

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA

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GRAIN HARVESTING JULY - 1902 32 ANIMALS IN THE TEAM

NOTICE

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FALL MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 1957 - 8 P.M.

Board of Supervisors Chambers

SPEAKER: Dr. Thomas
Rogers Associate of Biological Sciences
Professor Chico
State College

TOPIC: Sutter Buttes and the National Science in
that area

Mrs. Helen Belz will present a plan
for the celebration of Yuba City's
50th Birthday as an incorporated city.

HISTORICAL NOTES ON DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN SUTTER COUNTY

by T. D. Urbahns
Agriculture Commissioner of
Sutter County

It is the purpose of this article to bring together information regarding the early development of agriculture in Sutter County. These notes are summaries taken from old records, State reports and proceedings from fruit growers meetings, as well as published articles and old papers.

Sutter County agriculture was a natural development following the early settlement in other parts of the State, the gold rush and the settlement of General Sutter in this area.

1701 - The earliest fruit culture on the Pacific Coast was practice at the old Spanish Missions for their own use. Records show fruit grown at this time at St. Xavier in Lower California. (Mexico)

Historical Notes on Development of Agriculture in Sutter County - continued

1769 - Missionaries entered the area known as California, bringing with them seeds for fields, gardens and orchards. Trees were grown mostly from seeds. Three fruits have been perpetuated from early days, these are the Mission olive, the Mission grape and the Mission or Black fig.

1792 - At the Mission San Jose, apples, pears, apricots, peaches and figs were grown and at Mission Ventura, oranges, limes and pomegranates were included with other fruits. Herds of cattle were kept on open range country at the Missions and were considered the principal wealth because of the meat, hides and tallow.

1806 - Gabriel Moraga traveled up the Feather River and repeated his trip again in 1808. He traveled through the unsettled country searching for suitable Mission sites. He camped on the lower Feather River and being impressed by the greatness of the country called it Sacramento, which became the name of the valley and the great river. Moraga crossed the Feather River and traveled to the north-west to what he supposed to be a mountain range, this was probably the Sutter Buttes in the center of the valley.

1812 - The Russian trapper settlements in Russian America, which is the area around our present Fort Ross in Sonoma County, in addition to livestock, grew apples, apricots, pears, cherries and grapes. Their property later passed into the hands of General John A. Sutter.

1817 - Father Presidente Mariano Payeras in May traveled up the Sacramento River under command of Luis Arguello, accompanied by Father Narciso Duran and Ramon Abella, exploring the area to within good view of the Sutter Buttes.

1841 - Small orchards and vineyards were being planted in Santa Clara Valley. General Sutter erected an adobe house on the west bank of the Feather River on Hock Farm which was named after an Indian Village, here he made his first plantings of figs and vineyards. Hock Farm became Sutters principal stock ranch. The cattle ranging freely over the entire country-side between the Feather and Sacramento Rivers.

1842 - In an early report we find that Sutter County has the honor of being the pioneer horticultural county of the Sacramento Valley. The first attempts in this line were made by General Sutter at Hock Farm when he planted grapes, pomegranates and a large grove of fig trees.

1843 - Nicolaus was a trading post of Nicolaus Altgeier, a German native and Hudson Bay trapper employed by General Sutter. Sutter deeded to Nicolaus Altgeier, one square mile of land and helped him establish a ferry for his services in helping to put up buildings on Sutter Hock Farms.

1845 - The Wolfskill family, Putah Creek in Yolo County, planted fruit trees and vines long before younger members of the family came to Sutter County.

1849 - An early Sutter County Assessor's record shows that John A. Sutter deeded to Sam Brannan on May 11, 1849, 4,033 acres which sold for three and four dollars per acre. Brannan's property was mostly devoted to raising cattle, horses and sheep. His home was built on the river bank from lumber shipped around Cape Horn from eastern states.

Historical Notes - continued

1850 - Some development took place around the settlement of Vernon on the lower Feather River.

1850 - 1857 - There were considerable transactions in land sales and property development along the Bear River, the Nicolaus area including the New Helvetia area on both the east and west banks of the Feather River and also along the west side of Sutter County on the east bank of the Sacramento River.

1857 - The Sutter County Assessor's record for 1857, shows farm crops and livestock as follows: A number of growers producing 25 tons or more of barley and wheat, Geo. Brittain, 900 acres of barley and 1,000 acres of wheat. Total livestock, cows 3,521, young cattle 3,464, horses 675, mules 386, sheep 9,539, work oxen 400, hogs 2,113 and three threshing machines.

1860 - Information from various sources indicates that the Bear River district was a flourishing truck crop and vegetable growing area for the next twenty years, after which period it was completely destroyed for many years by silt and debris from placer mining in the foothills. The farms, as well as Kempton's Crossing and Oro were completely abandoned.

1870 - Several growers including John Briggs, P. L. Bunce, Dr. A. L. Chandler and Dr. Ellis Teegarden, had been planting fruit orchards in the vicinity of Yuba City.

1873 - Wm. Thompson of Sutter City, received a small shipment of grape vines from Elwander & Berry Nurserymen in New York. Among the vines, one produced the white seedless grape which was later known as the Thompson seedless and widely planted in Sutter County in later years.

1875 - The first raisins grown in California were reported produced in Yolo County and exhibited the following year in Philadelphia. In 1877 Dr. Chandler produced raisins in Sutter County and extended his plantings to 100 acres.

1877 - A flood occurred on the Feather River destroying many ranches and farm buildings.

1880 - Fruit had been grown successfully in various parts of the county which induced A. F. Abbott and Joseph Phillips to go into the fruit growing business. Three years later they added 55 acres of peaches.

1883 - In March of this year a state law was approved creating a Board of Horticulture with power to act in the prevention and the spread of farm pests. Seven state districts were established. The importance of the commission and laws was in part due to the destruction of grape vines by an underground insect known as grape phylloxera. The law also authorized destruction of gophers, squirrels, destructive animals, noxious weeds, insects and plant diseases.

The first fruit cannery in Yuba City came into existence through the efforts of B. F. Walton. It was the Sutter Canning and Packing Company located on B Street and Wilbur Avenue. J. J. Pratt was the superintendent.

Historical Notes - continued

1855 - H. P. Stabler reported that they had planted an orchard of 100 acres to deciduous fruit trees in Sutter County. These consisted of prunes, peaches, apricots, plums and nectarines. Dr. S. R. Chandler of Yuba City participated in horticultural meetings in Los Angeles.

1886 - R. C. Kells of Yuba City, delivered a paper on planting and pruning of deciduous fruits at a fruit growers convention in Sacramento, Judge S. J. Stabler worked to improve shipping conditions and to lower freight rates.

The San Jose Scale developed rapidly and in an effort to fight this pest three public spirited citizens volunteered and were appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve without pay.

A report by the Sutter County Assessor to the State Equalization Board showed fruits to the extent of the following acreage; grapes 110 acres, peaches 576 acres, pears 162 acres, apples 67 acres, oranges 10 acres, limes 1 acre, figs 20 acres, prunes 102 acres, plums 90 acres, apricots 182 acres, nectarines 29 acres and quince 4 acres.

1889 - Over the years there had been a constant growth in the production of grain crops and livestock throughout the county. The higher areas of the south-eastern portion of the county, the lands adjoining the Sutter Buttes and the higher land along the river banks were under constant development.

A report under the above date states: "Sutter County, until recently, has been wholly engaged in agriculture. The land is level and very fertile, and yielded such bountiful harvests of grain that the inducement to raise fruit for profit was small. Deciduous fruits have been planted upon a large scale in the last few years, and the experiment has been very successful in every line of fruit planted."

1889 - On September 4, the Sutter County Board of Supervisors appointed R. C. Kells, J. C. Gray and H. P. Stabler as secretary to a Board of County Horticultural Commissioners. They were commissioned Quarantine Guardians and compensation was fixed at \$3.00 per day. (This was the beginning of the Horticultural Commissioner's office which later was changed to Agricultural Commissioner.)

In the first report of the Commission we read that enterprising citizens who have imported trees and plants are undoubtedly responsible for the introduction of the worst pests. Also that all nursery stock will be now inspected before it can be planted in Sutter County.

1892 - We have no definite records on grain crops and livestock production in the county as of the above year; but the acreage planted to fruits is reported as follows: - apples 76 acres; apricots 227 acres; cherries 41 acres, figs 80 acres; olives 17 acres; peaches 980 acres; prunes 227 acres; pears 392 acres; almonds 304 acres; walnuts 15 acres; grapes 452 acres; oranges 27 acres.

1895 - Records show that great progress was made during the nineties through united effort in gaining scientific knowledge in agriculture leading to cultural practices, labor, pest control, packing and marketing. Special effort was directed to the improvement of the transportation of fruits and field crops to eastern markets.

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A Yuba Limerick

Apparently the Chicago Tribune, or at least somebody on its staff thought the name "Yuba" worthy of a pun, as the following limerick discloses:

A man who lived over in Yuba
Played the 'Dead March from Saul' on a tuba.
The neighbors agreed
They liked it indeed
But they'd like it far better in Cuba.

After it appeared in the Chicago Tribune, it was reprinted in The Argonaut (S.F.) in 1910. (Vol. 67, No. 1754, page 301) -(sent in by Noel Stevenson)

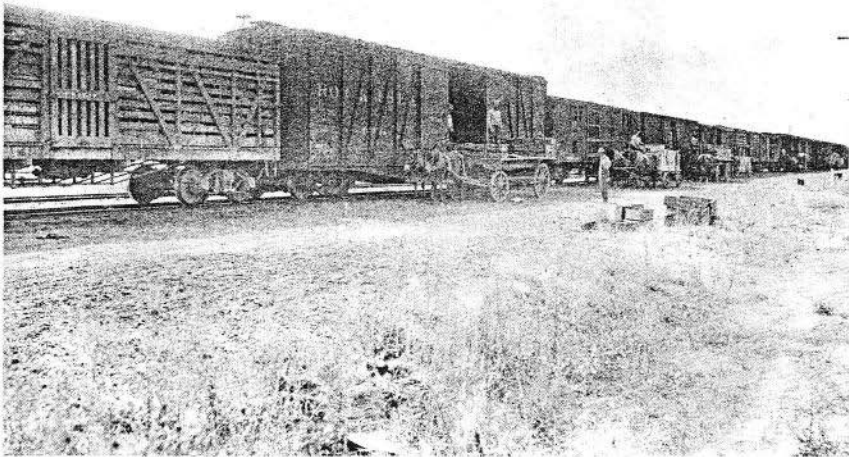
(The following excerpt was taken from the April 1948 issue of Motorland from an article entitled "Early Days in Yuba and Sutter")

Legend insists that Joaquin Murieta, "ubiquitous as he was iniquitous," rode into Marysville on occasion and was responsible for depredations thereabouts.

Reminiscences of such-like personages are rife in Marysville this April. Yuba City across-river, was laid out in mid-1849 by that Samuel Brannan who looms so large in the Gold Rush saga, along with explorer Pierson B. Reading and Henry Cheever. Sutter County is the site of the last California home of John Augustus Sutter - at Hock Farm, about eight miles down the Feather River from Yuba City.

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EARLY DAY DRY YARD



HAULING PEACHES
IN THE OLD DAYS
BOGUE STATION

THE DAIRY BUSINESS
EARLY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

