

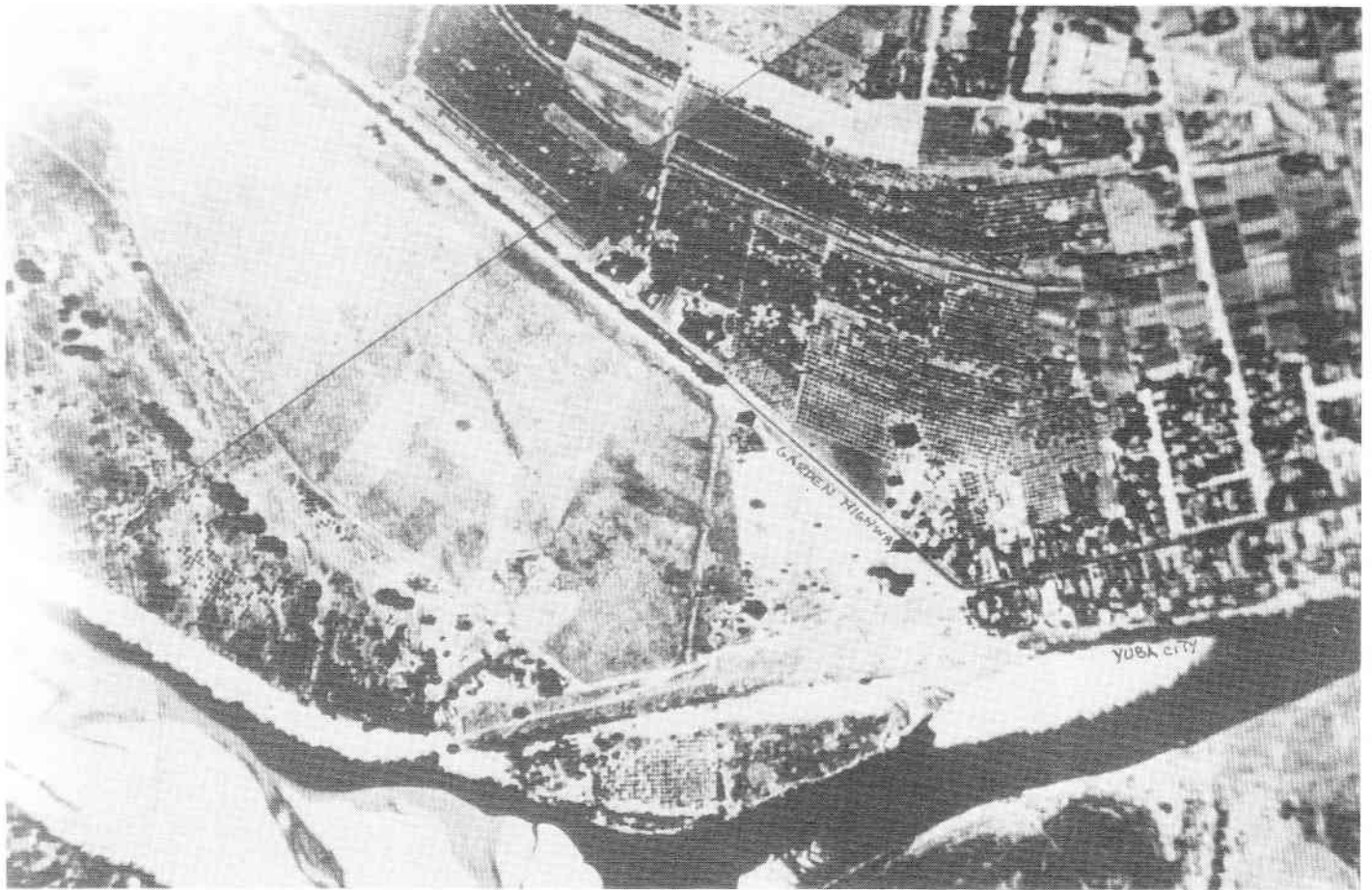
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Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin

Vol. XXXXI No. 1

Yuba City, California

April 2000



**Jackson Bottoms
(Left Diagonal Area)
Yuba City, California circa 1920
Now the Site of the Sutter County Airport
(Photo Credit: Von Geldern Engineering)**

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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The **News Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Society in Yuba City, California. The annual membership dues includes receiving the **News Bulletin** and the Museum's **Muse News**. At the April 1987 Annual Dinner Meeting it was voted to change the By-laws to combine the memberships of the Society and the Museum.

The 2000 dues are payable as of January 1, 2000.

Student (under 18)/Senior Citizen/Library	\$15.00
Individual	\$20.00
Organizations/Clubs	\$30.00
Family	\$35.00
Business/Sponsor	\$100.00
Corporate/Benefactor	\$1,000.00

President's Message

It has been a pleasure serving as the President of the Historical Society for the past two years. I believe that during my tenure, our biggest accomplishment was the completion of the Agricultural Wing at the Museum. I want to thank all of you who made it possible. I had the privilege of being in office when the construction happened, but if it had not been for the years of work, donations and plans that came before, we couldn't have achieved our goal of the new wing.

There are still plenty of projects in the hopper and the Society still has a great number of things to accomplish. There is interest in constructing a barn of some sort in the Park to house large farm equipment to continue the celebration of our agricultural heritage. We've discussed the possibility of re-publishing the Thompson & West History of Sutter County. The last edition was published by the Society in 1974. On a smaller scale, we are working on fixing up, protecting and beautifying the Hock Farm Historical site on Garden Highway.

Thank you for allowing me to serve in this organization. I'm sure we'll be working together on these, or other, projects soon.

Steve Perry
President

Articles Needed

All of you readers have an interest in Sutter County or you wouldn't be reading this publication. All of you have a story or interest that your fellow readers would enjoy learning about. Won't you share it? We are in need of articles and interviews for the Bulletin. If you are leery about writing, rest assured that the editorial staff will be happy to help. If you aren't interested in writing down your story, how about telling it to someone? Oral history is an important way to share your memories with your community.

This is not just aimed at those people who trace their families back for generations in Sutter County or recollections of the 19th Century life in Sutter County. Where were you when the astronauts walked on the moon for the first time? Where were you when World War II ended? What kinds of things did you do for entertainment when you were a kid - play baseball, Space Invaders, or go to the Tuesday matinee? Who can remember what it was like to walk down Plumas Street or D Street (in Marysville) in 1930? 1940? 1950? 1960? etc. We've had a suggestion for a story about the development of rice growing in the county? Is there someone out there who could provide information for such a story?

If you can help, please call Sharyl Simmons at 743-3741.

Director's Report

Spring at the Museum means the rose garden and the butterfly garden burst into bloom and many school children appear for museum tours. It also signals that the time for the annual vintage apparel fair, *Wear & Remembrance*, is near. One new exhibit is up, with a second one on the horizon for summer. The Museum Commission is working hard on plans for the new patio, and the Museum Staff is fabricating the permanent exhibits for the new agricultural wing.

The current exhibit features the photographic work of the Yuba College Photo Guild, comprised of both students and faculty. It is a wonderful show reflecting the great pool of talent in our local area and will remain up through May 26. The Museum will host a reception Saturday, May 13 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. You are invited to enjoy the exhibit along with wine and hors d'oeuvres. Tickets will be available for a drawing to benefit the Yuba College Photo Department's scholarship fund at \$5.00 each. Prizes include a \$500 gift certificate from Giselle's Travel, along with group dinners at several terrific restaurants and gift certificates from many local businesses.

Wear & Remembrance, the Museum's vintage apparel fair fund-raiser, is in its 10th year and still growing. The event, which operates exactly like an antique show with dealers showing and selling vintage clothing and accessories from the Victorian era through the 1960's, takes place on Saturday, April 29 and Sunday, April 30 at Franklin Hall on the Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds. Admission is \$5 or \$4 with a pink coupon available at the Museum.

Be sure to put Saturday morning, April 15 on your calendar. That's when the Sutter Buttes Garden Club holds its annual Plant Sale in the Museum parking lot, and great plant varieties at the right price are the order of the day.

Watch for a truly stellar exhibit opening on June 17. Local photographer Gerry Tsuruda has created a photo documentary titled *Silent Harvest: the Disappearance of the Family Farm*. His photos tell unique, personal, yet universal stories, not only from our local area, but up and down the length of the Central Valley. Gerry's incredible photos are complemented by essays from a half dozen quintessential California writers, among them Kevin Starr, Mas Masumoto and Victor Davis Hansen. *Silent Harvest* will remain up through September 10.

I hope that you will come by to see the changes taking place at your Museum. You will find that the Museum Store has expanded across the front of the Museum. It is stocked with many intriguing history books and small gifts. Whenever you are in need of a truly unique gift, the Museum Store is just the place to find it.

Julie Stark, Director

Editor's Page

This is an editorial I never anticipated writing. As most of you know, one of our most active members, Linda Leone, was killed in an automobile accident on January 30th. Her official duties for the Society included being the treasurer and co-editor of this Bulletin. Her un-official duties included helping with, organizing, or arranging just about everything else that happened in the Society. We depended on her to keep us on track.

Linda was the treasurer during the construction of the Agricultural Wing and sweated every penny that went into the building, scrutinized every check that went out, and when it was finished felt a tremendous relief and tremendous pride in her, and the Society's, accomplishment.

For the last several years, she and I co-edited the Bulletin. The last couple of years have been difficult as Linda found herself back to work full time, making time for family and friends, keeping the Historical Society on track, and being blessed with a renewal of a relationship with her high school sweetheart.

Many of you knew Linda on a personal level. I sympathize with your loss. She had that way about her – she never met a stranger. One of her tricks when we'd go shopping together was disappearing the second I turned my back on her. Ten minutes later I'd find her in an aisle chatting with someone, trading addresses, promising to keep in touch. When she and her great friend

finally parted ways, I'd ask who that person was and usually it was someone she'd just met. They were both interested in something they spotted on the shelves and by the time they'd said their good-byes Linda knew how many kids she had, the names of her dogs and had found three things they had in common.

Many of you were kind enough to share your memories and stories with Linda and then saw them magically appear in the Bulletin. She enjoyed talking to people and became proprietary about the stories you shared and about you. You became one of "her" people and I hope that you know how special you all were to her. She loved the history of Sutter County and loved to sit with people and take the time to really listen to what they had to say.

Linda's death has left a void – not just in reference to her role in the Society, but in the lives of her family. We miss her. I miss her. Besides being co-editor of the Bulletin and my co-conspirator in life, Linda was my sister. Not continuing with the Bulletin is impossible, but continuing without Linda as a sounding board, grammar maven, page counter, and giggling partner is going to be difficult and, for a while at least, not much fun. I learned, working with Linda, to do my job as well as I can and on that note I'll get back to work. Now, where did I leave that editing pencil...

Sharyl Simmons

Historical Society News

The Bulletin

The publication of the Bulletin has been rather spotty over the last couple of years. We are hoping to alleviate that problem and plan to print three Bulletins this year and then be back to four in 2001. With the attention and finances given to construction of the Museum addition, the Bulletin suffered from benign neglect. Please watch your mail for the next edition in your mailboxes in July.

Buttes Hikes

The Museum staff came through for us this year with regard to the Buttes Hikes. As many of you know, Linda Leone was the contact and organizer of this event. In early February, the Museum staff volunteered to make the reservations, take the fees, and use their weekend staff to see the hikers off. The hikes were successful again this year and we look forward to offering members (and nonmembers) the opportunity to see the Buttes up close and personal again next Spring.

July Meeting

It's never too early to mark your calendar. This year the July meeting falls on Tuesday, July 18th. We plan to once again have a pot luck in the park. The park is becoming more and more beautiful every year and we take great pleasure in being able to use it for our summer meeting.

Wear and Remembrance

A reminder that the annual vintage apparel fair is April 29th and 30th at the Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds. This is a major fund raiser for the Community Memorial Museum and a wonderful event to attend. For more information, you can check out the events calendar at the back of the Bulletin or the Museum's Web Page (<http://www.syix.com/museum/>).

Memorial Contributions

In Memory of **Charlotte Ann Alavarez**
Howard & Ruth Anthony

In Memory of **Raymond Armstrong**
Sam & Becky Anderson

In Memory of **Wilma Belcastro**
Tom & Jean Pfeffer

In Memory of **Richard Brandt**
Connie Cary
Robert Coats
Henry D. Crowhurst, MD
Frances Gentry
Dewey Gruening
Helen Heenan
Ted & Bette Herr
Vern Ornbaun Family
Randy & Shirley Schnabel

In Memory of **Dortha Burns**
Art & Dee Worledge

In Memory of **Howard C. Emery**
Connie Cary
Joan & Bud Doty

In Memory of **Lena Frye**
John Frye

In Memory of **Mary Elizabeth Giovannetti**
Christy Carlos &
Barry Lemenager

In Memory of **Frances L. Godfrey**
Bogue Country Club

In Memory of **Milton Gonzalez**
R. James Staas

In Memory of **Howard E. Habeger**
Marie Fuller

In Memory of **Edgar Hilbers**
M/M Fred Boone

In Memory of **Francis E. Johnson**
Helen Heenan

In Memory of **Margaret F. Knoop**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Linda Leone**
Joni Adams
Lillie Alder
Becky Anderson
Ray & Janice Anderson
Howard & Ruth Anthony
Florence Arritt
Karen & Lee Bernatchez
Audrey Breeding
Dale & Alma Burtis
The Don Burtis Family
Blair & Bobbie Butler & Family
Vivian & Ken Calhoun
Connie Cary
Jacqueline L. Clay
Tom & Marnee Crowhurst
Rose & Francisco Damboriena
Dale & Jack Davis
Meriel Davis and Family
Jane & Anson Dobson
Melissa Easton
Dorothy Ettl
Charlie & Marilyn Fayette
Anne Fletcher

In Memory of **Linda Leone**

Barbara Foraker
Esther Fortna Forsythe
Ray Frye
Dan & Corene Garcia
Patsy & Glennen Gasper
Cindy Gaven
Frances Gentry
Ellen Gibson
Harold Giddings
Roberta Gray
Joy & Janet Greene
Dewey Gruening
Jim Hall
Larry & Min Harris
Helen P. Heenan
Jean Heilmann
Louise Heise
James Hunter
Joseph's Clothing and Sporting
Goods
Beverly Krause
Tom & Normal Krull
Lois Lathrop
Loretta M. McClurg
J. E. McLaughlin
Calvert & Begona McPherrin
Maria & Laverne McPherrin
Bob & Pauline Masera
Joan M. Martin
Meridian Farm Women
Middle Mountain Foundation
Ron & Nancy Mulcahy of River
City Printing
Evelyn R. Nesmith
Dawn Noonan
Mary O'Neal
Clyde and Betty Perry
Ida J. Philpott
Norman & Loadel Piner
Evelyn & Harold Quigg
Marian Regli
Irwin & Judy Reuck

Tae Sano
Eileen Schmidtbauer
Randy & Shirley Schnabel
M/M Arnold Schneiter
B. Seymour
Elizabeth Smith
Phyllis Smith
Gene & Jim Taresh
Louis & Betty Tarke
Richard & Elaine Tarke
Marilyn Waits
Danetta Washam
Lee & Gloria Weis
Daryl & Judy Wilson
Harry, Bernice & Michael Wilson
Bill & Gennis Zeller
M/M Roger Zwanziger

In Memory of **Brandy M. Lewis**
Allen & Dorothy Sutfin

In Memory of **Margaret Madden**
Bogue Country Club
Kurt Buchholz
Dale & Alma Burtis
Marge & Bryan Fairlee
Barbara Putman

In Memory of **Irmira Stevenson Michelet**
Robert T. Coats

In Memory of **Ruth Mills**
Dale & Alma Burtis

In Memory of **Verdi Morris**
Suzanne & Leonard Reynolds

In Memory of **Patricia C. Oji**
Howard & Ruth Anthony

In Memory of **Margaret E. Renfro**
Art & Dee Worledge

In Memory of **Caroline Ringler**
Jackie Lowe Clay

In Memory of **B. Joel Schlotz**
Art & Dee Worledge

In Memory of **Donald L. Severe**
Marie E. Fuller

In Memory of **Annette Swinney**
Tom Pfeffer

In Memory of **Frank C. Vierra**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Art Worledge, Sr.**
Tom R. Bias
Ida Philpott
Marian Regli
Albert & Mary Ulmer

In Memory of **Robert Ziegenmeyer**
Leo & Alice Chesini
Mary O'Neal
Suzanne & Leonard Reynolds

In Honor of **Orlin & Johanna Schuler**
On their 65th Anniversary
Randy & Shirley Schnabel



And Thanks Go To...

I want to thank all the people who volunteered their writing skills to this issue of the Bulletin. Tremendous thanks go to Allen Herr who mailed in a wonderful article about early aviation in the Yuba-Sutter area as well as some photos to peruse and use. As indicated, this is the short version of a longer work. If you can give Allen any assistance in his search for more information about early aviation in the Yuba-Sutter area, please give him a call at 673-2517.

My thanks go as well to John Reische for his article on Ada Ohleyer. John has spent a great deal of time researching the history of the Historical Society. John recently joined the Board of Directors of the Historical Society and serves as the Vice-President of the Museum Commission. He and his wife, Dorothea, are a busy and gracious couple (both volunteer at the Museum) and it is terrific of him to take time to contribute to our Bulletin.

Last, but not least, my thanks go to Phyllis Smith. She stepped up to the box and batted out a couple of winners in her first contributions to the Bulletin. I'm hoping she likes to see her name in print and will produce many more. Phyllis has been kind enough to proof the articles for the Bulletin and I appreciate her taking time for this chore.

The Traveling County Seat

by

Phyllis Smith

In 1850 when California became a state there were 27 counties, and Sutter was one of those charter counties. The boundaries were not as we see them now – Sutter County included the southwestern portion of the later-created Placer County and a piece of territory along the west that now belongs to Colusa County. Territorial changes – subtractions or additions – were made in 1851, 1852, 1854, 1856 and 1866, before the boundaries were finally fixed in their present location.

In addition, the county seat was not Yuba City – it was Oro, and it changed hands more times than in any other county in California: Oro (1850), Nicolaus (1850-51), Auburn (1851), Vernon (1851-52), Nicolaus (1852-54), Yuba City (1854), Nicolaus (1854-56) and Yuba City (1856 to present).

Oro

Thomas Jefferson Green was a State Senator who owned the land which formed the “city” of Oro, and when the legislative act forming Sutter County was passed, he determined Oro would be its county seat. Oro was located on the Feather River just below the mouth of the Bear, near Nicolaus, and was described as “a noble city of broad streets, imposing buildings, and splendid public squares – on paper – but in fact a tract of land fronting on the south bank of Bear Creek.”

Since there was not a house in town for any purpose, much less for the holding of court, a zinc structure 20x 20 feet was put up, “without glass or shutters for the

windows, or doors for the entrances. Not a tree, or bush, or shrub grew near enough to give its shade to the building.” Under a brilliant May sun the first court met in the “zinc house,” but “law and equity, lawyers and litigants, jurors and witnesses, with a spontaneity of action that would astonish nothing but a salamander, rushed out of and fled that building, never again to return.” The official record of the proceedings did not present them in such a dramatic way, saying “upon it appearing to the Court that there were not proper and necessary accommodations and buildings at Oro, the county Seat, ... the Courts and county offices shall be held and kept open at Nicolaus...”

Nicolaus

So the Court of Sessions moved the seat of government to Nicolaus until proper buildings were available at Oro. The ranch and trading post of Nicolaus Allgeier was established on the road between New Helvetia and Sutter’s Hock Farm because of the need for ferry transportation at this point on the Feather River. Allgeier, a native of Germany and for a time a Hudson’s Bay Company trapper, was employed by Sutter to help build an adobe house at Hock Farm. In compensation for this work, as well as for anticipated services as ferryman, Allgeier was given a plot of land one mile square, at the crossing. Here he put up a rude hut of mud-covered tules, and in 1843 he constructed a primitive ferry, which he manned with Indians.

In 1850 Nicolaus promoters broadcast that it was the head of navigation on the Feather River, “the only port of entry that has ever been established north of Sacramento – the only town north of that city that has every had a full-rigged seagoing vessel lying at her landing.” This claim was untrue – in normal times boats could make it to Marysville, but in low water they had to stop at Vernon, nine miles below Nicolaus. By 1853 many of the houses had been torn down and carted away.

A few months after the first installation of the county seat in Nicolaus in 1850, the citizens voted to move it to Auburn. But in 1851 the Legislature created Placer County out of parts of Sutter and Yuba Counties, making Auburn its county seat, so the Sutter County seat moved to Vernon. Nicolaus managed to lure the government back in 1852, lost it for a few months to Yuba City in 1854, then had it again from 1854-56, until it was finally returned permanently to Yuba City.

There was turmoil during this last term. There was a vote to locate the county seat in the fall of 1854, and although the number of votes cast for Nicolaus was greater than for Yuba City, there was a question of illegal voting – votes cast by residents of Sacramento who wanted to keep the county seat in the southern portion of the county. The question seem to have been decided once in favor of Yuba City and then changed in favor of Nicolaus, because the August term of the Court of Sessions opened in Nicolaus and the county seat remained there for another year. Then the Legislature authorized the Board of Supervisors to hold a special election for a permanent county seat, and Yuba City,

won with the final vote tally as follows:

Yuba City	463
Nicolaus	163
Dean’s Wood Yard	16
Top of Butte Mountains	1
Scattering	1

Auburn

Auburn was made the county seat of Sutter County in the spring of 1850. Its favorable location, “its preponderance of population, and the inexhaustible powers of voting possessed by its citizens and partisans, decided the contest in its favor by a majority considerably exceeding the entire population of the county.” On April 25, 1851, when Placer County was created from a portion of Sutter County, Auburn was made the seat of justice of the new county.

Vernon

Vernon, another of those short-lived “mushroom” cities existing along the Sacramento and Feather rivers in 1849 and 1850, enjoyed the brief illusion that it was the head of navigation and the entrepot to the mining regions. Buffum, a contemporary writer, says:

Vernon is situated on the east bank of the Feather River at the point of its confluence with the Sacramento, one of the most eligible positions for a town in the whole northern region of California. The banks of the river are high and not subject to overflow, and this point is said to be at the head of ship navigation on the Sacramento. ...From the town of Vernon good and well-traveled roads diverge to the rich mineral regions of the North and Middle

Forks, Bear Creek, Yuba, and Feather rivers, rendering the distance much less than by any other route. The town is growing rapidly, and promises to become a great depot for the trade of the above-mentioned mines.

The land for Vernon came from a three by one mile strip bought from John Sutter in April 1849. The group of men who purchased this tract laid out a town one mile square at the junction of the rivers, "while the two miles above were designed for the county residences and elegant villas that would be the necessary accompaniments of a city such as this was designed to be."

The winter of 1849 was such a dry one that the Feather River was not navigable. Vessels were compelled to unload at Vernon, and hopes were aroused that the place would become the head of navigation. During the summer of 1849 a number of wholesale stores were erected. The prospect of a glorious future seemed bright indeed, and lots were sold rapidly at a high figure. One hotel was built entirely of mahogany from a shipment bought in Chile. Originally intended for New York, this expensive wood had been brought to California because the ship's captain desired to reach the gold fields.

The heavy rains of 1849-50 caused the rivers to rise so that it was possible for ships to go as far as Marysville. This was a deadly blow to Vernon, as well as to most of the infant cities along the river. Erstwhile enthusiastic speculators transferred their affections to other towns farther up the river. But Vernon did not expire without a struggle. E. O. Crosby, a property owner who was a member of the state senate, succeeded in having the county seat transferred from Auburn to Vernon in 1851. The position was lost the next year, however, and in 1853 the hotel ceased to be a public house and the post office was removed. No vestige of Vernon remains today. Only its name is preserved in Vernon Township. A settlement called Verona was later established on the site.

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Early Aviators and Airports In the Yuba-Sutter Area 1910-1930

by
Allen Herr

The early aviators first ventured into California in 1909. It wasn't until the following year that these professional, daredevil, exhibition pilots brought their flying machines to the Yuba-Sutter area.

The earliest Yuba-Sutter exhibition of a manned, self-propelled, heavier-than-air flying machine or airplane, as we call them today, was flown by Colonel Frank H. Johnson on February 12, 1910. Col. Johnson made his flights from the horse racing track in Knight Park, Marysville.

Millionaire Johnson, as he was known to the public, began his flying career under the tutelage of Glenn Curtiss in late 1909. Johnson was the first native Californian to own and fly his own plane, a Curtiss Pusher. He later traveled around California demonstrating his craft.

Colonel Johnson, who had owned his plane for less than one month, took off from Knight Park at 2:30 PM on the 12th. He made three flights of short duration. He attempted a fourth flight, but his engine developed problems and he was unable to get into the air. During his earlier flights Johnson rarely rose above a height of 100 feet. He did no stunts and kept to straight and level flight.

The crowd at Knight Park that day numbered a staggering ten thousand. A newspaper reporter described it as being one of the largest assemblages in Yuba-Sutter history. It was impressive when one considers that the combined population of both cities didn't reach that figure until the early 1930's.

Overall the crowd that watched Johnson's flights was mostly satisfied with his performance, but there was some grumbling about his timid technique. Also, a rumor had gotten around that he would fly around the Buttes. He never said he would and he didn't. The crowd wasn't happy about that.

Col. Johnson knew his limitations. Two months later while flying an exhibition over the San Francisco Bay, he lost control of his craft and plunged into the bay. Since he was flying at an altitude of only 80 feet, he was pulled from the water unharmed.

Charles K. Hamilton flew the next exhibition for Yuba-Sutter citizens. Compared to Frank Johnson, Charlie Hamilton was a wild man in the air. Described by one historian as "a pint sized, wiry redhead who habitually behaved as if his mainspring was wound too tight." Hamilton would give the crowd a display they would never forget.

Hamilton flew three days beginning March 16, 1912. The Curtiss Pusher he flew was known as the Rheims Racer. It was used by Glenn Curtiss to win the Gordon Bennett Race at Rheims, France, in 1909. The Marysville Chamber of Commerce promised that his demonstration would not be another like "Millionaire Johnson's."

C. K. Hamilton, who possessed Aero Club Of America license #12 (Orville and Wilbur were #4 and #5 and Glenn Curtiss had #1), did not bring his plane to town and spend a day assembling it as had Johnson. He flew here from Sacramento covering the

distance in 33 minutes for an unofficial world speed record of 78 mph. Keep in mind aviation was so new that practically every other flight was an unofficial record of some kind.

Hamilton thrilled the crowd with steep climbs and suicidal drops with the nose of his Pusher headed straight down then sharp pull-ups at nearly ground level. He climbed to altitude and dropped baseballs to two pro-ball players from the Sacramento Coast League which they were unable to catch. Later he raced local auto speed king E. E. Foss who drove a Regal "20" automobile around the horse racing track at Knight Park. The crowd of 6,000 left the park ecstatic.

Glenn Curtiss made Charlie Hamilton one of his first exhibition pilots under contract. Charlie was "the pioneer of American stunt pilots." Hamilton drank heavily, chain smoked, and lived on the ragged edge. It was said that he rarely flew without a few hits from his whiskey bottle, and towards the end of his career he had to be helped into his plane. Charlie "could do things drunk in an airplane others couldn't do sober." He died in bed of internal hemorrhage in 1914 at the age of 32.

There were local aviators who flew during the pioneering years of 1910-1913. They were: Land B. Maupin of Tudor who built a record-setting aircraft in 1911 and Lyman Gilmore of Nevada City who claimed to have flown a powered glider seven months before the Wright brothers first powered flight. Gilmore claimed his experiments were directed by "voices"; Syd Leggo who was possibly a student of Glenn Curtiss'; Oscar Meyerhoffer of Oroville who carried out many flights in this area in 1913; and lastly Thaddeus Kern of Chico who built and flew in at least one big air meet in San Francisco. With the exception of Gilmore

information about these aviators is sketchy and this author would appreciate more if any one has it.

As stated previously, the first flights in the Yuba-Sutter area were made from Knight Park in Marysville. The struggle to establish and maintain a suitable airport for the Yuba-Sutter area would rebound back and forth across the Feather River for the next 20 years.

Knight Park, with its municipal horse-racing track, was simply the most logical site for the area's first airport. In the early days of aviation, horse and auto racing tracks became the first community airports all over the United States. The inside of each track was usually the most level and hard packed ground in a community. As first flights were generally carried out by professional exhibition pilots from either Wright's School or Glenn Curtiss', the race track's grandstands or bleacher seats were necessary to enable the aviators to charge admission to their exhibitions. The location of Knight Park is essentially the land behind the current Marysville High School and south to the undeveloped portion of Ellis Lake, east of the railroad tracks.

How many times it was used as an airport between Hamilton's 1912 flights and the arrival of Major Ruben H. Fleet in 1918 is unknown at this time. When Fleet and Lt. A. Holland landed there in a Curtiss Jenny, the first military aircraft, to visit the Yuba Sutter area on July 17, 1918, they were impressed with the field.

Major Fleet was in charge of opening a major U. S. Army Air Service training field east of Sacramento. It would be called Mather Field. In the process the Army had let it be known that auxiliary landing fields would be needed for cross-country training flights by the student pilots. The Marysville Chamber of Commerce immediately

volunteered Knight Park.

After inspecting the 80-acre field, Major Fleet was told that an adjoining 40 acre parcel could be acquired. Fleet was satisfied and before departing he told the Chamber members that he hoped that it would soon be ready for the Army.

A few days later City Engineer W. M. Meek began work preparing the park for Army aircraft. On August 6, 1918, the field was ready and Major Fleet was notified of that fact. The local citizens were instructed by the newspapers to stay out of the park or the Army pilots would not use it. Knight Park became Mather Field Auxiliary No. 1. The first training class was to begin landing on the field September 12, 1918.

On September 9th Lt. Jacobson was sent up to Auxiliary No. 1 where he landed for fuel and oil. He then took off and flew over Bert's Resort on the Feather River between the two cities where he put on a dazzling display of aerobatics, then known as stunt flying, never before seen in the Yuba-Sutter area. The flight was part of the Admission Day festivities.

In late September, 1918, there was some discussion of using Auxiliary No. 1 as a stopping-off point for the future U.S. Air Mail Service, but that never happened. World War I ended two months later. In January, 1919, the Army turned the field back to city control. Knight Park continued to be used as an airport. How often the Army used Auxiliary No. 1 for training this author has been unable to determine.

On May 8, 1919, the Army sent six planes from Mather Field to put on the largest aerial exhibition ever seen in the Yuba-Sutter area. The Army pilots put on a stunning performance for the citizenry. Schools and businesses were closed so everyone could watch the flying. The purpose of the exhibition was to promote the

Fifth National Drive of the Yuba-Sutter Victory Loan Bond campaign.

Four local people won rides in the Army planes: two for selling the most Liberty Bonds and two for buying the most Liberty Bonds. The winners were Catherine Gill, G. T. Boyd, Ed Johnson, and Ruth Halter. During their flights they either enjoyed or suffered through loops, rolls, spins and anything else the aviators could dream up.

In the Spring of 1920, a young Australian, ex-World War I flier landed on a field in Jackson Bottoms which was located at the south end of 2nd Street on the outskirts of Yuba City. According to the Von Geldren family who took him in, he was out of gas and out of money. His name was Charles Kingsford-Smith. He stayed for a month or two and gave rides across from the Tom Giblin Ranch at \$10 each. Back on his feet he eventually went to work in August over near Willows chasing ducks out of the rice fields with a Curtiss Jenny that belonged to his employer, Moffet Aero Service of Woodland. Kingsford-Smith would go on to become one of the most famous long distance fliers in aviation history. He would be known as the *Australian Lindbergh*.

It is of interest that Kingsford-Smith's duck chasing may have been the earliest instance of agricultural flying in this part of the state. The earliest crop dusting in the Yuba-Sutter area is believed to have been done on a bean field near Meridian, July 31, 1929, by Major Livingston Irving, one of the survivors of the infamous Dole Race to Hawaii two years earlier.

Jackson Bottoms would be used from time to time as a landing strip for transient aviators because it was close to town. In 1923 Joe McKinney, an aviator from Sacramento, flew out of Jackson Bottoms giving rides and trying to interest customers

beef cattle and ended up with a hundred and fifty head. They, with about twelve head of horses, consumed a considerable amount of hay which was mowed and raked with horses. Then it was put into shocks with pitchforks. When hay hauling time came around, we hired extra men who slept in the bunk house and were cooked for by my mother and sister. They were paid one dollar per day and board. This operation was a well organized affair. We had a large horse barn and a double cow barn all equipped with derrick and trolley equipment. We had three hedder bed wagons drawn by two horses each. [ed note: hedder beds could be moved from wagon to wagon] There was one man on each wagon and two men in the field to pitch the shocks of hay onto the wagons. The man driving the wagon would spread out the hay with a pitchfork and tramp it down for a good solid load. It depended on his skill to form a good load. The wagons, when loaded, would take their place at the front of the barn. Here a large derrick fork called a Jackson fork was lowered to the wagon where it picked up a large load of hay. The man handling the Jackson fork had to be highly skilled in order to place it correctly in the hay. This man was my older brother, Ulys, who could unload an entire wagon in about five or six forks full. The hay was pulled to the top of the barn by the derrick horse hooked to a cable and a series of pulleys. When the fork and carrier hit the top of the barn, it engaged with a trolley that carried it to the end of the barn or wherever the spreader wanted it dumped. When it got to the right place, they would holler, "Dump" and Ulys would pull a rope

that dumped the load, then pull the fork back down to the wagon with the same rope. The two spreaders were usually my brother Gerald and Cousin Cecil Frye. It was their job to see that the hay was spread evenly and tramped down solidly to get as much in the barn as possible. When the derrick driver heard the shout, "Dump" he stopped the horse, picked up the single tree, hooked to the cable, so it would not bump the horse heels, and backed up to the starting point. One day, for some reason we had no derrick driver. Emmet had just lost his arm so he was out. You needed two arms for this job. You guessed it. At eight years of age, I was elected. Things went pretty well for a while til I got too close to the horses heels while backing up, and found a horse's hoof with eleven hundred pounds of horse on top of it on my bare foot. Ooh! that smarted. Pop finally came to my rescue and pulled the horse off. I continued to work until noon but by then my foot had swelled to the size of a catcher's mitt. My sister Gladys took over for the rest of the day. She was sixteen at the time. The next day Pop had a new derrick driver.

We had a friend, Floyd Smith, who was hunting with us on the hill one day. We had told him about the many rattlesnakes we had killed there. We were all bare foot, as usual, and had only one gun amongst us. Sure enough, on top of the hill a snake rattled and struck short of us. "Smitty" took off down the hill at a dead run and we had to chase him half way to the house to get the gun that was in his possession so we could go back and kill the snake.

worked for Jimmie Angel in Yuba City. "Weekdays were spent maintaining and repairing Jimmie's two Curtiss Jennies, his Tommie Morse Scout and the big five place Lincoln-Standard, also Dr. Johnson's Eaglerock." The Eaglerock and the Jennies were used for instruction flying, the single place Scout was used for air show work, and the Lincoln-Standard for passenger hopping and aerial photography. Jimmie's crew from San Jose consisted of pilots Eddie Angel, Dominic DiFiore, mechanics H. Hall and Robert McCollough plus helpers Parker Angel and Robert Straight. Many local folks got their first flight instruction and/or airplane rides at Angel Airport including local cropduster baron Ken Onstott.

Lady Luck began to turn on Dr. Johnson in late October, 1926. Having just been taught to fly by Jimmie Angel, Johnson was giving a ride to an in-law named Herbert Winn in one of the company's Jennies when he lost control and spun into a peach orchard near the airport from an altitude of 200 feet. Both men walked away with minor injuries, but the Jenny was demolished.

On November 27th a vicious thunderstorm hit the area. At Angel Airport a heavy gust of wind got under the roof of the big hangar which was open on one side. It lifted the roof and then dropped it on at least three airplanes inside. Angel's other Curtiss Jenny and his Tommie Morse Scout were destroyed. Dr. Johnson's Eaglerock was severely damaged. It was the end for Jimmie Angel. As Bob Straight remembers, "We packed up the next day and left for San Jose."

Dr. Johnson tried to keep his airport open but found it financially unfeasible. He lost \$7,000 of his own money trying to keep his airport going. His two friends, Norby and Read, tried to help. Read and Dudley Cunningham spent months rebuilding the

doctor's Eaglerock. Norby tried to interest his Army Reserve superiors in using the airport as a home base for a Reserve Squadron, but they showed no interest. Read and Norby tried to start a flying club at the airport. Eventually the flying club would be a success, but not at Angel Airport.

In an interview with the Appeal Newspaper in early 1927, Dr. Johnson stated that to date he had carried on the work of establishing an airport almost unaided and he urged the Yuba City citizens to get behind his efforts. Finally in June, 1927, Johnson told the Appeal that he was re-entering commercial aviation in the Yuba-Sutter area, but he could no longer keep the lease for the property on which his Angel Airport was located.

Dr. Julian Johnson would continue to lend his persistent voice to the creation of the next airport in the area, but it would be his friend across the river, Jim Read, who would spearhead that project.

Jim Read became the second local city-dweller to purchase his own airplane. It was a Curtiss Jenny in pieces. He assembled the plane himself but had nowhere to park it. He and Dr. Johnson moved their two aircraft, usually kept together, to three different locations for the better part of a year. The locations were the Cline Bull Tract, District Ten, and Jackson Bottoms.

Finally, the Marysville Chamber of Commerce chose Jim Read to head a committee whose sole purpose was to find a suitable site for a municipal airport. The committee considered several sites, but they felt that the Cheim property in East Marysville was the best location for an airport.

Heiman Cheim was approached by the city. He did not hesitate and generously offered use of the property as an airport for free. As soon as the paperwork was taken

care of, Jim Read doggedly pursued the construction aspect with help from Ed Johnson and Roy Bostic.

The new airport was named for its benefactor. It was called Cheim Airport and it was ready for aircraft in late spring, 1928. Jim Read was named airport manager. Yuba County Sheriff McCoy also named Read his aerial deputy, so that the air laws of the city and county would be enforced. *Western Flying Magazine* stated that he was the first such deputy in the state.

The official dedication ceremony was on August 25, 1928. Jim Read was crowned king of the ceremony and one of his flying students, Estal Burch, Yuba-Sutter's first woman pilot, was crowned queen. Unfortunately, Jim Read was transferred, one week later, to the LA area by Western Auto where he would head up their new aviation division.

In 1929 Dr. Johnson would make another plea for an airport on the Yuba City side of the river. He suggested to the city fathers that Jackson Bottoms be acquired as the next municipal airport. The property owners wanted \$45,000 for the site and, by the time it was seriously considered, the country was well into the Depression.

In late 1929 entrepreneur J. Francisco, realtor P. N. Swenson, and lumberman, J. C. Nason formed a corporation called Sutter Air Terminal, Inc. They would locate a new airport site on Township Rd. near Nuestro Rd. They obtained use of the land from the owner, E. F. Galbraith. The airport was located five miles west of Yuba City. It would have three runways and a large hangar.

The most notable event to take place at this airport was its spectacular five day opening ceremonies. The event began on August 28, 1930. On each day there were stunt flying and passenger hopping, and each

night a dance was held on the already constructed concrete floor for the hangar. Music was provided by the Ken Shreck KFBK Orchestra from Sacramento. There were to be two weddings during the ceremonies and floodlights were set up in the center of the field for night flying passengers. Few facts have surfaced as to what happened to this airport other than a hangar was built and later burned down. The airport drifted into obscurity fairly soon. The distance from town and the Depression were probably the causes of its demise. There is presently a large hay barn and alfalfa pellet plant on the old airport site.

Meanwhile Cheim Airport had its main runway graveled and cinder was put down to control dust. The runway was eventually oiled. A hangar was built and a gasoline truck was supplied by the Richfield Oil Co.

On September 29, 1930, following another dedication ceremony at Cheim Airport, a large Ford Tri-Motor aircraft named the *Pride of Marysville* belonging to Consolidated Air Lines took to the air at 7:20 a.m. for Sacramento and then Oakland. It was the first airliner to depart from Marysville on a regular, advertised schedule. The pilots were: Sterling Boller and Gene Tigar. The first passengers were: Mr. and Mrs. Ed Burger, James A. Griffith, H. H. Dunning, Enid Dunning, Capt. Weldon Brown and A. R. Arnot. The return trip from Oakland would be completed at 5:30 p.m.

With the advent of Consolidated Air Lines regular scheduled service the Yuba-Sutter area had finally acquired a first class airline flying from a first class airport. Cheim Airport would remain the Yuba-Sutter airport for the next 16 years at which time the Army would turn Alicia Army Air Base, built in 1941, over to the city and county. It would eventually become the current Yuba

County Airport. Cheim would be used as an airport until its official closure in 1954.

In the late 1940s, following the Depression and World War II, Jackson Bottoms would finally become what is now Sutter County Airport.

This article is part of a larger work intended for the American Aviation Historical Society. If anyone has any photos or additional information of or about any airport or aviator mentioned here or not mentioned here of this period, please contact the author at (530)673-2517. Corrections and suggestions would also be welcomed.

Sources:

Books:

Contact, Story of the Early Birds by Henry S. Villard

Curtiss, The Hammondsport Era 1907—1915 by Louis S. Casey Glenn

Curtiss, Pioneer of Flight by C. R. Roseberry

Periodicals:

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Newspapers:

Marysville Appeal, 1910—1927

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Information Request

If any of our readers can help Mr. Herr with information or pictures about early aviation, please give him a call at 673-2517.

Museum Volunteers Needed

The Community Memorial Museum needs a few good people to fill some important shoes. The efforts of the volunteers at the Museum make it possible to keep the doors open, the patrons satisfied, and the staff happy. If you can give some of your time to the Museum, please contact Joan Doty, the coordinator for the volunteer staff, at 882-7141 or 673-4642. A few hours a month could make a big difference in reducing staffing stresses.

Ada E. Ohleyer –
An Early Sutter County Historian
by
John V. Reische

In her time, Ada E. Ohleyer was acknowledged as one of the pioneers in the documentation of Sutter county history. She was recognized as an excellent writer, speaker, and teacher; widely sought to talk about and assist in writing about the early history of northern California and Sutter county in particular.

Ada's father came to California to mine for gold. He did not have much success so turned to farming. Settling in the Hallwood area, he developed a fruit orchard and was engaged in a grain harvesting business for several years. (He owned one of the first grain harvesters shipped around the horn to California.) After the flood of 1862, when he had severe setbacks, he purchased a quarter section of land four miles west of Yuba City and moved his family there where they continue to reside until the mid-1930s.

Ada was born in the family home on Franklin road about four miles west of Yuba City. The daughter of George and Ellen Ohleyer, she was born in 1875 and raised in a family of three sisters of four brothers on a farm that at one time covered 960 acres.

Ada attended Franklin school and did not continue with formal education after graduating from the eighth grade; however, her interest in local history and self-motivation resulted in her education continuing for a lifetime. She was particularly interested in local history and early in life started recording what she learned from talking with first-generation settlers and those who knew Indian lore of the Valley Indians.

Early in her life, Ada was active in school and local organizations. She was secretary of the Bogue Grange for many years and was very active in the Yuba-Sutter Bi-County Federation of Women's Clubs where she served as Historian. Later she was appointed California State Chairman of the California Federation of Women's Clubs, Division of California History and Landmarks. She played a prominent role in the erection of the John C. Fremont monument on Pass Road in the Sutter Buttes. She worked with a group of interested citizens on this project and the monument was officially dedicated on April 15, 1923 in an elaborate ceremony before large crowd.

During her adult life, she continued to document the histories of local families, towns and schools of Sutter County. This led to a weekly newspaper feature entitled "The Romantic Story of Sutter County" where she recounted local history. These articles first appeared around 1930 and continued for four or five years.

Due to the recognition of her interest and knowledge, she was appointed the Sutter County Chairman for the "Trails of '49" in January, 1930. She served on the Regional Council and contributed significantly to the efforts of this organization. In 1930, she was also named Chairman of the History and Landmarks for the county for the California State Chamber of Commerce.

Her collection of Indian legends was a source of many articles and she traveled extensively, giving talks regarding the beliefs of the Indians in the Sacramento Valley. She

not only admired the people who lived in the region, Indian and settler alike, but also admired the land itself. The Sutter Buttes remained very important to her and she was an early advocate of their preservation in their natural state.

In October of 1931, she was granted a certificate authorizing her to teach California history in any Adult High School by the State Board of Education. She began teaching at the Yuba City Adult School on a bi-weekly basis during the adult school term.

Ada never married. She lived on the family farm until the mid 1930s when the family lost the land during the Great Depression. She moved to San Francisco where she was a member of the San Francisco Police Force. She was struck by a car while crossing Fell Street in 1939 and is buried in Sutter Cemetery.

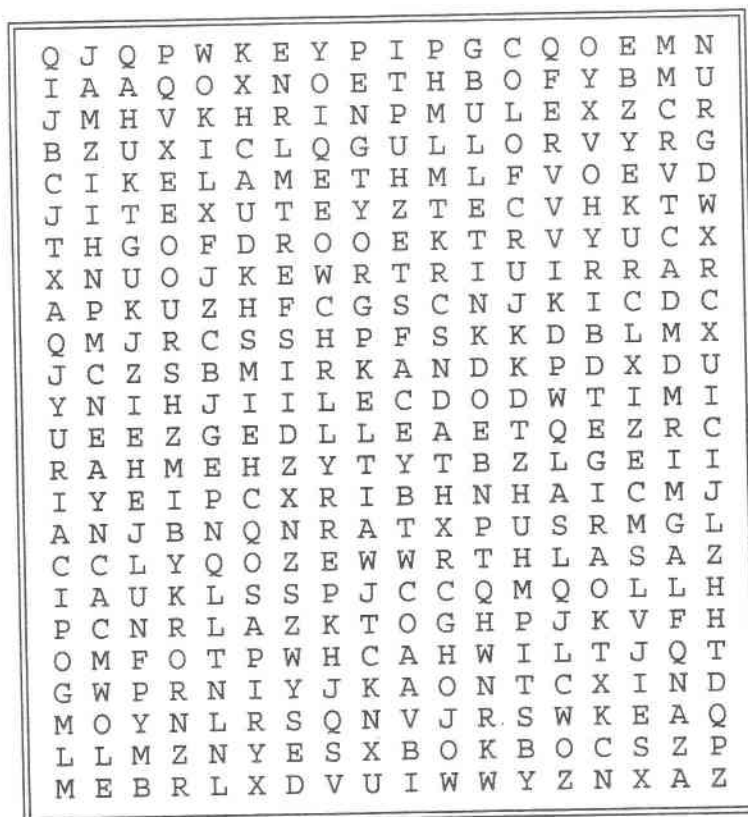
Ada E. Ohleyer was my great-aunt. She was revered by family and friends in Sutter County. Aunt Ada was a great person to know and as a child I always looked forward to visiting and talking with her. Working as a volunteer at the Sutter County Memorial Museum, I often find old-timers who remember Aunt Ada and remember her many contributions to the preservation of Sutter County history. Her excellence as an early Sutter County historian has enriched the recording of the settlement and development of Sutter County.

Flashbacks

First Ice Cream Soda -- Mrs. E. A. Warren of Chico created the ice cream soda as determined by the "Confectioner's Journal." "The first glass of soda water ever made was put up in Warren's store in the year 1885. In those days cream soda was a popular drink. It consisted of the plain soda water flavored with a syrup and having in addition a tablespoon of pure, fresh cream. Mrs. Warren, who assisted her husband in the store, had trouble in keeping the cream from souring. When it happened that there was no fresh cream on hand she substituted ice cream. Patrons of the establishment seemed to like the drink and began to call for it regularly, at the same time demanding that a larger amount of ice cream be used, and thus it was that (the) ice cream soda was born. - Oroville Mercury July 28, 1911

First Automobile/Movie House/Garage -- William Burt Grow had the distinction of being the first to own and drive a motor equipped vehicle in Marysville and the first to open a movie house in Marysville. He also owned the first garage on Third Street in Marysville. Besides being the Oldsmobile agent in the area, the garage also handled "Gasoline, oil and tires, bicycles and sundries, phonographs, typewriters and sewing machines repaired, light lathe work, electrical repairs and repairing of all kinds."

The Puzzler



HIDDEN WORDS

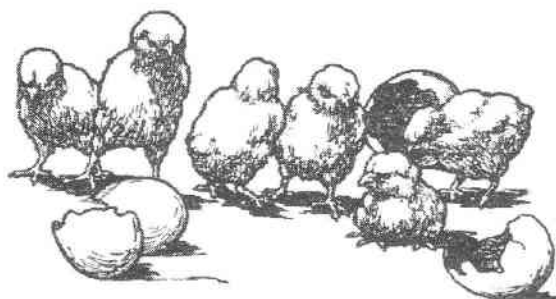
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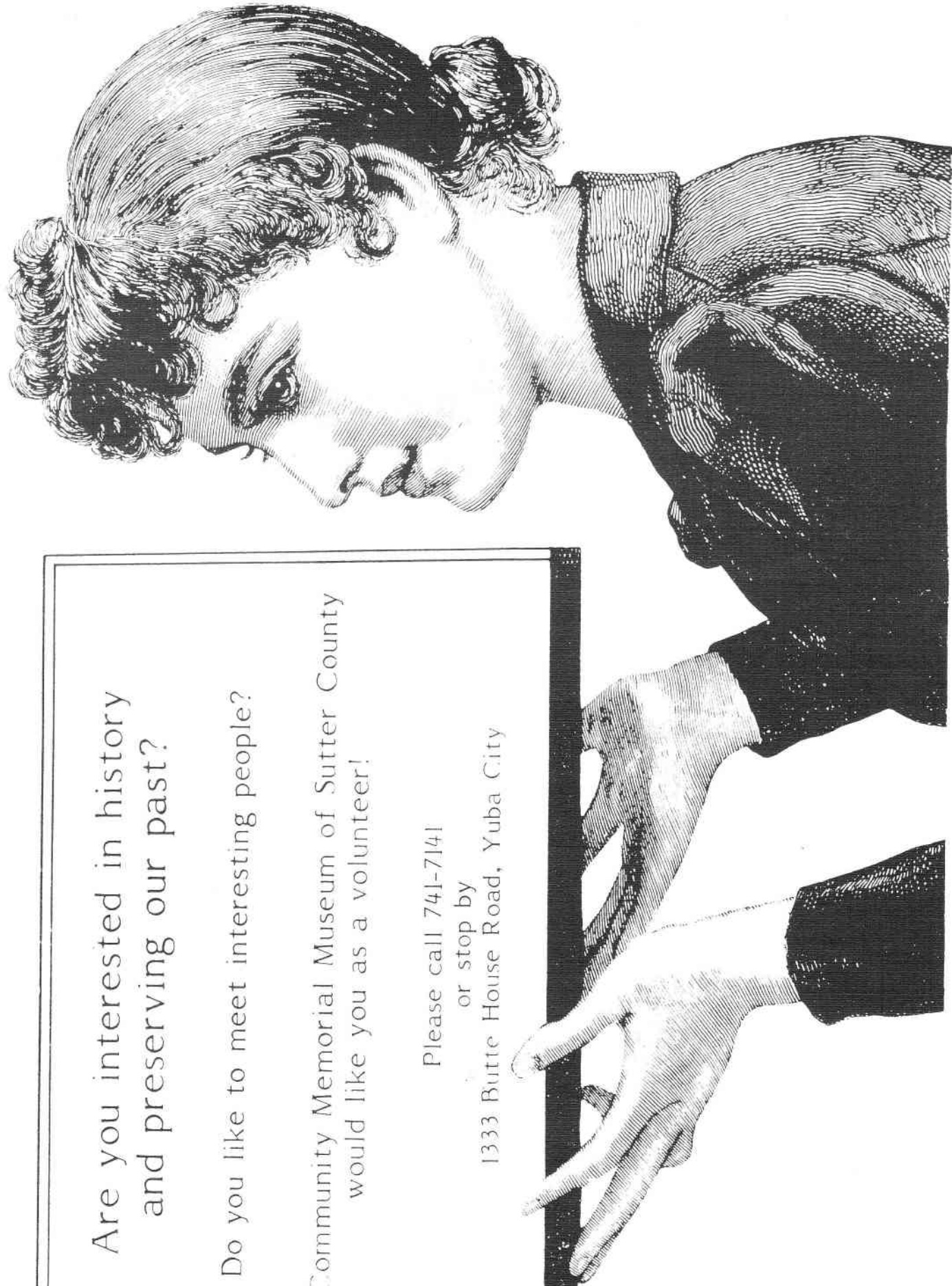
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Do you like to meet interesting people?

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Please call 741-7141
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1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City



COMING EVENTS

April

29 & 30 – Wear and Remembrance - Vintage Apparel Fair
Franklin Hall – Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds
Admission is \$5.00/\$4.00 with a coupon available at the Museum

May

13 Reception for Yuba College Photo Guild Exhibit
Community Memorial Museum – 6:30 to 9:00 pm.

26 Yuba College Photo Guild Exhibit Closes

June

17 Silent Harvest: The Disappearance of the Family Farm exhibit opens
A photo documentary by local photographer Gerry Tsuruda
Exhibit closes on September 10th

July

18 Picnic In The Park
Sutter County Historical Society General Meeting/Potluck

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