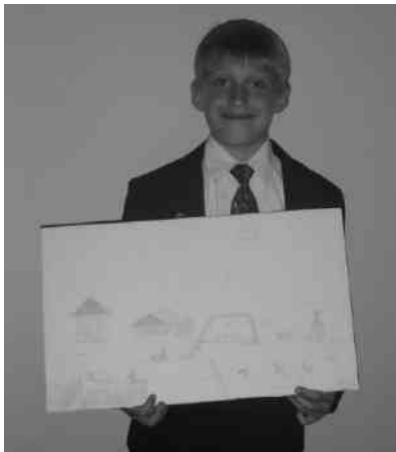




Vol. LV No. 3

Yuba City, California

July 2013



Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Contest Winners

***Top:* Katherine Emerson Sharp, Emily Quintero, Shaan Sandhu**

***Bottom:* Leighton Tarke**



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*The year the director joined the Board.

The **Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Historical Society in Yuba City, California. Editors are Phyllis Smith, Sharyl Simmons and Vicki Rorke. Payment of annual membership dues provides you with a subscription to the **Bulletin** and the Museum's **Muse News** and membership in both the Society and the Museum.

The 2013 dues are payable as of January 1, 2013. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City, 95993-2301 530-822-7141

Student (under 18)/Senior Citizen/Library.....	\$ 20
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President's Message

Thanks to all of you who attended our second Buttes picnic – what a great way to spend a spring afternoon! And now it's time for our regular June picnic meeting, under the shady trees in Howard Harter Memorial Park, behind our magnificent Museum. We'll gather together on **Saturday, June 22 at 11:30** for our annual potluck. Bring whatever you fancy, and the Historical Society will provide tables and chairs, plates and utensils, and drinks made for a summer's day.

Do you know of any Century Farms in our county? A Century Farm is one that has been held by the same family for at least 100 years. I know we must have plenty, and our Society would like to recognize and honor those in Sutter County. If you're a "Century Farmer," or know of a farm that might qualify, please share the information with me at 530-755-0702 or SutterCoHistory@aol.com.

We're thinking of changing the format of our October meeting from a restaurant luncheon to a harvest party, with foods and decorations appropriate to the season. I'd love to hear your ideas on this or other theme-based events.

And finally, we still have some vacancies on our Board of Directors and would love to welcome YOU to our group! Or if you think you don't want to make the commitment but would still like to help, we can use volunteers for individual events. Give us a call - operators are standing by!

Sarah Pryor
President

Would you like to receive special notices via email?
Just send your address to SutterCoHistory@aol.com
and we'll add you to our distribution list.

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Director's Report

Among things to know about the Museum this summer is that the marvelous Sutter Buttes art exhibit *Other Views* is up through August 3rd. Even if you have seen it, it continually changes, so you may see new works of art at a second look. Remember that the art is available to purchase and that a portion of the proceeds benefit the Museum. One of the frequently asked questions about the exhibit is why there are some paintings that don't pertain to the Buttes. All of the participating artists submitted work focusing on different aspects of the Buttes, but they were permitted to bring a piece or two that expressed their own unique style and content. The majority of the works do express the artists' interpretations of the Buttes.

Another question asked about the exhibit concerns the fused glass work of artist and exhibit curator Paul Boehmke of Sutter. Many visitors don't recognize the process used to create them. Some of his compositions look like paintings of the Buttes, but they are created with glass in two forms. He uses both sheets of glass and powdered glass, called frit, artfully combining them and then firing the work in a kiln. The resulting surface of the glass is somewhat glossy, unlike the result acquired with paints. The process is unusual and quite remarkable. The result is a painting in a very different medium. Be sure to take another look at these works, and you may have a new admiration for this innovative art.

Summer events to look for are, first, the Children's Program on Thursday, July 11th, starting at 10:00 a.m. In the park, the children will learn about bugs and create an art project to make their own bugs to take home. The "bugs" project is a creation of Paul Boehmke, and you can see some of his fused glass bugs in the Sutter Buttes art exhibit.

Don't forget the big *Christmas in July Sale* starting on Wednesday, July 17th when holiday tree ornaments from past years and Museum Store clearance items go on sale at teeny tiny prices!

On Friday, August 16th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. plan to attend the reception for the photographers of the new Sutter Buttes calendar for 2014. The calendar will make its debut, with photographs on display. The event is co-hosted by the Museum and The Middle Mountain Foundation, who publishes the calendar each year.

We are very excited about the Museum's newest fundraising event. It is a pig roast in Ettl Hall on Saturday, August 24th in the evening. With Buster Brugmann at the grill, music, and lots of activity, this should be a fun-filled event. Tickets will be available in the last part of July.

Right now, it looks as though the Museum will have to bear with the budget cuts made last July with staff and open hours at 80% for another budget year. We are not anticipating further cuts, but the previous cuts cannot be restored yet.

On a positive note, our new Ettl Hall is beginning to see use for rental events, such as weddings and special occasions, with a number of dates already reserved. Please share the news that Ettl Hall and the beautiful Schnabel & Dean Patio are available for rental. More information may be obtained by calling Sutter County at 530-822-7473.

Julie Stark, Museum Director

Memorials

In memory of **Irene Bagley**
Sandra & Bob Fremd
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Marilyn Bevacqua**
Gene & Joan Erfle

In memory of **Ken Calhoun**
Ev & Liz Berry
Rich & Shelby Hewitt

In memory of **James Changaris**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Wallace Crother**
Roger & Janis Stillwell
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Art Flagor**
Jim Staas

In memory of **Caroline Ann Mathews**
Lee & Bob Jones
Lomo Cold Storage

In memory of **Dorothy Munger**
Sandra & Bob Fremd

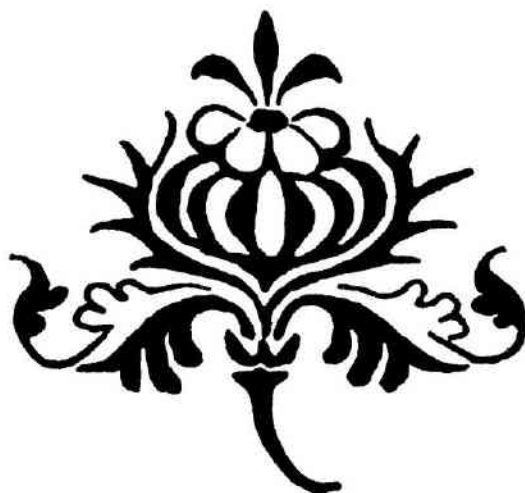
In memory of **Tosh Sano**
Gene & Joan Erfle

In memory of **G. Dave Teja**
Julie Moore Patton

In memory of **Gordon Van Arsdale**
Mary Ann & Nancy Bristow

In memory of **June Pederson Woodard**
Ed & June Watson

Outright gift to the Museum
Mrs. Mel Tsuji
Rose Wood



Honorary Member Nancy Van Arsdale Bristow

by
Mary Ann Bristow

Nancy Van Arsdale Bristow is a member of one of Yuba City's founding families. Her great-grandfather, Abraham Brewer (A.B.) Van Arsdale, settled in Sutter County in the 1860s. A.B. Van Arsdale was later elected to serve as a supervisor and then county treasurer, an office he held for eleven years. A.B. had one son, Edward G. (E.G.) Van Arsdale. E.G. maintained a grocery business for almost 40 years in the area. E.G. was one of the first men to serve as city trustee. He built a home at 774 B Street, located next to the current site for Yuba City High School, and the land for the first Yuba City high school was made available by E.G. at a reduced price. He and his wife, Maggie Shur, had four children: Blanche Bevan, Gordon Blackwood, Elizabeth Wilson, and Abraham Burch Van Arsdale.

Nancy Margaret Van Arsdale Bristow was born on June 24, 1923 in Yuba City. She is the only child of Abraham Burch Van Arsdale and Mary A. Matson Van Arsdale. Burch was an orchardist and Yuba City policeman. Mary was assistant Sutter County assessor for over 30 years. Nancy attended Yuba City Grammar School on Bridge Street. Later she attended Yuba City High School, graduating in 1941.

Life in Yuba City for Nancy was fairly peaceful. Early in her life, she lived with her parents and grandmother on C Street. She loved to roller skate in the area and especially remembers skating around the Hall of Records and the Sutter County Courthouse. Nancy

also enjoyed spending time with her extended family. She remembers going to movies at the Sutter and State theaters. Because her mother worked, Nancy was responsible for cleaning house and doing the laundry at home.

When Nancy graduated from high school, the US was about to enter WWII. She went to work as a secretary for Principal Winship at the Yuba City Grammar School, where she was employed until her marriage. She was a member of Gamma chapter, Alpha Sigma and received her majority degree in Marysville Assembly, Order of Rainbow. In 1945, Nancy was introduced to Arthur A. Bristow, who had just returned from the Army Air Force, 69th Bomber Squadron. Arthur's family lived across the street from Claire and Eileen Stevenson, close friends with Nancy's family. Arthur's sisters and Eileen thought that Nancy and Arthur were a perfect match and arranged for them to meet. They were right! Nancy and Arthur were married in February 1946. Spring was Nancy's favorite time of the year because of all the tree blossoms and the St John's Episcopal Church was decorated with almond and prune blossoms for their wedding.

They built a home on Franklin Road in 1949 where they raised their family. They had three children, Harry and Steve of Yuba City and Mary Ann of Sacramento. Nancy also has two granddaughters and two great-granddaughters. They had a small walnut orchard which provided Art with



Nancy and Arthur Bristow
(photo courtesy of Mary Ann Bristow)

a chance to play on his tractors. Arthur worked at Marysville Tractor & Equipment Co and later Tenco Tractor for over 40 years. Nancy and Arthur enjoyed many pursuits. Nancy maintained the home and raised the children. Arthur was an active member of many organizations. He was past president of the Mid-valley Scottish Rite Club, Ben Ali Shrine Club, Rotary Club of Yuba City, and former chairman and retired member of the board of directors of Fremont-Rideout Health Group, to name just a few.

In addition to the many activities associated with Arthur's organizations, they enjoyed travelling. They were fortunate to travel to many locations throughout the world. Nancy's favorite

trip was to Italy. As their children were growing up, Nancy even accompanied the family on many hunting and fishing trips. Nancy was a member of the Fremont Hospital Medical Auxiliary, Rotary Club Inner Wheel, Daughters of Nile and a local bridge club. Nancy remained close to a group of girlfriends from her school days: Lauralu Fairlee, Betty Brown, Clara Binninger, and Marian Von Geldren. The friends would meet regularly throughout the rest of their lives.

Arthur died in 1973. Nancy still resides in the family home in Yuba City. She would never dream of moving away from her beloved hometown.

Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest

This contest is in honor of Judith Barr Fairbanks, a local teacher who encouraged her students to embrace history. This year we asked third and fourth graders to compare the Sutter County they know today with that of the nineteenth century. In addition to their essays, students also submitted original artwork – drawings, paintings and collages. We had so many excellent entries we were unable to award only three prizes. Our thanks to all the students who shared their talents with us.

First Place

Sutter County: Then and Now

by Shaan Sandhu

Shelley Boeger, Barry Elementary School

When the early settlers came here to Sutter County, they didn't have some of the things we have today like electronics, cars, paved roads, and neighborhoods full of houses. I am about to tell you what life was like for these early settlers coming to Sutter County.

Since its early beginnings, Sutter County has been well known for its production of a wide variety of grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables supplied to markets across the country and around the world. In 1841 John Augustus Sutter, whom Sutter County was named after, first began using the land between Feather and Sacramento rivers for agriculture. There he planted the first wheat, figs, vineyards, and allowed his large herds of cattle to roam freely. Farmers also kept other animals such as horses, ducks, pigs, turkeys, chickens, goats, and oxen. Many farms had a blacksmith shop so that farmers could repair or make their own farming equipment.

In 1850, people entertained themselves by doing many activities. Some of these activities included social evening gatherings at home, social church gatherings, and singing and dancing. These are different from the activities we do today. Such as go to the movies, watch TV, play video games, and go to the local video arcades.

Today we have cars and tractors to travel and help with farm work. In 1850, traveling was done by either walking, riding horses, or stagecoaches. Farm work which involved plowing was done by using oxen. For this reason, oxen were very important to farmers.

We still see signs of what life was like in 1850 today. Sutter County is still very dependent on agriculture, as it was in 1850. The techniques of farming may have changed, such as using tractors instead of oxen and having mechanics instead of blacksmiths, but the crops that are grown are still very similar. Even today we can see some of the old buildings that were built then and are still being used today.

In conclusion, Sutter County is still heavily reliant on agriculture as its primary industry. Life today is different and easier than the life the early settlers had when they arrived in Sutter County. I am glad that the early settlers gave us so much history to appreciate and I enjoyed learning about the early settlers.

Second Place

A letter to Grandma

by Katherine Emerson Sharp

Tami Ortega, Marcum Illinois Elementary School

Dear Ms. Sara Elkin,

My name is Katherine Emerson and I am your Great, Great, Great, Grand Daughter. I have grown up hearing stories about you living in Sutter county. All the wonderful adventures you must have had, especially watching all the gowns grow. I've learned about how your Father worked with John Sutter and that you had friends that went to the same school as I do in Nicolaus. I wish they still had the Ferry that went to Yuba City but my mom did show me the first Post Office ever built in Sutter County, it's still working. I saw pictures of you planting your own garden from seeds that you gathered and how you canned peaches every summer. I really like the flower dresses that you wore, I wonder if you got to pick out the fabric at the General Store. I never got to meet you, but in my heart I really do know you.

Now 163 years later, while everyone has Smart Phones and electric cars, people are worried about the environment and eating organic. I'm quietly standing barefoot in my garden planting sweet peas. I walk through the same walnut orchards to the Post Office to mail a letter, just like you. My mom is sewing me summer dresses and teaching me to can our fresh fruit. In the evenings I collect heirloom seeds for next year and gather eggs from our hens. I feel fortunate to be able to live my life like a pioneer girl in 1850. I feel even more blessed knowing that for many generations, Sutter County has been our family's home.

All my love,
Kate

Third Place (tie)

Our World

by Emily Quintero

Suzanne Nakashima, Lincrest Elementary School

Our world is different now because Yuba City was very different in the past. There were horses, cows, barns, farming and wagons. There were no paved roads back then only dirt roads. The things that are the same are houses, trees, horses, and mountains. The person who owned that land was John Sutter. Yuba City now has buildings and more technology. There were wagons to pull them with horses no there's cars. There was dirt now there's roads. There were small houses made out of wood now there are buildings. That was old Yuba City a long time ago.

Third Place (tie)

Time in the 1850s

by Leighton Tarke

Laura Vickner, Brittan Elementary School

In Sutter County in the 1850s people did many things. Some things people did were farming, mining, hunting, and store keeping. My ancestors came here during that time. They were seeking gold like so many people that came to California. They ended up as farmers.

Farming still continues today. One hundred sixty years ago, farmers planted barley and wheat because the ground was dry back then. Now they have irrigation, so farmers can plant almonds, walnuts, beans, rice, prunes, peaches, and olives. Many of the same things are done in farming such as plowing the ground, but it was different, too. They had a horse pull a plow. Now we drive harvesters and tractors.

People came to mine in the nearby foothills. They used pick axes. It was a hard job. Most people did not find gold. They had to do other jobs. They came to Sutter County to live and work. Now not very many people mine.

Hunting was a common way to get food in the 1850s. They hunted deer, ducks, and pigs in the Buttes. We still hunt all of the same things. They used mostly rifles, but they weren't as advanced as today. We still use rifles for deer, but use shotguns for ducks.

Just like my ancestors, people came here to seek for gold and have a better life. Most people had to do other jobs to make a living. Store keepers were very successful, and sold many things in their stores. They sold food, toys, blankets, tools, shoes, seeds, and furniture. We still have specialty stores like they did then. But now we have stores that sell many things in one store.

Back in the 1850s people did not have machines. Instead of using a car they used a horse or horses and a carriage. If people wanted to communicate with someone it took weeks or even months. The reason it took so long was the letter had to be taken by horse or by boat. Now we can e-mail or text and all it takes is a click of a button and a few seconds and it is there.

Many things have changed in Sutter County since the 1850s. More people and more technology are the biggest differences. Some things are still the same like farming and hunting. Six generations later my family still lives and farms at the base of the Sutter Buttes.

The Oji Family

by
Moriah Edwards

This paper was prepared under the Brandstatt Family History Project. The Project's purpose is to produce histories of longtime Sutter and Yuba County families involved in agriculture, pre-1925, to preserve the history of local agricultural families in our area and make it available to researchers and visitors at the Community Memorial Museum. James Uren, husband of the late Irma Brandstatt Uren, made a gift to the Museum to honor his wife and her father, peach farmer Frank Brandstatt, and family and from this gift a stipend is awarded to the participating student.

The beginnings of the Oji family are in Iwashijima, Hiroshima, Japan. Farming has been in the Oji family for generations; Sohei Okamoto was a farmer, and it was his son Kanematsu and grandson Ryozo who would eventually immigrate to America in the early 1900s and continue the line of work. The Ojis have participated in and experienced major historical events such as multiple racially discriminatory acts (the most consequential of which was the internment of the Japanese) and several wars. However, the obstacles that life has placed before them has not kept them from maintaining and excelling in their business in the present day.

I. Late 1800s and Early 1900s

The personal history of the Ojis begins with Kanematsu (*Okamoto*) Oji.¹ He was born in Iwashijima to Sohei and Some Okamoto, as their second son. His two brothers and sister were Hukujiro, Reiji, and Kiyo, respectively. As a young man in Japan, Kanematsu Okamoto became at risk for conscript-

tion into the Japanese army. To avoid it, he "entered the family of Oji, Matusuke to take on the name of Oji, Kanematsu on December 1, 1879... [He] took the Oji family name as the first born." It was traditional for the oldest son to take responsibility for the care of his family, and thus they were excused from conscription. "There were a number of exemptions [from conscription], particularly for firstborn sons, students, and teachers, and the middle and upper classes could buy their way out of conscription. The effect was to ensure that most conscripts were second and third sons of poor farmers." Being in this exact position, had Kanematsu not changed his name, his fate and those of his posterity would have been entirely different.

He was married to Kuu Misaka, who was from a fishing village in Onimichi, a place just across the bay from Iwashijima. They had only one son, Ryozo Oji, who was born on March 1, 1885. The two separated in 1895, but emigrated from Japan together in 1910. Before their emigration, Kuu had remarried to Tanekichi Okamoto (suggested to be the brother of Kanematsu's father) and had a son, Giichi, but she was divorced from him

¹ *Maiden names for the women are listed in parentheses. For the men, changing of the last name or taking on a different last name than his father is listed in parentheses and italics.*

in 1912, two years after being in America. Giichi remained in Japan.

After Kanematsu and Kuu arrived in California, however, the two lived separate lives. Kanematsu, who was “not an easy person to live with,” worked cleaning railroad cars in Richmond and returned to Japan alone circa 1917, where he died of pneumonia around 1924. Kuu, remembered by her granddaughter Bernice as “a very beautiful lady,” lived with Ryozo and his family and babysat the oldest grandchildren. She died in 1921 from a bleeding ulcer, though it is unclear whether from the cause or the attempted cure, which was the salve of a burnt frog. She was fifty-five years old.

Kanematsu and Kuu were not the first to leave their homeland, however. By 1900, there were 25,000 Japanese laborers in the United States; Ryozo was among them by 1902 and paved the way for his family when he came to California and worked on a railroad gang, wherein Kuu and Kanematsu joined him later. At the time, Ryozo had only planned to be in America temporarily, and in fact many Japanese men were of the same mindset; they worked and sent money back home, and would eventually return when they’d made enough money, albeit disappointed that the roads had not been paved in gold as they had previously believed. Ryozo did decide to remain, as there was also a part of him which did not have incentive to return – his father had treated him badly as a child and he had mostly been raised by his maternal grandmother, Sumi.

By this time, unfortunately, the Japanese had begun to be disliked and distrusted in California. Because of

both Chinese and Japanese success in business, the year 1905 brought the Yellow Peril, in which notable anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese sentiment caused laws to be passed forbidding the sale or lease of land to them. Also following this was Theodore Roosevelt’s “Gentlemen’s Agreement” of 1908, which attempted to mollify the indignant Japanese government when California laws ordered the Japanese to attend Oriental School under a “separate but equal” pretense; in response to this, Roosevelt strongly reprimanded California and Japan agreed to send only skilled workers to the United States.

After feeling the Yellow Peril and seeing the passing of the “Gentlemen’s Agreement,” Ryozo Oji was married to a picture bride, Tsugino Kiso. Tsugino (Kiso) Oji was born on June 12, 1890 and also raised in Onomichi. Her parents were Asakichi, a merchant who doted upon his daughter, and Hana Kiso. Tsugino had three siblings: two older brothers Yasujiro and Tokujiro, and an adopted younger sister named Tatsuno.² The traditional style of marriage was through a “baishakunin,” or a go-between, who arranged the marriage between a Japanese man located in America and his bride in Japan. The two would exchange photos, and then be married in Japan; if the groom could not be present, the marriage would take place with a proxy standing in for him. The trend was banned by the Japanese government in 1921, however, “dooming nearly 24,000 single adult males to bachelorhood.”

² *Tatsuno was the younger sister of Tsugino’s father, Asakichi. She was born late to Tokuhachi and Hana Kiso, and Asakichi adopted her.*

(Adhering to some parts of tradition, however, a few of Ryozo's children did have a baishakunin to help set up their marriages.) Before marrying Ryozo, Tsugino had been jilted in another engagement and thus decided to become a picture bride. Ryozo and Tsugino were arranged to be married through mutual friends: Tsugino's school friend was married to George Aratani, a good friend of Ryozo's. They were married by proxy in November of 1910, when the trend of the picture brides began. The Ojis and the Aratanis always remained good friends. Ryozo and Tsugino would raise and delight in the growth of eight children in their 58 years of marriage: Bernice Kazue, Masanobu, Sukeo, Henry Mitsuo, Arthur Noboru, Chester Susumu, Ruby Tsuyako, and Mary Yoko.³

II. 1911-1920

Their first child, Bernice Kazue Oji, was born on October 18, 1911, in the family house on Riverside Boulevard in Sacramento – the first of three located on that street which the family would own.⁴ To her family, she was fondly known as “Nesan,” which is a nickname for an older sister. As a girl, she was educated at a local school and

³ *Oji family book (entire paragraph) Any “American-sounding” names given to Ryozo’s children are not listed on their birth certificates; rather, their legal first names are shown in this paper as their middle names. [For example, Bernice Kazue (Oji) Ohashi was born Kazue Oji.] Mary and Ruby Uno disclosed to me that their American names were given to the children in school by their teachers, and from then on the names mostly caught on among the family.*

⁴ *Over the years, the Oji family lived in three different houses which were all located on Riverside Boulevard in Sacramento. A map describing the layout of the houses is included in this record at the Community Memorial Museum.*

at the home of Dr. Bert and Lillian Thomas. She was married to George Ohashi on May 17, 1929, when she was seventeen years old. The couple lived in La Jolla for a time, where Bernice worked as a babysitter and George became a beautician; thereafter, they moved to San Diego in 1933 and opened a hair salon. After the couple were released from the internment camps during World War II, they traveled and opened up a hair salon in every place they lived: in Colorado, in Hawaii, in Santa Barbara and in San Diego. George was a well-known barber at the time, which allowed him success wherever they went. The two had a daughter named Susan Kiku, whom they adopted in 1947. Bernice and her future siblings would be part of the Japanese-American generation called the nisei, which is a second-generation Japanese-American; her parents and their respective generation were known as the issei, or the first-generation Japanese-Americans.

Even after the resolution of the Gentlemen's Agreement, Japanese workers were being shunned by unions in the urban area, and so began to turn to agriculture, “in the rice districts of Glenn, Colusa, and Butte Counties, the Delta region, the orchards and vineyards of Fresno and Tulare Counties. Their thrift and industry brought several hundred thousand acres into their proprietorship – and earned them the competitive enmity and fear of many of their American neighbors.” Their competitors were alarmed, and in response to this, passed the Alien Land Act of 1913, which took advantage of a loophole in the Naturalization Act of 1790. While “free whites” were granted citizenship, this law disallowed sale or lease of land to those who were

ineligible for citizenship; indeed, most Asians were not allowed citizenship until as late as 1952. Eventually, the Japanese would buy property in the names of their American-born children once they were old enough, but the anti-Oriental sentiment did not wane.

During the First World War, Masanobu Oji, known as Mas, was born in the first Riverside Boulevard house on the sixth of July, 1916. As a boy, he was in an all-Japanese-American Boy Scout troop, Troop #25, which had the opportunity to visit Japan. This trip left an impression on Mas, and gave him a better idea of what his parents' country was like. He graduated from Sacramento High School in 1932 and thereafter attended the University of California, Davis, but had to leave to help his father with the farm during the Depression. He married Yoshiko Kozono on February 2, 1941, and the two would have four children: John Isamu, Arden Kozono, Kathleen Ruth, and Evelyn Martha.

In 1918, two years after Mas's birth, Ryozo was forced to declare bankruptcy for the tomato canning business he owned at the time. The California Packing Corporation had asked him to grow a thousand acres of tomatoes as a war effort, but the war ended before he could harvest the crop, leaving Ryozo in a difficult situation.

In the same year, Sukeo Oji was born. On February 24, 1918, "Skeets" was born in the second family home on Riverside. He and his younger brother Henry would attend Japanese school together as boys, to which they had to walk two miles from public school to reach. (When Bernice and George would pick them up in the family Model T car, George, who "always had a few

cents on him," would give them a nickel apiece for the corner candy store.) In his adult life, Skeets was drafted into the Army during the Second World War, participated in the multiple wars following, and was twice married. His first wife was Chizuko Sasagawa, and they were married in February of 1947 in Sendai, Japan; thereafter he was married in Carmel, California to Tey Tokuno on the eighteenth of June, 1966, four years after he and Chizuko separated. Skeets and Chizuko had two daughters, Maryann Kimiko, and Margaret Hitomi.

It was at the end of this decade when Kanematsu Okamoto Oji returned to Japan, later to pass away from pneumonia.

III. The 1920s

The decade of the 1920s began with the birth of Ryozo's third child and second son, Henry Mitsuo Oji, on September 2. In a family history written collectively by Ryozo's children, Henry's account was written by his wife, Mitsuye. Mitsi, as she was known, was married to Henry on June 29, 1946 in Denver, Colorado. He was known as somewhat "gruff" in his youth, but softened in temperament after his marriage to her. They had two daughters, Jane Takako and Helen Shizuko, and he was remembered as a good father who called his daughters his "babies" even unto their adulthood. He was a natural musician who played several instruments and was a talented singer, but also an accomplished farmer, hard worker, and good employer. He participated in several boards and committees, including the Central-Gaither School Board for ten years, and the Selective Service Board for ten years, and was the Director of

the Tomato Growers Association for eight years. Tragically, Henry was killed in a car accident in 1975, at age 55, when he was rushing to Robbins and hit a truck, which caused his car to flip.

Arthur Noboru Oji was born in the third Oji house on Riverside Boulevard on March 29, 1923. Arthur was called Noboru by his family, and was “happy, kind and carefree.” Arthur would be drafted into the Army, but would ultimately leave the service and help his brothers take over the farm when internment was over. He was married to Misao Ando, a Japanese native, while he was assigned there. They were married on the first of April in 1947 in Yokohama, Japan, and they had two daughters named Irene Rumiko and Barbara Lois.

The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Alien Exclusion Act, was passed, creating another obstacle for the Japanese:

That law restricted immigration into the United States to 150,000 a year based on quotas, which were to be allotted to countries in the same proportion that the American people traces their origins to those countries, through immigration or immigration of their forebears... [and] constructed a white American race... But, while Euro-Americans’ ethnic and racial identities became uncoupled, non-European immigrants – among them Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans, and Filipinos – acquired ethnic and racial identities that were one and the same.

Those considered part of the Asiatic races were particularly defined in this law, and particularly excluded. By quota, China, Japan, India and Siam was set at a quota of 100 per year, “but the law excluded the native citizens of those countries from immigration because they were deemed racially ineligible to citizenship.” Thus, only non-Japanese people from Japan were allowed to immigrate into the country – a strange anomaly. This restriction for the native Japanese also heightened negative sentiment toward nikkei (a general term for Japanese-Americans).

Chester Susumu Oji was born on September 13, 1925 in the Ojis’ third Riverside Boulevard home. As a child, his younger sisters remembered him being the leader in their play, especially cops and robbers – “we were tied up a lot,” Ruby recalls – but also a serious and generous person, assuming the role of protector. Chester married May Zaiman on the April 28, 1951, and they had five children: Patricia Joyce, Sarah Elle, Julie Ann, Douglas Chester, and Arnold Lee. He signed up for the Army after he finished high school, but after his discharge, he returned to earn his dental degree at Northwestern University in Illinois. He would eventually settle in Fresno in the mid-1950s, and remain there until his retirement.

In 1926, the family moved a short distance away to West Sacramento, in Brighton, where they began farming 200 acres of vegetables for the local market, and also seed crops for companies such as Ferry-Morris and Largomosino. Since tractors had only just been invented, Ryozo farmed with a team of a dozen horses.

The family built their own two-story home which accommodated the family plus four farm hands.

Two years later, on July 26, 1928, Ruby Tsuyako Oji was born. She and her younger sister Mary were always playmates, and have many fewer experiences with or memories of family hardships. On December 27, 1952, Ruby would marry Richard Uno and they would have two sons, Richard Keith and Robert Gregg.

In 1929, Prohibition was instituted. All production, sale and distribution of alcohol was prohibited, which then sparked one of the largest spikes in the history of America's crime. Skeets recalls, "I... remember the prohibition days... when father used to make wine in our cellar. Once the Warden came to inspect the place for liquor. Father told him that he had two barrels of vinegar down in the cellar, and told him to go down and taste it. Sure enough, it was so sour that the warden was convinced." Fortunately for Ryozo, his illegal alcohol production was unnecessary after the law was repealed in 1933.

IV. The 1930s

On March 21, 1931, the last of the Oji children was born: Mary Yoko Oji. As the youngest and the "cute one," she was the baby of the family, and was doted upon by all. She married James Uno, Richard Uno's brother, on the twentieth of September in 1952. They had three children, James Timothy, Joan Theresa and Jill Tammony.

The 1930s also brought the infamous Great Depression, when the market crashed suddenly and unemployment rose to 25 percent. It was because of this that Mas Oji had to

abruptly leave U.C. Davis to join his father in 1932. They had no money in those years, but "[Mas] worked very hard for the farm," his younger sister recalls: once their father sold his truck for twenty dollars just to send him on a short vacation to see Bernice and George in San Diego. During this time, however, the family still always had food because they grew most of it themselves. What they could not grow they traded for at the farmers' markets.

Shortly thereafter, they began farming hops in Perkins, California. George Aratani's father, Mr. Inagaki, recommended it to them since Prohibition had recently ended, and so they devoted 100 of the 200 acres to farming the hops, with the rest dedicated to English walnuts and truck gardening. Ryozo waited for the "right price" to come, hoping to make more money since the repeal of Prohibition, but unfortunately the hops farm went bankrupt in 1937 when that price never came. "The price slumped so low, Father couldn't get rid of [the hops] on the open market. He finally had to take the stored crop and spread it back in the hop field as fertilizer. It got so bad that father filed for bankruptcy."

From 1937 to 1938, the Ojis worked for the Swanson Meat Packing Company, but they had a bad experience with the owner and foreman, Mr. Swanson. Mas remembers:

We had the fortune to be asked to start an asparagus farm... on a 250 acre rolling terrain along the American River banks... Swanson Company was represented by a very demanding, farm ignorant, domineering person who made

our effort very difficult and discouraging. We tolerated him for about a year... [but] it finally got to the point where we decided to give it up.

V. The 1940s

In the early 1940s, the family moved to Guadalupe and Santa Maria near the Aratanis, hoping to change their luck. They again farmed asparagus until the outbreak of the war in 1941. During this time, Mas was married and Skeets had earned his pilot's license at Sacramento Junior College. Skeets had a job as a crop duster, but before the war began, he joined the U.S. Air Force. When the war started, he was released from the Air Force, because as a pilot he was a threat to national security. Later he was drafted into the Army on the 16th of November in 1941.

On December 7, 1941 was the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor. World War II was already raging in Europe, and the Japanese made a daring move by attacking the Hawaiian naval base. This attack only heightened the distrust of the Asian-American population and was followed quickly by Executive Order 9066, which is one of the most important historical American events in which the Oji family was involved. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt ordered that all Japanese descendants with a minimum of one-sixteenth Japanese blood, "regardless of citizenship, be corralled and evacuated inland into internment camps," later to be called "relocation centers." Because this order was given before permanent camps were built, all were evacuated to temporary camps, and then were transferred to the

permanent locations. Over 100,000 Japanese located in the "buffer zone" of the West Coast were given 48 hours to pack and leave; many would leave their possessions and businesses in the hands of friends or neighbors, but many were also robbed and found themselves with nothing to return to when they returned. Executive Order 9066 would not be repealed until January of 1945, and the damage caused to the victims would not be officially compensated for until 1988.

When the Order was given, the younger girls were given a short graduation from school, Skeets returned from the Army as a civilian, and Ryozo and his family (except for Bernice and George, who were married by this time) were sent to the Tulare Assembly Center and then to the Gila Relocation Camp. Bernice and George, who had been living in San Diego, were sent first to the Santa Anita Racetrack Assembly Center and then to the camp in Poston, Arizona. Ryozo was fortunate that he had only just moved to Guadalupe; the government had been rounding up all the first-generation men and separating them from their families to take them to other prisons, but Ryozo was not well-known in the community and went under the radar, allowing him to remain with his family. Skeets said:

War with Japan... changed the lives of all the Japanese in the United States. Most of the soldiers... were either moved further inland and kept under surveillance or were discharged. Few of us were placed in the inactive reserve... Within two months [of my return], citizen of the United States or not, we were uprooted and evacuated

from the West Coast and incarcerated in the so-called Relocation Camps... The whole Oji family was assigned two rooms [which were] 20 [feet by] 15 [feet].

To the next generation, the camps were not spoken of in a particularly negative way. Although they felt that it was a terrible thing to be taken from their homes, the camps were seen as the safest place they could have been during the war, despite the hardships they endured. (Although most of the children attended Japanese school when they were young, one unfortunate long-term consequence was that eventually the children lost their native language; the increased distrust of the Asian community during this time caused the strong encouragement of Americanization, and as a result, the subsequent third Oji generation had a difficult time communicating with their Japanese grandparents.) The Oji family remained in the camps for less than a year, however. Ryozo did not want his kids out of school idle or getting into trouble, and so resolved to leave as soon as possible. At the time, internees were allowed to live outside of the camp if they were sponsored by “an American family whose loyalty had been assured.” Internees had to have someone to go to, and so by March of the following year, the entire family was sponsored by a cousin of Ryozo’s and was allowed to leave. At first they relocated to Rocky Ford, Colorado, but because there were no jobs, they moved to Keenesburg, Colorado to farm mainly sugar beets. Because of this, George and Bernice were able to open another hair salon in Denver, on 18th

and Champs Street. Ruby and Mary recall, “We were lucky that we went to a community that was full of German [families], because they were our allies. They were nice to us,” and although they came across at least one pro-Hitler neighbor, they were still grateful, because they “could have gone to someplace where they hated us.”

In 1943, Skeets was sponsored to attend the University of Nebraska to study engineering, which served him well in his military career; Arthur and Chester were also in the army at the time. In 1944, Skeets and his brothers went on active duty in the famously decorated 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team, and were trained in Fort Snelling, Minnesota. The 442nd consisted of mainly nisei volunteers, and were essential in combat and in roles as translators; they suffered heavy casualties and are known for their bravery and dedicated service despite the internment and discriminative sentiment back in America.

He reported for duty at Camp Shelby, where there were over 3500 nikkei going through training in the uncomfortable weather. Skeets was a heavy machine gun squad leader of the 1st Platoon, Company D, Heavy Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, and after the regiment was sent to Europe in the early spring, stayed to train a new 78th Battalion to replace the 442nd who were then in Europe. He was put through an intensive language school where 6000 of them were drilled in the Japanese language.

Arthur also was put into the language school in the Army and was sent to Japan to be a translator, but found himself practically unable to do

his job because of the short time they had allowed him to learn the language. The Japanese language has several dialects and systems of address for different age groups, authorities, and levels of formality. While Skeets and Chester, who underwent the same training, managed well, Arthur decided to become a mechanic for the Army instead. (As children, Arthur and his siblings had spoken Japanese quite well because of their parents, and more often than not would act as translators for their parents; as time went on, however, English became their primary language and by the time they reached adulthood they had almost completely lost the ability. Ruby says that now it didn't feel like "the right language.") Chester "was sent to the Pacific theater of war, was stationed on an island where he interpreted Japanese commands, etc., while they were close enough to hear. He recalled it as a very eerie, frightening experience because they were in such close proximity to the enemy in a jungle setting." He was also sent to Japan as an interpreter after Japan surrendered.

Skeets became an officer in October of 1945, just a few months after Executive Order 9066 was repealed. After the way, in January of 1946, he was sent to the occupation of Japan:

The Japanese people... were struggling to keep alive, restoring their family, homes, businesses, social well being and self-respect... I feel we, [as nisei soldiers], did contribute in the rapid recovery of the Japanese people and economy. We... understood and felt the compassionate needs of the Japanese people.

At this time, the distrust of Japanese-Americans was naturally at an all-time high, and it did not go unnoticed by the Oji family. Skeets responded to the discrimination:

We were in [the] uniform of the United States to fight against our parents' country, while many of our families and parents were still in these concentration camps. However, we, as [people] born and raised in this country, were compelled to serve the nation of our birth and belief... regardless of how the propagandized nation, public opinions and its war hysteria may have been. We had to take the chance to prove that we were an integral part of this nation's fiber. We stood against all odds, but by doing so, we proved that we were part of this nation. We still struggle with the tide of animosity and greed that we must always face and stand up to. We must live with it and survive the best we know how.

In 1948, the family was allowed to return the West Coast. Ryozo and most of his children returned to the Sacramento area, and Mas, Henry and Arthur began to take over more of the responsibilities of the farm. They farmed a smaller plot in Clarksburg, eventually buying land and settled permanently in Yuba City and founded the Oji Brothers Company, with Ryozo as an overseer and advisor.

VI. The 1950s-1980s

The Korean War broke out in 1950 between North and South Korea,

as a consequence of the Second World War. In June of 1951, Skeets was sent there, but made it safely back after the conflict was over in 1953. Near the beginning of the Viet Nam War, from 1959 through 1961, he served in Baumholder, Germany as a Facilities Engineer, and retired in June of 1963 with the rank of an Army Major.

The 1960s were an important decade for Ryozo and Tsugino: it was in this time that they became official citizens of the United States. 1965 also brought a momentous occasion for the Japanese. The Immigration Act of 1965 was passed, which ended 40 years of anti-Japanese immigration laws. This, and the fact that many Asian-Americans had begun to rise to public positions and honor, meant that Ryozo and Tsugino lived long enough to see the oppression that had surrounded them since their arrival in the United States begin to fade. Ryozo passed away on July 15, 1968, and Tsugino followed on March 19, 1971. Half their ashes were sent back to the Misaka tomb in Onomichi.

Ryozo was an innovator, a resourceful inventor, and a bit of a gambler. In his retirement, after handing the farm off to his sons, his life was full of travel and gambling. He was proud of his farm, the perseverance he had exhibited, and what he had been able to give to his children. The children praise their parents at every turn, knowing the full value of all that their parents did for them, and count themselves fortunate despite multiple hard circumstances the family experienced; they had been favored with a close family and the fact that it survived uncontrollable conditions, lived in the midst of these difficulties surrounded by friendly

people, and had escaped much direct discrimination. As Mas recalled,

It was Father's happiest years, seeing and knowing that all his family were doing so well. Something he always dreamt about and strived for in this country... As his children grew, he realized that his life belonged [here]. I'm sure that he felt it was all worth the hardship, the trials and tribulations of overcoming discrimination when he left us, knowing that his family was flourishing and doing well.

Tsugino had been an active participant in Marysville's Buddhist church, President of the Sacramento Buddhist Women's Association for a time, and was adept at public speaking. She liked the idea of wealth, having grown up with a doting merchant father, and liked to play cards, especially a game called "Hana." Skeets was amazed by his mother:

I always wondered as to when mother had the time to give birth and raise eight children, do all of our washing, clean the house, make the beds, cook for about 14 people, sew all of our underwear from the inner rice sacks lining and give us our haircuts, make our lunches and send us off the school.

Beginning in 1980, the Reagan administration began its investigations into the internment. At the end of his presidency, in 1988, he signed HR 442, the redress legislation which provided compensation for the wrongs that the remaining living internees had faced forty years previously. He said:

The legislation that I am about to sign provides for a restitution payment to each of the 60,000 surviving Japanese-Americans of the 120,000 who were relocated or detained. Yet no payment can make up for those lost years. So, what is most important in this bill has less to do with property than with honor. For here we admit a wrong; here we reaffirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under the law.

VII. *The Present*

Currently the Oji Brothers Farming Company is run by John Isamu Oji, son of Masanobu and grandson of Ryozo. Mas never pressured either of his sons to assume the responsibilities of the farm, but after serving in the military and completing college, John returned to the family line of work because he loved it so much. (His brother Arden went into the tractor business.) The main crop is walnuts, fresh market honeydew, and vegetable seed crops; there is also a tenant who lives on the farm who runs a tomato cannery for them. They are now a major agricultural entity in the Yuba-Sutter area.

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Calendar of Events

June

22 Potluck Picnic in the Park, 11:30 a.m., behind the Museum

July

11 Children's Program, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum

17 *Christmas in July* sale starts at the Museum

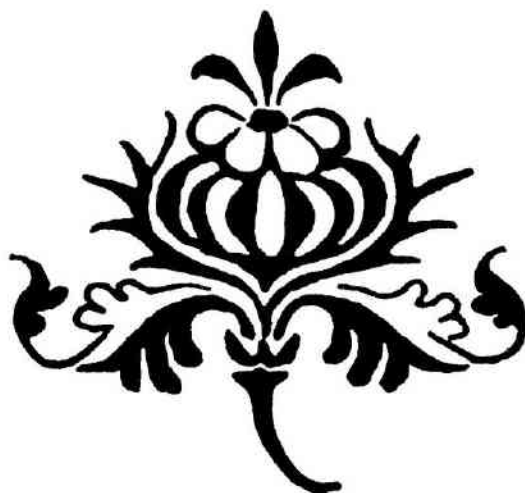
August

3 *Other Views: The Physical and Cultural Diversity of the Sutter Buttes Interpreted through Art* exhibit closes at the Museum

7 *Strife in the Fields: Centennial of the Wheatland Hop Riot, 1913-2013* presented by David Rubiales, 7:00 p.m. at the Museum

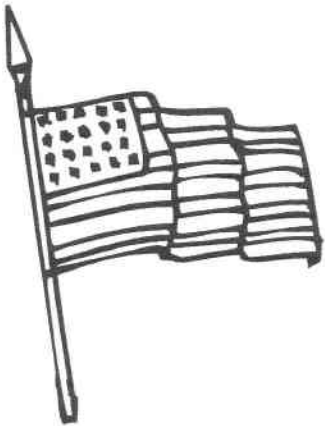
16 Reception for Sutter Buttes Calendar photographers, 5 - 7 p.m. at the Museum

24 Pig roast, Ettl Hall



Puzzling

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 QUINTERO
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 SANDHU
 SHARP
 SUTTERBUTTES
 TARKE
 TENCO
 VANARSDALE



Picnic in the Park

Saturday, June 22 at 11:30 a.m.

in Howard Harter Park

(behind the Museum)

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City

**Potluck – bring your favorite dish
Drinks, plates and utensils provided**

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