

# BULLETIN



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PHOTO FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.

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Sutter County Museum



suttercountymuseum

## Our Mission

The Sutter County Museum shares local stories to strengthen community bonds, to inspire celebration of our diverse cultural heritage, and to demonstrate how understanding the past prepares us for the future.

## About the Bulletin

The **Bulletin** is published by the Sutter County Museum Association. This year, the Association is publishing three editions. Editors are Sharyl Simmons and Phyllis Smith. Renewal of annual membership provides you with a subscription to the **Bulletin**.

## Museum Association

The Association is a 501(c)(3) organization that fundraises and supports the operation of the Museum.

Applications to join are available on the Museum's website. If you are interested in history and want to do something meaningful for our community, please consider applying! New applicants to the Association are approved by a vote of the full Association. Members serve for 4-year terms.

### Association Members:

Debbie Reid, President  
Barbara Hankins, Vice President  
Marika García, Secretary  
Amber Milner, Treasurer

Manny Cardoza	Tony Kurlan
Babs Cotter	Margit Sands
Eric Gruenthal	Sharyl Simmons
Scott Hankins	Phyllis Smith
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# Celebrating 50 Years of Serving the Community

This year, we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Sutter County Museum! From 1975 to 2025, the Museum has served the Yuba-Sutter community by sharing local stories to strengthen community bonds, inspiring the celebration of our diverse cultural heritage, and demonstrating how understanding the past prepares us for the future. This year, we are honoring the past while focusing on our future for this special milestone.

Save the date and join us for a celebration on **Saturday, April 26th from 12:00-4:00pm** for a fun family day with activities, food trucks, and giveaways! Admission to the Museum is free.

By our 50th anniversary celebration on April 26th, our new permanent exhibits in the Museum's Middle Gallery will be open. We have been working on this multi-year project to add a **comprehensive flood exhibit**, make **upgrades to the Nisenan and Gold Rush exhibits**, and **create educational programming** that directly supports our local students and teachers. The exhibits will include **interactive elements for hands-on learning** for children, families, and all community members to enjoy. We are excited to share the new exhibits with the community for our golden anniversary!

This new exhibit project is funded by the Specified General Fund for the Museum Grant Program under the California Cultural & Historical Endowment with substantial support from the Sutter County Museum Association (SCMA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The SCMA raises funds through Museum memberships, donations, Gift Shop sales, and fundraisers like Trees & Traditions. We want to take the opportunity to thank all of you for supporting us throughout the years and hope you will join us in April to celebrate our 50th anniversary and the new exhibits.



THE MUSEUM'S NEW EXHIBITS IN PROGRESS, FABRICATED AND INSTALLED BY GIZMO ART PRODUCTION AND DESIGNED BY RALPH APPELBAUM ASSOCIATES. PHOTO COURTESY OF SCM.



# Isaac Taylor McComas Diary

## Part IV: 1861 – 1862

Edited and Annotated by Sharyl Simmons

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*Isaac McComas came to California to search for gold. He stayed to work as a mason in Marysville, Yuba City, and occasionally Oroville. Once established here, he returned to Maryland and married Sarah “Sallie” Slicer. They added a daughter, Ella, to their family in the spring of 1860. In the last issue, we ended with a catastrophe when one of his buildings, the Market House, collapsed in a windstorm, putting a damper on the Christmas season and the new year starting with questions about what happens next to his business.*

*There is very little in his diary about current events. The American Civil War starts in April 1861, but he doesn't mention it in any detail in his diary. He shows interest in local politics and states his political party as Republican. One can assume he voted for Abraham Lincoln in 1860. His home state of Maryland remained in the Union but also remained a slave state until the state constitution was re-written in 1864.*

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### 1861

#### Jan. 1, 1861

We have not got the Market House job settled as yet. It is still laying as it fell. We met the Market House Company and had the affair fixed up. We have to lose \$500.00. We compromised.<sup>1</sup>

#### Jan. 9, 1861

We are working at the Market House to get ready to lay brick again soon.

#### Jan. 15, 1861

We topped out Mr. Fuller's two stores on 2nd St. at noon.<sup>2</sup> The wind blew so hard while we were at work I was afraid the building would fall down.

#### Jan. 18, 1861

We commenced to build the Market House that fell down. The walls are pretty much all down to the first floor excepting the wall next to the Odd Fellows Hall and the northeast corner. Our church choir met at our house.

#### Jan. 26, 1861

We finished up the first story of the Market House at noon today.

#### Jan. 27, 1861

Miss Mollie Walton, Dorsey, Sallie, the baby (Ella) and I walked down to see the new bridge across the Feather River.<sup>3</sup> A very pleasant walk.

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<sup>1</sup> The Market House was directly east of the Odd Fellows Building (currently an empty lot at 3rd & D Streets). The building was to be 60' x 85' with a 20' yard in back with stalls for meat, vegetables, etc. The building went from one story to two stories during the design phase. During the construction, a high wind blew the building down, with damages estimated at \$5,000. It was completed except for the fire walls. McComas' worry about the impact on his business cast a pall over Christmas 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Mortimer Fuller Livery Stable on 2nd Street near Maiden Lane.

<sup>3</sup> This was the Fall-Hanson-Webb toll bridge. Their first bridge washed out the previous winter. Later in 1861, a “free bridge” was erected crossing at 3rd Street in Marysville. Tolls were collected on that bridge until it was paid for, and then it became a truly free bridge.



IDENTIFIED BY THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM AS THE BRIDGE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 1861. PHOTO FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.

#### Jan. 30, 1861

We are working on the fire walls of the Market House and now it's only going to be one story. I moved a window frame for Dr. Winter<sup>4</sup> at Odd Fellows Hall.

#### Feb. 7, 1861

I finished Brophrey's<sup>5</sup> and a

job at the jail house and laid a foundation for a curb at Mr. Nash and George.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Chittender<sup>7</sup> called to see us this evening.

#### Feb. 13, 1861

We finished at the Market House excepting the pavement. We settled with the Hall Building

Association after a good deal of talk and deducting \$175. We are so glad to get a settlement, and all is over with them.

#### Feb. 16, 1861

We done a job for Mr. J. H. Wright<sup>8</sup> and John Lowery<sup>9</sup> at the Market. We also done a job for



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHARYL SIMMONS.

THIS IS THE MARKET HOUSE LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF 3RD STREET. ORIGINALLY IT WAS BROKEN INTO STALLS AND HOUSED MEAT AND VEGETABLE SELLERS. CURRENTLY ON EITHER END IT HOUSES A BAKERY/CAFÉ AND A BUTCHER SHOP/MEAT MARKET.

<sup>4</sup> J. W. Winter of Winter & Burlingame, Dentists, who had a practice on the second floor of the building.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly James Brophrey, who had a bar, or J. E. Brophrey, who worked at the Western Hotel.

<sup>6</sup> These were bakers in Marysville. On his death in 1891, John Nash, born in Scotland, left \$1,000 to Marysville to be used to buy books for the library.

<sup>7</sup> Probably Chittenden. Giles Chittenden lived in the area at that time.

<sup>8</sup> J. H. Wright & Co., Wholesale Hardware Merchants on 1st between D & High Streets.

<sup>9</sup> This could be John Lowery who was a Yuba County Supervisor and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the short-lived reform school.

Mr. J. Eaton<sup>10</sup> at the graveyard. We got \$1,500.00 on the Market House old bill. We put down the sidewalk at the Market House and that being the last work we have to do there. We also pointed up the arches at Mr. Fuller's two stores on second street. We visited friends on Casey Branch.

**Mar. 12, 1861**

Wright and Booth dug my well for \$1.00 a foot.

**Mar. 20, 1861**

I bought a yoke of oxen for \$150.00. I went to Lodge. We are still in the old Lodge Room but expect to get in the new Hall<sup>11</sup> in a week or so.

**Mar. 27, 1861**

The rivers are very high from so much rain. A man was drowned on Quintay Ranch.<sup>12</sup> The water is

as high as in 1854. I was elected one of the trustees of the Odd Fellows building association last night. Our daughter is unwell.<sup>13</sup>

**Apr. 15, 1861**

Jas. McCabe<sup>14</sup> was drowned close by the yard today trying to cross the slough on horseback. Mr. Steel<sup>15</sup> wants me to take the contract to finish the brick work on the State Reform School.

**Apr. 22, 1861**

I commenced to take out Mr. Scholl's<sup>16</sup> front on D St. next to the theatre building to put an iron front in. We broke a shaft on the yard this morning so we could not mold today. This is the last time we meet in the old hall. We meet in the new hall Tuesday evening.

**Apr. 26, 1861**

We dedicated our new hall today.

Quite a number came up from San Francisco and Sacramento. Everything came off in fine order and a fine time was had by all.<sup>17</sup> I worked all day at Scholl's the gun smith.

**Apr. 30, 1861**

We met in our new Odd Fellows Hall this evening<sup>18</sup> for the first time and initiated by Judge Merrill.<sup>19</sup> I have the brick work of Johnson's four houses to do. Wimple<sup>20</sup> is with me on it. I done a job for Mr. Moore on D St. opposite the post office.<sup>21</sup> I got Rafe to help me. He is a young man that served time with J. B. McDonald and J.<sup>22</sup> I engaged one hundred cords of wood of Mr. Casey at \$4.00 per cord delivered. I start on Gwynn's<sup>23</sup> houses today.

<sup>10</sup> John L. Eaton had a warehouse at 149 2nd Street.

<sup>11</sup> International Order of Odd Fellows' new hall that McComas worked on.

<sup>12</sup> High water submerged the Quintay Ranch and attempts were made to get stock to high ground. The slough between the ranch and city was very deep and Owen Phillips, a hired man, drowned driving cattle across the slough.

<sup>13</sup> McComas rarely mentioned family in the diary, so he must have been quite distressed. Children were susceptible to so many illnesses that it was a fortunate family if they did not lose at least one child.

<sup>14</sup> James McCabe drowned while driving stock across the slough near the County Hospital. One animal became stuck in the slough, and he rode after it, lost his seat on his horse, and was swept away. His body was recovered.

<sup>15</sup> John A. Steel, contractor and builder who had an office over the Wells, Fargo & Co. offices. Besides the state reform school, he constructed the elementary school on 7th & B Streets and J. C. Fall's toll bridge over the Feather River.

<sup>16</sup> C. F. Scholl, gunsmith, located on D between 2nd & 3rd Streets.

<sup>17</sup> International Order of Odd Fellows' new hall was dedicated on Friday, April 26, 1861. Members met at the old hall on 3rd Street and moved in a procession at 10:00 a.m. from 3rd to E, E to 1st, 1st to D, D to New Hall (corner of 3rd & D Streets). After the dedication they marched to the Presbyterian Church where a choir performed, music was played, a poem was read, and oration given by P. G. Newton-Booth. From there the group marched to the Pavilion where lunch was served. Following lunch, the procession marched from C St. to 7th, 7th to D, D to the New Hall, and was then dismissed.

<sup>18</sup> There were three Odd Fellows clubs in Marysville. McComas belonged to Yuba Lodge No. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Judge Rufus R. Merrill served as a Justice of the Peace, Under Sheriff, District Attorney, and on the local school board. His sudden death in 1874 at age 48 shocked his many friends in the community. Schools were closed for his funeral so teachers and children could attend.

<sup>20</sup> H. A. Wimple.

<sup>21</sup> The Post Office was located on the east side of D Street between 3rd & 4th Street.

<sup>22</sup> This does not relate to a stint in jail, but the fact that Rafe worked with other masons in the area including J. B. McDonald, one time partner of McComas. There is no way to identify "J."

<sup>23</sup> William Gwynn, dealer in building materials including lime for mortar with the Lime Depot located on 5th Street between High & D Streets.

**May 10, 1861**

We are going to San Francisco on a visit. I finished the cellar at Gwynn's Lime House. We built two privies for Mathews on D St. I done a job for Mr. Williams'<sup>24</sup> mill. I got another job to do for Ross and Cockrill.<sup>25</sup>

**May 23, 1861**

I went to the Pavillion to hear Senator Latham<sup>26</sup> speak. I am to do a job for the gas company this afternoon. The free bridge was opened today and got ready to have a ball on it at night. A large crowd is expected to enjoy it.<sup>27</sup>

**June 3, 1861**

I went to the new Odd Fellows Lodge. Paul Provost<sup>28</sup> and Ham Willard were initiated. I went to our Fireman's Company meeting. We are making preparations to go to San Francisco this month, I would like to go with them.

**June 6, 1861**

We started a house for Mr. Cockrill on his lot and it's 24 by 30. It's only one story high above the cellar. I only get \$12.00 and wait about twelve months for my pay. Very cheap indeed. We have engaged a lot and expect to build a chapel soon. The trustees paid for our lot today \$110.00 on E and 8th St.<sup>29</sup>

**June 12, 1861**

The slough is still high so we have to go around by the bridge. I started a job today down by the Feather River steamboat building for Frank Gott at \$12.50 per m.<sup>30</sup> William Barnes and I met at Williams' Mill to make arrangements about building our chapel. We topped out the lime house this noon and then we all went on the job that Wimple and I are doing together.



MILTON LATHAM.  
BRADLEY & RULOFSON, PHOTOGRAPHERS.

<sup>24</sup> Fennie Williams & Co., Marysville Flour Mills, corner of 2nd & F Streets.

<sup>25</sup> Probably Christopher Cockrill who died suddenly on a train in Contra Costa County. He was identified by a letter he carried, and family was notified. He was a member of the Pioneer Society and owned property in Marysville and a ranch near Pennington in the Sutter Buttes.

<sup>26</sup> Milton Latham was a Lecompton Democrat (favored expansion of slavery into territories) elected governor of California in 1859 and resigned five days after his inauguration when he was elected to fill the remainder of Senator David C. Broderick's term. Broderick was killed in a duel by slavery supporter and former California Supreme Court Justice David Terry in the fall of 1859. Latham later became a prominent banker who helped finance the California Pacific and North Pacific Coast Railroad.

<sup>27</sup> Approximately 1,000 people and various-sized wagons paraded around downtown Marysville, crossing the free bridge into Yuba City where speeches were made and music played and the crowd, now supplemented with people from Yuba City, crossed back over the bridge into Marysville. That night a ball was held on the bridge, and dancing continued until dawn.

<sup>28</sup> Provost was active in the Eureka Engine Co. #1.

<sup>29</sup> The First Baptist Church was organized in Marysville in 1854, but it wasn't until 1862 that a permanent home was built at the corner of E & 8th Streets. This brick building was another of McComas' contributions to Marysville, as well as his home church. The congregation later split into the First Baptist and Union Baptist churches.

<sup>30</sup> I believe this means per 1,000 bricks.



**June 23, 1861**

I had in my class at the Baptist Church all day George Hunt,<sup>31</sup> George and Frank Strong, Frank Cook,<sup>32</sup> Charles Fitzgerald, R. Reed,<sup>33</sup> and G. Landry.<sup>34</sup>

**July 3, 1861**

We had a very big fire this afternoon. About half the block opposite the United States Hotel burned. But we got together and saved the hotel.<sup>35</sup>

**July 4, 1861**

The Republicans had quite a turn out as well as the Union party<sup>36</sup> at the Court House. Both parties had a ball at night. I am a Republican I'm glad to say.<sup>37</sup>

**July 10, 1861**

I started our chapel today. Pat McCarthy and Dorsey helped me.

**July 22, 1861**

I started Mr. E. May's Livery Stable today.<sup>38</sup> I'm working a small gang on the stable. My yoke

of oxen gave out and I hired two yoke and turned mine out on a ranch. My best ox, Old Blue, died today.

**Aug. 13, 1861**

We done a job for Eaton<sup>39</sup> at his store on E St. I put in a bid to build a wall around the State Reform School. We had quite a good little boy (son) come to town today just fifteen past two this afternoon.<sup>40</sup> Dr. Rice was present. Sallie is doing finely so is the baby.

**Aug. 21, 1861**

Mr. Fall and Mr. Wescott spoke to me today about doing the brickwork at the State Reform School but it's not decidable yet. I will do it at my time.

**Aug. 22, 1861**

Bowen and Shakespeare<sup>41</sup> are the lowest bidders on the brick work at the State Reform School. Came forward and gave the bonds and I took the job.

**Aug. 31, 1861**

I bought an ox yesterday and paid \$70.00 for him. He looks good to me.

**Sept. 4, 1861**

Election Day for Governor and others. I put up a wall for Shillingburgh today and started Woodson's house.<sup>42</sup> I have to take it all out in lumber. I get \$13.00 per m and pay for lumber as follows, fencing \$22.00 and rough lumber flooring \$40.00.

**Sept. 24, 1861**

We had quite a fire. An old blacksmith shop burned on A street.<sup>43</sup>

**Sept. 28, 1861**

The Committee met this evening on that \$240.00 subscription in stock in Odd Fellows Hall. It is not decided yet but expected soon.

**Oct. 6, 1861**

We had another fire last night

<sup>31</sup> George P. Hunt, blacksmith at the corner of C & 3rd Streets; lived at the corner of 4th & A Streets.

<sup>32</sup> Francis "Frank" Cook, a carpenter who lived at the corner of 9th & G Streets.

<sup>33</sup> Possibly Robert Read, a blacksmith who along with his brothers ran a stable, blacksmith shop, and grocery store out of their property at the corner of C & 4th Streets.

<sup>34</sup> Prior to having their own chapel, the Baptist Church met at City Hall, so these classes may have been held there or at a private residence.

<sup>35</sup> Fire originated in Cora's Stable on C Street and spread, destroying this stable, including 13 horses and mules, the stable of C. G. Bockius, the United States Stable, and the blacksmith shop of A. P. Spear; on 3rd Street one blacksmith shop and two homes; on Virgin Alley the stables of Thomas Nutter and T. Suber; and on B Street the California Bakery. Firemen battled the heat of the day as well as the fire to limit the damage to these establishments.

<sup>36</sup> The National Union Party was a wartime coalition of Republicans, War Democrats, and Unconditional Unionists in border states who supported the Lincoln administration during the war.

<sup>37</sup> This is one of the few direct comments McComas made about politics or which side he supported in the ongoing Civil War.

<sup>38</sup> A. W. May. This was construction of Bull's Head Livery Stable on 2nd Street between Maiden Lane & C Street. By June 1862, May left the community and his partner, D. Alley, remained in business.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Eaton.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Slicer McComas joined Isaac, Sallie, and Ella.

<sup>41</sup> Josiah S. Bowen & B. F. Shakespeare, contractors. McComas and Bowen dissolved their partnership earlier in 1861.

<sup>42</sup> Either G. N. or A. C. Woodson, who shared ownership of a lumberyard.

<sup>43</sup> Hoole's blacksmith shop on A Street below 4th Street. Damages were contained to that shop and the roof of another building on 4th Street.





McCOMAS WORKED ON PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS. THESE ARE SOME OF THE BUILDINGS WE KNOW HE WORKED ON IN MARYSVILLE. THE BUILDINGS HOUSED (LEFT TO RIGHT) C. F. SCHOLL, GUNSMITH; JOSEPH L. DAVIS & CO., WHOLESALE MERCHANDISE & T. T. DAVENPORT (USE UNKNOWN); CITY HALL & EUREKA FIRE ENGINE #1; JAMES DALEY, HAT STORE & J. B. HUMPHREY OFFICE; YUBA COUNTY COURTHOUSE. PHOTO FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.

on the corner of C and 2nd street. The old frame Philadelphia Hotel burned down.<sup>44</sup> J. C. Fall and Tennent failed today and I lose 50 or 60 dollars by Fall.<sup>45</sup> It has created quite a sensation.

### Oct. 15, 1861

I topped out the Baker house and then took a job for the City of Yuba engine house. We dedicated our Baptist chapel today and the house was very much filled. We had three ministers present besides our own.<sup>46</sup> Rev. Wallsworth,<sup>47</sup> Laxton, and Cheeney. Everything passed off very well. Mr. Gramps<sup>48</sup> played the melodeon for us.

### Oct. 21, 1861

I paid my city taxes today. It amounted to \$91 dollars and some cents. In the afternoon I worked at the hospital. We are all well.

### Oct. 23, 1861

I figured up the brickwork on the hotel to be built on corner 3rd and C Sts.

### Oct. 25, 1861

I bought an extra paper at noon today. This date being the first news telegraph over the new line.<sup>49</sup> It brought the news of the death of Wildey<sup>50</sup> and Col. Baker.<sup>51</sup> I worked all day at Johnson house on D St. pointing up. That being the last thing, the big job is finally done at last. Now to be completed by the Superintendent. Last Monday I was elected delegate for the Marysville Fire Company.

### Nov. 16, 1861

I paid my county and state taxes today amounting to \$156.36.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>44</sup> This fire originated in a Chinese wash house early in the morning at the southeast corner of 2nd & C Streets and a cluster of wooden buildings burned including the Philadelphia Hotel, a shoemaker's shop and two Chinese wash houses.

<sup>45</sup> John C. Fall, Fall & Co. and Tennent & Covington suspended business, being unable to pay their outstanding bills. Fall, a very prominent merchant in Marysville and the builder of the Fall-Cheim house, lost everything, but the paper wished him well. They believed that Tennent & Covington would survive, as they could cover their losses. One contributor could have been the opening of the free bridge over the Feather River, as they had the license for the toll bridge.

<sup>46</sup> Reverend H. H. Rheese.

<sup>47</sup> Reverend E. B. Wallsworth.

<sup>48</sup> F. Grambss, leader of the Leiderkranz, a German male choir. Grambss taught piano, harmony, and singing at his residence at 186 5th Street.

<sup>49</sup> First transcontinental telegraph connecting California to the east coast. It must have been unimaginable to people used to receiving news days or weeks after it happened to hear it instantly.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Wildey founded the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in North America.

<sup>51</sup> Edward Dickson Baker died at the Battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861, the only sitting Senator (Oregon) to be killed in a military engagement. In the early 1850s he was an attorney in San Francisco.

<sup>52</sup> Approximately \$3,600 dollars today.

**Nov. 22, 1861**

I worked for Mr. John Holsch<sup>53</sup> repairing his privy at his store on D St.

**Dec. 4, 1861**

I am building a little colored man a house near the public-school house.<sup>54</sup>

**Dec. 9, 1861**

Today the weather has been very pleasant overhead but last night it rained terrible hard and with that and a great amount of snow in the mountains melting has caused one of the greatest floods ever witnessed in California. Part of the Merchants Hotel and a number of stores fell about day light.<sup>55</sup>

**Dec. 10, 1861**

The water continued raising yesterday until late in the afternoon. At one point in town it was 5 inches higher than in 1852 and 1853. My house on the corner of 5th and F was all right. The grade being about 12 inches above water while the house on D St. was only about 6 inches above. A great deal of property was destroyed. I lost some wood just above the back yard.

**Dec. 11, 1861**

Today brings my back yard under 11 feet of water. We barely saved the oxen by swimming them out. It has washed a great many small houses that stood on the low land away. The houses washed pass my house all day long. Many boats were in great demand. I have done nothing but watch the flood.

**Dec. 12, 1861**

The merchants have been very busy all week saving what they can from the stores that fell. No lives have been lost about Marysville, but a great many escaped in the hotel and Eaton's store when they all fell.

**Dec. 13, 1861**

The weather pleasant overhead but the streets and roads are in a horrible condition. William and Co.<sup>56</sup> millers lost considerable by the flood. Sacramento has suffered most from the flood. A great many cattle drowned thru out the valley. Our cellar kept perfectly dry.

**Dec. 14, 1861**

During the high water on Monday the steamboat came up the slough and went around by the back yards closest to Judge Bliss' property

<sup>53</sup> Possibly John Hoesch who sold patent medicine for ague and owned and operated the City Drug Store. If it is the same person, a few years earlier he was partners with Frank Terstegge in the Philadelphia Boot and Shoe Store.

<sup>54</sup> Somewhere near 7th & B Streets.

<sup>55</sup> Merchant's Hotel, O. M. Evans, Proprietor, at the northwest corner of 1st & Plaza. These establishments were in lower Marysville near the Yuba River.

<sup>56</sup> Marysville Flour Mills at the corner of 2nd & F Streets.

## The Great Flood

It was at first thought that the Yuba River was rising slowly enough for Marysville to remain safe, but by Sunday morning, it was discovered the river had backed up into the slough so that the lower part of the town, below E Street, was in danger and the flats were filling up with water.

By Sunday night the water was stretched from the slough above 3rd Street to the Yuba River, making islands of most of the buildings below E Street. About daylight Monday the outer wall of Eaton's store on the Plaza fell as the foundation was undermined by water. The Eaton family fled in their nightclothes to the Merchant's Hotel on 1st Street, and about 10 minutes later, the floors of the hotel gave way and the cellar supports collapsed. By that time, the fire bell began to sound an alarm, and rescues of the stranded commenced.

The Rev. Deal of the Methodist Church lived near the slough and kept watch all night. He started hearing cries of distress from the west side of the slough and rang the church bell. From his alarm, boats began rescuing people from their second floors and roofs. The next morning, some small houses were submerged and/or floating away.

The steamer Defiance went around the Yuba bridge and took off people in distress without means of escaping the flood. It continued its rescue mission until the water began to subside and the boat had to return to deeper water.

The only parts of town not under water were the Yuba waterfront from the corner of High St. to the foot of A St.; on E St. to 8th St., 8th St. from C St. to A St., and on A St. to 7th St.

The townsite of Yuba City was under water. In the countryside, ranches and farms were inundated, and livestock perished by the thousands.

By December 10th, the only local human losses reported were a man coming into the city on horseback near the Quintay Ranch and a woman carried off in a small wooden house from the flat beyond the sloughs while a boat, which had rescued her children, went to town with them. The house was gone when the boat returned, having been swept off its foundation and carried away.

Flood waters rose and subsided throughout the rest of December and continued into January 1862. On January 11th, water covered the town again. Flooding continued throughout northern California, and the flood of 1862 is considered the largest flood in recorded history in California.

Approximately 5-6,000 square miles of the Central Valley were under water.

It is estimated that this flood, which affected several states besides California, resulted in the death of 4,000 people, the loss of 200,000 head of cattle, and inflation saw the price of groceries such as eggs rise to \$3.00 a dozen (\$79.00 today).

to get families from the houses and also around the other way to get families out.

#### **Dec. 16, 1861**

I am not doing much now because the roads are so bad I can't haul brick.

#### **Dec. 18, 1861**

I have been working all day trying to get that job of J. R. Johnson settled. Miller has made a deduction on the brick work of \$225.00.

#### **Dec. 20, 1861**

I worked most all day for C. Rash on C St. repairing what the flood destroyed. I reset a range at the hospital. The water has got very high again within about 4 feet of being as high as the flood a few days ago.

#### **Dec. 25, 1861**

Today has been a very quiet Christmas. I stayed at home all day. The streets are in awful condition on account of so much rain. A great many people have lost by the flood all they have in the world. It rained very hard last night. The lower part of town lying west on F St. to Feather River is all under water again but not so deep as the flood of the 9th. About all the damage the flood done was on the brick yard. The fireman's pole fell last night.

#### **Dec. 28, 1861**

I commenced to do some work at the Post Office. My oxen died last night.

#### **Dec. 30, 1861**

Another very heavy rain while I was at the graveyard building. I was building a vault for Montgomery's two little boys that died from eating toadstools.<sup>57</sup> It rained so hard that they left them at the church until later.

#### **Dec. 31, 1861**

I helped get ready for our fair which is to commence this evening.<sup>58</sup> Evening very pleasant. My wife Sallie was with me at the fair. Everything looked very nice. We bought a few things for the children. Today being the last day of the year finds us all enjoying excellent health for which I hope that we do feel thankful for it. I feel very well satisfied with the success that I have had in business for the last year and only hope that I may do as well the next year. I have met with some losses, but I must expect that dealing with so many kinds of

<sup>57</sup> Children of Zachariah Montgomery who deserves an article for himself. Thomas and Zachariah Jr. ate poisonous mushrooms they found near their home in Yuba City. The boys, ages 6 and 3, died within hours. The famous aviator John J. Montgomery was Zachariah's twin. A sister became very ill but recovered.

<sup>58</sup> Held by the ladies of the Baptist church and the congregation at the Water Works Hall.



people. The assessment roll of the state last year was one hundred and forty-seven million dollars. \$147,000,000.

## 1862

### Jan. 2, 1862

We got weighed at the Fair today. Sallie weighed 150 and I weighed 160.

### Jan. 3, 1862

I worked at the hospital most of the day and at Mr. Wright's and at the Ponder<sup>59</sup> house later.

### Jan. 4, 1862

I worked at the Post Office today, a side of the wall fell down during the heavy rain we had here earlier. It snowed very hard today and the Buttes was

quite white with snow. The streets are in a horrible condition.

### Jan. 10, 1862

Weather continues very bad. Rained very hard today and the water has been rising very fast all day and has appearances of another high flood. This evening the water is still rising. We made up our minds to stay up all night. It is about as high as the last flood.<sup>60</sup>

### Jan. 11, 1862

The water continued rising all last night and all day today and has got about eight inches above the flood where we lived on the 9th of December last and this makes the 4th time we had water like this. This is the largest flood ever known in this state. Most of the valley as far as you can see is covered with water. We had no church today on account of the water. My

<sup>59</sup> Possibly John H. Ponder.

<sup>60</sup> Over the month of rainfall San Francisco received 34" of rain, Sacramento 37", Los Angeles 35", and Nevada City received snowfall the equivalent of 115" of rain.



K STREET IN SACRAMENTO AS SEEN FROM THE LEVEE. THE ORIGINAL LITHOGRAPH WAS PUBLISHED BY A. ROSENFELD IN SAN FRANCISCO.



shanties at the yard<sup>61</sup> are all covered over with water.

**Jan. 14, 1862**

The streets and roads are in awful condition. Wood is very scarce about town and very high in price. My pump on D St. fell in the well because of soft dirt. I put in city water today.

**Jan. 16, 1862**

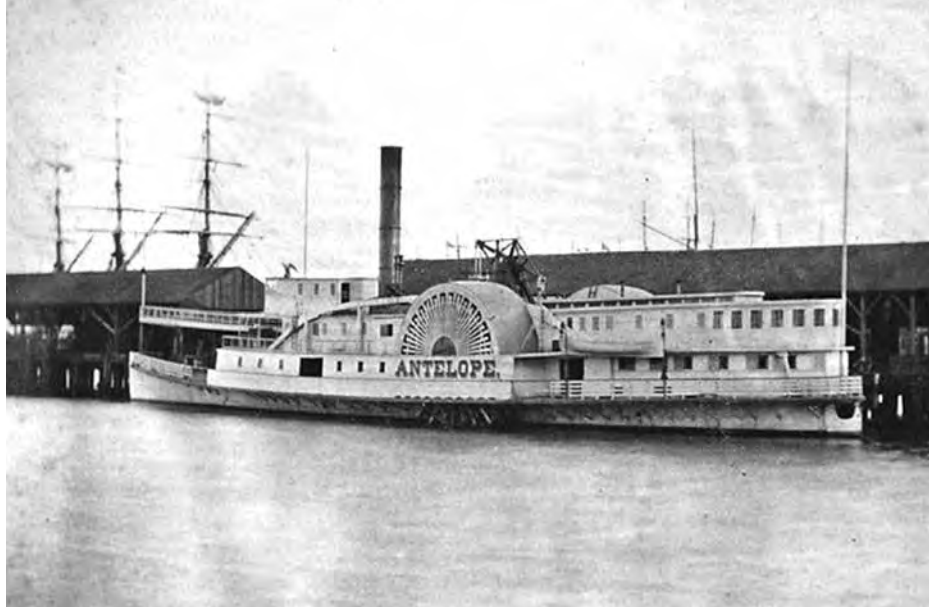
It again has the appearance of another flood. Everybody is complaining very much of the bad weather and a lot of stock is lost. Thousands are being washed away. I started for San Francisco at 7 this morning. We found the river very high all the way to town. We arrived in Sacramento about noon and took dinner there. We found half of the town flooded so bad that they had to use boats in all the streets. We went down from there on the Chriopolis.<sup>62</sup> Arrived at nine and stopped at the Cheer House.<sup>63</sup>

**Jan. 20, 1862**

I could not walk about on account of the high water and rain. I saw the man about the new stile range and found out how they were set up. I also saw a new stile four-wheel dumping cart.

**Jan. 21, 1862**

I started back on the Antelope<sup>64</sup> and we had quite a race to Sacramento with the Nevada.<sup>65</sup> I stayed aboard all night. At Sacramento the weather is still bad and the city is still flooded and everybody is



THE ANTELOPE. PUBLIC DOMAIN.

leaving that can get away. We found the country very much flooded all the way to Marysville. A great many cattle perishing all the way. Arrived home about 9 and found all well.

**Jan. 23, 1862**

Provisions are getting very scarce in the last week. Flour is \$6.00 per hundred. Potatoes 6¢ per lb. Wood 12 to 16 dollars a cord. I drove the white and black oxen out on Sampson ranch.<sup>66</sup> I stopped at the State Reform School and got my lunch. It's the first time I ever saw it.

**Jan. 27, 1862**

I took a walk down to the Feather River bridge and that part of town looks very bad on account of the high water. We were all surprised to find three inches of snow on the ground and it continued snowing all day. It looked like one of our old fashion

<sup>61</sup> His brickyard.

<sup>62</sup> Chryopolis (sidewheel steamer) constructed in San Francisco in 1860 by the California Steam Navigation Company.

<sup>63</sup> What Cheer House advertised itself as neat, good, and cheap with free shower baths, an extensive library and reading room, and an omnibus to carry passengers from steamship to the hotel free of charge. R. B. Woodward, Proprietor.

<sup>64</sup> *Antelope* (sidewheel steamer) reached the Bay Area in 1851 by sailing around Cape Horn for the Independent Line. It was brought in to the California Steam Navigation Company when it was formed in 1854. She was considered the fastest and most reliable steamer on the river.

<sup>65</sup> During a race on February 7, 1862, the Nevada's pilot missed seeing a snag and the steamer foundered. They got all passengers off the boat near Rio Vista, but the steamer was a total loss.

<sup>66</sup> William H., John, & Charles B. Sampson owned a great deal of property in Yuba County, and this was probably where McComas took his oxen.

winters back home in Baltimore. I even saw some strays out and lost. The citizens living here said it's greater than they'd seen.

**Feb. 4, 1862**

In the evening the citizens had a town meeting to try and devise members to get the state capital at Marysville. The meeting was quite enthusiastic. A committee of 8 was appointed to solicit \$60,000 to build a building for that purpose.<sup>67</sup>

**Feb. 7, 1862**

I got ready today to set a range at the Western Hotel.<sup>68</sup> I also got ready to build a little stable in the Court House yard for Barrett<sup>69</sup> the Sheriff.



WESTERN HOTEL, AT THE CORNER OF D & 2ND STREETS, MARYSVILLE. PHOTO FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.

**Feb. 8, 1862**

I got to do the range at the Western Hotel about 9 this morning. It is a new style range and a very good one. I commenced my job on the stable at the Court House. I had to get the brick in town on account of the roads being so bad. I now have to do the brick work in Yuba City. I do it by the day and am paid in script. I am to get \$7.00 a day. Evening at the delegate meeting.

<sup>67</sup> The idea the committee came up with was for John Sampson to quit claim title of Cortez Square for the building, raise money from locals, build the building suitable for the capitol, give the keys to the state, and surely the legislature would move the capitol. The capitol remained in Sacramento.

<sup>68</sup> Located at the corner of 2nd & D Streets.

<sup>69</sup> Herndon Barrett previously served in California State Assembly. He was active in local politics and was an auctioneer as well.

**Feb. 12, 1862**

Got ready and started at work repairing the Court House in Yuba City.<sup>70</sup> The floor was damaged considerable by the flood. The Supervisors of Sutter Co. are extending the free bridge and making repairs. The old bridge washed away.

**Feb. 21, 1862**

I started some work for Mr. Boyd<sup>71</sup> our county Treasure of Sutter Co.

**Feb. 22, 1862**

All stores are closed in observing Washington birthday.

**Feb. 25, 1862**

At Yuba City putting down pavement on the north side.

**Feb. 26, 1862**

It rained so hard last night we could not get over to Yuba City to work. I went on Charlie Hapgood's<sup>72</sup> notes today for one thousand dollars and also for one thousand dollars on John Love<sup>73</sup> for his appearance at Court.

**Mar. 2, 1862**

Jerry and I worked all day at Mr. Boyd's in Yuba City built a chimney.

**Mar. 10, 1862**

I worked today paving the Empire block.<sup>74</sup>

**Mar. 17, 1862**

Today was election day for city officers. Our old Mayor was elected. The election passed off safely with very few fights and trouble.

**Mar. 18, 1862**

We have quite a number of smallpox cases in the city and quite a number have died. I was with my family vaccinated today.<sup>75</sup>

**Mar. 24, 1862**

I finished at the California Stage Company Granery<sup>76</sup> and paved it all over. I done it for \$11.50 per thousand. The Sheriff sale of Charles Covillaud<sup>77</sup> came off today. I attended it because of my brick yard being in the sale. I paid for my lots that I bought in the sale today. Ella is two years today.

**Apr. 8, 1862**

I put in a bid for the 5th St. aqueduct at \$11.00 per thousand. Went to the delegate meeting at the City Hall. We started Issac Green's<sup>78</sup> stable.

<sup>70</sup> This courthouse, built in 1858, was destroyed by fire in 1871. The cause was listed as mice or rats chewing on sulfur matches.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Boyd was elected Treasurer in 1858 and continued to be reelected until his death in 1871 at age 40. Following his death, his business partner in the Boyd & Wilcoxon store assumed his role as Treasurer. His home at the time of his death was on 2nd Street in Yuba City. For a detailed biography of Caleb E. Wilcoxon, please see the article by Don Burtis in the *Bulletin* dated April 2002. All previous editions of the *Bulletin* can be found on the Museum's website.

<sup>72</sup> Charles Hapgood came to California in 1856 and, with partners, had a dry goods store in Marysville. In 1862, he left for Mexico and operated a silver mine, eventually moving to San Francisco where he worked in the U. S. Customs House for several years before returning to Marysville to become the Postmaster. He died in 1900 of malaria.

<sup>73</sup> John S. Love was the tax collector for Yuba County. At some point, it appears that he defaulted on a bond that he denied owing. Several lawsuits were filed against him and his wife, which they appear to have lost, and at some point, they left California and were thought to be in Utah and out of reach of the law. All his property in Marysville was auctioned off to pay debts.

<sup>74</sup> On 2nd Street.

<sup>75</sup> In 1862 the city built a "pest house" for smallpox patients to be taken. A nurse and doctor were paid to care for them. Bills were submitted for bedding and clothes which had to be destroyed. A "pest house" seemed to be the response by the city to epidemics several times during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

<sup>76</sup> The office was at the corner of 2nd & D Streets. Daily stages left for Hamilton, Neal Station, Chico, Red Bluff, Tehama, Shasta, Yreka, Oregon House, Keystone, Foster's Bar, Downieville, French Corral, Heiss' Crossing, Camptonville, Long Bar, Empire Ranch, Rough & Ready, Grass Valley, Nevada (City), Charley's Ranch, Central House, Lynchburgh, Stringtown, Ophir, Thompson's Flat, Garden Ranch, Bidwell's Bar, Hansonville, Forbestown, Long Bar, and Park's Bar. Their stages also went to Virginia & Carson Cities in the Nevada Territory.

<sup>77</sup> Charles Covillaud, a French immigrant, is considered one of the founders of Marysville. The town itself is named after his wife, Mary Murphy Covillaud, who was a survivor of the Donner Party. Although his fortune took a dive in the spring of 1862, by the time of his death in 1867 he left his family well cared for.

<sup>78</sup> Isaac Green ran the U. S. Mail Line for Downieville, daily leaving at 4:00 for Brown's Valley, Oregon House, Foster's Bar, Camptonville, Goodyear's Bar, Brandy City, Eureka, Monte Cristo, and Downieville and connections with the Reticker and Humphries line for Washoe, Virginia, and Carson Cities. The office was at the corner of D & 3rd Street at the St. Nicholas Hotel.

**Apr. 11, 1862**

I handed in a bid for the brick culvert on 3rd St.

**Apr. 28, 1862**

I started a job for Lennox & Elwell<sup>79</sup> on second street. I set a monument for John Walsh. Just as I was coming from the cattle ground someone set it afire, I saw two young men inside and I think it was them.

**May 7, 1862**

The Grand Lodge<sup>80</sup> is now in session in Marysville.

**May 27, 1862**

Worked all day at Issac Green's black smith shop. I received my pay today for the culverts I built. It amounted to \$420.00.

**June 9, 1862**

I went over to Yuba City to go on a bond for Mr. Stephenson and while I was there I got the script for the work I done at the Court House amounting to \$77.00. I commenced a job at the hospital today.

**July 1, 1862**

I went out to the graveyard to do a job for Nightingill.<sup>81</sup>

**July 4, 1862**

In the afternoon I went out with our new steam fire engine.<sup>82</sup> We had a very nice time with her. She is very new and quite a sight to see.

**July 14, 1862**

Worked all day on the basement wall of the Old Merchants Hotel.<sup>83</sup>

**July 17, 1862**

I started a School House for Mrs. Poston<sup>84</sup> on the corner of 6th and D Sts. It is one story high at \$12.00 per m.

**Aug. 30, 1862**

Pat and I built a privy vault at the Old Merchants Hotel. I got another job from Mrs. Poston to build a wall around the School House in front.

**Sept. 17**

I started for Oroville and got there about 10. I went up to repair a house for Mr. Ducy<sup>85</sup> and stopped at the St. Nicholas Hotel.<sup>86</sup>

**Sept. 26, 1862**

Still in Oroville building some piers under the Catholic Church.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Lennox & Elwell supplied groceries and provisions including barley, wheat, oats, ground barley, mixed feed, bran & shorts, flour, corn meal, potatoes, etc. and Isthmus butter in small kits. Isthmus butter was sold at many locations and appears to be butter brought through the Isthmus from the east coast. The store was located at 149 & 151 2nd Street. This address indicates that the store was large enough to take up two storefronts.

<sup>80</sup> The annual session of the Grand Lodge of the State of California, Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I. O. O. F.) at the Odd Fellow's Hall at 3rd & D Streets. The *Marysville Appeal* published the Journal of Proceedings of the 10th Annual Session. The session lasted four days and the minutes were all published in the newspaper.

<sup>81</sup> Probably Gideon Rither Nightingill, who purchased a cemetery plot in 1861. There is reference to his losing a son in his brother's, Alanson Walker "Lance" Nightingill's, obituary in 1870. Both brothers arrived in Marysville from Ohio as painters, but Gideon stayed with the trade painting, gilding, graining, and hanging wallpaper. His brother mined and served as City Marshal in Marysville and Nevada's first State Controller, and he died in Carson City of tuberculosis in his early 40s.

<sup>82</sup> The Eureka Fire Co. bought a steam fire engine which arrived in parts. The final piece, the boiler, was delivered in June. \$3,640 was appropriated for its purchase. On its first call out to a fire in July, it was unable to build up enough pressure to be used in time to save the buildings on fire. The paper reported the handpump engine managed to limit the loss to two buildings.

<sup>83</sup> The Merchants Hotel on 1st St. was destroyed in the flood, and a series of brick buildings were going to be constructed on the site.

<sup>84</sup> Mrs. Eugenia C. Poston opened a Girls Seminary on E St. between 7th & 8th Streets in 1857. She purchased a residence on the north side of 6th & D Street and had a brick school constructed. In 1873, she announced she was moving to Oakland and opened a school there in 1876. After teaching for many years, she closed her school and went to Rome to study art. She returned to Oakland and gave lectures. In approximately 1897, her former students from Marysville and Oakland formed the Eugenia Poston Club and met regularly. She died on Christmas Day in 1907 at the age of 80.

<sup>85</sup> This might be a member of the Duensing family.

<sup>86</sup> Located on Montgomery Street in Oroville. Single meals were 50 cents, and lodging was between 50 & 75 cents a night.

<sup>87</sup> St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church. The original church was a frame building at the upper end of Pine Street. The brick building at the site of the current church wasn't constructed until 1875.



**Oct. 6, 1862**

I started a little stable for Mr. Plough<sup>88</sup> off on Commerce Alley in the rear of Smith's lumber yard.<sup>89</sup>

**Oct. 13, 1862**

I worked all day at the water works<sup>90</sup> and did a little job for Col. Tompkins<sup>91</sup> out on Washington Square and paid my city taxes. It was \$134.75. My business is quite dull now. I am thinking of going over to Washoe to see what the prospects are and maybe I will go over in the spring and carry my business there. Sherman and I went out to the Reform School to raise a chimney. I have a one story to put on Mathews house where Booth<sup>92</sup> and Judge Filkins<sup>93</sup> live on D St. I paid my county taxes today. They were \$181.39 making city and county taxes \$340.00.

**Nov. 10, 1862**

I worked at Mr. Jewett's<sup>94</sup> house on C and the house

that Bollinger built.<sup>95</sup> I went on a trial case between Casper Phosmer.<sup>96</sup> We started a stable for Mr. Selby<sup>97</sup> and a foundation on 3rd street.

**Nov. 24, 1862**

Today is my birthday and I am 33<sup>98</sup> years old. I started the 5th street sewer. It is in the slough close to where I live on the corner of 5th and F St.

**Nov. 28, 1862**

I commenced a job at the Methodist Parsonage<sup>99</sup> building a chimney and a great marble mantle. Started paving for Mr. Jewett the banker.

**Dec. 11, 1862**

Got through at Mr. Jewett's and started a job for Mr. Rideout<sup>100</sup> building a curb on E St. Steward<sup>101</sup> and I started our first job together working for Reish and Billnop blacksmith and wheel right shop.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Probably William Plughoff who had a harness and saddlery business at the corner of 3rd & E Streets.

<sup>89</sup> Owned by Joseph F. Smith, located at the corner of 4th & E Streets.

<sup>90</sup> Located at the corner of 4th & D Streets.

<sup>91</sup> Schuyler C. Tompkins, who was active in city government, acting as Alderman, Mayor, and Assessor as well as having a real estate office on the west side of 3rd & D Streets.

<sup>92</sup> Possibly H. J. Booth, owner of Marysville Foundry & Machine Shop located on the corner of 4th & B Streets.

<sup>93</sup> Charles E. Filkins was born in New York and studied law in the office of William H. Seward in Auburn, New York. Seward became Secretary of State under President Lincoln. Filkins came to California and mined for a time before settling in Marysville and becoming a partner with Judge Stephen Field. Field went on to become a member of the Supreme Court, appointed by President Lincoln. Filkins was active in local politics, served as a judge for one term, and then returned to practicing law in Marysville. He died in 1876 at the age of 49.

<sup>94</sup> John H. Jewett, partner in Decker & Jewett bank in Marysville. Active in the community. He settled in Marysville in 1851 and was partners in the grocery business, first as Kasson & Jewett and later Jewett & Cheesman. He went into partnership with Peter Decker and John A. Paxton to open the bank of Decker, Jewett & Paxton. Later, Decker & Jewett bought out Paxton. The bank was considered one of the soundest in the state. He was active in the Society of California Pioneers and was president of that organization in 1899. In his later years, he retired to his country home in Sonoma where he died at age 87 in 1911. Several local banks closed on the day of his funeral so they could attend the services in San Francisco.

<sup>95</sup> A very large house at the corner of 6th & C Streets that was described in the newspaper as a mansion with seven gables, two stories with a deep basement, an abundance of light that has warm and cold running water, and marble mantles. There was also a wash house (for laundry) and a smoke house.

<sup>96</sup> I have no idea what this sentence means or if it was transcribed correctly when Mr. McComas' descendant sent the Marysville section of the diary to the Museum.

<sup>97</sup> Possibly Samuel S. W. Selby who sold iron, steel, tinsmith materials, lead pipe, wagon lumber, wire, pumps, etc. His store on E Street moved to D Street at some point. He was very active in the community and served on many committees and boards. He died at his home on E Street in 1874 at the age of 52.

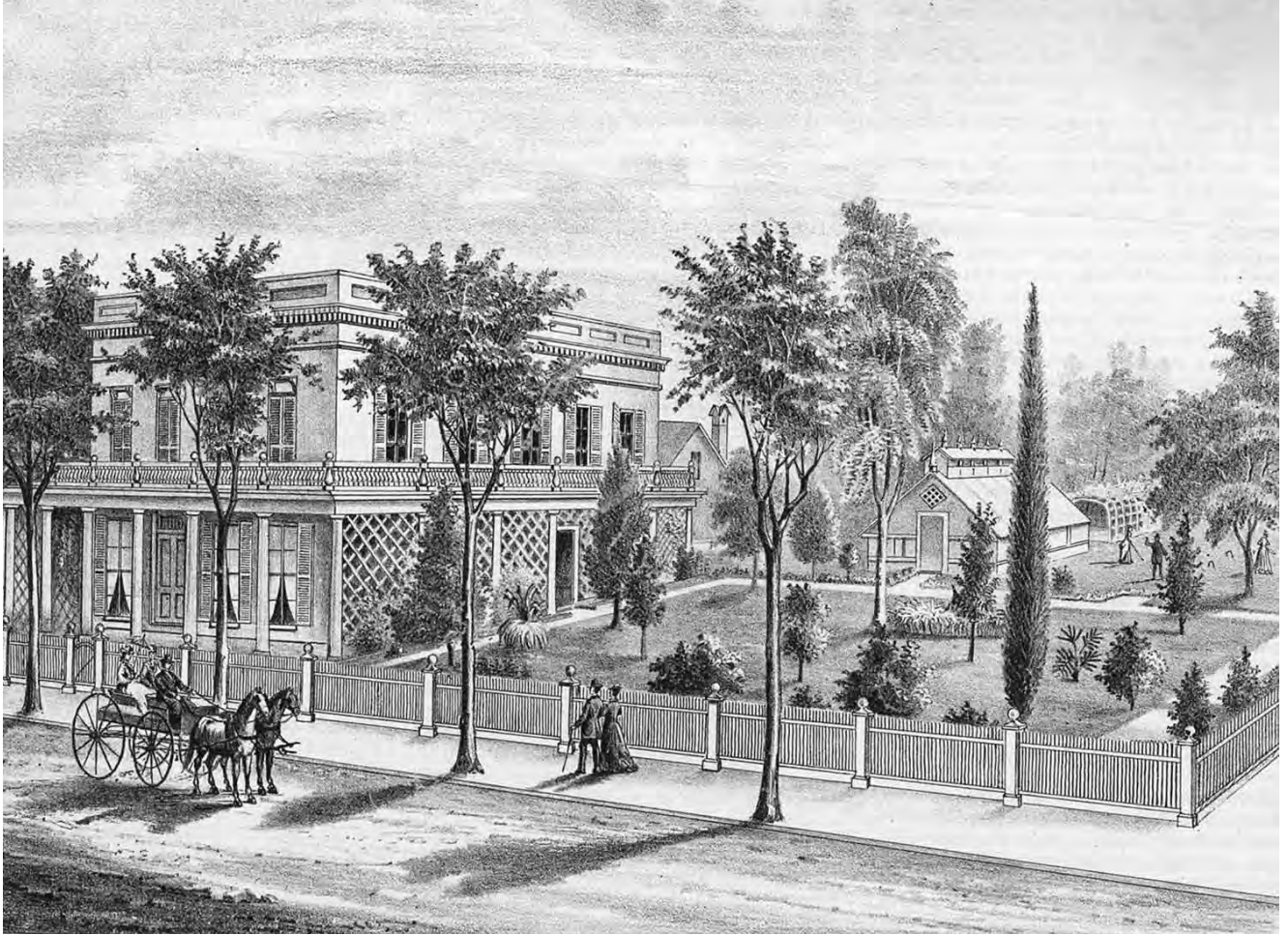
<sup>98</sup> Some records give his birth year as 1828 which would have made him 34. We have to assume he knew how old he was and those records are off by a year. His age at death is given as 93 or 94 in the records.

<sup>99</sup> The church was at the corner of 4th & E Streets with the parsonage next to the church on 4th Street. The Reverend David Deal was the pastor.

<sup>100</sup> Norman Dunning Rideout's home was on the corner of 5th & E Streets.

<sup>101</sup> This might be John Steward.

<sup>102</sup> I'm pretty sure the names are the result of creative spelling, but I can't figure out who they may be.



RIDEOUT HOME AT THE CORNER OF 5TH & E STREETS. LITHOGRAPH FROM THOMPSON & WEST'S HISTORY OF YUBA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA 1879.

**Dec. 25, 1862**

I spent a very pleasant Christmas with my family.

**Dec. 26, 1862**

I will do some work for Mr. Ogdon.<sup>103</sup> He wants me to build him a shop. I'm also going to do some work for Mr. Hartwell.<sup>104</sup>

**Dec. 31, 1862**

Well another year has just come to a close and I trust and feel very thankful for the many blessings that we have received during the year that has just passed and I hope and pray the Good Lord will continue to bless us as in days past and gone. Amen.

.....

*To Be  
Continued*

.....

<sup>103</sup> William C. Ogden, a blacksmith.

<sup>104</sup> Probably William H. Hartwell, who was an importer and dealer in iron and steel with a storefront at #26 & #28 High Street, three doors below 2nd Street.

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# Beale Air Force Base, Major Della Raney, & Colonel George J. Iles

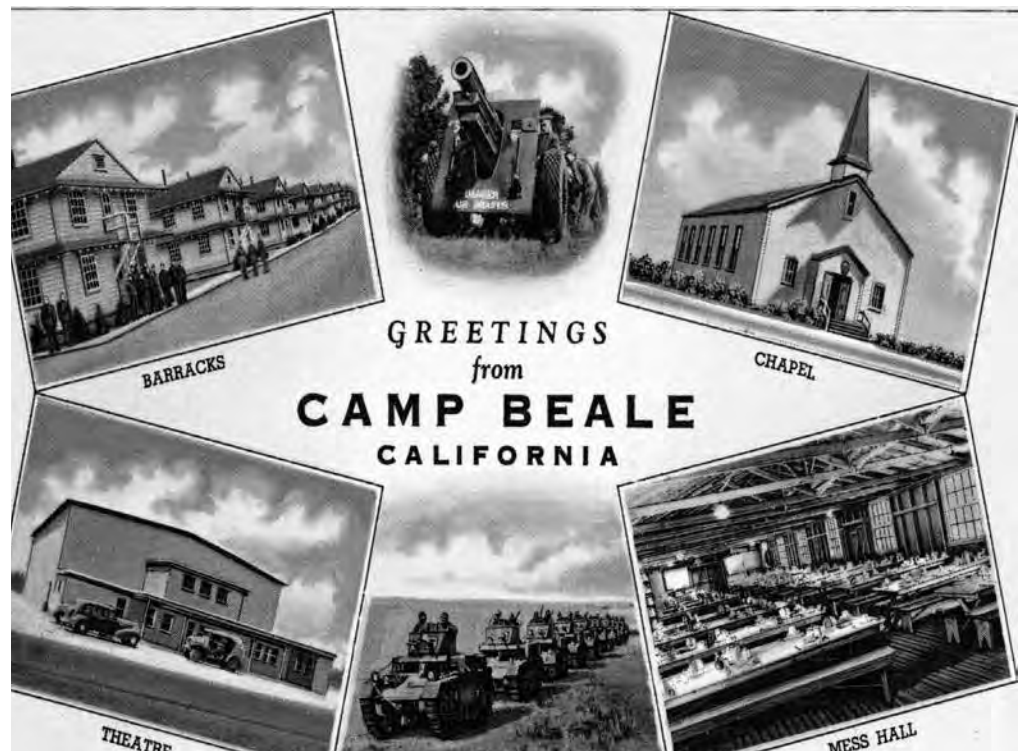
By Gwen Ford

Everyone would agree that the Gold Rush in California was a major catalyst in the growth of Yuba-Sutter and the surrounding communities. Many different cultures migrated to this area seeking their fortunes. The same holds true for Black Americans. Some reached their goal of becoming rich and some did not, but whatever their efforts, they contributed to the start and growth of the local community.

Many of the first Black Americans in the community became very successful and leading citizens in the community. Take, for example, James P. Beckwourth, who discovered a pass in the mountains that greatly facilitated emigrants in reaching California. His house became a stopping place for the weary and the

dispirited. Or consider Edward P. Duplex, who, after he and his partners sold their very successful Sweet Vengeance Mine in Browns Valley, moved to Marysville and established a very successful barber/beauty salon on D Street, spawning the success of what became known as “Barbers’ Row.” From there, he moved on to be elected as Mayor of Wheatland, becoming the first Black person to serve in that position in the state of California.

During the 19th century, many Black Americans settled in this area (some free, some with their slaveholders) who went on to become outstanding leaders in the community. But the 20th century was a milestone marker for growth in the Black community because of Camp Beale.



A POSTCARD FROM CAMP BEALE.  
FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.



MAJOR DELLA RANEY (COLLECTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE).



In 1940, the Camp Beale area consisted of grassland, rolling hills, and an abandoned mining town called Spenceville. During that time, the Marysville city officials encouraged the Department of War to establish a military facility in the area. The U.S. Government purchased approximately 87,000 acres in 1942 for a training base for the 13th Armored Division, the only unit of its kind to be entirely trained in California. During World War II, Camp Beale had 60,000 personnel and provided training facilities for the 81st and 96th Infantry Divisions, a 1,000-bed hospital, and a prisoner of war camp.<sup>1</sup>

In 1948, the enactment of Presidential Executive Order 9981 officially abolished segregation in the military. In the same year, the U.S. Air Force established Beale Air Force Base. Many Black American service members serving in the Army re-enlisted in the Air Force. It was at that time that many more Black Americans were transferred from other military bases to this area to serve as Air Force personnel and became prominent members of the community.

Major Della Raney was the first Black female accepted to the Army Nurse Corps. She served as a second lieutenant. She was the first Black nurse with the Army Air Corps promoted to captain. When Raney returned from her tour of duty overseas after World War II, she became Director of Nursing for Camp Beale (now Beale Air Force Base.) Although Major Raney did not settle in the area after her assignment to Beale AFB, she had a major impact helping other Black Americans establish themselves within the community.

Another distinguished Black American who served at Beale Air Force Base was Col. George J. Iles, a U.S. Army Air Force officer, former World War II prisoner of war, and a combat fighter pilot with the 332nd Fighter Group's 99th Fighter Squadron, best known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

George was born in Quincy, Illinois, just north of St. Louis, Missouri in 1918. He attended local schools and entered Quincy College in 1939. In 1940, he applied for admission to the Civilian Pilot Training Program conducted by the college, and, despite

<sup>1</sup> German prisoners were held there.

local racial resistance, in the fall of that year he obtained his private pilot license.

In the 1940s, African American men were excluded from being accepted into white flying schools, stemming from the belief that Blacks were too intellectually inferior to master aviation. This notion was supported by the War Department through their policy of no comingling of white and Black airmen and approved by President Roosevelt on October 9, 1940.

However, in 1941, the federal government established a separate flying school for Black men interested in flying war planes. African American men received their training at a segregated and isolated Army Airfield near Tuskegee, Alabama, at the historically Black college, the Tuskegee Institute.<sup>2</sup> Thus was established the 66th Air Force Contract Flying School at Tuskegee Institute that was opened for Black cadets.

Despite the obvious obstacles facing them, more than 900 men graduated from this school. Their flight missions ranged from Italy to North Africa to Germany. Iles graduated from the Tuskegee Institute in 1945. Upon graduation, he became one of the World War II legends called “The Black Redtail Angels.” On February 25, 1945 his plane was shot down over Germany by anti-aircraft fire. His plane crashed into the ground near the town of Augsburg. He remained a prisoner of war for two months.

He served in the U.S. Air Force for 30 years, including service in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. After WWII, Iles returned to the United States and



COLONEL GEORGE J. ILES.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF DANNY ILES.

served as a trainer at Tuskegee Air Force Field. He reenlisted on July 13, 1946. During the Korean and Vietnam Wars, he served in intelligence in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

He retired on October 31, 1973 as a Colonel and settled in Marysville, CA. George Iles was not only a decorated American hero, but he was also a major force in the Yuba-Sutter area. He went on to serve the community in many ways, one of which was the establishment of the Iles Academy of Golf for Kids in

Marysville, which served as a leadership and sports non-profit for the support and development of the youth in our area. It is still in operation today.

The prosperous growth of Beale Air Force Base in the mid-20th century was a huge factor in the growth of the Black community in the Yuba-Sutter and surrounding areas. Many members settled here with their families and became active in building these communities. These individuals served as doctors, nurses, businessmen/women, educators, and in many other professions, which enhanced the growth and health of our communities.

<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1881, the Tuskegee Institute was a private, historically Black land-grant university in Tuskegee, Alabama. Its motto was Knowledge, Leadership, Service. The U.S. Army Corps established a training program at Tuskegee, and its graduates became known as the Tuskegee Airmen. In 1965, the Institute was recognized as a historic landmark. The Institute received university status in 1985 and was renamed Tuskegee University.

# New and Renewing Members

October 15, 2024 -February 1, 2025

Tim & Linda Beilby

Mitchell Bloom

Jeff Boone

Keith & Nelly Bordsen

Ray & Karen Brooks

Ma'Carry Cairo

Dianna Ceballos

Ann & Michael Chesini

Celeste Cobeen

Gratia Cobeen

Nance Contreras

Marnee Crowhurst

Teeann Duncan

David & Judi Freiler

Mary Ann & John Frye

Kimberly Heisch

Allen & Kathe Herr

William & Marilyn Kenyon

Marilyn Kirby

Darcee Kraus

Scott Leone

Meriam Library

Thea & Carl Norum

Elaine Novak

James & Jenette Ochsner

Lee Roy & Sarah Pryor

David Schmidl

Jeanne Schultz

Kathleen Shannon

Sharyl Simmons

Joyce Smith

Keith & Vera Smith

Phyllis Smith

Ryan & Jolene Sola

Jeff Stephens

Lynne Takahashi

Craig & Maureen Tarke

David & Gina Tarke

Brianda Vargas

Jane Wheeler

Jon & Susan Whiteman

Jolyne Williams

Dennis Wilson

Joan Young

## **Business Memberships**

Sutter Buttes Business  
Services

## Renew your membership today!

Funds from your membership directly support the work we do, including taking care of our collections and offering stellar educational programming.

### **Not a member?**

Consider joining today!

And, don't forget, a membership is a great gift!

**For more information, visit [suttercountymuseum.org/support](https://suttercountymuseum.org/support)**

# Puzzling



- JEWETT**
- FLOOD**
- BRICKS**
- ILES**
- RANEY**
- TUSKEGEE**
- BEALE**
- ELLA**
- RIDEOUT**
- OXEN**
- FAIR**
- ELECTION**
- MARKET**
- PAVEMENT**
- LODGE**
- HALL**
- TAXES**
- MERCHANTS**
- ANTELOPE**
- CULVERT**
- CATY**

**Friends for the Preservation  
of Yuba County History  
(FPYCH)**  
P. O. Box 1993, Marysville, CA. 95901  
Email: [FPYubaCoHistory@aol.com](mailto:FPYubaCoHistory@aol.com)

A non-profit group dedicated to preserving, protecting, studying and sharing the history of Yuba County

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[www.sbbsyubacity.com](http://www.sbbsyubacity.com)

## Volunteer

We would not be able to do what we do without our volunteers. Volunteers staff the front desk when the Museum is open. This includes greeting visitors, answering any questions they may have, helping orient people to the Museum resources and exhibits, answering the phone, and using point-of-sale software to sell items in the Museum Gift Shop. Volunteers also work on special projects, assist at events, and help decorate for *Trees & Traditions*. If you are interested, please contact us, or download the application online: [www.suttercountymuseum.org/support#volunteer](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org/support#volunteer)



# Memorials & Gifts

October 15, 2024 -February 1, 2025

*In Memory of* **Marlene Binninger**  
Marnee Crowhurst

*In Memory of* **Wilbur “Buster”  
Brugmann**  
Marnee Crowhurst  
Art & Dee Worledge

*In Memory of* **Rowena Lum Jang**  
Marnee Crowhurst

*In Memory of* **Cathy Jordan**  
Molly Bloom &  
Nick Lashway  
Kelly Gash

*In Memory of* **Mary Knapp**  
Marnee Crowhurst

*In Memory of* **Doris Mitchell**  
Marnee Crowhurst

*In Memory of* **Loadel Piner**  
Marnee Crowhurst

*In Memory of* **Norma Sanborn**  
Marnee Crowhurst

*In Memory of* **Lola Sisson**  
Marnee Crowhurst

*In Memory of* **Ron Ward**  
Lee & Bob Jones

## **Outright Gifts**

Nancy Aaberg  
American Association of  
University Women  
Constance Cary  
Dianna Ceballos  
Randolph & Vernice Deas  
Sarah Graf & Alan Bloom  
Allen & Kathe Herr  
Diane Hilbert  
Steve & Marie Kroeger  
John Palmer  
Rob’s Raw Cutz & Styles  
David Rubiales  
Randolph & Barbara Schnabel  
Carmen Smith  
Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health

David & Gina Tarke  
Yuba-Sutter AIM

## **In-Kind Donations**

Brady Harper  
Norm Jones  
Donna & Barry McMaster  
Debrah & Mike Reid

## **Community Garden Donation**

Tony & Joan Kurlan

## **Trees & Traditions**

### **Sponsorships, Donations, & In-Kind Gifts**

The Acting Company  
Appeal-Democrat  
Linda Baker  
Gayle Barkhouse  
Blue Zones Project  
Manny Cardoza  
City of Yuba City  
Colusa Rice Company  
Cordi Winery  
Babs Cotter  
Dutch Bros. Coffee  
Edward Jones – Diane Warnock  
Susan Eggleston  
Joanne Ellis  
Fletcher’s Plumbing &  
Contracting  
Ellen Francis  
Frank M. Booth, Inc.  
Geweke Ford Kia & Towing  
Jennifer Graf  
Grocery Outlet  
Brenda Haase  
Scott & Barbara Hankins  
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino  
Sacramento at Fire Mountain  
Harkey House Bed & Breakfast  
Heads Together Salon &  
Day Spa  
Hilbers, Inc.

Vern & Phyllis Hill  
Holycross Funeral Home  
& Crematory, Inc.  
Lee & Bob Jones  
Patricia & Steve Justus  
Diane Ketelle  
Scott Kirchner  
Tony & Joan Kurlan  
Lotus Health Care  
LunaLei Wellness  
Marysville JACL  
Roberto Muñoz  
Papé Machinery  
Peach Tree Golf &  
Country Club  
Pearl Guys  
Poole’s Jewelers  
Plumas Bank  
PureJoy Yoga  
Sukh Purewal, State Farm  
Insurance  
The Ranch House  
Debbie Rozzen  
Sacramento History Museum  
Sicilia Vineyards  
Sharyl Simmons  
Phyllis Smith  
Ryan & Jolene Sola  
Sound Annex  
Sutter Buttes Business Services  
Sutter Buttes Regional  
Land Trust  
Sutter Orchard Supply  
Takeda Pharmaceuticals  
Three Rivers Optometric  
Group, Inc.  
Maris Wagener  
Jon & Susan Whiteman  
Thomas P. Winn Foundation  
Yuba City Honda

# Membership Information

Our members are vital to the success of the Museum. The funds we raise from your membership help us to properly care for our collection, bring in traveling exhibits, and provide educational programs.

For a complete listing of benefits by level, visit [www.suttercountymuseum.org/support](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org/support).

## Membership Levels

Basic*	\$35
Basic Plus*	\$60
Bronze**	\$100
Silver**	\$250
Gold**	\$500
Harter Circle**	\$1000

## Business Levels

Business Basic***	\$250
Business Basic Plus***	\$500
Business Sustaining***	\$1000

All Business Memberships include Basic benefits as well.

\*\$10 discount for Student/Senior/Military/Long Distance (200+ miles away)  
 \*\*\$15 discount for Student/Senior/Military/Long Distance (200+ miles away)  
 \*\*\* 20% discount for Non-profits

## Business Memberships

Consider a Business Membership to the Sutter County Museum! Annual rates start at \$250 and include benefits such as advertisements in the *Bulletin*, listings on the website, Gift Shop discounts, and more. Visit [www.suttercountymuseum.org/support](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org/support) for more information.



### MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES



*Advancing the understanding of the natural and cultural features of the Sutter Buttes through interactive educational activities for schoolchildren and the public.*

To sign-up for our e-newsletter, view hike schedule, and more, visit:  
[www.middlemountainhikes.org](http://www.middlemountainhikes.org)

## Donate

The Museum is a partnership between Sutter County and the Sutter County Museum Association, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. The Association supports all of the public programming aspects of the Museum, including educational programs, fundraising events, temporary exhibits, updates to permanent exhibits, and the Museum Gift Shop. Donations made to the Association are tax deductible.

There are many ways to donate to the Museum:

- Mail a check to:**  
 Sutter County Museum  
 1333 Butte House Road  
 Yuba City, CA 95993
- Come visit us!** You can use a credit card, cash, or check to donate in person
- Donate online** through our website
- Legacy Giving:** please contact [info@suttercountymuseum.org](mailto:info@suttercountymuseum.org) to learn more

We also offer corporate sponsorship opportunities for our events and temporary exhibits.



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## New Staff Bio



**Caty McKinin**  
Assistant Curator

Caty McKinin is thrilled to be joining the Sutter County Museum as the new Assistant Curator. She previously interned at the Museum as a graduate student. During her internship, Caty experienced the intricacies of running a small but mighty museum and fell in love with the Yuba-Sutter community. Prior to joining the Museum, she worked at a Global Non-Profit that is dedicated to humanitarian causes and giving back to the community. She holds a Master of Arts (MA) in Museum Studies from the University of San Francisco and is excited to bring her creativity to the team and welcome visitors near and far to the Sutter County Museum.

*iPLeibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues / En los barrios y las grandes ligas* ON DISPLAY AT THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.



## Exhibits

- *iPleibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues / En los barrios y las grandes ligas* is now open! This temporary exhibit will be on display until May 3rd. *iPleibol!* presents the experiences of Latinas/os whose love for the game and incredible talent changed baseball and transformed American culture. Throughout the last century, in the barrios and the big leagues, in rural backyards and on barn-storming travel teams, these trailblazers used baseball to chase their dreams, challenge prejudice and build communities.
- *iPleibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues / En los barrios y las grandes ligas* is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in collaboration with the National Museum of American History. This exhibition received generous support from the Cordoba Corporation and Linda Alvarado, and federal support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the National Museum of the American Latino.



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Permit No. 12

## Our public hours are:

WEDNESDAYS – FRIDAYS  
**from 9am-5pm**

SATURDAYS  
**from 12-4pm**

While we will work hard to remain open for every advertised hour, low staffing levels will likely result in occasional unexpected closures. Please feel free to call the Museum at 530-822-7141 on the day of your visit to ensure it is open.

## Sign up for our **e-newsletter**

to receive the latest updates about Museum exhibits, programs, and events!

Visit our website at

**[www.suttercountymuseum.org](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org)**

Scroll to the bottom of the homepage, and enter your email address to subscribe.