

# SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWS BULLETIN

VOL. I No. 14

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 21, 1958



FALL MEETING  
SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 21, 1958  
7:30 P.M.

CHAMBERS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SUTTER COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING

SPEAKER: Dr. Joseph A. McGowan  
Sacramento State College

PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 21ST

MEETING Program Chairman - Randolph

Schnabel Co-Chairman - Thomas Gianella

Speaker - Dr. Joseph A. McGowan  
Professor of History  
Sacramento State College

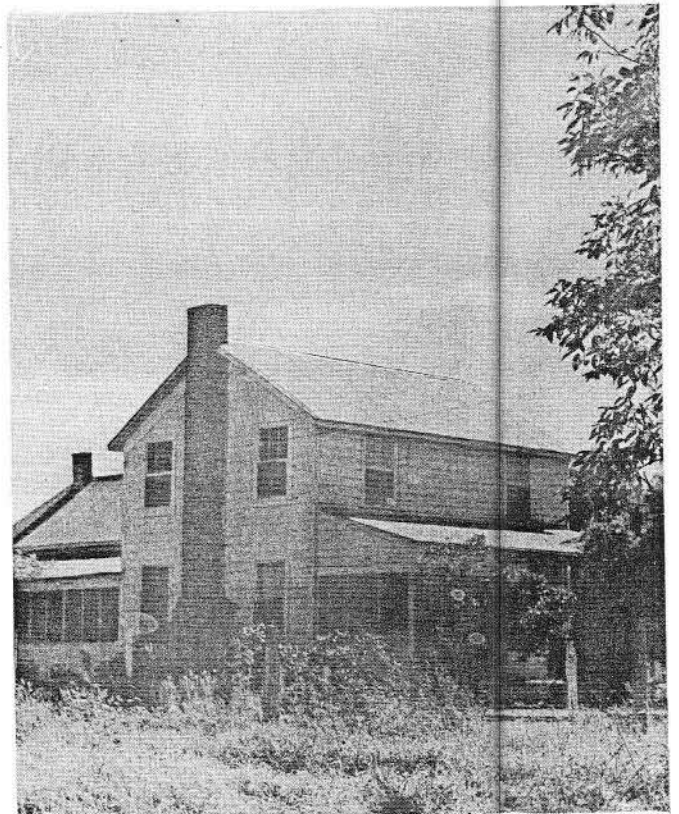
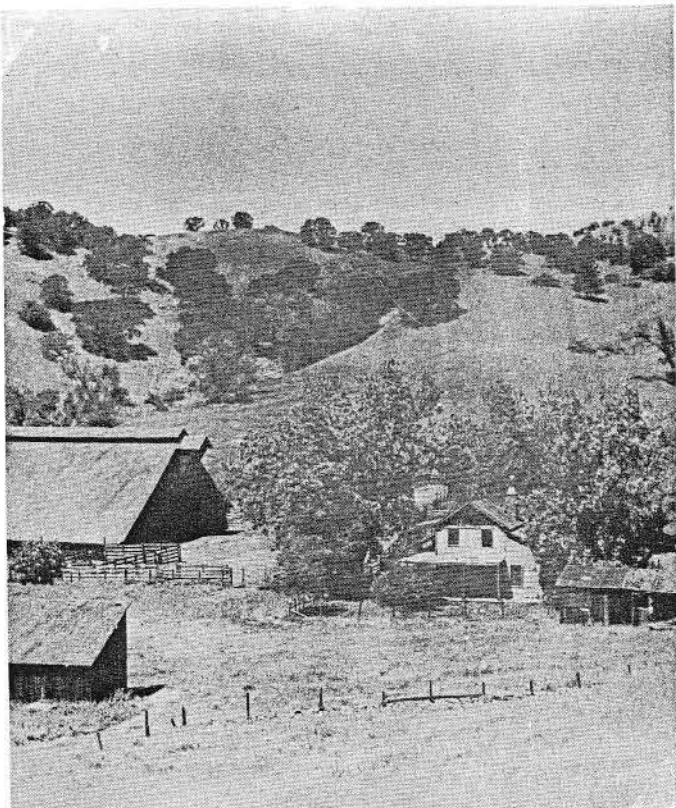
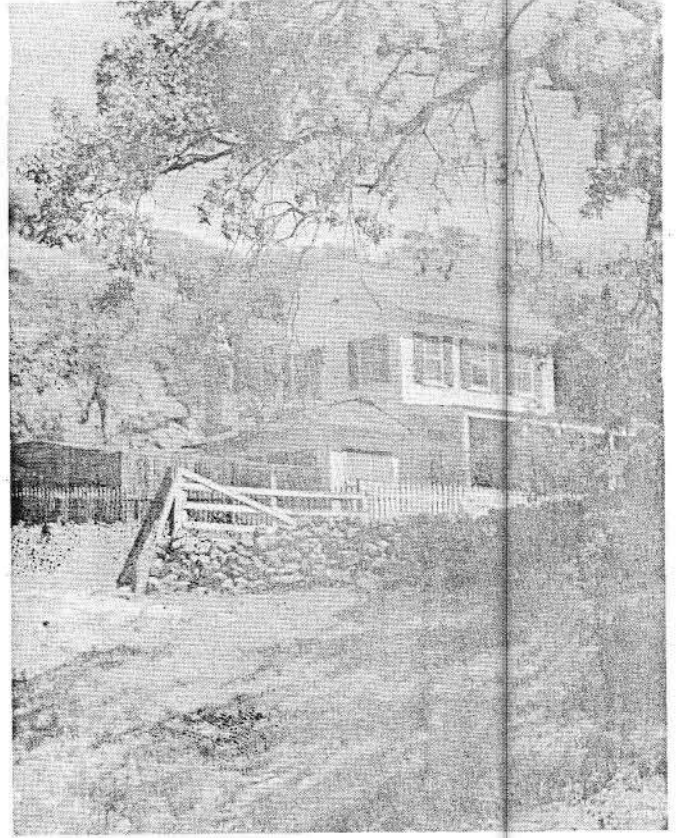
Topic - Freighting and Transportation from  
this Community into the Sierras

Since we have standard time now,  
I believe it is possible to begin  
our meeting at 7:30 P.M. Please  
try to be on time and close at  
9 P.M.

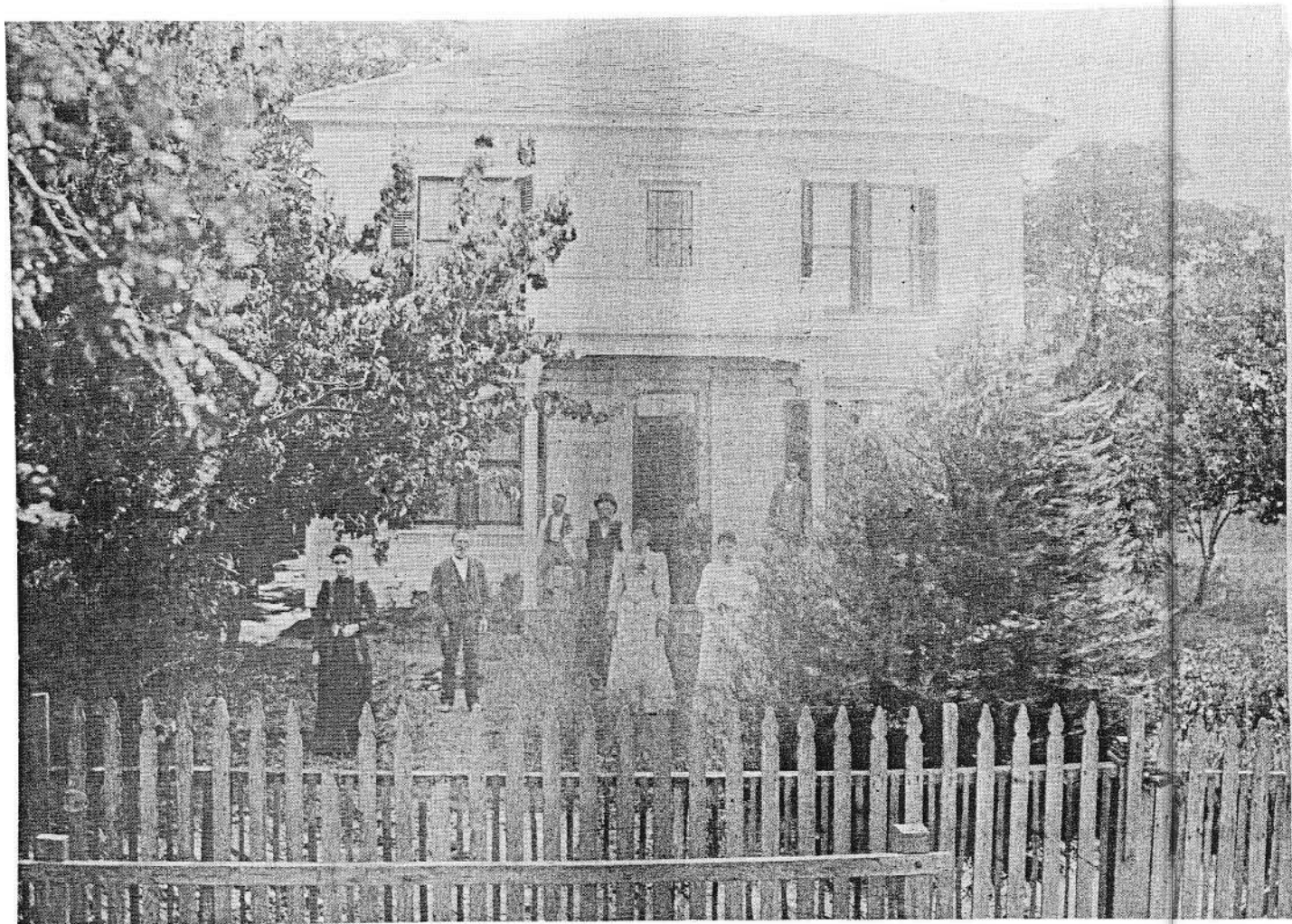
DUES ARE DUE  
\$2.00 per year  
Keep our Society rolling

\* \* \* \* \*

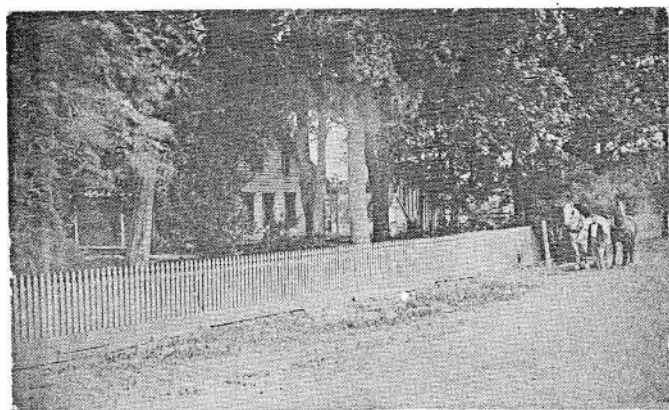
OLD HOMES OF SUTTER COUNTY  
CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE



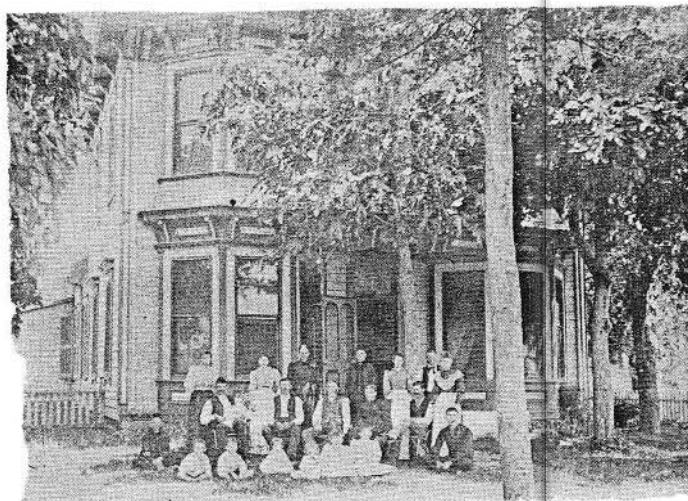




ROBERT GRAY HOME  
TUDOR 1878-1923



T. B. HULL HOME  
TUDOR RD. - SAWTELLE AVE.



HENRY BEST HOME 1875-1925  
HARKEY CORNERS

## DEDICATE TO YUBA CITY

(This title was appropriated from that of a poem by Yellow Bird which appeared in the Marysville Herald on April 29th, 1851)

A little more than one hundred years ago two adventurous gentlemen with schemes for sudden riches and dreams of future fame marked a spot on the west bank of the Feather River directly north of its juncture with the Yuba River and said, "This should be a likely spot. Let's plan a city here." And thus Yuba City was born.

In choosing this particular spot about seven miles north of Hock Farm, show place of Alta, California, John A. Sutter and Sam Brannan, noted that the terrain rose sharply from the sluggish river and tilted westward, making it fairly free from inundation, a mighty important factor to consider in a valley frequently beset by heavy downpours and sudden run-offs that spread east and west from the river and slowly moving southward made a great inland sea to the Golden Gate. Too, they noted that the earth was rich and the soil was deep, assuring good drainage at all times, and they were pleased. They checked, measured, studied, and surveyed; they laid out the streets and marked the lots. They cleaned out the under brush of poison oak, wild grape, scrub oak and willow. They looked over their handiwork, the neatly plotted blocks, the wide thoroughfares, and they admired the many handsome white oaks, the sycamores, and towering cottonwoods that dotted their city. They dreamed, and a metropolis arose.

From the west bank of the Feather, they gazed eastward. There they saw low land, pitted and ridged by winter currents; choked and tangled with tule and swamp grasses. Low masses of young willow and cottonwood vied with box elder and bramble for a root-hold in the sandy soil. Wild grape carpeted the ground and festooned itself over trees and scrubby brush, a moving, growing, green wall, impassable to man and beast.

There too, they saw the Yuba as it right-angled into the Feather and in its backwashes created stagnant pools of algae infested water. From these green pools rose grey clouds of humming and hungry mosquitoes that drifted effortlessly but with deadly purpose to settle business-like on elk and Indian, antelope and white man. To the north and east these planners saw the slough that meandered and widened as it approached this basin adding its trickle of brackish, infested waters to the slowly moving current of the two rivers. And as they looked they were well content with their choice of a site for a city. Little did they dream that in a matter of a few short months those pits and ridges would be leveled, the under brush cleared away, wharves and homes and stores would be erected, all on the east bank of the Feather, the unsightly quagmire that presently repelled them. In a matter of months on this same east bank, there mushroomed a tent city and shortly thereafter a city of brick and wood, a terrifically busy city, catering to a feverish new industry that engulfed the area of the rivers with a mass of humanity intent on sudden wealth. For gold had been discovered in the Sierras and this town was catapulted into being to serve the miners who took to the hills with hopes high and dreams higher. Thus Marysville was born. In serving the miners, the city developed many related businesses. Blacksmith shops, general stores, stables, drug stores, hotels, boarding houses and saloons quickly rose to meet the need. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, land

speculators, and politicians found that the city needed their services, too. By the end of 1850, three thousand people had settled in Marysville. Ministers came and churches were established. A theater and ballroom were added to bring lightness and gaiety and atmosphere to a city that was experiencing the painful awareness of too sudden growth. And so it was here that the first newspaper set up its presses and began to interpret the city to the world and the world to the city. The first editor, Mr. R. H. Taylor, found Marysville a pleasantly located city, but in gazing across the river to its western bank, he commented in an article entitled "Yuba City" that appeared in the August 16th issue of the Herald, 1850:

"We like our sister town very much, but it's a peculiar liking. We like it because it's a pleasant place to go of an afternoon as a relaxation from our cares; we like it because in those 'diggings' the glorious sun shines 'o'er fair women and brave men', not to say anything about the Indian Rancheadero where one can, if in the right mood and spirit, learn many a lesson. But the Yubans must allow us to say that as to business, Marysville never surrenders."

In business and commercial enterprises thus it seemed that Yuba City was hopelessly out of the race early in the history of the towns. On January 14th, 1851, another article on Yuba City appeared in the Marysville Herald:

"The glory seems to have departed from this place; the houses appear tenantless, and even the few Indians remaining seem disgusted with the prospects. There are a great many stores, though it would be difficult to get anything to eat over there with the exception of dried fish."

Apparently both Indians and whites were irked by the patronizing manner of the Herald and hastened to make known to its editors their displeasure over the derogatory remarks. Consequently, on February 21, a few issues later, an article appeared in the Herald entitled "A Vent to Smothered Indignation".

"A depredation of youthful Diggers, who took offense at the Herald's previous remark that even the Indians were disgusted with Yuba City, protested said article and expressed their indignation at such. The Herald consequently retracts and states that the 'Indians of Yuba City are not disgusted with their prospects. True to the time honored firmness of their race, they are still determined to 'stick by' Yuba City even though the white man had long given up the idea of making his 'salt' there!."

Marysville continued to prosper and to gloat. She noted the many new businesses, the new names, the new activities, the improvements, all this adding up to progress and wealth. Yet she had time from her whirlwind growth to glance toward the western shore and comment on what she saw. Among the many things she saw to criticize were the Indians. The squalor of their dwellings, their general torpor, the apathy of the white man toward their plight provoked comment from the Herald periodically. On April 15th, 1851, the following article appeared:

"On Thursday we visited the Indians in Yuba City in company with one of our two gentlemen. It is not necessary to speak of their filth and other circumstances connected with their miserable condition. We would rather ask if there is no method by which they may be made useful to the whites and improve themselves. In their council hall, as it is called, but more properly a deep, dirty pit with the poles for bunks and everything else in keeping, we saw three chiefs and a dozen or more captains large, muscular men, squatted on the ground by bowls of acorn mush or lazily lying in their bunks with a few unravelling a red comfort to bedeck themselves for some imbecile fandango. There is to us something so utterly abhorrent in the thought that they must waste away a life thus in activity, or by the more speedy process of dissipation to which they are becoming addicted. Could not those who live among us by some law be required to bind out their children to farmers and others for a given period so as to make them useful and thus induct to habits of cleanliness and industry.

This should not be done by coercive measures or means that will cause their dislike or excite their prejudice; but by overseers of the poor who will encourage them to it by presents and other means that will evidence to their minds that their welfare is sought. We merely make these suggestions to direct others to this subject who may examine it in all bearings and, if possible, rescue them from their present uselessness and degraded condition."

Marysville moved along rapidly with the watchdog Herald faithfully recording the day by day metamorphosis. Subscriptions for building churches, church services, reports by ministers and doctors deploring and extensive drinking, swearing and spitting as detrimental to the health and morale the community appeared in the paper's columns. On May 20, 1851, the Herald carried this news item:

"The subscribers to the Roman Catholic Church are hereby notified that those of them who have paid in their subscription will apply to Messrs. Colonel Berry or Dr. Watts at the City Drug Store to adjust their claims within ten days by order of the Trustees."

This Roman Catholic Church, St. Josephs, was to serve both communities for over one hundred years. So also did the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches serve the two communities. Thus Marysville led in matters spiritual as well as temporal.

And in matters temporal Marysville continued to forge ahead as evidenced by this article in the April 19<sup>th</sup> issue of the Herald:

"Over one thousand mules loaded out of the Plaza alone in one day. Yesterday four steamers left our landing at nearly the same time, while one was coming in. There are now about eight or nine steamers plying here regularly from Sacramento City, and three from San Francisco direct. They all come loaded down with goods."

How Marysville must have rubbed its hands together and gleefully gloated over the prosperous signs of the times. And what could Yuba City do? Very little, if anything. Folks did build fine homes over there, but these homes were more in keeping with the huge dwellings the wealthier farmer were to build in the ensuing years. These homes were hardly to be classed as city dwellings, for between them were acres of empty lots. Yuba City merchants could not or did not aggressively compete with their more progressive rivals across the river.

To add to Yuba City's woes, the local branch of the Land Bank Commission set up house in Marysville and farmers, settlers, squatters, and service men looking for free land drifted there. In taking care of one phase of the business, they also saved time doing other phases of business with the Marysville merchants. Yuba City could only resign itself to accepting the crumbs of business that might come her way after Marysville had partaken of the feast. But she had sympathy from a few who saw her plight and expressed their concern in the columns of the Herald. On April 29th the following appeared, entitled "Dedicate to Yuba City" and signed by Yellow Bird:

The Yuba City silent stands  
Where Providence has placed her;  
The glory passed to other hands  
That should by right have graced her.

She stands with aspect sad but high  
And gazes at the river  
That like a stranger passes by  
And nothing has to give her.

Alas, that beauty thus should fade  
Or live so unregarded  
And all the efforts Art has made  
Pass fruitless, unrewarded

Are not her groves most fair to see?  
Her paths full greenly skirted?  
What has she said or done to be  
Thus doomed and thus deserted?

Though melancholy her decline  
By memories sweet 'tis haunted  
And loving tones, and forms divine  
Still makes her scenes enchanted.



There love domestic reigns supreme  
In deep and holy beauty  
And like the smiles of angels seem  
Parental, filial duty.  
Her aged ones are good and mild  
Her children fair and witty  
But gone is now the fairest child  
That charmed the lonely city.  
I've seen her at the morning prime  
The sky looked sweeter, bluer  
Dye seen her at the evening time  
The stars seemed bending to her.  
Oh Yuba City, 'tis a sin  
Thou art lonely and forsaken  
When uglier cities favor win  
And prosperous paths have taken.  
Who seeks for loveliness will meet  
The picture when they find thee  
The Feather River at thy feet  
The lofty Buttes behind thee.  
And they will bless the quiet scene  
That holds thee like a jewel  
And weep that thou hast abandoned been  
To fortunes cold and cruel.  
But Yuba City time will cast  
The changes in thy favor  
Then in redemption of the past  
Thou wilt stand while others waver.

One hundred years of rivalry have slowly slid along the edge of Time , not blunting its edge but honing it surely sharper. For now that Marysville is hemmed and hedged by banks and levees and her expansion limited by rivers and sloughs, she can extend herself to these limits and no further. Perhaps, now Yuba City is in position to take advantage of her better natural situation and attract the commerce that adds to the city's pocket book. Surely now the dreams of her pioneer founders will materialize as Yuba City continues to develop her lovely homesites with handsome residences and accelerates her commercial activity with the establishment of a flourishing business area.

Time at long last has brought recognition to the great potential of the west bank of the Feather. We, therefore, might add the final stanzas to our "Dedicate to Yuba City" and bring our story up to date:

"Oh happy town, the time has come  
To lift thy noble brow  
To show accomplishment and deed,  
The Where, the When, the How !  
  
For long thy streets and thoroughfares  
The busy traffic rolls  
Insuring wealth, assuring health  
A city's natural goals.

Thus recognition comes to thee,  
One hundred years'  
endeavor And brings to mind the  
old adage,  
'Tis better late than never !

So let us stop and meditate  
On fame and lasting glory  
As ever, 'tis the end that counts !  
We thus conclude our story

--- Honora A. Laney

(Marysville Herald, November 1, 1855)

#### YUBA CITY INDIAN

The removal of these Indians from their Rancherie on the banks of the Feather River opposite the mouth of the Yuba, to the Nomo Lackee reservation is in contemplation. The people of Yuba City and our own citizens should give every encouragement in this undertaking to Colonel Hanley, the Indian agent.

At the reservation the Indians will be kept sober and rendered every way more comfortable than they now possibly can be. Here they are a vicious, diseased and drunken race. Their number is continually decreasing, and the only prospect before them, if they remain among us is total extinction.

Though besotted and degraded, they are worthy of a better lot, and we hope it awaits them in Nomo Lackee.