

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS BULLETIN

Vol. XIX, No. 4

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA 95991

October 1980



Thomas Truman Wight, son of Amos S. Wight, Shown in his mining days along the Feather River

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At our October 15th meeting at the Museum plans for a "holding area" for farm equipment will be discussed.

Several speakers of interest are being contacted to provide a topic that will be enjoyable.

Two new members on our Board of Directors are Joe K. Roberts and C. C. Epperson, Jr. They are filling out the terms of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Rosso who have moved from our area. We wish to thank Ed and Barbara Rosso for their interest and help these past several years.

The passing of Bernice Gibson, our good friend and guide for so many years, will long be remembered.

SUTTERANA

Captain Sutter -- The Marion Rifles of this City (San Francisco), have in their possession a very fine and life-like portrait of Captain Sutter, painted by a Chinese artist in his native country, from a daguerreotype taken in California. The resemblance is perfect, and the execution betrays a hand of considerable skill. The painting will be displayed in the armory of the Rifles in appropriate compliment to the Sutter Rifles (Sacramento) who will soon be their guests.

Quoted from the San Francisco Herald in the Sacramento Union of June 17, 1853.

MUSEUM NOTES
COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM ANNUAL REPORT
August 1, 1979 - July 31, 1980

The Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County was completed in 1975 and formally dedicated and given to the County of Sutter in October of that year. Building funds came from the Community Memorial Trust Fund, established in 1973 with a gift of stocks from Howard and Norma Harter equivalent to \$100,000. To this sum has been added gifts from many in the community, often received in the form of memorials. Set up as a perpetual trust with the interest earned to be used for museum development, the fund is administered by a board of trustees.

The seventeen member Community Memorial Museum Commission, appointed by the Sutter County Board of Supervisors, meets monthly to provide advisory services to the museum. The commission supervises the museum gift shop and is responsible for the Membership Program, for fund raising events, and for the Museum Expansion Fund.

Membership in the museum is open to all interested persons. Seventy nine individuals, families, groups, or businesses are 1980 museum members as of July 31. Fund raising events were period fashion show-teas held in November and June and a December Christmas party. Special gift shop sales items developed by the museum this year were a "Sutter County Seal" medallion or belt buckle; the sixth in the historic Sutter County plate series, "North Butte;" a Sutter Buttes woman's T-shirt; and the "History of Sutter County Coloring Book." Gift shop and fund raising revenues and memberships are used for operating and exhibit expenses.

The museum was awarded an Operation Support Grant of \$6,138 from the Institute of Museum Services, Department of H. E. W., in September of 1979.

The grant supplemented local fund raising efforts and was used for exhibit preparation, for conservation and preservation of artifacts, and for educational and research services to the community.

The Memorial Fountain, a community beautification project of the Sutter County Bicentennial Commission was built at the museum entrance and was dedicated in May of 1980. Donors to the Bicentennial Fountain Project are recognized by plaques set into the fountain.

In September of 1975 the Community Memorial Museum Auxiliary was formed to provide volunteer services to the museum. To date 14,310 volunteer hours have been logged, 2,110 hours during the period covered by this annual report. Auxiliary member recognition is given each October at an Awards Brunch.

During its fifth year of operation, 7,082 people visited the museum. 35,037 visitors coming from all 50 states and from many foreign countries have been logged by the museum in five years.

The museum gave a total of 79 group tours to 1,701 people this year. Of these 48 were to public and private school classes (1,098 individuals) ranging in level from preschool to seniors in college. Special groups served were 13 classes of educationally, physically or emotionally handicapped children or adults. Twelve youth groups (113 individuals) and 19 adult groups (490 individuals) also toured the museum. In five years 9,259 individuals in 465 groups have taken advantage of the museum's special tours.

The Museum Concert Series, under the direction of Jane Roberts, is in the fifth year of presenting programs featuring local artists. Eleven Sunday afternoon concerts were held during the year with a total attendance of 616.

A total of 749 individual artifacts were given to the museum by 70 donors in the past twelve months. Added to the 4,499 items received the prior four years and the over 1,000 items in the original Sutter County Historical Society Collection, the museum's collection numbers over 6,250 items.

In addition to its permanent exhibits, ten special exhibits were featured during the year. Displays of "Ribbon Plates", Sutter and Yuba County post cards, juice reamers and items from early settlers of the Nicolaus area were loaned by local residents. An exhibit and demonstration of spinning, weaving, and natural dyeing of wool was held in November. "Feminine Finery," Christmas Toys, and 1920's and 1930's Automobile Advertisements were museum-developed exhibits. "American Agriculture, A Continuing Revolution," a Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit was sponsored by Orchard Machinery Company of Yuba City and shown in April. In July a Smithsonian exhibit, "Five Critical Elections", was sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Michael Gabhart of East Nicolaus.

MUSEUM CALENDAR -- 1980 and 1981

September 13 - October 12		Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit, <u>PHOTOGRAPHING THE FRONTIER</u>
October 16	Noon	Museum Luncheon - Card Party (Reservations & tickets available at museum)
October 26	2 p.m.	Sunday Concert Series
November 1 - 29		California State Archives Traveling Exhibit, <u>ORANGE CRATE ART</u>
November 23	2 p.m.	Sunday Concert Series
December 1 - January 5		Special Exhibit, <u>ANTIQUA CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS</u>
December 13	5 - 8 p.m.	Second Annual Museum Christmas Party, <u>TREES AND TRADITIONS</u>

May 3 - June 1

California State Archives Traveling
Exhibit, CALIFORNIA'S WINE INDUSTRY

May (date not set)

Museum Wine Tasting Party

DONORS TO THE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM TRUST FUND
May 14, 1980 through August 15, 1980

Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Schnabel	in memory of Geraldine Hall
Caroline Ringler	in memory of Geraldine Hall
Ignatius Banasewicz	in memory of Alexandra Banasewicz
Bee and Dick Brandt	in memory of Kate Ramsaur
Lola L. Case	in memory of Geraldine Hall
Norma P. Harter	in memory of Ivy Ernst
Norma Harter	in memory of Lee McCune
Roberta McCoy, Marcella Hardy, and Elizabeth Phillips	in memory of Emily Wilbur
Verna M. Sexton	in memory of Floyd Nesbitt
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Alexander	in memory of Bill Donovan
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Alexander	in memory of Hattie Grace
Betty and Bill Arnett	in memory of Genevieve Burtis
Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Davis	in memory of Ermon Umfress
Norma Harter	in memory of Bernice Gibson
Norman and Loadel Piner	in memory of Lee McCune
Verna M. Sexton	in memory of Bernice Gibson
Alice A. Soderberg	in memory of Bernice B. Gibson
Mr. and Mrs. Burwell W. Ullrey	in memory of Geraldine Hall
Leroy and Meriel Davis	in memory of Genevieve Burtis
Leroy and Meriel Davis	in memory of Herbert F. DeWitt
Maude K. Roberts	in memory of Leona Johnson

Bart and Donna Edward	in memory of Bernice Gibson
Sons of Norway, Snowshoe Thompson Lodge No. 78	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
The Heart Federal Savings & Loan	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District Governing Board	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Sullivan School Faculty and Staff	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Thelma Ashford Gage	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Walter and Celia Ettl	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Violette and A. J. McCabe	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Greene Jr.	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Maude K. Roberts	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Mary Mulvany	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Claudine Rolufs	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Velma B. Olsen	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Jean Gustin	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
Fairfield-Suisun Administrator's Association	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Rotary Club of Fairfield-Suisun	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Lola & Leighton Case and Caryl Trailer	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Mr. and Mrs. Mario Del Pero	in memory of Elizabeth Joyet Curtis
Julia Reynolds	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Verna M. Sexton	in memory of Genevieve W. Burtis
Verna M. Sexton	in memory of Herbert F. DeWitt
Maude K. Roberts	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
Lucille Tokuno, Miharu Studio of Hair Design	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
Joe and Jane Roberts	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
Adah R. Borchert	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson

Edna Morrissey and Family	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Margaret Madden	in memory of Elizabeth J. Curtis
Bogue Country Club	in memory of Elizabeth J. Curtis
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Allen	in memory of Juanice Hollingshead
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Allen	in memory of Jean Morehead
Mr. and Mrs. James Arnoldy	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
California Retired Teachers Association, Sutter-Yuba- Colusa Division	outright gift
Louis and Miriam Farone	in memory of Bernice Gibson
Georgia and Wilbur Green	in memory of Lloyd A. Evers
Philip and Eleanor Holmes	in memory of Jean Morehead
R. A. & S. D. Schnabel	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
R. A. & S. D. Schnabel	in memory of Bernice Gibson
Mrs. Alice A. Soderberg	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
Mrs. R. S. Turney	in memory of Bernice Gibson
Mr. and Mrs. Burwell W. Ullrey	in memory of Margaret M. Berry
Mr. and Mrs. Burwell W. Ullrey	in memory of Genevieve Burtis
Mr. and Mrs. Burwell W. Ullrey	in memory of Bernice Gibson
Wesleyan Fellowship, First United Methodist Church	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Emily Wessel	in memory of Walter Redhead
Mr. and Mrs. Lynn F. West	in memory of Bernice Best Gibson
Verna M. Sexton	in memory of Ira C. McKay
Rich Flatland, Marianne Flatland, Anne Flatland, Kathy Flatland, and Marie Hyman	in memory of Bernice & Arthur Cheim
Jesse and Ivadel Simmons	in memory of Jesse Heffington
Cassius C. Epperson	in memory of E. W. B. Jones
David and Sylvia Lamon	in honor of the birth of Grady Bruce Lamon on August 4, 1979

Alice Lowe	in memory of Eric & Elna Nelson
Norman and Loadel Piner	in memory of James L. Brierly
Lloyd and Sylvia Henson	in memory of James L. Brierly
Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Brannen	in memory of Elizabeth Curtis
Caroline Ringler	in memory of James L. Brierly
Mr. and Mrs. Burwell W. Ullrey	in memory of James L. Brierly
Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Dawson	in memory of James L. Brierly
Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Ashford	in memory of Oren P. Moore
Mrs. Hugo Del Pero	in memory of Geraldine Gengler
Henry and Norma Poffenberger	in memory of Paul Schuette
Ed and Jean Gustin	in memory of Lloyd W. Henson
Caroline S. Ringler	in memory of Lloyd W. Henson
Ruth E. O'Sullivan	in memory of Lloyd W. Henson
Loyd and Nora Wilbur	in memory of Edward Rose
Mr. and Mrs. Frank W. Welter	in memory of Vernie Crouch
Mr. and Mrs. Frank W. Welter	in memory of Lloyd Henson
Wallace and Dorothy Coats and Rosemary Redhair	in memory of Lloyd W. Henson
Maude K. Roberts	in memory of the grandparents of Woodrow Best, Henry and Luvina Best and Constantine and Caroline King of Harkey Corners of 1864
Margit Epperson	in memory of Lloyd Henson
Caroline Ringler	in memory of Woodrow Best
Bee and Dick Brandt	in memory of Oren P. Moore
Bee and Dick Brandt	in memory of Lloyd Henson

AMOS SMITH WIGHT --- ONE WHO NEVER RETURNED

How many early pioneers came to an area such as ours from across the country in search of a new way of life or perhaps even riches? The time was 1849 and for many, the message of "gold discovered in California" reached eastward. The news met the ears of many a young man who was eager for adventure. We might suppose that our subject, Amos Smith Wight, born in Kentucky in 1821, was one of these young men.

In researching an individual who lived so long ago, it is often difficult to fill gaps in time with events in his life and it is easy to give way to speculation along the way. The reason for selecting Amos as our subject was that many letters were given to the Community Memorial Museum, of Sutter County by his great granddaughter. Much of the material seemed to be of historical interest. Even though Amos's contributions were not of great individual significance, they are of significance collectively with those of his contemporaries. His deeds aided the development of the West. Today, descendants of this man are numbered among residents of this part of California.

The content of this article is comprised mostly of a compilation of letters written to Amos Wight in the 1850's and 1860's. With this writer's introductory notes, to help clarify certain portions of the letters, it is hoped you will enjoy these accounts of life so long ago. Note that there is a rather continuous thread of pleas throughout the letters for Amos to return "home."

The period in history is pre-Civil War. The area of Kentucky where Amos lived, had been settled for a considerably longer period of time than California. Migrating to California and leaving behind family, friends and

his slave holdings undoubtedly was a big decision in Amos's life. We have no evidence that he was a married man so perhaps this made it a bit easier to leave his home, even in his 27th year, and try a new life in the West. It is believed that he devoted the next six or seven years of his life to mining.

We can speculate that he traveled here from Kentucky with Moss, Taylor, Porter and Spears, but will never know for certain. Different letters make it appear that these buddies of his later scattered to areas such as Strawberry Valley and Gibsonville and that Doc Spears returned to Richmond, Virginia area by 1855. The feeling one derives from reading these first few letters from his friends is one of a genuine closeness as reference is made to the "California Boys". After a few years passed, mining seemed to be not as profitable for Amos as he might have wished. Perhaps settling down, having a wife and family and ranching, was to be the next appropriate turn in his life. We find evidence that he rented a small ranch the very month of his marriage to Fanny Nichols Pierce (see rental agreement of November 24, 1856).

I will take you through the portion of Amos's life as prospector, rancher and as a responsible citizen. He served positions such as Justice of the Peace, chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Yuba County and Director of Browns Valley Irrigation District. Some will say Amos Smith Wight did not leave a very large mark in our history. This may be true, but he does represent an early pioneer who did come here with a sense of adventure. He did work to better himself and his family and he did serve his community in ways that he could.

It may not be earthshaking to find out why, while on the Board of Supervisors, Amos was referred to as "Hooppole" Wight. It may not be unique that he had slave holdings back in Kentucky. But one thing is

certain. As a researcher, I spent some interesting hours peering into his past and reading Amos's personal mail from some 125 years ago. And it made me feel as if I had a small scope into his life -- a life that was less than dull and uneventful. I would like to share as closely as possible, happenings in his life as are revealed in letters to him, old newspaper articles, library microfilms, courthouse documents, and information given to this Museum by one of his descendants.

As one delves into these letters, it is interesting to note some of the archaic terms used such as "drubbing" and "doggery" for example. One also must realize that back in the days when many of these letters were written, few people had any real formal education. Many letters are very difficult to decipher with numerous run-on sentences, lack of punctuation, and poor spelling. Perhaps this is the proper time and place to emphasize the importance for people to preserve old records, letters, documents, and to identify photographs for following generations to enjoy.

An extensive search did not turn up photographs of Amos or his wife, Fanny. What we do know about Fanny is that she was born Fanny Nichols Pierce in Genesee County, New York, January 5, 1835, and married Amos November 30, 1856, in Butte County California. In a span of thirteen years, six children were born to them, but apparently only three lived to adulthood.

The surviving son, Thomas Truman, whose photograph will appear several times, is mentioned as marrying Mary Josephine Burris. (The Burris Ranch is known to many in this area today. They are descendants of this same Burris family). He and his wife lived a time at Gridley, Bangor, Camptonville and moved to Berkeley area in the early 1900's. Thomas was at least for a time, involved in mining in Yuba County along the Feather River.

Once again it is only speculation that his interest in mining developed because of his father. (Note the cover picture -- Amos's son, Thomas is third from left).

The letters or portions of letters selected to share with you start in 1855 and the last one was written late in 1863. With a brief introduction to each letter, you are ready to begin reading them. The content of the letters is left as original as possible.



Compare this photo with the cover photo. Can we speculate this was a Sunday afternoon outing, with lady friends? There is an extra small boy in this picture but each man's face can be identified on the cover picture.

* * * * *
 *
 * April 10, 1855 *
 *
 * This letter is from I. T. Moss of Gibsonville *
 * to Amos Wight. The letter asks Amos if he *
 * wants into a partnership in a steam sawmill at *
 * Cragg's Flat. Although we have no answer from *
 * Amos, we assume he declined the offer, as no men- *
 * tion was ever made in reference to a sawmill in *
 * later correspondence. *
 * * * * *

Friend Wight

I take this opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know
 how we are getting along up here Well we are doing very well so far
 My claim has paid very well for the time that we have worked it. I
 sold out of it some two weeks ago. my sixth part for seven hundred
 Neil bought one third last fall for six hundred so you can see that the
 old fellow is in luck for once. he would not take fifteen hundred for
 it now.

My object in writing to you at this time is this. I heard that you
 had sold out your claims and supposing that you was out of business at
 this time and would like to get in to something that would pay and be
 noteworthy (?) business for some time and as I have a good chance as I
 think of that sort I would write you word and if you want to go in to it
 I would be very glad to have you for a partner It is this to build a
 steam saw mill at Cragg's flat this summer. we can get the mill and put
 it up for five thousand dollars at most and I think much less than
 that I have sent below by aman that is in the business to know what
 the engine will cost. and will hear from him in about two weeks he is
 a man that has been in that sort of business for some time and a friend
 of mind and he wants me to go into it he says that he knows that it

will pay well Now if you think that you would like to go in to the
operation write me word as soon as possible and let me know how
much you would like to put in it and if you want to see me about it
let me know at what point I can find you and I will come and see you
at any time you may set I dont know where you are at this time so I
will send this to Doc and get him to forward it to you We are all well
at present got a letter from Pat the other day he is well and says that
he is doing well if old porter is with you give him my respects and
the same to old man Taylor I remain yours Respectfully

I. T. Moss

* * * * *
 *
 * October 3, 1855 *
 *
 * The letter is from friend, George Porter of Straw- *
 * berry Valley, California to Amos Wight. Porter is *
 * sending \$75 by stage driver to Amos. George Porter *
 * invites Amos to look at this place where he is *
 * working on the Feather River. *
 * *
 * *Dogery (Webster's 1881 dictionary) means low *
 * grog shop or bar. *
 * * * * *

Friend Wight.

I avail my self of this opportunity of writing to you a few lines;
 Yet at the same time giving but little news of any importance. I left
 here last Saturday Morning. went by way of Forbes Town to Ophir, and
 was quite anxious to See you, but it was with Some little difficulty I
 could learn any thing about you. Old Man Youlen was in Company with me
 we passed near to where you were building made many and numerous enquiries
 for you but Could learn nothing of you, we made those enquiries of an old
 Buckfact(?) who keeps a *Dogery All that I could learn from him was that
 Several Stores were about being put up Some one or two miles above him. I
 at last Saw a man who told me he knew one of them to be you. but you were
 not at home haveing gone up to the Mountain House. At this time the sun
 was about Setting and not likeing the appearance of the Hotell, near by.
 we consulted each other and thought it best to keep on to Ophir. Our feet
 were dam sore. and we were very much fatigued indeed. however we reached
 Ophir in time to get supper Stayed all night and went to Marysville next
 day in the Stage I am not fully prepared to say how I like the Ophir
 Country did not look round but little But I do know one thing it is the
 hottest place I ever met with in the Country And I dont like it much on
 that account. Wight I have been doing my best to make a raise for you but

without success___ I send by the Stage driver \$75= which is all I can do at the present time. I hever in all my life knew money so hard to come at before. Now Wight you had better come up and look at this place where I am working on Feather River. And Harrison Diggins if you think Competition will run to high at Cherrokee, Nothing more at present.

I remain your Sincere

friend Geo W Porter

* * * * *
 *
 * December 7, 1855 *
 *
 * *The letter is from George Porter of Strawberry*
 * *Valley to Amos Wight. This letter is brief and*
 * *mentions Dr. Spears and described winter condi-*
 * *tions in Strawberry Valley.*
 *
 * * * * *

Friend Wight

As I have an opportunity of writing you a few lines. I will avail
 Myself of the Same, Yet writing nothing of any interest at all. The
 Snow at this place, at present is some 2 feet in depth, and very dis-
 agreeable in deed. Times are distreSsingly dull, And if I knew of
 any place that I could make expences. down your way I would be
 tempted to leave this place and Come down and spend Some 2 or 3Months
 at least And Wight if you know of any show that I can make any thing.
 You will Confer on me a liveing favour by informing me the Same I am
 very tired of the Mountains and So much Snow. I have been Mining on
 Georgia Gulch for the last 2 Months. but the pay is very poor indeed
 I have at last heard from Dr. Spears. he reached home in good health and
 safety. He send to you his best wishes__and respects he also mentioned
 the money he owes you, which amount I will make right with you as soon
 as I can,, Nothing more to write at present I remain your Sincere friend,

{ How is MiSs Fannie }

Geo, W Porter.

P S

Let me hear from you Soon.

GWP

*
* March 19, 1856 *
* *
* *The letter is from J. H. McIsaac, a cousin in Ken* *
* *tucky to Amos Night. This section of this letter* *
* *refers to a man who had gone down to Bullitt &* *
* *Nelson Counties with old Mary, the slave woman* *
* *The last portion points out that cousin McIsaac,* *
* *too, is looking for him to return to Kentucky* *
* *Love to our "new cousin" may mean that Amos had* *
* *already taken Fanny for his bride.* *

----He has gone down to Bullit & with him took old mary, and I hop she will not come back to Nelson again they are a devil of a sett I could not let Liz goe out to See them out my haveing to goe after him. -he was out at christmas all the cold weather I did not get hir for a month and could not get hir to come in she wanted me to hire hir to Dr Mattings to wash all the year & hir in the family way again. She is a good breeder, is a bout as much as can be said, as they get old they all get mean, they are all in good Health, liz is got Stout & I think Healthy the little Byoy is Healthy but Small

Amos, I have not much News to write you though I expect there is a great change Sinc you left here a good many of you old acquaintances dead & some moved off Doct McElvany was thrown out of his buggy a few days agoe & died the sanne Night, be Sides a good many broken legs & arms this winter the Hardest ever experienced in Kentucky the pound has bin covered with Ice from the beginning of winter till now, James Slaunther the clerk died this winter & Hinds is in his plaee, Lots of weddings Mrs Winton to Doct James Muir partner of Dr. Hinds Aron Haris Marid again off is still here Single all though they have it he is to mary eny week to a Miss B. Polly, is mared Aunt Jane had bought a small farm in Harder or Larne is very well pleased one of hir Brother Single is with hir it is avry good little place off has bin down, & seen it, A. we have all bin looking for you, & Bristowe & Frank in this last fall - By evry veSsell that arrives from Cal but none of you come & it is vey Seldom we hear from you - please write oftnir wall Join in our love to you & our New cousin/

J H McIsaac

 *
 * July 30, 1856 *
 *
 * The letter is from Thomas Spears, Chesterfield
 * County, Va., written to Amos Wight. One of the
 * "California Boys" who returned home is Spears.
 * His health is failing. If he could have foreseen
 * ill health in the East he would never have left
 * California. He, being a physician himself, be-
 * lieves he has consumption. He loves the California
 * boys like brothers and longs to see Amos once more
 * and feel as "happy as a bed bug".
 * *Drubbing - to thrash or beat with a stick.
 * *Consumption - Wasting of the body; pulmonary
 * tuberculosis.
 * *****

Dear Friend Wight

I have promised myself thousands of times to write you without having done so and I am almost afraid you think hard of me indeed I admit I have done wrong and deserve a good "drubbing, but Dear Old Wight you must forgive me cheerfully and willingly. My health has been wretched indeed ever since Christmas. Confined nearly the whole time on my back and I feel so bad always, even now, both in body & mind that it is very difficult to commence a letter. I've no energy of mind or body and a good specimen I am of a regular hypocondriac. I think of you so Often every day I have determined to write. Tho. I've nothing that could interest you from this quarter apart from my self.

last fall for a short-time I enjoyed myself very well hunting birds & knocking about Richmond with a few of my old Chums with that exception I had as well have been dead for the pleasure or comfort since. Could I have foreseen I would never have left Cal I believe now my health would not have suffered. and I think my only show ever to enjoy anything like health will be to emigrate again to some climate similar to yours. One of my lungs is very seriously affected in plain English I have every symptom of *Consumption & believe I have it. It makes me feel bad to think of

leaving home without any constitution & in bad health also. to try or mix in with this wicked world once more & on the other hand what do the comforts of home amount to when you have no health to enjoy them. None of course. I've been thinking of leaving this fall seriously, tho I have not mentioned it to any of my folks. They will be very much opposed I know but if I remain one more winter I am a gone Chicken. we had the hardest winter you ever saw in your life. Ice on James River was 4 ft thick. nearly all the birds of every description & hares were killed fruit trees also. Crops are very indifferent this year in Va. the corn is suffering very much now with dry weather.

I got a letter from Skinner a month or two ago. he has just settled himself he says at delphos Ohio. inquired after you & all the boys" said it was very hard to quit stimulating" I have to say Amen to the same. I presume he is Merchandising. tho I know no Geo wrote me you had lost your mule I hope by this time you have found her & the rascal too. The Vigilance Committee ought to have him. I lost a very fine mare a few weeks since with Pneumonia She was a beautifull animal indeed. Are you married yet, if you are let me congratulate you & give my love to the Old Lady. If you are not you had better be all the Old folks say so They know too. I heard it was supposed that you were. I am looking out for Geo. every mo. & I hope you will come home with him. If I could see you once more I think I would again be as happy as a bed bug. feel some of my Old feelinos over again.

Wight I would like to meet you my good old friend again but I fear not I can only hope. I love you Cal boys like brothers. The images of all are deeply impressed on my heart I shall never meet men again I love so well. write as soon as you get this give my love to all the boys and accept for yourself the best & most sincere affection of you Old friend

Thos. M. Spears

* * * * *
 *
 * August 3, 1856 *
 *
 * *The letter is from George Porter of Strawberry* *
 * *Valley to Amos. He states that his claims are* *
 * *prospecting well but buying of a billiard table* *
 * *has "cleaned him", thus making it difficult to* *
 * *pay back money owed Amos.* *
 *
 * * * * *

Friend Wight

Your note of August the first Came to hand today, and I hasten to
 reply to the same. Yet at the same time I fear my letter may not entirely
 meet your approbation. Wight I am very sorry that my pecuniary matters
 are of such a nature as to prevent my compliance with your request. I
 would like above all things to do so. I esteem you as one among my best
 friends and would do any thing to comply with your request And I shall
 do my best for you=. You must not think hard of me. The amount due you
 is just and ought to be paid. And I will see it paid. at the earliest
 opportunity. My circumstances are some what similar to yours. I have
 been at great deal expence lately and comparatively speaking made nothing
 I will write to Pat Handly and see if he can do any thing for you. My
 claims at present are prospecting well and I think from this on pay well.
 Are you going to take Miss F with you Tisdale is about buying a Billiard
 Table and that has cleaned me Nothing more at present / My respect to
 MeSs Fanny for you Sake And accept of The best wishes of your

friend Geo W. Porter

*
*
September 7, 1856
*
*

The letter is first one from Aunt Elizabeth Glass of Kentucky to Amos (born in Md. 1794). She pleases to him to "come home". She never knew what hard times were before. Henry, a slave, who apparently belongs to Amos has been taken and hired out by Aunt Elizabeth. She wishes Amos to write her and give her permission to use Henry as a hired out slave so she might realize extra income. Thirteen people are in her "family," 11 blacks, William and herself. A slave called Elizabeth, with two fine little boy children is mentioned. Amos is asked not to sell her. Someone else has her in his keep at present and is treating her very badly ("worse than hound dogs"). Elizabeth, the slave, prays for Amos to come and take her to California. She would follow him to the end of the World.

Dear Amos

I have just received yours of the 16 August I was glad to do I thought you was dead I am Soree you are hirt at what I have don about henry it was surety and troubel was the cause I was Stript of very thing to the 1st hen or Chicken my money gon I wint in det for a home and meet and bredd to I had not one mouth full but what I bought/I went in det one thousand dollar I thought I mout (might) as well have henery and the hire of him to help mee along well as Macatee or ben Wight/you Shall not bee run to eany (any) Court Amos Shour (sure) as I live I will account to you for it and god hears me promas it to you/ one thing more/the ares (heirs) of the estat has thretend mee for puting eany of my property and my possession during his lifetime Tha (They) are still holden back to See what I will do with henery wright to me to take him and the hir of him and do what I please with it Amos if you knew half the troubel that I have Seen I know you would not refuse to help me out if you are afraid of me I will give you my noat for All _____ if you think you Cant do it I will excuse you and not think hard of you

you Shall not have to whistle for it nor any thing else that letter
is a bare faced ly Come ~~Who~~ (who) it may as fore Elizabeth I have
nothing to do with hir O dont Sell (sell) hir Shee has tu (two) fine
littel boy Childern the yungest 2 weakes old John henery and William
Amos is thare names Peeter hir father is heare/tells mee right you
that Elizabeth and Childern are treated worse than houn (hound) dogs/
Starved and Not Clothed/put down at the factory to lay in thare/a old
and pore black woman to nurse hir Mary and lucinda went up to see hir/
hir breckfast was a peace of Corn bredd half the size of thare hand with
a coup of Cofy William Saw hir last fall in rags/gaver hir five dollars
to get Cloas (clothes) you cant blaim William nor me fore feare of given
offence She is now dout badely treaten She/I prays you Com take hir
to California She will follow you to the end of the world She is will-
ing to leave All to go with you Hir wife is a devil in human Shape
thare Severl that wants to hir hir/good places to Amos, I thirten in
familey eleven black William my Self William workes hard he is in the
hogs/has the wost (worst) luck in the world/hard winter/grait (great)
drouth (drought) we didnt raise as many oats as we Soad (sowed) and will
have a half Crop of Corn he is very down harted he wants to help mee
out but has bad luck Amos I never knew what hard times was be fore/
Amos Come home I do want to See you William Allways Says he will
wright to you but like all the rest of his familey wont wright he Sends
his best lov to you Says he wants to see you and James (?) I am glad
to heare you are not given to none of thear bad habits hold up Amos
that is a satisfction to mee to hear you are Steady and holds up you head
whare you aught you aught not judg mee by the rest of your relations/
when I think over the past Seens I cant _____ So I will bring my letter to

a cloas

your affectinant Aunt utill deth

Elizabeth Glass

William sends his best love to you

 *
 * November 24, 1856 *
 *
 * Rental Agreement. Amos has rented a farm and farm *
 * house known as Lincoln Ranch in Butte County for *
 * seven months. Seth Pierce was Fanny's father. *
 * *This is the year Amos was married to Fanny Nichols *
 * Pierce from Genesee County, New York. *
 *

This is to Certify that I have let and rented unto Amos S. Wight my Farm and House known as the Lincoln Ranch Situated in the county of But State of Calafornia for the turm of Seven months. Turm of lease to Expier the first of July one thousand Eight Hundred and fifty Seven for witch I a gree to pay the Sum of four hundred dollar mounthely, the premises are not to be used or occupied for any busineSs deemed extra hazardous on account of fire nor Shall the Same on eny part thereof be let or under let withou the written consent of the Landlord under the penelty of Forfeiture and damages,

Given under my hand and Seal the twenty fourth of Novembe one thousand eight hundre and fifty Six

Hector Achorn

Seal

WitneSs Seth S. Peirce)

December 27, 1856

The letter is from J. H. McIsaac of Bardton, Kentucky to Amos Wight. This letter is not used in its entirety. The subject of Amos's slave Henry and the possibility of selling him is mentioned and a difference of opinion is noted in regard to "Aunt B" (Elizabeth Glass) and "hir negroes," impending law suit etc. Conditions and medical problems of slaves are related. The last portion of this three page letter gives some news of the day and excitement caused by a report of an insurrection of the negroes.

*Insurrection means a revolt or rebellion. History shows that there were different uprisings by the negroes in this pre-Civil War era.

Dear Cousin

Amos I have written to you but heard nothing since from you, Now for the BusineSs part of you letter you write to me to sell Henry, I new the feeling of ant B, for negroes So I Sent hir a line for all the in for mation I Could get from hir and wm, The information I got, was to not to interfere with hir negroes & I would not get a Suit on my hands, but If I did I would have a Suit on my hands, sure for She intended to Sue Benj. Wight and wm McAtee for the Hire of Henry, I donot Know how She will make it.

. . . . Amos I do not know what to do about the negro, I think I had best wait awhile until wm McAtee comes Back & By that time you will, may be, get one of my letters and give me your opinion, and what you wish me to do, I do not want the displeasure of Either wm or ant B. The Ballance of your negroes are well at this time, I let hir goe out to hir old neighbourhood for a fiew days, Uncle Benj, has lost his Em= he let hir stay out at old Cy-s & pay (?) what she pleased She preferred to Stay out there in a Shanty that neither Keeps out cold nor wett, Took cold and died by neglect, & So Beny is out about 6 hundread dollarS & I expect

they will make him pay the **Docs** Bill all for hir accomodation. So She would be near hir husband and dady____ Liz Stuck a nail in hir foot & could hardly walk for two weeks. If She had bin out there She would have died If She done as She done here what I put on She would let Stay untill Some one told hir what was beter/then She would try that/you Know every one that Saw hir had to tell hir what was Best, untill I told hir if She took it of I would lash hir, I thought it would give hir lockjaw for three or four days & had to cut it open twice it was vry bad there has bin a good many deaths but two that I have not mentioned before - Columbus Harris, dead & old H. Rite he was Sawed up in a Saw mill died in a minute,, old nat wickliff & we hear that all the Boys that went out to help walker nearly all are gone Howard hines, Kiled/ Bin talbot died with fever others I do not recollect, nomore We have bin in thrown in to Excitement by a report of an *inSurection of the negroes but it is all a flash,- though in tenessee they have huno 8 or 9 negroes an afew in others we Keep a guard of 16 men in town for a few weeks/in Jefferson three negroes kiled three white women & 1 man & Burnt them up, have bin caught, & confest all

all well of you ac-quaintance off not married yet.

J. H. McIsaac.

 *
 * April 19, 1857 *
 *
 * Letter is from Aunt Elizabeth Glass of Kentucky to
 * nephew Amos. Aunt Elizabeth tells of hard winter,
 * hard times and the slave, Phoebe, having dropsy,
 * Poor William is "out of heart and out of money."
 * Elizabeth, the slave, says not to sell her for any
 * price. She will take up her bundle on her back and
 * follow Amos anywhere.
 *

Dear Amos

I once more Sit down to drope a line or two to you weare (we are)
 All well but Pheby (Phoebe) I think has the dropsy I see nothing but
 troube1 and hard times hard winter1ait Spring the 13 a deep Snow/this
 morning Snowing/every night a frieze no corn no hay nor fodder to feed/
 out of money/in det William is out of hart out of money o Amos you can
 gess how thing goes with me William has lost more than three hundred
 head of hogs Still ding (dying) he has not more than twenty head left
 he has Al most give up the hole neiber hood is in the Same fix/not quit
 (quite) as we are every ons hogs is dying with the saim dease/the fat
 as well as pore are ding (dying) o Amos I onely wish I was with you and
 your wife I think i my troube1s certenly would be less I Cant live
 long and See what I dooe my hart is all most broak with in mee i have
 13 in famiely/every mouth food to by/but my meet. I wont tell you All my
 troube1s/you may gess what Some of them are Amos I hope in god you are
 Sober study (steady) man /to know you are would be a grait Satisfaction
 to me now and when I leave this world Elizabeth Says you must not Sell
 hir for now (no) price Says She will take hir bundel on hir back and
 fowel (follow) you to the end of the world if you Say So She has two
 fine boys I do be a shamed of theas fue lins my mind is so confused

I cant wright dont let fanny See this or She never will Come to See
mee I hoape She will Come before I die this is not old Keintucky
ainy more the Seasons is so chainged

pore William Sends his best love to you both

my best love to fanny and your Self I Cant wright for Mary is
drunk and goin on at a dredful rait wright Soon your letters gives
me grait Satisfaction to think you think Something of mee o if I
Could See you both talk to you what a pleasur it would be to me

yours as ever Elizabeth Glass

* * * * *
*
* April 26, 1857 *
*
* The letter is from Ben W. D. Moore, of Solano County, *
* California to Amos Wight. Ben congratulates Amos *
* his marriage. Reference is made that he, Moore, used *
* an "unprofessional surgical knife" to perform an *
* operation. A request is made for Amos to pay back *
* fees due on a note. *
* * * * *

My Old Friend

It has been some time since I have had the pleasure of seeing or hearing of you. I had long since come to the conclusion that you had returned to the Atlantic States. But yesterday I had the pleasure of meeting with Wm Peacock who informed me that you had sometime since abandoned the Old ship of Bachelorism and were now enjoying the luxuries of double blessedness. As it was the first intimation I had had of your good luck you will not think me tardy in sending you my congratulations and wishing you all the joys and comforts which Our Common Father has laid up in his Store house above for his Creatures here on this earth. Since I saw you My life has been as varied as it well could. Sometimes in big luck; infact I may say all the time big. But not all good, by any means. This year Everything has gone against me. My entire Crop overflowed so such an extent that I shall not realize one dollar from it. I suppose you heard of my unfortunate difficulty with Rowe. It cased me much trouble and nearly all I was worth to get out of it. The Jury decided that the knife I used on him was not be found in any surgical case of instruments that they had ever seen; and thought it decidedly unprofessional to perform such operations if they could be avoided. But from the evidence before them they were bound to clear me. Some of my friends made Oath that they considered me one of the most amiable men they had ever known

You can be your own judge as it regards my amiability as you have known for some time. Crops here look remarkably well but would be much better if we could have a rain. White, I am from necessity compelled to call on you for the ballance due me for Back fees all so the ballance due on the Sheldon Note which I gave up to you at the Texas Rancho in December fifty four. You will reccollect you were to have sent me the money the next January; The ballance due me at that time was a fraction overy fifty dollars. But you have the note and can see exactly what it will amount to. The Ballance on Ranch feess I think was some Seventeen or Eighteen dollars. By attending to the above at your earliest convenience you will confer a great favour on me as I am in verry straitened circumstances at this time: you can send me a draft on Wells Fargo & Co at Suisun City

Give me all the news when you write and direct your letters to Cordilia P. O. Solano Co.

Yours in haste, Ben W. D. Moore

 *
 * December 25, 1857 *
 *
 * The letter is from Aunt Elizabeth Glass in Kentucky to *
 * Amos. She describes extremely troubled times. Out of *
 * necessity, she sold Henry, who belonged to Amos. This *
 * is an example of a very difficult letter to decipher. *
 * It is interesting to note that in the first half of *
 * the first page, Aunt Glass remarks that four years is *
 * too long to wait to see Amos and Fanny. She says she *
 * "may be in eternity by that time." She died March 18, *
 * 1861, about four years from the time this letter was *
 * written. *
 *
 * *****

Dear Amos

I received yours yester day wich gave great Satisfaction to hear from you I ws (was) in hops (hopes) your long delay of wrihting you was coming home as the cars coms in half mile of mee from louisvill but you have got your thout her Self I hope She will influence you to Com and let us see our new conetction/we are both ancious to See hir William gives his best love and wishes to you and his new and only Sister/my niec (niece) you must tak good care of my Amos as he is one of my sons/U have but too bee Cind (kind) to each other/then you will be happy O how I would like to see you both Amos fore years is to long for me to wait I may be in eternity by that time I want to See you be fore I die and tell you All of my troubelS which you dont know nor blieve but So it is I must bare them the best I Can I never new what troubel and hard tims was/ you know I feel the affects now/thare is Almost a perfect faliour (failure) of All Crops of grain and vegetabeS

Willi went in to the **hog** traid last august/was year in hops to make something/last winter and this is so very hard/the drouth this Summer and hard frost in September has maid all most a totel faliur (failure) of every thing /he put in about forth acers (acres) of oats/did not rais as many as he soed (sowed) on the ground We rented ground/put in betwn (between)

forth five and fifty acers of corn we did not raise one hundred bushels
So it is throu the hole Country except in the river botoms the mitts
and the ohio is froven (frozen) up as nothing Can be had to keep Stock a
live / William is loosing almost all his hogs Som peopel has lost nerly
all with Som dese (disease) and the want of food William has lost not
less than Seven hudred dollars worth Since he bought and maid not one
dollar he is out of hart and most despnding I am afraid he will Amos
you know we have now (no) money to by with he is now try to get Som food
when thare Comes a thaw in the river / that is all the Chance / wod in
Louisvill is Seven dollars a Cord / coal seventy cents fore a bushel

Amos you may think hard of mee for what I have don but necessity maid
me do it I have Sold henery for three hundred dollar due in April next
I cany Say eny thing bout the hier of him yet I thought I might as well
have the use of the mony as Not. or others Amos it Shall be more than
two thousands to you dont think hard of mee I have a leven (eleven)
blacks and Something els and now (no) one but you and William to leve
it to you both I thought it the best sell him kep the rest. All I
want is you and william to seport me deasently my life time the balance
is yors both I will right gain (again) on the subkect wen I Can

you want to know what Elizabeth and hir too boys john henery and
Amos William would bring thay easly fetch fifteen hundred / negros is
very hi here I would not Sell hir She has sayd (said) she would be
willing to folow you to California I cant Say whare She is at this time/
take hir with you and hir wait on your wife Elizabeth Cars a very good
name / **also** did you know doc McIsaac is not abel to by hir / he is
making nothing / benjamun Wight lost emely this fall She died at Syleses
and myria houss Sy is rather behind hands (and) has lost so many horses

Some Seven or eight.

I have too littel babys Mars and Synthas and too older ones five and three yars old the rest all abel to work we have rented eighty acers of ground this yar at too dollars per acer if we fail this year you may both lok out of your doore and See us all Coming thare or we will go to **T**exs/william would go in a minit if he Cold (could) I never on to Nlson william has not bin thare since March I Cant tel much what thare a doing I must bring this to a Close as I ame very tired my helth is very good and I am thankful to the giver of all things it is the best gift of god my love and best wishes and Williams to you and your better half

Elizabeth Glass

-37-

*
* November 8, 1859 *
*
* *The letter is from James A. Smith in Nevada City to* *
* *Cousin Fanny. Reference is made to baby "Kassy",* *
* *Amos's and Fanny's first born. Amos is apparently* *
* *away from home on a visit to Kentucky. He seems to* *
* *be accompanying "Annia", Smith's wife on the trip.* *
*

(Cousin) Fanny

I hope you will forgive me for not wriought before this time But as I have Just gottin a letter from Annia I thought it my duety to drope you a few lins to let you know how she is she thinks that she will qit well as she has got intirly free of pains and is stronger than she was when she left this Country She says she has not heard from Amos since he left hur Fathers house She seemes to be very uneasy abought him as he promist to wriought to hur when he got with his friends as he thought of starting back

before October ~~if~~ he did not he said he would Call and see hur before he returned to this Cuntry if you have had letters from him you must wright to hur to that efect as she seems to think a grate ~~dell~~ of him for his kind tretment to hur while in his Charge on the way home (to Kentucky?) She says Frank is well and as spritly as he Can be I do truly hope you and your swet babe is well and also you Father famly give my respects to them I have thought strange that Amos has not rote to me or Aunt Glass one as I sent hur a draft sum ten months ago and have not heard from hur since or the draft eather you must wright to me and let me know if thare has any thing hapned and how you and Kassy are getting along and also how Amos was and aunt Glass was when you last heard from them and when Amos is likely to returne and tell him when he dos returne home he must wright to me and I will Come down and see him my helth is good as yousal hoping that you are well and happy your friend and relation

Jas A Smith

direct yours to Navada city Navada County

While on a recent motor trip, I had the opportunity to visit Shepherdsville, the county seat of Bullitt County in Kentucky. After having spent considerable time reading and examining Aunt Elizabeth Glass's letters to Amos, it had special meaning to visit the area where these letters originated. It almost seemed like I expected this part of the country to still be experiencing "hard times" as she described them. Instead, the countryside looked as prosperous as any other farming community of Tennessee or Kentucky.

In the microfilm department of their County Library, I found the following 1860 census:

11 August 1860 Census

"Belmont Furnace Post Office District #4 County of Bullitt
Elizabeth Glass age 66 Born in Md. Real estate \$1,600
Personal \$8,000

*W. A. White age 38 - listed as Farm Laborer"

*(W. A. White was a brother of Amos Wight)

Across the street, in the courthouse, the Great Book of Wills (1836-1863) gave me a chance to see a copy of Aunt Glass's original will, 2 codicils and a later inventory and appraisal of her personal estate.(photocopy of same follows)

Aunt Elizabeth Glass died March 18, 1861.

* * * * *
 *
 * December 9, 1863 *
 *
 * From (?) unsigned letter of Carson City to Uncle
 * Benny. Handwriting matches identically with that of
 * James Smith (letter to Fanny, November 1859). It is
 * interesting how this letter got into the possession
 * of Amos after it was sent to Kentucky to Uncle Ben
 * Wight. It is mainly talking about Amos. Cousin
 * Smith in Carson City is doing all he can to get Amos
 * to liquidate his Kentucky slave holdings. He made the
 * statement, "I have no Ida that he (Amos) ever will re-
 * turn to Ky as his people or his wife people wont
 * heare to his leaving them and another fact is he is to
 * proude spired to ever returne there with less than
 * he left with." Also, Smith thinks the "institution
 * of Slavery has gone by the bord."
 *
 * * * * *

Dear Uncle Benny

Having not heard from you for some time with in a few days past and having got a letter from Amos Wight Saying that you Said you Could Sell his negros for so much in green Backs and asking me at the Same time what I thought was best for him to do I advised him to let you Sell and in order to incoreg him to Sell I told him to tell you to Sell mine which I do not wish you to do I have had no thought of Selling mine and my reason for incoring him to Sell is this I have no Ida that he ever will returne to ky as his people or his wife people wont heare to his leaving them and another fact is he is to proude spired to ever returne thare with less than he left with and to be Canided (candid) with you unleSs he picks up more Coreg and has more industry than he has had for the last few years he will never will be able to Come as he desres tharefore I advised him to Sell and as I onstly think the instution of Slavery has gone by the bord I think you had better Sell them for him for what you Could obtain for them would be of vitle impotence to him for it might inable him to go at Sunthing that he might do better than he has done heartefore I do

not wish you to think I have rote this with anny desine to inger him in your estemation for God knows if thare is a man on earth I luvè it Amos he is to good harted for his one good and is as honerble as anny man on earth but you know as well as I do he never like to pute his Sholder to the wheel and thare is the grate Seckret of his not doing as well as he might do I was for the first time thinking do day that as long as I have too and thay both grls that if you thought it best I would like to have the boy you hired to Mr. Riley when I was there as I do not think I will ever Sell mine I thought if I did by him and the instution goes down I Could Stand the loSs and if it dos not it would be better to have all of one famly So if Amos has requested you to Sell them and it will not inger the Saile of the balance to take the boy from the lot you may Set him down to me at what ever you think would be rite or at the Same price you Can obtain from anny one els If you would rather I would not purches him let him go with the rest If you should keep the boy for me please State the price/I will have to pay Amos either in Gold or Curncy/ it would make no diference wich I would have to pay/he would git the advanteg of the exchange between heare and thare I think he rote me that you Could get \$500 dollars in green backs for him if So wy I could give him the Same heare green backs are genrely worht more heare than thare/ If you Should keep the boy for me I would like for you to keep him with you as I would rather you would train him and have no Compensation than have him hired out and Spoilt I think it more than likely that I will returne thare in the Corse of twelve or fifteen months and locate permently for the balance of my days I have Sold out in California all with the exception of a Speculation I have over thare and the results of that will be known by Spring/I could Sell that now fore thousand five hundred dollars but think I will do better.

At the conclusion of reading these letters, many of which are in reference to dealings with slaves, their ownership and inheritances of slaves, we stop to think of what was happening at this time in our American history. In the very last letter, Mr. Smith does remark that the institution of slavery has probably "gone by the board". By this time, Aunt Glass had been gone two years already and ironically much of her concern about willing her slaves to William or Amos or James had been for naught. The abolition of slavery was quite close at hand. Martin & Gelber's dictionary of American History explains how the Emancipation Proclamation issued in September, 1862, did not apply to border states and Kentucky was one of four of these border states. However, abolition of slavery was to soon follow.

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION ARTICLE

*Emancipation Proclamation. Issued by President Lincoln on September 23, 1862 as a war measure designed to gain world public support of the Union cause. It provided that all slaves could be declared free in those states still in rebellion against the United States on January 1, 1863. Under these provisions slaves were freed only in those states which after that date, came under the military control of Union armies. The proclamation did not apply to the border states of Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland and Missouri, nor to that part of the Confederacy already occupied by Northern troops such as Tennessee and parts of Virginia and Louisiana. Several states availed themselves of the opportunity to adopt ABOLITION measures in 1864 and 1865. It should be clear from the above that the document did not abolish slavery as it is commonly believed. Abolition did not occur until the adoption of the 13th Amendment in 1865.

*Dictionary of American History by Michael Martin and Leonard Gelber - Littlefield, Adams & Co., Totowa, New Jersey, 1972.

Amos Wight, later in life became somewhat active in civic affairs. From information obtained from the book of minutes in the Yuba County Courthouse, it was found that he served as Justice of the Peace of Long Bar Township. He was elected in 1877. Following the September 3, 1879, election he was elected to the Board of Supervisors, receiving 315 votes which was a large majority. The two men running against him trailed with 37 and 33 votes respectively. This would indicate that he was quite well known and popular in the community. It was interesting to read about resolutions introduced by him and some that were adopted. He served on the board from 1880 until the end of 1882.

In the last years of his life, he served as Director of the Browns Valley Irrigation District and held this position at the time of his death in 1898. From time to time, the newspaper, the Appeal, as it was called then, had news articles of Amos's civic activities. He voiced his opinion publicly in this December 28, 1889, newspaper article in regards to an issue on irrigation.

Enthusiastic for Irrigation

Ex-Supervisor Wight Discourses on the Browns Valley District.

A. S. Wight, of Brown's Valley, who is one of the leading spirits in the movement for irrigation in the foothills, and has frequently said that he would be willing to pay the present price per acre of his land for a water supply, was in town yesterday and expressed himself as greatly pleased with the survey as far as it has gone in the Brown's Valley irrigation district.

"I am not satisfied, though," said Mr. Wight, "with the way in which some of our own people are bucking against it. I can readily see why a certain few are doing so, and that is because they expect to make a few dollars by some little scheme which will benefit them only. The irrigation district has been formed, and we are going to work and the kickers can't stop us. Water we will have, and plenty of it. Every day that goes by and every dollar expended makes my land enhance just so much in value, and I tell you the richest part of Yuba county will be in the foothills when our ditch is completed."

AMOS SMITH WIGHT - DIED JUNE 11, 1898 - AGE 77 MALE - WIDOWER - BORN IN KENTUCKY - CAUSE OF DEATH OLD AGE. This single line entry from the Yuba County Clerk-Recorder's Office seems almost too brief and insignificant to record his life's ending.

A further search of the Daily Democrat files, revealed that the residence and barn on the A. S. Wight place was destroyed by fire January 3, 1900. "The loss will reach nearly \$1,000".

It is now time in this account of Amos's life to explain why he was called "Hooppole Wight" by his fellow supervisors. It was simply because he had mentioned that he came from "hooppole country". (A Hooppole is a small young tree used for cutting hoops, as in barrel making).

In some future day, it is likely that some of his descendants will add to this sketchy account of Amos's life. As for me, I have enjoyed looking into his life and sharing what I could.

Our special thanks to Mr. Earl Ramey for his assistance through the California Room of the Marysville Library and Denelda West, a great granddaughter of Amos Wight. Mrs. West contributed many letters, photographs and information. Also, I would like to express appreciation for the assistance I received on my visit to the Bullitt County Courthouse in Shephardsville, Kentucky this past summer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shirley Wilson, author of this article, grew up on a Minnesota farm and received her early education in a one-room schoolhouse. A registered nurse, Mrs. Wilson moved with her husband and children to Sutter County from Escondido, California in 1977. She now uses her professional training as a volunteer with the Sutter-Yuba Health Department. Her long abiding interest in history, especially of the California mining areas, led her to become a member of the Community Memorial

Museum Auxiliary in January of 1980. In reading through the Museum's "Amos Wight Collection" of letters and documents, she became interested in finding out more about the life of Amos Smith Wight. This article is a result of her research which led her as far afield as Bullitt County, Kentucky.

Wight, Amos S.
"Death at home on the Honcut"

Appeal Newspaper June 12, 1898

Passing of a Pioneer Resident of
Yuba County

After a somewhat extended illness, full of years and overtaken by a general breaking down of the system conducive upon old age, A. S. Wight, one of the oldest and best known residents of this county passed away at his home on Honcut Creek Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

The deceased, a native of Kentucky, had been a resident of Yuba county for over forty years and at one time and another during that lengthy period had filled in an honorable manner several official positions in the county. At the time of his death he was a director of the Browns Valley Irrigation District in the administration of whose affairs he had maintained a lively interest from the date of its earliest inception.

Of a genial character our old neighbor had made and retained the friendship of a large acquaintance among the citizens of this locality, who while aware for some time that his days were numbered, will yet hear with sincere regret of his death.

Were there more men of the gentle, convivial nature of the deceased in the world many of the rougher places would be smoothed over as life's journey progresses and many a heavy load would be lightened up a trifle for the passing wayfarer.

A married daughter and one son were left to mourn his loss.

The funeral services for the deceased will be held at his late residence on Monday at 2 p.m. The interment will take place at the Honcut Cemetery.

A cemetery role search of the Honcut Cemetery did not report a grave mark site for either Fanny or Amos.

Wight, Fanny N.
"Fatal Buggy Accident"

Appeal Newspaper October 31, 1882

In Long Bar township, Yuba county, October 28th, Mrs. Fanny N. Wight, wife of Supervisor A. S. Wight, aged 46 years 8 months 23 days.

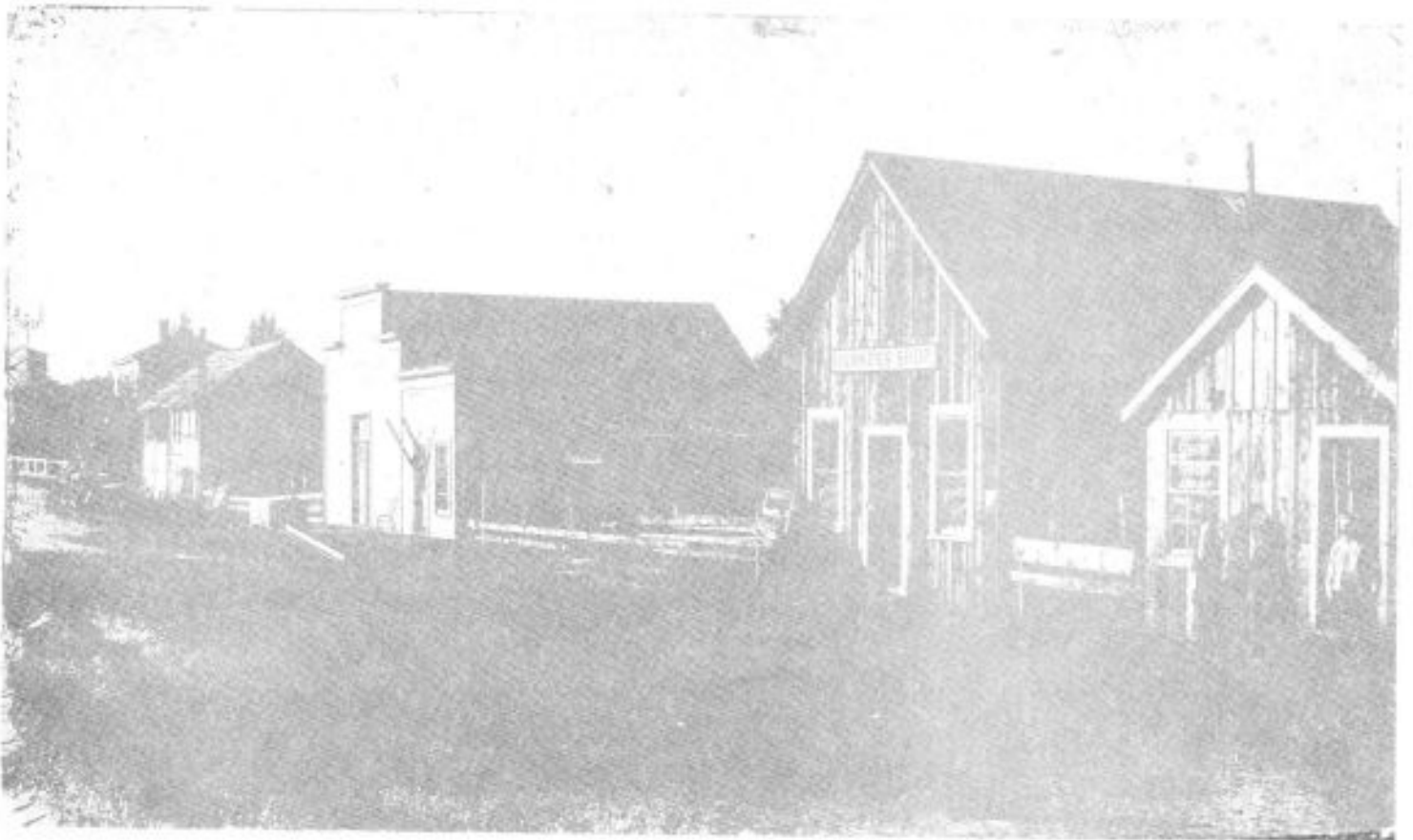
Fatal Accident. -- Mrs. Fanny N. Wight, wife of Supervisor A. S. Wight, met with a fatal accident on Saturday last. Their home is about five miles northwest of Brown's Valley. Mrs. Wight had been visiting a married daughter, and about 6 p.m. was returning in a buggy with a boy (her own) of about nine years. When only a few hundred yards away from the house the horse took fright at some object in the gathering darkness and shied. Horse, wagon and all went off the grade and rolled to the bottom of the slope, a fall of about 20 feet. The horse was uninjured, and at once ran away, leaving the buggy a wreck behind him. The boy was badly cut on the forehead, and lay stunned for some little time. When he came to he found his mother lying unconscious in a ditch beside him. There was water in the ditch and he lifted her head out of it. Then he made his way to the house and told Mr. Wight and Hayward Forbes, the former's brother-in-law, what had happened. They carried Mrs. Wight to the house. Her neck seemed to have been broken, but they think she lived about twenty minutes after the accident. She leaves three children. The funeral took place yesterday morning. There was a great procession. The Rev. J. A. Van Anda officiated at the house and the grave, and J. M. Wilson, N. D. Coombs, John Copeland, D. P. Newbert, M. Meed and Wm. Jefferts acted as pallbearers.



Thomas Truman Wight B. Dec. 16, 1861
Yuba Co. D. June 13, 1937

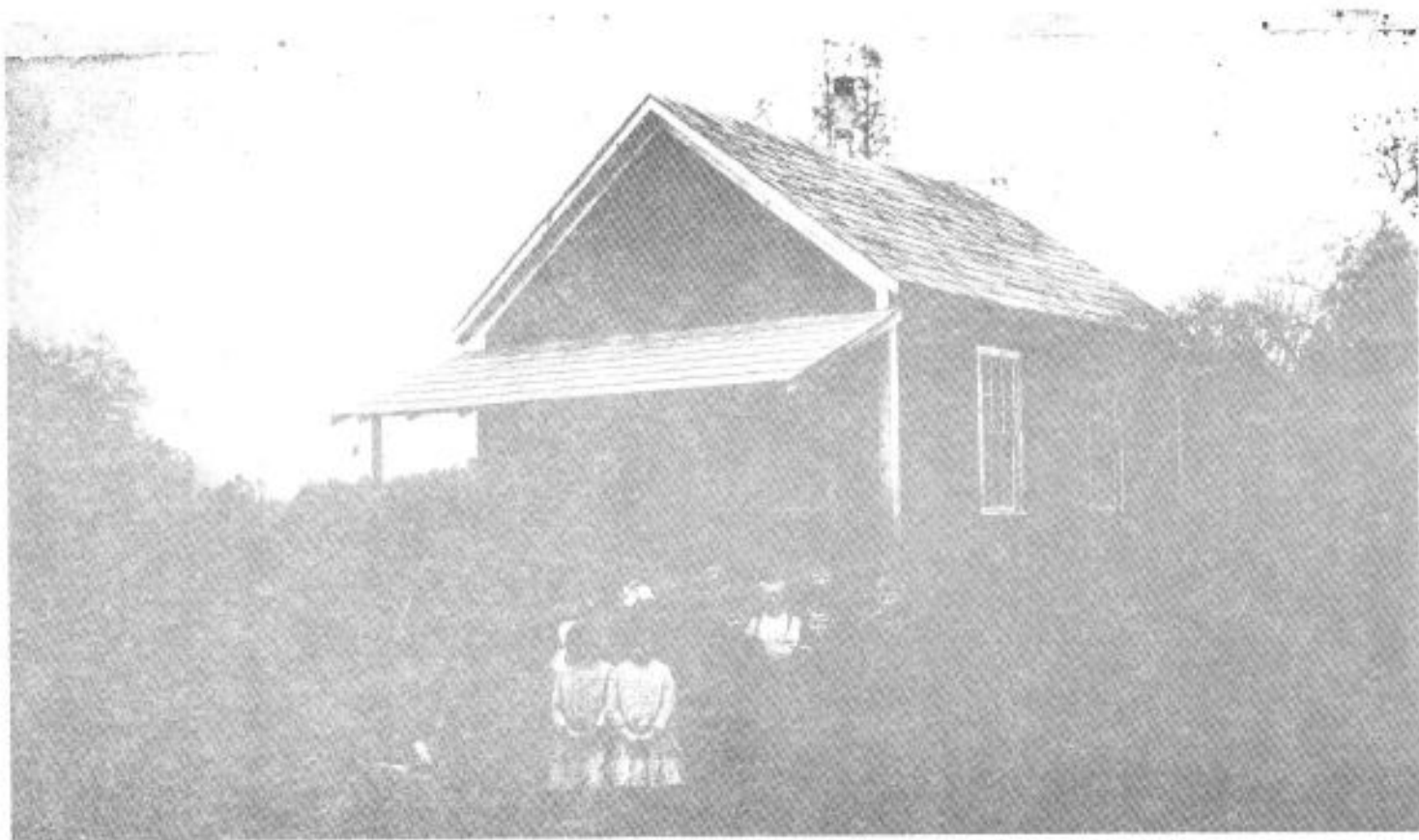


Mary Josephine Burris B. Aug. 20, 1882
Sacramento, California.
D. Dec. 25, 1965



Street scene of Bangor, California — 1900 The Thomas T. Wights
reportedly lived in Bangor for a time—before moving to Berkeley in early
1900's.

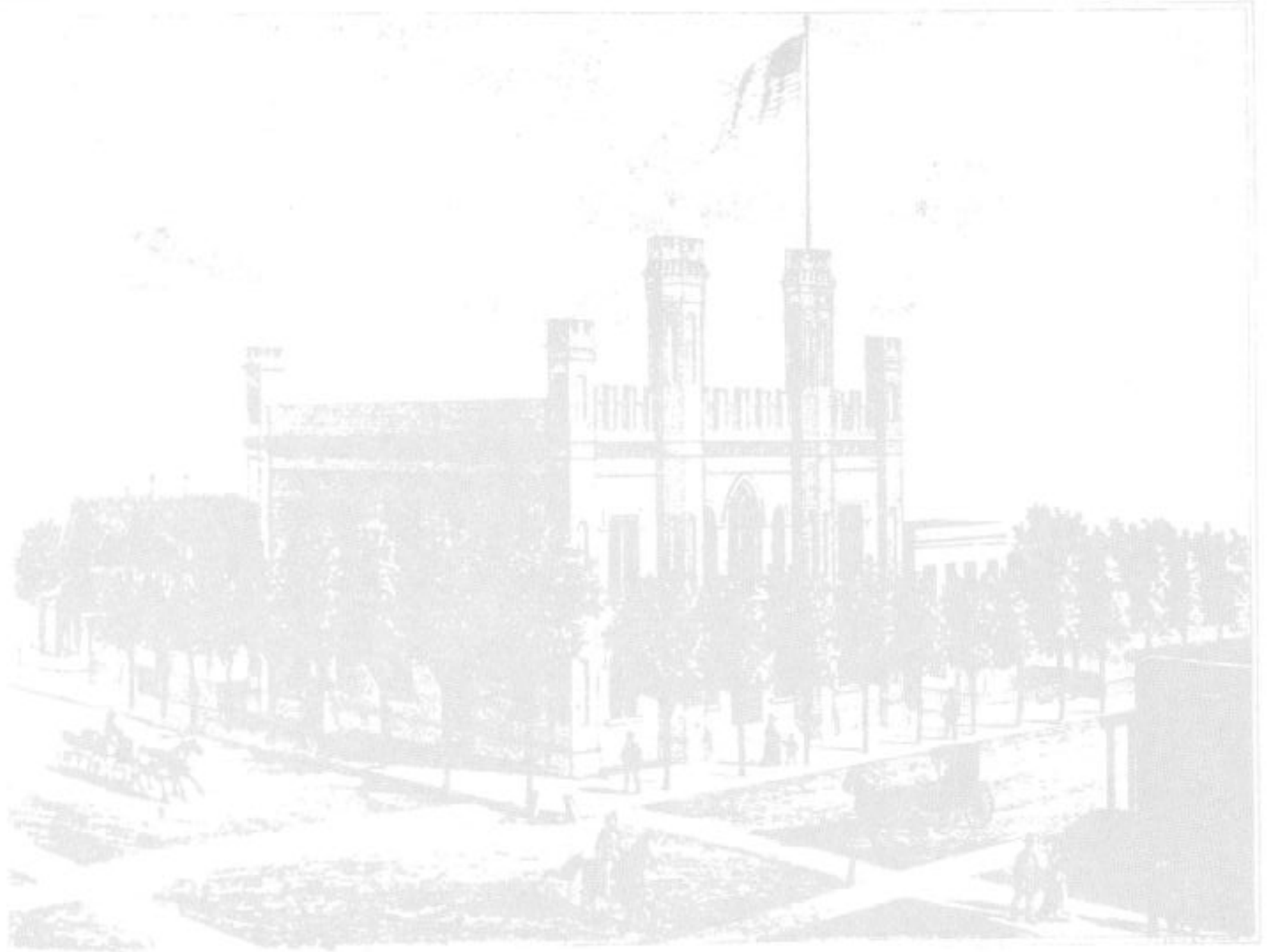
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**Brown's Valley School District School — Circa 1900 School attended by Mrs. Thomas Wight
(Mary J. Burris) Location of school shown on bottom center section of Long Bar Platte**



L7



COURT HOUSE - YUBA COUNTY

The Yuba County Court House as it looked at the time Amos Smith Wight was supervisor in 1880 through 1882.

Will BK 7 pg. 526.

May the 17th 1808

Eliza Glass
Will

In the name of God. I Elizabeth Glass of Bullitt County give to William, A. White, Cynthia and Mariah her child and Silas and little Cynthia and my land and Stock, that I may have at my death, six households and certain furniture and Phely he is to take good care of her, clothes and see that she is well fed, and a comfortable bed to sleep in if William, A. White die without her, of her body, said Negroes and their increase if any shall be equally divided between James A. Smith, and Amos S. White William, A. White is to pay all my debts if any doctors bills, burial expences, Elizabeth Glass will -

I give to James A. Smith, Rodab and Mariah and their increase, if they should bear any, I give to Amos S. White, Mary and Sarah and George Ellen, these gifts is to stop all claims either of them may have against my Estate -

This is my last Will, written with my own hands, and in good mind.

Attest
James A. Kill

Elizabeth Glass

In the name of God. Amos S. Elizabeth Glass of Bullitt County and State of Kentucky, being now of sound mind, but of feeble body, do make, this as a codicil to my previous will, which I intend as my last Will and testament, to James A. Smith I give Rodab Mariah and little Cynthia, to Amos S. White I give Mary, Sarah and Silas and Ellen, and Old Phely, who I wish her to take good care of while she may live, to W. White I give Big Cynthia and Mariah her child and my land and all of my stock and farming utensils, households and kitchen furniture, I will my bequest, to Amos White or and for, A. Smith to include my indebtedness to them, and that they shall have no further claims against my estate, I wish what debts I owe to be paid out of the money and out for Negro here and if not sufficient out of the stock on the place, W. to have the remainder. I wish what I have left to W. White to be controlled by Amos S. White and James A. Smith in trust for him, if there should be a remainder from Negro here and stock to pay my debts, I wish W. White to have it. At this I now affix my signature this March 15th (1808) One thousand Eight hundred and Sixty One.

Attest
Dr. W. Bowman
W. S. Miller

Elizabeth Glass

James, Rosel and Martha and Phely, James, the chois Mule, Amos,
Mary, little Cynthia, and Sarah and George Belle Cynthia, Sylla
and Mariah to William, the land and Stock, furniture, farming
utensils to be sold to pay my debts if any, and burial expences
the balance to be equally divided between James and William
and Amos, Williams part of Negroes I leave in trust with Amos
for Williams benefit. these gifts is to Stop. All the Notes
or Accounts, either James or William or Amos, may hold again
st my Estate. March the 31st 1861. Elizabeth Glass

State of Kentucky
Bullitt County 3rd Sect.

I C. R. Samuels clerk of the County Court for the
County aforesaid, do Certify, that on the 15th day of April 1861. the
foregoing Will with the Codicils annexed of Elizabeth Glass deceas-
ed was produced in open Court, for records, and proven by the
Oaths of M. F. Kalfus, and on the 23rd by Geo. W. Bowman, and on
the 17th day of June 1861. was further proven by the Oaths of James
A. Hill subscribing witnesses thereto to be the act last Will Testament
with the Codicils annexed of Elizabeth Glass deceased.

Whereupon the same was examined, approved of and ordered
to be recorded which together with this Certificate is truly done in
my Office.

C. R. Samuels clk
By J. W. Stoner. D. C.

Eliz. Class's
Estate
Inventory 1st

Kentucky Bullitt County Court 29th April 1861.
'On Motion of Henry F. Kalfus Administrator with the Will annexed of Elizabeth Class dec^d - It is ordered that Henry Trunnell, George A. Cushman and Thomas, if joyed any two of whom being first duly sworn may act,) be and they are hereby appointed appraisers to appraise the personal Estate of said decedent and make report to Court -

A Copy att. G. R. Samuels Esq.

For R. F. Samuels Esq.

Sworn to before me by Henry Trunnell and Thos. if joyed. Given under my hands, this 8th day of May 1861.

Jas. M. Carpenter J.P. &c.

A true and just Inventory and appraisement of the personal Estate of Elizabeth Class dec^d which was produced to us by H. F. Kalfus her Administrator -

Notes on J. M. Carpenter due March 18 th 1860 for	\$ 65.00
Notes on J. Mandeville payable quarterly 1 st quarter due this first April 1861.	100.00
Notes on Lloyd Beable's wife due 1 st Jan. 1861 for	75.00
Notes on John Porter & M. Carpenter due 20 th Dec. 1852.	70.00
1 Two year old mule	75.00
1 five year old mule not sold	90.00
1 Box stand	3.00
Negro woman Mary	300.00
Brak	900.00
Silas	800.00
Phoebe	800.00
Ellin	250.00
Small Sinks	400.00
Marthy	500.00
Large Sinks	800.00
Mariah	800.00
Rosella	600.00
Ball Cove	12.00
Red Keifer	10.00

I do Certify that the foregoing Inventory contains all of the personal Estate of Elizabeth Class dec^d so far as comes to my hands

H. F. Kalfus Adm.

We do Certify that the foregoing appraisement is true and just by one of all the personal Estate of Elizabeth Class deceased.