

Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin

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Yuba City, California

Fall 2000



Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Contest Winners

(Left to Right) Drew Battaglia, Heather Young,
Christopher James Walker and Brittany Patterson

(Photo Credit: Kristen Childs)

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

Documented history comes in many forms – Sutter County history started with John A Sutter in 1837 and his vision of a vast empire in the lower Sacramento Valley. Sutter County history is rich with discoveries, farming, economic development and the settling of families that are now in the fifth, sixth and even seventh generations. They came to stay and this has made our history very rich with stories, tales and success.

The year 2000 brings the challenge of following the footsteps of our forefathers in creating new history and preserving the old.

As the newly elected President of the Society, I accept the challenge of continuing in the footsteps of past presidents and members who have worked over the past 45½ years to preserve and record the history of our Country. Along with my commitment, it is important to involve all members of the Board of Directors and you, the members, to actively support the goals and programs of the Society.

My thanks to Steve Perry for his time and efforts serving for three years as our President and to Linda Leone for carrying more than her share of the work in assuring the continuing success of the Sutter County Historical Society.

My strong points are organization and communication. Please join me in working to improve both of these areas in the coming year. Working together, I am sure that we will remain strong and productive in our effort to be successful in continuing the positive influence we have in Sutter County and in sustaining the goals of the Society.

I invite you to become a part of the "team," to contact me at any time and especially I want you to know that you are an important part of our organization.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President.

Sincerely,

John V. Reische
(Phone number: 674-8106)

Dual Membership Reminder

Remember as a member of the Society you are also a member of the Community Memorial Museum. You are invited to and encouraged to attend meetings and events sponsored by both.

Director's Report

We are looking forward to showing our members and the community the new exhibit. It is called *Our Photo Album: Yesterday in the Yuba-Sutter Area* and features local historic photographs. The exhibit is a sampling of a large donation of local photos the museum received recently. They stretch back to the 19th century and reflect the work of a number of photographers, both professional and amateur. The photos record the daily life in our small towns in a truly intimate way.

Although some are formal portraits, many are less formal snapshots or impromptu photos. They depict diverse aspects of human activity and give us a glimpse into life in our community beyond our memories. Family life, commerce, civic activities, farming, street scenes, celebrations and disasters are all represented in these photos which range from the 1870s up through the 1940s. The exhibit will open in mid-October and remain, with the exception of December, through February 2001.

You are invited to the Volunteer Appreciation Tea to help us honor the Museum's volunteers, the people who keep the Museum running and are the backbone of the institution. It takes place on Tuesday, October 10 at 10 a.m. at the Museum. There will be a brief program, and service awards will be presented, as well as the Caroline Ringler Perpetual Volunteer of the Year award. Please join us for the one time during the year when all the volunteers get together.

Your help is needed for the Christmas Ornament Workshop on Wednesday, November 1 from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Friends of the Museum meet to make the handcrafted ornaments that trim the 16-foot tree that is the centerpiece for the Trees & Traditions fund raiser. No skills are needed, just a willingness to help and enjoy a pleasant morning with others.

The museum staff continues to work on the exhibits in the new agricultural wing, and things are slowly progressing. Work is expected to commence this fall on preparations for laying the new patio with the memorial paving stones. When those two large projects are completed, there will be a great celebration.

During this year, we are also celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Museum, which was dedicated on October 19, 1975. The coming to fruition of the new agriculture wing and patio projects, along with the kickoff for the Museum Endowment, will be a great way to celebrate 25 years of saving our county's history. Look for it in spring or summer 2001.

Julie Stark
Director

Editorial

First off, we extend our thanks to our contributors for this issue. Co-editor Phyllis Smith contributed an article about the historical landmarks to be found in Sutter County. We have two such sites in Sutter County: the site of the propagation of the Thompson seedless grape (located on Colusa Highway) and the Hock Farm (located on Garden Highway). One of the major projects for the Society in the coming year is helping to refurbish/restore the Hock Farm "doors."

A tremendous thank you goes to the students, teachers and schools who participated in the Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Contest. Christopher James Walker, Heather Young, Drew Battaglia and Brittany Patterson did a fine job on their winning essays. We appreciate their hard work along with that of their teachers. We know that you'll enjoy reading these essays.

Marian Regli, an active and dedicated member of the society, contributed an article of her memories of her introduction to Sutter County when she began teaching school at East Nicolaus High School and lived at John and Anna Wisers' Hotel in East Nicolaus.

Finally, we get part one of John Reische's look at the forty-five year history of successes that, through hard work, dedication and a respect for the past, the Sutter County Historical Society has enjoyed. Yes, we're patting ourselves on the back, but if we don't do it, who will? I think some of you will be surprised at how the Society and Museum got started. Some of you may be surprised at where

the first Museum was located.

As always, we need articles submitted from you for your Bulletin. We have been receiving some great stuff that will show up in future Bulletins, but we can **ALWAYS** use more. There will be another Bulletin out before Christmas and then we are going to try to get back to our quarterly publishing schedule in 2001. That means that we are looking for even more contributions from our members in order to have something to publish. Future articles include a look at Ben Drescher, a south Sutter pioneer, and a look at the history of rice production in Sutter County. If you have articles to contribute or ideas for articles, we'd love to hear from you. We can be reached at 743-3741.

The Board of Directors are taking some time to look at long range plans for the Historical Society. The major goals for the first 45 years, or so, of a Museum celebrating local history and the various additions to the original Museum may have been achieved, but there are still a good number of terrific ideas we could be working on. Your input is something that we would be happy to receive. You can see some of the ideas for future projects being entertained on the News page.

Sharyl Simmons
Phyllis Smith



Historical Society News

First Call For Membership Renewal

Remember, your membership renewal is due at the end of the year. Since the holidays are approaching, may we suggest a gift that will always fit, always be the right color, and always be in style? We're talking, of course, about a membership in the Historical Society/Museum. It's a gift that lasts all year. And since the coming year is the real start of the new millennium, what better way to celebrate than a gift that honors the past?

Looking Ahead

While the agricultural addition is a reality, the Society still has projects in the works. We are still involved in the restoration of the Hock Farm site. Suggestions on the final scope of the project and its appearance are being entertained. Hopefully the next year will see that project completed.

Long term projects include the Century Farms project – a listing and acknowledgment of farms that have stayed in the same family for 100 (or more) years. If any of you wish to nominate a Sutter County farm that has remained in the same family, please contact one of the board members with the information. We are also anticipating a very long term project to collect more of the oral history from our community. You have stories, you know you do, and we want you to share them with the community. There will be more information about that project in future issues.

Our meeting in January 16, 2001 will be at the Community Memorial Museum. It will be another dessert meeting so don't get serious about your New Year's diet resolutions until the 17th. We are still awaiting confirmation of the speaker and that should be announced in the next Bulletin.

We are going to be selling Christmas ornaments again in 2001. The likely subject will be a rendering of Hock Farm to tie in with our restoration efforts. We hope that ornaments will be available for purchase as early as the April meeting. In the past, our ornaments have sold out rather handily so be prepared to be disappointed if you wait too long to purchase.

Memorials

In Memory of **Charlotte Anne Alvarez**
Howard & Ruth Anthony

In Memory of **Raymond Armstrong**
Sam & Becky Anderson
M/M R. A. Schnabel

In Memory of **John Barthe**
Marie E. Fuller

In Memory of **Julie E. Barringer**
R. James Staas

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

In Memory of **Richard "Dick" Brandt**
Robert Coats
Henry D. Crowhurst, M.D.
Frances Gentry
Ted & Bette Herr
Vern & Marilyn Ornbaun

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

In Memory of **Wallace Coats**
Charles & Barbara Barnett
Jim & Eleanor Clark
Arthur & Jane Coats
Jane & Bob Elliott
Marge & Bryan Fairlee
Mary E. Figeroid
Mallard Huntley
Florence & Bill Littlejohn
Harold & Evelyn Quigg
Betty Taylor
Lauralee Wemple

In Memory of **Carl DeWitt**
M/M Lee J. DeWitt
Don A. Nelson

In Memory of **Bettie Dewey**
Jim & Eleanor Clark

In Memory of **Lee Drew**
M/M R. A. Schabel

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

In Memory of **Donald Foresman**
Tom & Jean Pfeffer

In Memory of **Lena Frye**
John Frye

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

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

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

In Memory of **Gerald Jenkins**
Joe & Darlene Davis

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

In Memory of **Linda Leone**
Howard & Ruth Anthony
Jim & Sharon Burriss

In Memory of **Linda Leone**

Ken & Vivian Calhoun
Arlene Chestnut
Tom & Marnee Crowhurst
Edith S. Love
Joan M. Martin
Irwin & Judy Reuck
Louis & Betty Tarke
James & Irma Uren
Bob & Mercedes Warner
Danetta Washam
Bill & Gennis Zeller

In Memory of **Brandy M. Lewis**

Allen & Dorothy Sutfin

In Memory of **Jeanette McNally**

Jim & Eleanor Clark
Helen Powell Heenan
Robert & Jean Kells

In Memory of **Margaret M. Madden**

Bogue Country Club
Barbara Putman
Richard & Elaine Tarke

In Memory of **Fred Meischke**

Orlin & Johanna Schuler

In Memory of **Ruth Mills**

Dale & Alma Burtis

In Memory of **Verdi Morris**

Suzanne & Leonard Reynolds

In Memory of **Carrie Nevis**

Jim & Eleanor Clark

In Memory of **Patricia C. Oji**

Howard & Ruth Anthony

In Memory of **Ray E. Pogue**

M/M R. A. Schnabel

In Memory of **Margaret Elaine Renfro**

Art & Dee Worledge

In Memory of **Ruth Riddle**

Tom & Marnee Crowhurst

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 **James E. Smith**

Bill & Alice Andreason
Catherine Booth
Connie Cary
Roger & Jackie Chandler
Carolyn Weber Childers
Anne & Ernie Crall
Dave & Elena Durand
Employees of Pacific
Coast Producers
Wallace & Joan Hardie
Eleanor L. Harris
John & Karin Jelavich
Milton Larson
Ronald & Christine Leick
Gerald M. Millen
Rose Nelson
Roger & Kris Parnell
Elizabeth Stolp
Beverly J. Winship

In Memory of **Lois Sterchi**

Randy & Shirley Schnabel

In Memory of **Annette Swinney**
Tom Pfeffer

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

In Memory of **Michael S. Ward**
R. James Staas

In Memory of **John (Tony) Winship**
Bernard "Bunny" Fontana
Tim Garner Family
Robert Kells Family

John B. Orzalli
Myrtle (Hamilton) Orzalli
M/M Walter Ullrey

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

In Memory of **Robert Ziegenmeyer**
Suzanne & Leonard Reynolds

Sutter County Historical Society Year 2000 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Society was held on the evening of April 18th at the Community Memorial Museum. Rather than a dinner meeting, we celebrated with "Just Desserts" brought by the Directors, ably helped by the Museum Commission. Next year we plan on being back in Meridian for our traditional Dinner Meeting.

The evening included the presentation of awards to the winners of the Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest whose essays can be found in this issue. Along with a raffle that raised \$100 for the Society and an update on summer events at the Museum by Julie Stark, we were entertained with a slide presentation of the "Meridian Basin Flood of 1997" by Dorothy Ettl, a long time member of the Society and resident of the County, who provided the visuals and commentary of that event.

After the general meeting, the Board of Directors had a brief meeting to elect officers for the coming year:

- ◆ President – John V. Reische
- ◆ Vice- President – Audrey Breeding
- ◆ Secretary – Connie Cary
- ◆ Treasurer – Dorothy Ettl

The terms of office began on the adjournment of the Annual Meeting. Next on the itinerary was the sad acceptance of the resignation of Dewey Gruening from the Board. Phyllis Smith was voted onto the Board and has agreed to continue to help with the production of the Bulletin.

Historical Landmarks in Sutter County

California Historical Landmarks

by
Phyllis Smith

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, private clubs sought to preserve historic sites in California, starting with the Spanish missions. One group also wanted to place memorial plaques to mark significant historic sites. In 1931 special legislation required the state Department of Natural Resources to register and mark historical landmarks. Responsibility for the task moved among several state agencies, finally settling with the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation.

The first twenty landmarks were officially designated June 1, 1932. The original idea was to limit the number of historic sites to 500; as of this March, 1,030 landmarks have been designated.

Today the California Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee determines if a site is worthy of distinction. The basic criteria are:

- ◆ The site must in some way be of significant historical importance to California: It maybe the first, last, only, largest, or smallest site of a type in a large geographical area.
- ◆ The historic site must be of lasting significance to the history of the state.
- ◆ The site may be a significant architectural landmark, such as a prototype or outstanding example

of a period, style, architectural movement or method of construction. The most notable works, or a region's best surviving work by a pioneer architect, designer, or master builder, may also qualify as an architectural landmark.

Sutter County has two historic landmarks: John Sutter's Hock Farm and the site where William Thompson propagated the seedless grape.

Hock Farm

(California Historical Landmark No. 346)

The inscription on the plaque reads "This memorial is constructed of the original iron from the fort of Hock Farm, established in 1841 by John Augustus Sutter, being the first white settlement in Sutter County. The fort and farm buildings were located on the banks of the Feather River opposite this point. Erected by Sutter and Yuba Bi-county Federation of Women's Clubs, 1927." As you can see, the local club deemed the site important before the state established its historical landmark registration process.

General Sutter had several ranchos, including the Hock Farm. One history relates the farm was named after an Indian village on the river; another says

that the Swiss Sutter named the farm "hock" from a corruption of the German word hoch or "upper," and that the Indian village nearby was called after the farm. On this rancho, which was located on the west side of the Feather River about eight miles below Yuba City, Sutter kept agents to look after his cattle from 1841 until 1850. An adobe house was erected on the estate in the winter of 1841-42, followed by other structures from time to time. Hock Farm, referred to as Upper Farm as late as 1845, became Sutter's principal stock ranch, the animals ranging freely over the entire countryside between the Feather and Sacramento rivers and south of the Buttes.

By 1850 gold-seekers had despoiled Sutter of the greater of his lands at New Helvetia, and he retired to a plot of ground at Hock Farm which he had reserved for his home. There he erected a "pretentious" mansion one and a half miles above the site of the adobe house. The grounds were laid out to beautiful gardens, an orchard, and a vineyard, and there Sutter kept open house to the many travelers and friends who called to pay their respects. Following the flood of 1862, debris from the mines gradually buried the best part of the gardens and orchard at Hock Farm. In 1868 Sutter moved east to live among the Moravians at Lititz, Pennsylvania, where he lies buried. He died in Washington, D.C., on June 18, 1880.

The old adobe, as well as the later mansion, has disappeared. For many years the remnant of the garden and orchard was used as a picnic grounds. Today the site is marked by one wall of the

old iron fort, which stands on the Garden Highway eight miles south of Yuba City.

Site of Propagation of the Thompson Seedless Grape

(California Historical Landmark No. 929)

The plaque, at 9001 Colusa Highway (eight miles west of Yuba City), was placed on September 12, 1980, and is inscribed "William Thompson, an Englishman, and his family settled here in 1863. In 1872 he sent to New York for three cuttings called Lady de Coverly of which only one survived. The grape, first publicly displayed in Marysville in 1875, became known as Thompson's Seedless Grape. Today thousands of acres have been planted in California for the production of raisins, bulk wine and table grapes."

In 1872 William Thompson bought three grape cuttings from Elwanger and Barry of Rochester, New York, for \$1.00 each. Thompson and his son George grafted them onto the roots of one of their grapevines; because of a flood that spring, only one of the sprouts grew. The Thompsons shared cuttings from their new grapevine, which did not fruit the first year, with John P. Onstott, who discovered that a change in pruning techniques resulted in heavy clusters of seedless grapes.

In 1875 at the Marysville Fair, Thompson exhibited his grapes which were tagged "Thompson's Seedless," a name eventually changed to "Thompson Seedless" by the Sutter County Agricultural Society.

It was Onstott who spread the

grapes, first throughout California and then across the country. He established nurseries in Fresno and Los Angeles, supplied San Joaquin Valley growers with roots of the plant, and shipped stemmed grapes around the United States.

Sources:

Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin, Volume XIX, No. 1, January 1980
By Carol Withingtoni
From articles in the Appeal Democrat, 1961,
by Jessica Bird

California Historical Landmarks
Office of Historic Preservation

California Department of Parks and Recreation
1990

Historic Spots in California
Mildred Brooke Hoover, Hero Eugene Rensch, Ethel Grace Rensch
Third Edition revised by William N. Abeloe
1966

California, A Landmark History
Joseph R. Knowland
1941

We Met in the Park

Picnic in the Park

We made it back outside in July and the weather was beautiful. On Tuesday, July 18th, members met in Howard Harter Park to celebrate the season. The social started at 6:00 and the potluck dinner started at 6:30. All of you who made the event know that dinner was superb, as always.

The program was one that we tried to coordinate for some time. Debbie Callaway, the postmistress of the Meridian Post Office, spoke on the history of the Meridian Post Office and Meridian in general. She brought more than a few photographs to share as well. She did a terrific job and we are grateful she took time from her busy summer to speak to us. Julie Stark provided an update on the progress of the Agricultural wing exhibit, the paver patio and Museum happenings in general. A small raffle brought in some funding for future speakers and events.

If you like to plan your picnics far in advance, be sure to make a note to mark next year's calendar so you can join us the third Tuesday in July for our next picnic in the park.

Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest

The Sutter County Historical Society and the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County were co-hosts of the seventh annual Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Contest which was open to all fourth and fifth grade students in Sutter County. The contest was created to honor Judith Barr Fairbanks, a fourth grade teacher at King Avenue School, who believed very strongly in the importance of involving our children in local history.

The topic of the essay was a "letter home" from the immigrant or emigrant who had arrived in the Sutter County area during the 1840s, '50s or '60s. The letter was to describe how the area looked or relate experiences since arriving here.

Drew Battaglia, Brittany Patterson, Christopher James Walker and Heather Young received their awards at the Society's Annual Dinner which was held in April. Following are their essays.



Fourth Place
Brittany Patterson
Robbins School
Ms. Janet Alonso

March 6, 1851

Dear Cathy,

California is great. There is swamp land, beaches, valleys, and more. Jhony said he saw a bear. I saw a whole bunch of new plants and I saw a quail plus a monarch butterfly. There were plenty of ducks, geese, pheasants, and more mosquitos than ever. Little Miny is upset and she can't stop scratching.

There are six families, 23 children and 14 adults. Every night we would make a circle and begin dinner. All of us

would cook with Mum and the other ladies. The food was usually salt meat, potatoes, and biscuits, but if we were lucky the men would bring in fresh meat. Then as we were eating the men would keep the fire blazing. Luckchuck, our dog, would sleep with us under the stars bringing a homey feeling. The wilderness nights were nice and sometimes Tifiny would cry for Ma.

In the morning we would wake up at the crack of dawn or earlier. Then I would help with breakfast. Afterward, the aroma of the sweet wild flowers was great, it guided spirits.

Once Dad said that we would have to cross a river. Indians carried our wagon across but half way through the door I was leaning against broke. I fell in head first. It was like ice. One of the men saved me from drowning. Because of the cold water I caught a bad fever. White hot pain

spread through me like lightening. I rummaged around trying to find a cold spot on my pillow. Everyone had to stay away so as not to catch the fever. It took two weeks for it to go away.

By this time we were at the foot of the mountains. The snow began to fall and fall. Miny was on Jason, our horse. I had to walk and carry Luckchuck. Jhony carried his few belongings. Jessica was in the adult group. Plus it was cold. The snow was up to 5 feet deep. Once we even got hit in a blizzard and had to kill the rest of our oxen to survive.

When we finally made it out Dad had claimed land. We all pitched in to build the cabin. When we went to buy anything the prices were really high. The flour would cost up to 30 dollars a pound. We all, at one point, missed home.

California had all sorts of things I would never have dreamed of. I come to the fields with Pa and smell the early fragrance. We would see lots of fauna in the distance. The rivers are boiling with fish too.

Lots of people are opening up businesses like Mr. Ceder's opening a school. California is the best place I have ever seen. We came for a better life and we got one.

Your friend,



Third Place
Drew Battaglia
Winship Elementary School
Mr. Reusser

Dear Mama and Papa,

The shp from Italy to the United States was the most exciting thing I've ever experienced. Going under Cape Horn was horrible. The weather made me sick. When we passed through the Strait of Magellan many men were hoisted overboard.

Aunt Haddi and Uncle Dave got jobs on the ship so we would have money for supplies when we docked in San Francisco Bay. During the days, I would separate myself from the other children and go fishing. I only caught two fish. I spent what seemed like endless days sitting on the deck, watching the sea go past me.

We had been on the ship already for four months when something very terrible happened. A man got a plague when he was down in the cargo hold. There was now a rumor going around that five other men had the disease. It has been a week now since the man in the cargo hold was bitten, and thank goodness no one else got it. I decided to make myself useful, so I got a job on the ship as a cleaner. I did not enjoy this job at all. It was really awful. I had just finished mopping when I heard a girl, about the age of five, yell "Land!"

Everyone stopped and looked off

the starboard bow. Then everyone started cheering and yelling. Some started crying, though I did not know why. In less than an hour, we had docked in San Francisco Bay. When I walked down onto the dock with Aunt Haddi and Uncle Dave, there were many men dressed in old dirty clothes like myself. We walked down the dirty streets looking for a tent or a Californio to trade with. Then we turned a corner and there was a small white tent. We walked in and there were so many things I had never seen before. I didn't know where to look first. Before I had a chance to really look around, we had bought our supplies and headed for Sacramento. Uncle Dave said we had taken a wrong turn, so we had to camp at the base of a small mountain range. Upon arriving, I saw a small camp fire then I knew Uncle Dave was wrong. We were in the gold fields.

The next day, we decided to stake a claim on a stream. In the next few days we had built a small cabin on our claim out of some old oak branches and we had made forty dollars. I was anxious to get more. "We will be settling here till the gold is gone," Uncle Dave said. So I won't be home for a while but when I come back I will be rich! Please write back.

Sincerely



Second Place
Heather Young
First Lutheran School
Mrs. Newman

May 26, 1846

Dear Samantha,

It's been two months on the wagon trail.

We came across an Indian village and we were lucky they didn't attack. The land that the Indians live on is beautiful. I saw wild horses, buffalos, many different birds and sometimes coyotes. At night, I can hear the cries of mountain lions. Da said don't worry they won't hurt us.

At night Da and other men stood guard protecting us from attacks by wild animals. Sometimes I can hear the hooting of the owls, but do you know that really scares me? It's when I hear stories about Indians and how they sometimes take children from their families to make them a part of their own. Da said that won't happen to us. Got to go. I will write you another letter sometime.

Your friend,

December 2, 1846

Dear Samantha,

It's winter times now and it just started snowing. I'm thankful for our log cabin our neighbors helped us build. Our cabin has only one room but it is comfortable and warm thanks to Ma and Da. Da says that come spring we'll make it bigger.

It's almost Christmas. I have been working on a corn husk doll for Ma. It's not as pretty as the dolls she had back home in Missouri, but I think she'll like it. Ma is helping me knit a pair of socks for Da.

Yesterday Da and I went into the forest and cut down a Christmas tree. Ma and I decorated it with berries and paper chains.

One thing that I want for Christmas is a doll with a purple dress, brown shoes and a black hat. Well, have a Merry Christmas.

Your friend,

June 8, 1847

Dear Samantha,

It is now springtime and everything looks beautiful. All the trees and flowers have started blooming. There are more chores to do in springtime than during the winter. I have to fetch water from the forest. I have to do this three times a day. When I go I also collect twigs for the cooking fire and gather berries. Ma uses

them to make us a pie. Da says to watch out for bears so I'm careful. Early in the mornings I go into the chicken coop and gather eggs for Ma with breakfast. When we are through with breakfast, Da gives me a ride to school in our wagon.

Our school house is a one room log cabin. All grades are together. Sometimes the older students have to help the younger ones. We study reading, writing, arithmetic, and sometimes geography or history. At lunch time, after we finish eating, the girls will play jump rope or jacks and the boys play mumblety-peg or marbles.

Sometimes we all get together and play drop the handkerchief or hide and seek. We're only in school three months out of the year. Our teacher, Miss Brown, travels to other towns to teach. There are not many teachers out here so we have to share. That's okay with me. I have to help Ma at home anyway. I like helping her churn butter and spin yarn. I need to go now. It's time for bed. I'll write again soon.

Your friend,





First Place
Christopher James Walker
Nuestro Elementary School
Mrs. Nina Sharma

January 13, 1850

Dear Cousin Jack,

This is the first birthday I have spent alone. Instead of a celebration with family and friends, I'm stuck in a shack with two other guys. The fog is very thick and has settled in the valley for about a week now. It is very damp and gloomy. We are forced to eat wild game and we get very few supplies in Marysville. My rifle comes in handy because this countryside is surrounded by flocks of geese and ducks.

Businesses in Marysville are worried about the floods during this rainy season. Rivers have been getting higher each day since my arrival. As the snow melts in the Sierras, the water will be too swift to prospect for gold. The valley Indian tribes have packed up their camps and have headed for higher ground. Could the native Indians be warning the rest of us to get out of this flat land while we can?

I have been offered room and board, if I choose, to do farm labor for a man named Winship. I'll work on the farm during the week and prospect on the weekends up on the Yuba River. Mr. Winship owns a piece of property in the Sutter Buttes and said I could go with him if need be. They still have their covered wagon and will travel up there soon.

As soon as this land dries out after the flood, we will have to plant more crops. The soil is very rich and any kind of fruit or vegetable can grow in this valley. I'm looking forward to spring and warmer weather.

This weekend, we're taking the livestock to the Buttes. It will take Winship's two older sons and my two roommates and myself to get the job done. Most of the Winship's land was once "a large rancho owned by Mexicans." I am fortunate to be offered this job because many men are coming to this area and jobs are few.

By next year, I wish to see you out here. I miss everybody very much. Tell them that I'm doing fine and have found work. Tell them that I love them and think of them everyday. Thank you for your prayers. My prayers are with you, too.

God bless you,

Happy Birthday, California
150 Years Young

My Memories of John and Anna Wises' Hotel and Store in East Nicolaus

by
Marian Regli

Before I tell the reader about the hotel and store, I thought I would tell the reader how I happened to come to East Nicolaus.

I received my secondary teaching credential from College of the Pacific in Stockton in the middle of the school year and found this to be a difficult time to secure a teaching position. There were three teaching positions open in my major in Northern California. I chose to be interviewed for an opening at East Nicolaus High School. At this time, East Nicolaus High and Sutter High were unified. This seemed rather unusual to me because of the distance involved, but that is the way it was. I was interviewed by the District Superintendent-Principal of Sutter High School, Mr. Cherry, the East Nicolaus High School Principal, Mr. Decatur, and the only trustee from East Nicolaus High, Mrs. Evelyn Smith.

What experiences awaited a city girl who found her teaching position to be in East Nicolaus? The friendliness of the community, the attitude of the students, plus a quaint hotel and the Wises' country store, all of these things appealed to me. I had never seen such a quaint hotel, which boarded single teachers, or a store quite like the Wises' store.

The rooms in the hotel were very adequate. They were furnished with a desk, a chair, a bureau, a comfortable bed, and, believe it or not, a very roomy closet. My room faced the road which meant I

could see all the traffic that passed by; however, the traffic was not too heavy since the road ended at the cross canal. Usually the traffic consisted of farmers' pickups going either to the Wises' store, the Diamond Match Lumberyard, or Barker's grocery store.

All of the teachers who boarded at the hotel were fortunate, as the Wises were very cordial to their boarders. Anna Wise, who had come from Germany, was a very good cook. Veal dishes were her specialty, and the desserts she prepared were especially delicious, such as lemon cream dessert, black forest cake and apple strudel. John, who was from Russia, supplied entertainment, often times singing the "Volga boatman" or an aria from some opera as he roamed downstairs from room to room.

Downstairs, there was a parlor for entertaining guests, since no male visitors were allowed in the teachers's rooms. Fathers and brothers were permitted to go upstairs to help transport clothes, luggage, and books, but everyone had to go downstairs to visit in the parlor. There were two bedrooms off the parlor – one for the Wises' and the other for married couples.

The dining room consisted of two tables – one a very large table and the other smaller to accommodate any overflow visitors who might happen to "drop by" at lunchtime including salesmen, PG&E workers, and others. This

was a great room for celebrating birthday parties and, on at least one occasion an engagement announcement – mine.

Behind the dining room was a large kitchen and beyond that a service porch with washing facilities. They dryer was the clothesline in the backyard. Off the kitchen was the Wises' spacious living room. Here they could entertain their guests, read, write or listen to the radio.

Upstairs there were nine rooms. All of the rooms opened onto a long hall. On one side of the hall were two bedrooms, a storage room and two bathrooms, one men's and one women's. On the opposite side of the hall were five more bedrooms. One of the back rooms was occupied by George Levisay, the handyman.

I met my future husband, Melvin Regli, while living in the hotel thanks to two matchmakers, Anna Wise and John Irbarren who was the head of the PG&E substation. As a result the Wise Hotel holds special memories for me. I also made friends with the teachers who lived there and still correspond with two of them. Anna Freitas, who was an elementary school teacher, now lives in Lodi and Lucille Wilson Pemerton, who was a high school home economics and English teacher, now lives in Live Oak. The third teacher that lived at the hotel during that time was Ethel Roosman, who taught commercial subjects.

Now, let us step into the past as we visit the Wises' store. To the left as one entered was the branch library and the post office under the watchful eye of Mrs. Evelyn Smith, who was the librarian and postmistress. It was new to me to receive

mail in a postbox since I was used to having my mail delivered to our home.

Many people in the area, which covered East Nicolaus, Nicolaus, Verona, Trowbridge, Rio Oso and Pleasant Grove, and I suspect other places, traded here, for one could find almost anything one needed. For the farmers there were boots, work shoes, work clothes and tools of all description; the women could find yardage, patterns, dresses, baby clothes, dishes, cookware, gifts for showers and weddings, plus items to numerous to mention. The store's wooden floors had been trod on by its many customers, and its display cases held buttons, thread, jewelry, and novelty items. Above the main floor was a mezzanine that could be reached by a moveable ladder.

One day when I asked John if he had any notepaper, he reached under the counter, blew off some dust and presented me with a black rimmed box. I should have purchased this box to show my students the black edged notepaper was often used to announce a death in a family.

My two years living in this hotel and trading in the store helped me become adjusted to a life in a friendly, helpful farming community and also prepared me to become a farmer's wife. Living at the hotel, trading at the country store, and teaching at East Nicolaus High School were enriching experiences for me.

In 1964, our area experienced a sad loss when fire destroyed the store, the hotel and the Northern Electric Depot, which was located across the street from the store. A treasured era passed away.

Sutter County Historical Society

Forty-five years of Success

by
John Reische

History has always been an interesting and vital part of people's lives. People make history and what has been recorded over the centuries centers around people and how they lived and changed. Sutter County history is endowed with people who have contributed to the settlement and development of our communities. Farmers and businessmen welcomed the chance to make their homes and livelihood on the rich lands that comprise Sutter County.

Stories of the people who arrived at the time of the Gold Rush and then stayed to become permanent residents are the basis for the development of interest in recording and preserving a history of the development of Sutter County. On March 20, 1920 the Yuba – Sutter Bi-County Federation of Women's Clubs was formed as a historical society to record and preserve Sutter County's history. This organization carried out its charter from 1920 to 1956.

The Sutter County Historical Society came to be as the result of a meeting on May 25, 1954 when twenty-one people gathered to establish the Sutter County Historical Society. At that meeting they talked about By-Laws, a Constitution, Aims, Incorporation, and Membership. Elections were held and committees were formed. An emblem, the Sutter Buttes, was chosen and a motto, the Cherokee word Nowetta (Welcome, You Come

Again) adopted.

The aims the Society adopted:

- ◆ To collect historical facts and records pertaining to Sutter County
- ◆ To utilize this material in preparing historical publications
- ◆ To establish a museum for the display and preservation of the material.
- ◆ To foster good citizenship through the encouragement of interest in local history

There have been many milestones in the forty-five years since the Society formed. People, like you, have made this a success story only possible because of past members and your membership, interest and support. In a sense, we are all Sutter County historians contributing to the preservation of facts, records and antiquities of Sutter County. I would like to describe some of our noteworthy accomplishments:

Membership – Starting with the original group of twenty-one people in the Society, we quickly grew and in one year reached a total of sixty-five members. By 1961 there were ninety-two members and in 1962 we established the Honorary Life Membership, the Sustaining Membership, and an Active Membership. In 1985, we joined with the Museum to offer our

members a dual membership in both organizations with the membership fees shared by the two organizations. Each group retained its own identity, but began working together toward our mutual goals of raising funds for building additions to the museum and the production and distribution of the Bulletin. Membership at the time of the reorganization was 248 and in May of 1999 was 550.

Quarterly Bulletin – Volume I, No. 1 appeared in November 1954. The a progression of editors and bulletin committees, the Quarterly Bulletin has been a great success. Much of Sutter County's history is recorded in articles published in the Bulletin.

The Carriage Square Museum – An original aim of the Society was the establishment of a museum. With the completion of Carriage Square (at the intersection of Bridge Street and Highway 99) in 1963, an offer was made by the owner/builder to provide space for a museum. The Society directors signed a lease in January of 1964 and action immediately started to occupy the space and display the many pieces donated to the Society. The museum opened on May 17, 1964. Admission was free and the staff was the museum was staffed entirely

by volunteers. Donations were organized, cataloged and displayed. Many of these items can still be seen in the museum today, including the giant guest book that is still in use.

Memorial Museum Park to Honor Sutter County Pioneers and Servicemen – In 1971, with the acceptance by the Sutter County Board of Supervisors of a gift from Howard H. and Norma Harter of 4.74 acres of land at the Onstott Freeway (Highway 99) and Butte House Road, the Society moved ahead in achieving its aims. The Society instituted a special fund for the development of the property to include a park in a "Living Memorial" grove and a plans to build a community museum began to take shape.

Park development continues to this day. With the establishment of a museum commission came the establishment of a park committee to oversee, and participate in, the development of the site. Sutter County maintains the park, but volunteers assist in keeping up the various flowers, shrubs, and specific gardens. The park now has a grove of mature trees, a butterfly garden and a memorial rose garden. All of these have added significantly to the beauty of the park.

To be continued...



The Puzzler

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BRITTANY
FARM
MARIAN
ROAD

CARRIAGE
GOLD
MONUMENT
SCHOOL

CHRISTOPHER
HEATHER
PHYLLIS
SEEDLESS

DREW
HOTEL
PIANO
THOMPSON

ESSAY
JOHN
RIVER
WINTER



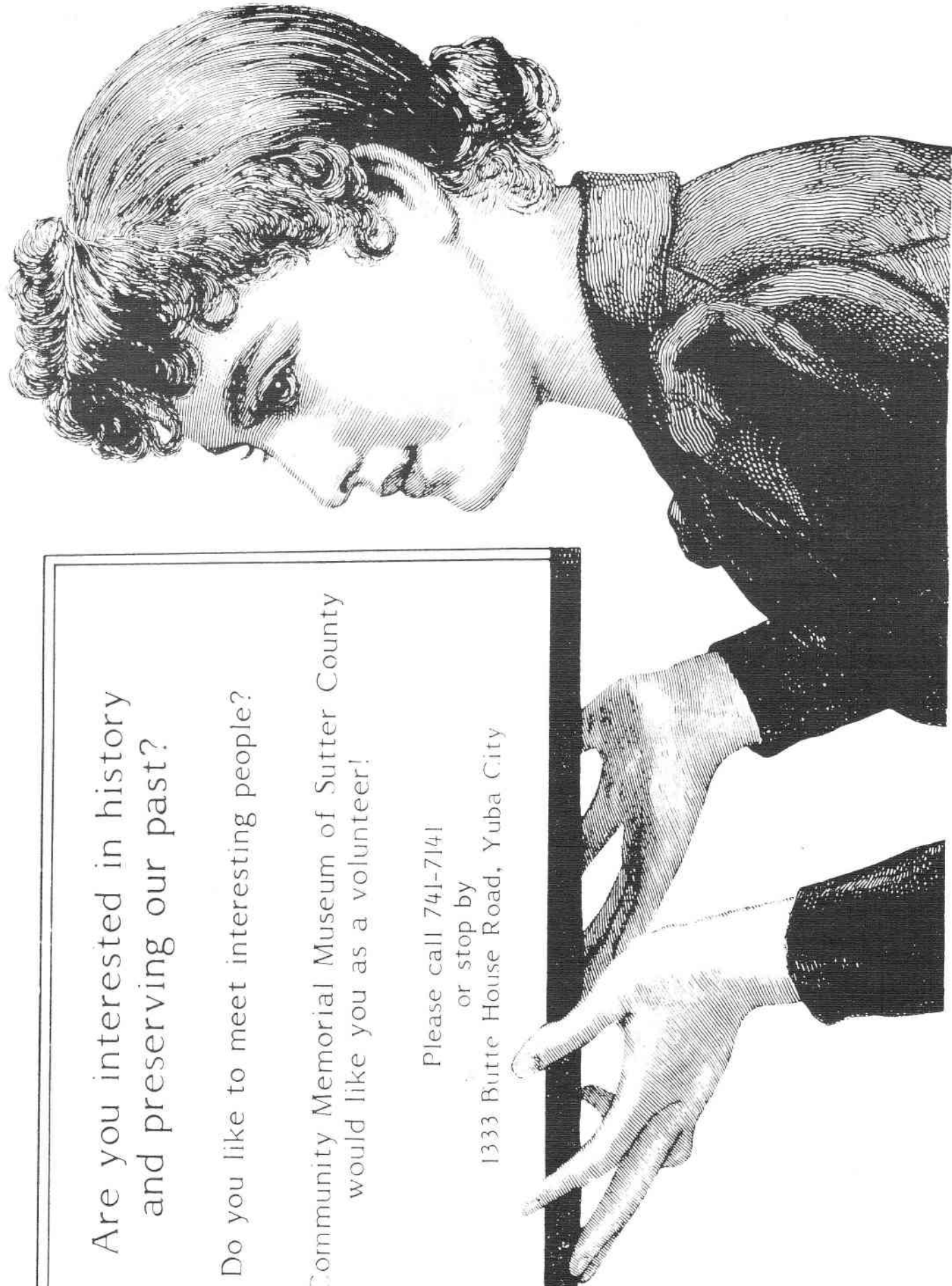
Are you interested in history
and preserving our past?

Do you like to meet interesting people?

The Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County
would like you as a volunteer!

Please call 741-7141
or stop by

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City



Coming Events

October

- 14 Community Memorial Museum
New Exhibit Opens – Our Photo Album
- 22 Historical Society Meeting
Hermann Sons Hall – Nicolaus

November

- 1 Christmas Ornament Workshop – 10:00 a.m..
Community Memorial Museum

December

- 7 Decoration Day, 9:00 a.m.
- 9 Trees and Traditions – 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Community Memorial Museum
- 20 Community Memorial Museum
Open House all Day
Children's Program at 3:00 p.m.

January

- 16 Historical Society Meeting
Community Memorial Museum – Yuba City

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