that he could get the votes of the many Irish laborers in the mountains. Wm. Elwell was a painter by trade but was then operating mines and employing men whose votes he could influence. Joel Stoddard, a prosperous farmer and miner from the Sear River district, and Lyster Burnett of Long Bar, a miner and ditch owner, were also expected to draw votes from miners and farmers. And Judge Barbour, the only resident of Marysville, was to get the urban vote.

The convention passed a resolution condemning "all secessionists, bolters, traitors, and disunionists whether from North, East, West or South." And candidates were urged to oppose Gwin and Bulkhead. Then another resolution declared that Douglas was the regular Democratic nominee. On September 1 the Republican Central Committee of Sutter county ordered the precincts to hold elections September 8 to choose delegates to a county convention which was to meet at Nicolaus on September 11.¹³ This order was signed by Urn. H. McGrew, president and G. M. Hanson, secretly.

Twenty-five delegates assembled in Riders Hall and chose John McGrew as president and F. B. Haswell, secretary. Francis Hamlin was nominated for the Assembly and Benjamin Crabtree for Assessor.

Nine delegates were chosen to meet with the Yuba group to nominate a joint senator, and G. N. Hanson moved that the delegation favor W. H. McGrew of Yuba City for the nomination. After choosing a new central committee and giving cheers for Lincoln the convention adjourned. A reporter stated that harmony prevailed and that the meeting compared favorably with any of the Democratic ones. And he illustrated the optimism prevailing by quoting one C. A. Sumner, a delegate, as opining that after Lincoln was elected "lots of us poor cusses will wear store clothes again."

The nomination of Francis Hamlin for the assembly is one of the most interesting of the campaign and calls for some explanation. Hamlin was born 1817 in Cumberland County, Maine. His father was a farmer and a teacher, and he provided his son with good schooling. The son also became a teacher. He moved to Ohio in 1841 and taught schools there until 1849 when he joined a company called the Cincinnati Mining and Trading Company. With other members of this company he came overland to California in 1849 and mined in the Yuba River diggings. He went back to Maine in 1852 but returned to California the next year, this time with a drove of cattle. He settled in the West Butte district of Sutter county where he preempted land, and by 1860 had established a prosperous live-stock business.¹⁴

Francis Hamlin was a nephew of Senator Hannibal Hamlin of Maine who was nominated by the Republicans at Chicago to be Lincoln's running mate for vice president. Francis Hamlin was not a politician and had not taken an active part in party affairs before 1860. The Republicans of Sutter county valued his name on the ticket. They believed that he could run ahead of his party and pull some votes for the Republican electors. We shall note later whether or not this strategy was successful.

The delegations of Douglas Democrats from Sutter and Yuba counties met in Marysville September 9 to nominate a candidate for joint senator. There had developed the custom of alternating the candidates between the two counties and inasmuch as Sutter had had the candidate at the last election, General Winn proposed that the candidate be from Yuba county. So they nominated James C. Wilson, a merchant of Marysville. Wilson had come to California from his native state of Maryland in 1849. He had engaged in stock raising in Sutter county for a time and also in mining at Grass Valley where he had helped to build the first quartz mill. His qualifications as a Douglas Democrat were deprecated by Linthicum who recalled that as a member of the state central committee in 1859 he had stated publicly that Douglas was the last choice of the Democrats of California. But the Yuba-Sutter Douglasites chose not to hold that statement against him.

On September 15 the Yuba county Republican convention was held in Marysville with 80 delegates attending. Horace Beach presided and W. K. Hudson served as secretary. Beach was nominated for senator and given cheers by the convention. He was a pioneer merchant of Marysville although he had been educated for a career in law in his native state of New York. He had been a candidate for Mayor of Marysville in 1857 but otherwise had not been active in politics. He was the type of candidate the Republicans of Yuba and Sutter counties were favoring in 1860 – men without previous political history who would be free of taint.

For the assembly positions they nominated Hartwell, Adkinson, Mellen, Boyd and McChesney all persons without any previous political prominence. The delegation from Sutter county came over and joined the Yuba group to nominate a joint senator. They agreed upon Wm. H. McGrew of Sutter county for joint senator. McGrew was from Kentucky and also had been trained for law. He was a Whig during most of his residence in California. He had lived in Sacramento for a while and had served as district attorney for Yolo county, but for some years had operated a stock farm in Sutter county where he had been active in organizing the Republican Party. During the campaign he demonstrated his talent as a Political orator.

The convention passed resolutions which put the members on record as supporting Lincoln and Hamlin, as demanding removal from state records of the legislature resolutions which had censored Broderick for certain actions before he died, as opposing further limitations on freedom of the press and as opposing the Bulkhead Bill and the produce license. Also the convention requested the precincts to conduct polls to determine the strength of the several parties. So with this last of the conventions the stage was set for the contest of the three parties (the Union Party could be ignored) to elect a president, a vice president and in Yuba county a senator and five assemblymen while in Sutter one assemblyman with the two counties jointly electing a senator.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE)

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ O'Meara, James, Broderick and Gwin, San Francisco, 1881, p 253

² Guinn, J.M., History of California and Record of Sacramento Valley Chicago, 1906. p. 923

³ One of these poems of local interest is the one lamenting the decline of Yuba City after Marysville had gone ahead in 1850. This poem is included in an article commemorating the fiftieth birthday of the incorporated city by Honora A. Laney in this Bulletin for October, 1958

⁴ Dale, Edward E. and Litton, Gaston, Cherokee Cavaliers, Un. of Oklahoma Press, 1940. This volume contains many letters written by Ridge to his relatives and many notes of information about the family.

⁵ California Express, Feb. 1, 1860. The three Marysville papers which have already been identified by complete official titles will hereafter be referred to as Express, Democrat or Appeal. However, few notes will be needed because the date and paper will in most references be implied in the text.

⁶ Davis, Winfield J. Political Conventions in California. Sacramento, 1893. pp. 109-123. These pages contain the results of the several conventions referred to in this paper.

⁷ Phelps, Alonzo, Contemporary Biography of California's Representative Men, San Francisco, 1882, pp 68-69.

Deeds, Sutter Co. Book D. pp 348-0; Book F, pp.97, 101, 170, 172, 207, 252, 337,485. These deeds by which Montgomery acquired his property on B Street give us some hint of the answer to the question being asked today "What became of the streets of Yuba City?" The streets between blocks which he purchased were listed in the deeds as being conveyed to him. But we are not told by what authority they were conveyed. This question suggests an interesting study which could be made of the early history of Yuba City.

Notes and References continued

⁸ Hanson, Nicholas Wilson, As I Remember, Chico, 1944, pp 15-24

⁹ Most of this information is taken from a large file on A.M. Winn to be found in the California State Library. There are many deeds to and from Winn in the Hall of Records in Yuba City.

¹⁰ DeLong, Charles E., Journal, 1854-1863, Carl I. Wheat, Editor Quarterly of The California Historical Society, V, VIII, No. 3, September 1929, pp. 193-198

¹¹ Ibid, p. 212

¹² A Tiger was an extra cheer added after the traditional ones and was usually given for an especially important person. It could be a repetition of the other cheers, but sometimes the word "tiger" was pronounced as the extra cheer.

¹³ These precincts were Yuba City, Bean's, Brittain's, Maze's, Brimer's, Winter's, Cranmore's, Smith's Ferry, Knights, Slough, Vernon, Yoculmne, Nicolaus, Kempton's and O'Rear's.

¹⁴ Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California. Chicago, 1891. p. 303