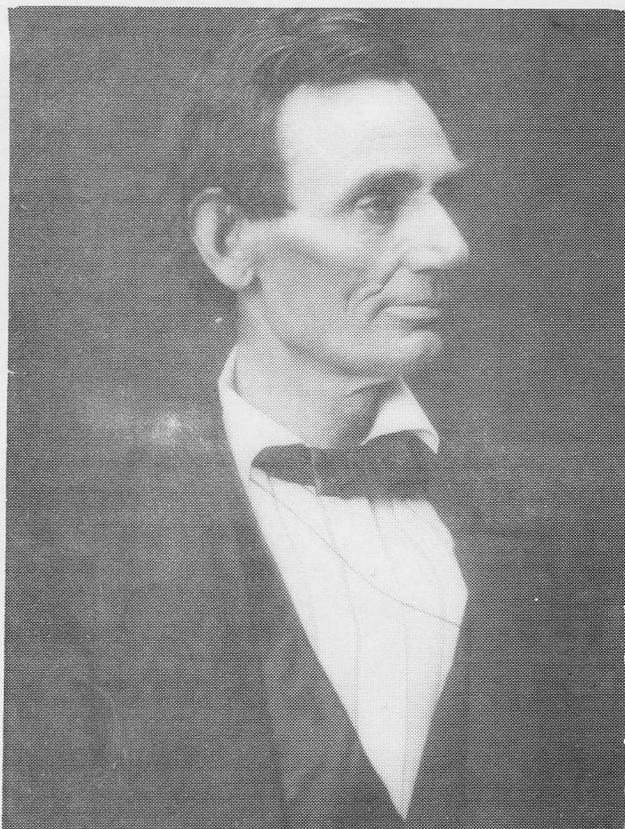


SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWS BULLETIN

Vol. XX No. 4

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA 95991

OCTOBER 1981



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CALIFORNIA IN '53'

A Journal of a California Pioneer

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ABOUT OUR COVER

A recent gift to the Community Memorial Museum from Harlan Robinson of Gridley is the Lincoln photograph used on the cover. It was the last of the four photographs taken of the Republican nominee in Springfield, Illinois, on June 3, 1860, by Alexander Hesler of Chicago, commissioned to provide campaign photographs of Lincoln. The photograph was criticized at the time, and its portrayal of the rumple-haired, presidential candidate was considered "undignified."

The museum copy of this photograph is approximately seven by nine inches and is imprinted, "G. B. Ayres Copyright 1881." It was made from the original glass negative by George B. Ayres of Philadelphia who bought the Hesler studio after the Civil War.

In the 1930's copy prints of the Hesler negative were made by the Chicago Historical Society. The glass negative was later cracked during shipment to the Smithsonian Institution.

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The NEWS BULLETIN is published quarterly by the Society at Yuba City, California 95991. The annual membership dues includes receiving the NEWS BULLETIN. JANUARY 1981 dues are payable now. Your remittance should be sent to Sutter County Historical Society, P. O. Box 1004, Yuba City, California 95591. To insure delivery of your NEWS BULLETIN, please notify the Treasurer of any change of address. Dues are \$7.50 per person, \$10.00 per family, \$5.00 if over 70 years.

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An index and file of all the past issues of the NEWS BULLETIN may be found in the Sutter County Library, the Marysville City-County Library, and at the Community Memorial Museum.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer is a time of easy relaxation --- vacation, picnics, and outdoor recreation. Small wonder, then, that our July 21st meeting drew meager attendance. But for the faithful, the reward was getting to meet David Evans, who presented a slide show on Northern California Water Projects, with recorded narration by Assemblyman Wally Herger. The show itself combines natural beauty and considerable information on a subject close to the agricultural heart of Sutter County. Mr. Evans undertook to answer questions from the floor after the presentation, and acquitted himself well, even against probing queries from our more astute interrogators like Jessica Bird.

The AG ANNEX project is going forward, with active agitation from Chairman Randy Schnabel, and some professional attention from Museum Commission President Bob Mackensen. The pad for the building has been cleared and laid behind the present building, and your Board of Directors authorized the necessary expenditures to complete that part of the project. It behooves all of us now to become acquainted with the proposed building, and concentrate our problem-solving proclivities on the acquisition of the needed materials, money, and manpower for that portion of our "Greater Community Memorial Museum".

Each autumn brings a crisp and scholarly air. As members of a Historical Society, we think of ourselves (at least briefly and infrequently) as historians (and therefore scholarly). Only a few of us attain the first rank as writers, chroniclers and analysts. We others are quite content in the secondary line -- "one versed in history". And the history we enjoy being "versed" in is often of a local nature, having to do with the things we have personally seen and touched; with people we have known and liked (or disliked). The purpose of groups like ours is to share and preserve what we think is noteworthy about our community. Occasional reminiscence keeps past, present, and future in tune; -- the fragrance of yesterday's roses is the perfume of life's afternoon.

Our Quarterly meeting this fall will be October 20th. Bring all your good ideas. See you then.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dewey Gruening". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dewey Gruening

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM NOTES

Jean Gustin, Director/Curator

ANTIQUUE DUCK DECOYS loaned by Ray Frye of Sutter will be featured as our special exhibit in October and November.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERTS are scheduled for October 25 and November 22.

THE ANNUAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITION COFFEE for Auxiliary members and other volunteers is slated for October 5th.

THE EIGHTH IN OUR SERIES of collector's plates will feature "West Butte". It will be available at our gift counter about Thanksgiving.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW for the social event of the year. Our annual Christmas party, "Trees and Traditions" will be December 12th. Tickets will be available in November.

COME IN AND SEE the turn of the century miniature dream home created and furnished by museum volunteers. Raffle tickets are available for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. The "deed" to this lovely doll house will be "awarded" in December.

ANNUAL REPORT: We are proud and happy to give you the annual report encompassing that period of time from August 1, 1980 to July 31, 1981.

We had 6,965 visitors and provided tours for 90 groups, including 38 school groups, 11 special groups (handicapped, mental health, etc.), 13 youth groups, and 28 adult groups.

Special events for our members included champagne previews of the Smithsonian photography exhibit and the Moller Art Exhibit and sculpture demonstration, and the fun-filled birthday party for the hundred year old doll, Jessie. Other events open to the general public were a coffee to meet Congressman Vic Fazio, the festive Wine Tasting Party, the annual luncheon and card party, an Awards and Recognition Coffee for our valued volunteer workers, and the most popular event of the year, Trees and Traditions, the annual Christmas party.

Special Temporary Exhibits included: "Three San Francisco Expositions" and "State Fair Trophies", "Photographing the Frontier", "Orange Crate Art", "Acoma Pueblo Pottery", "Antique Christmas Ornaments", "Yuba City '55 Flood Pictures", "Wedgewood Pottery", "The Glory of China", (antique Chinese robes) "Red Cross Centennial", "Tommie Moller--Art and Sculpture", "The California Wine Industry", "Norwegian Arts and Crafts", "Peking Glass", and "Miniatures of an 1870 Store and Saloon".

We are especially thankful for the loan of materials for our temporary exhibits and also for the 739 individual artifacts given to the museum by 82 donors. Our museum collection now numbers over 7,000 artifacts.

We are delighted to report 22 active volunteers are members of the Auxiliary. These volunteers and two groups, Delta Kappa Gamma and The Native Daughters, have given 3,304 hours of service to the museum for this period of time.

The museum received an Institute of Museum Services Award of \$9,715 in September, 1980 to be used for staff salaries. The museum's budget of \$8,065 for Services and Supplies, (operational and exhibit expenses), and for Extra Help is raised by gift counter sales, unrestricted donations, Museum Memberships, and Commission fund raising projects and events.

LIST OF DONORS TO THE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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May 23, 1981 through August 28, 1981

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Lorraine E. Ramsdell	in honor of Mr. & Mrs. Randolph Schnabel on their 45th anniversary
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in memory of Marie G. Winship
in memory of Marie Winship
in memory of Marie Winship

FREE TABLE CAMP MEETINGS

ORGANIZATION OF COLUSA CIRCUIT

In the fall of 1856 a strange character made his advent among the ranchers living along the west bank of the Sacramento. He was of medium height, and very spare, with black eyes and sallow skin.

Dressed in a black-cloth suit, worn slick and shining, and so large that it hung loosely on his figure; a white shirt (an exceedingly rare article in those days) much soiled; he wore a battered stovepipe hat and a queer old-fashioned cloak for an overcoat. Mounted upon a small mule, he carried his belongings in a large pair of saddle-bags. This was "Crazy Bob Martin", the first representative of the Methodist Church, South, ever seen in Colusa County.

We called him crazy, not without reason. His actions, like Bret Hart's Heathen Chinees, were peculiar. The first time I ever saw him was at a neighbor's house. He was drying his outfit, singing, praying and shouting alternately, according to his humor.

My neighbor, Hoy, was a "Piker," (a name applied to all Missourians and afterwards included all southern sympathizers on the western coast.) There were two classes, "Pike" and "Yank". An acquaintance of the preacher, a mischievous fellow, had directed Martin to cross Sycamore Slough, about 100 feet wide and eight or ten feet deep, telling him it was all right.

The result was that, the mule, saddlebags and cloak all were submerged and he or no one else ever knew how they got out. He was praising the Lord for his deliverance and praying for the fellow who sent him into the water.

The next day he called at our house. I was called in to entertain him and be entertained, and this is the way it turned out; I found him in one corner of the room and my wife in another, she looking very serious, and he wringing his long slender hands, swaying his body and groaning as if in great pain.

He stopped long enough to shake hands, then renewed the groaning and other performances, with an occasional burst of song or praise. This was kept up for some time, when he said, "Let's pray," and down he went on his knees and prayed loud and long.

After ten or fifteen minutes of this he got up and left in a great hurry. This was a sample of his conduct at every house where he visited and was allowed to perform.

There was only one family in that part of the country that made any pretension to religion. This was an old Baptist couple with two children. Bob made their home his headquarters, and during the summer held monthly services there. His certainly was a unique service.

The first Sunday we all put on our best clothes--which generally meant changing our soiled ones for clean ones--and went to meeting.

At eleven o'clock we went into the house and there sat the preacher with a long, lank body and woe-begone look, wringing his hands, his body writhing as if in great pain, and the tears raining down his cheeks. He would sometimes cover his face with his hands and bow his head a few moments, then suddenly look up and either groan or shout "Glory to God!" or some such expression.

This continued until our patience was well nigh exhausted. He gave out the hymn in regular Methodist style--lining the hymn--prayed, read a chapter, sung again, took his text and preached us his first sermon.

And such a sermon! It would have required an expert to tell the difference between the prayer and the sermon. All that followed were about like this one, but we become accustomed to them, and, strange, to say, the more we saw of the preacher, the better we liked him.

His zeal and his harmlessness so impressed us that we began to take an interest in him and were glad to see him when he made his monthly rounds. He took all our jokes and sly fun so kindly and good naturedly, even to answering gross insults in the kindest manner; always saying: "I will pray for you, you can't prevent that!"

He visited all the bachelor camps and houses, and proposed prayer, as was at that time the custom of the Methodist preachers.

Some would take offence and sneer at him to leave. He would do so with the remark! "I will pray for you." and go off singing one of his favorite hymns at the top of his voice, "Ye angels who stand around the throne and view Immanuel's face," being his favorite. He sang it with his soul and interspersed it with loud "amens" and similar outburst.

THE BASKET MEETING OF 1856

By the time September came, we were all in a good frame of mind to endorse Martin and carry out his proposition to hold a basket meeting. We wanted to please him and have a good time too, and some of us had a lingering wish to take up the lives we lived in "the state."

At the time and place, a pleasant and jolly crowd met to do Crazy Bob's bidding, whatever it might be. I can now recall to mind only ten ranches, in the whole circle of my acquaintance, where a woman presided, all others were the homes of bachelors.

That was a remarkable meeting. The results were the most unexpected things that ever came under my observation. It began on Friday evening. On Saturday a man and his wife opened a restaurant, another man a whisky mill.

Saturday the presiding elder and a young preacher named H. C. Settle arrived. The latter had a young wife who cut quite a figure in the meeting. On Saturday we all took our dinner to the grounds, and had a good sermon from the presiding elder, B. H. Russell, which pleased all.

Russell was a fine speaker and understood his audience. All things went smoothly and all felt assured of success. Sunday was to be the big day.

For miles and miles the people came in crowds, all drawn to a common center. Some sat under the arbor and listened to the preaching, some swapped horses, and all indulged in the usual style of spending Sunday except those who sat under the arbor.

By the time preaching was over, the whisky mill was doing a big business; more than one man had more whisky that was good for him, though there was no drunkenness. The crowd was shifting about and quite jolly.

The wives of the two preachers had been to the restaurant to get dinner, and as they returned to the arbor, about 150 yards, passed near the whiskey mill. One peculiar old fellow was pretty full. He was a rough-looking man, in his shirt sleeves, with a savage-looking beard, but with all the instincts of a gentleman, despite his rough exterior, and worth about \$50,000.

While passing, Rev. Settle's wife, from some cause--nobody ever found out what--imagined that Bird, the rough looking man, had acted rudely, and was offended.

Bird tried to apologize, but she became more angry and finally began to scream, which made Bird perfectly wild with distress, and many ran to see what was the matter. There was a great pow-wow until the woman was taken away and all explained.

It took about an hour to get quiet restored. Some of Bird's friends got mad and left the grounds. The usual results followed. Partisans sprang up on both sides and bitter feelings were expressed. A number of best citizens went to the whisky man and gave him a limited time to leave or have his mill thrown into the river, with a chance of following it.

After this the meeting moved along smoothly and increased in interest. Our preacher was in his glory and was becoming more popular every day. The young preacher, Settle, proved a fine orator and an impressive speaker.

It was the only meeting I ever attended where all publicly manifested a desire to be religious. It was held over two Sundays and closed on Monday.

Before closing, everyone there stood up for prayer. The congregation was not large, but there was not an indifferent person there. All were eager to get good and do good; all disturbing elements were gone. "Pike" and "Yank" were forgotten. The best of feeling and kindness prevailed.

Friendships were formed that the civil war could not destroy. My heart warms within me today when I recall some of the happy hours spent with my worst political enemies. I ask no other proof of the truth of Christ's teaching. Consciousness is far more convincing than theory or orthodoxy.

THE FIRST CAMP MEETING, 1958 (1858)

The basket meeting in '57 proved such a success and all were so well pleased that grand free camp meeting was there and then planned for the next fall. I have never seen a community nearer a unit public proposition.

The effects of the meeting marked a new era in the whole community. New ideas and new lines of future procedure were originated and marked out to be

followed by the community with a few exceptions. And even the opposition was to a degree affected by the well know fact that agression produces opposition.

We found it disagreeable to ride home in the cold nights, so concluded to arrange as far as possible to leave home for the time being and have a good time. It was no small job to prepare food and provide sleeping room for from five to eight hundred people and their horses.

Be it known that campers came from near and far, twenty, thirty, and even forty miles. We expected from eight hundred to one thousand on Sunday. To the uninitiated, the question will arise, "How did you provide for so great a crowd?" That is what I propose to tell as well I can.

The free camp meeting was to us a truly original idea and so far as I know was the first one ever held in California. It had its origin in our talks while cooking and eating our suppers.

Charley Gardiner and I both having small children and living farthest from the ground, declared our intention of locating on the ground next year. Others took it up, Charley Miner, Dick Gleason; in fact all in attendance soon became enthusiastic in the proposition.

"To resolve was to act," was California sytle at that time and the whole scheme was discussed and outlined before we left the ground. We never did things by halves in those days. When the time came for action, committees were appointed to look after all the different interests and management of what we expected to be a grand occasion.

My memory may be a little at fault, but I think Hunt Byres and Sam Wright were to look after meat; Dick Gleason and Kirk or John White after hay; while the tables, cook and cooking was assigned to Charley Miner and myself. I think Corbier was assigned to look after the preachers, visitors and general stand and arbor interest. Such are my recollections; but forty years are likely to bring mistakes.

The preacher had the general superintendence of the arrangement of the preaching stand, plan and seating of the ground and the preacher's tent. The preacher's tent was for the use of the preacher and was furnished with bedding by individual campers.

The heaviest responsibilities rested on the table committee. A chief cook at \$5.00 per day and \$5.00 extra for Sunday with assistants, dishwashers, fuel, provisions, etc., had to be obtained. There were also necessary dishes to set four tables sixty-four feet long. They had to provide stoves, cooking utensils, buckets, dippers, and all the paraphernalia belonging to such an undertaking.

A large brick baker's oven was provided, with two hundred pounds of bread capacity or double as much beef, the largest kettles for boiling procurable and plenty of them.

Winship was the autocrat of the feeding department and was on hand Friday to superintend its arrangement. He could cook more grub and do it better, in the same length of time, than anyone I ever saw. He was not a second, but first edition of Tom Reed.

By paying breakage and damage, the crockery was borrowed from some dealer. Knives, forks, spoons and tinware had to be bought. Sugar, coffee, tea, pickles, soap, candles and all such other supplies as our autocrat demanded had to be supplied by this committee. We bought sheeting for table cloths and when it got soiled turned it over.

A table committee appointed of one or more to procure waiters from meal to meal. There were always plenty of active young fellows willing to help. Another was also necessary to keep us the carving end; also a bread cutter or two.

Thus meat committee was expected to keep a good supply on hand. I never knew them to fail. The forage commission always kept a good supply on hand, though the waste was fearful to contemplate (at least it would be now).

Where did all this stuff come from and how was it procured? Californians at that time were a whole-souled set of hearty-go-lucky fellows who put their whole soul in anything they endorsed, from the scrub horse race to a camp meeting. They knew no half-way stopping grounds. Whole-hog or nothing, was the prevailing sentiment governing their actions.

On that principle, the offering, in all country products, like volunteers for the Cuban War, was far ahead of the requirements. Nor did our cash in all my experience fall short but once, and that was the fault of the collectors.

All who came brought an offering of some kind, many by choice preferring to pay cash. All the soliciting required consisted of the announcing from the stand of the names of a few persons to receive donations.

Lives there a participant in that whole section who does not look back with a feeling of pride in contemplating those times of unselfish generosity; the times, when, by a common volition, all seemed to want to pay a little more rather than a little less.

Though nearly all of them rode in lumber wagons or horse-back and lived in shack houses and few dressed fine, were they not full recompensed for their hail-fellow-well-met or easy-go-lucky unostentations free and easy lives.

No tramps, no want; all had plenty. If misfortune overtook anyone the donations generally exceeded the loss, freely and gladly given, and were as gladly accepted without the sting of dependence the spirit of giving having extracted the sting.

It is refreshing to the soul to recall kindnesses and favors received and given in that whole-souled, unselfish spirit that characterized the old style Californian. But they have passed into the great beyond, as have most of participants. To recall and live over these scenes in memory, I doubt not makes a green and restful oasis in the past life of many, if not all, still in this side of the river.

ORGANIZING THE CAMP MEETING

The management of a free table camp meeting, where large crowds of people and horses had to be fed, and a general oversight made of all the arrangements, required pretty good executive ability and lots of work. After all need things were on the ground, it took a great deal of work with both head and hands to get all things in proper running order.

We had committees to look after the different necessities. One on forage kept up the supply of hay. All did their own feeding. There was another whose business it was to keep a good supply of meat on hand; another to see that the table was always in order and well supplied, and that meals were ready at the proper time. When the meal was ready he blew the horn, not Gabriel's but the dinner horn--sweet music to every boy raised in the south.

A general superintendent had charge of the whole, to who all requisitions were made by those who had charge of the different lines. If we wanted meat, all the committee had to do was to butcher it. Quite often it was dressed by the donor.

Stock men would say: "You know my brand, go get what you want, or let me know and I will bring in as many as you want." Grain raisers would make the same offer for flour, and others for vegetables. All were eager to help with hands and substance.

Money was collected to buy sugar, coffee, tea and such things as were not donated. A committee appointed announced from the stand what was needed, and it always came without further soliciting.

This was our yearly gathering for many miles around. It was the only ten or twelve day's respite for the overworked wife and mother from the never-ending household cares and grind of cooking, washing, scouring, milking, churning and all the other tread-wheel attachments of the times.

We had none of the modern conveniences of the present, but did all our work under unfavorable conditions. Even the best of us lived in board shacks and often carried water from fifty to one hundred and fifty yards.

No one can form a correct idea of what a ten or twelve days' respite meant to all hands, even the children, only by experience. All that the mothers had to do was to care for their children, go three times a day to the table, stay in the tent, visit or receive visitors, listen to preaching, sing and shout if they wanted to, and exercise all the rights and privileges of a free camp meeting.

We all wore plain clothes and rode in two-horse lumber wagons and sat on the straw floors of lumber wagons or on lumber benches. But was our happiness marred by these conditions? I think not, for all were on a level.

The frontier spirit ruled supreme and whole year's experience had to be told and heard and often repeated. We had no camp meeting courting then, simply because there was no one to court except the other fellow's wife, and that didn't always pay.

It was simply a gathering of a large community to have a jolly visit, with preaching, praying and singing for all who desired it, and general good time for all, along the line of their choosing.

There was never any disorder or hoodlumism, for that element had not reached California, and it would have fared badly with anyone to have attempted anything along that line. Not two percent of the attendants were church members, but all alike would have resented any bad behavior.

It was a happy time for the women and children, with nothing to do but eat, sleep and enjoy a glorious good time. Some greatly enjoyed the religious exercises and others the social, but all were content.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1863

I had been gone on a visit about two months and got home Thursday and the meeting was to commence Friday. We washed Friday and got into the ground Saturday forenoon and found the affairs in a muddle and no one to direct or superintend them.

The proper arrangements had been about half made and all hands seemed to have quit. They had a negro cook, plenty of beef, flour and potatoes, a good brick oven of 100 pounds bread capacity, but no cooking vessels and no arrangements for heat.

It was easy to see that if we fed the usual round of from eight hundred to one thousand, on Sunday, some rustling had to be done right away. We sent to my place for a 45 gallon kettle and 50 milk pans. By noon we had mixed two buckets of saltrising bread. Soon we got the kettle and filled it with beef. When it was cooked, we emptied and refilled it.

At 11 p.m. the yeast was up and in just two hours I had 200 pounds of flour in the milk pans set to rise. By eight the next morning we had nearly 300 pounds of good bread and the oven full of good beef. By noon, with other preparations, we had plenty for all and the first and worst agony was over.

But our trouble was far from being over. There was nothing in the country to do, so many thought it was a good time to seek religion, or at least go to the free camp meeting.

The future was far from bright. One of our children came near dying with the croup Sunday, so we went home and did not get back until Wednesday, and by so doing missed most of the meeting.

Now for the joke at this meeting. It was in 1863, when the war spirit was rampant and sectional lines almost made a Chinese well between the people. Consequently, when a South Methodist camp meeting was announced, all the southern element for miles around came, regardless of denominational prejudice or preference.

We all knew it would be a strictly southern crowd, where we could laud Jeff Davis, Lee Jackson, and all the southern leaders, laugh over Bull Run, and consign Abe Lincoln and all the Yankees to the bow-wows to our heart's content, without let or hindrance. We fancied, at that time on a general average, that we were ahead in the war and felt sure of final results.

In 1863 there were three candidates for governor; Standford, republican; Conness Douglas democrat; McConnel, Secesh or Breckenridge democrat. All felt sanguine of success. With one exception the democrats had always succeeded.

The election came off the Tuesday after the meeting commenced. We were all filled more with politics than religion. One of the preachers even declared he would walk to the polls, about two miles and a half, on his knees, if necessary, to vote.

We made Tuesday wash day so the men could go and vote and the others wash. Wednesday about 10 o'clock, an hour before service commenced, a stranger rode into the camp full speed and shouted that McConnel our man, was elected; that San Francisco had given him a large Majority. That was where we expected to get beaten.

Such an excited crowd I have only once mingled with. Some shouted "Glory to God," falling on their knees and offering thanksgiving for the great victory of the right.

One preacher who had a rather hard time with the Yankees, rolled over in the straw, then jumped up and shouted his thanksgiving and glory with tears running down his cheeks.

OLD STYLE CAMP MEETING MEMORIES

There is no country on the globe that has passed through such great and radical changes in sixty years as the territory of the United States west of the Alleghany Mountains, except in a few mountain districts in Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri and probably a few small localities in Illinois. The change almost equals a new creation. The genuine frontiersmen first occupied all this west vast domain. They were a peculiar people with general characteristics common to all, but with individualities common to no society.

Some remained and reaped the benefits from the localities that had been subdued. But there was an ever restless contingent, moving from the rear to the front like wild pigeons hunting for beechnuts.

There were many customs and institutions peculiar to the times and conditions that played their part in evolving the later civilization which has passed into the bygone. Only a pleasant remembrance is left with the few remaining participants who will in the next two decades have gone the same way. There will be left behind only fragmentary records of what has been. I think the most prominent and powerful factor for the betterment of the surroundings of the frontiersmen's life and for the cementing and uplifting of society, was the old style camp meeting.

I doubt if twenty miles square of populated territory of what we call the great southwest to the gulf of Mexico, can be found where the camp meeting has not been a powerful factor for the good of society on general principles, and of individuals in particular.

If an individual is by any means made better, society is benefited in proportion.

To write up an old style camp meeting in all its phases should be on small undertaking. It was emphatically a pioneer institution and as near a genuine cosmopolitan aggregation as can well be imagined.

The richest and the poorest, the most learned and the ignorant, all met on a common level, drawn to a common center by a common impulse and desire; to have a good time and respite of ten or twelve days from life's routine of cares and drudgery. If there were any social financial distinctions before the meeting they were all left at home.

All were determined on a real good time, and though the lines followed might diverged widely, the fact that all were bent on the same errand was a help to all in accomplishing their ends.

The backslider waited and longed for the time when he could be renewed. The overworked housewife longed to get away from sweeping, milking, scrubbing and never-ending routine of everyday life. The laddies 'and lassies naturally hankered for a renewal of last year's good times and good things. The children were in ecstasies contemplating what times they would have romping under the arbor afternoons, and concerning numberless other sources of fun peculiar to boys of a certain age, not infrequently including a melon patch.

The dude and dudine were also present. I have known fellows to plow all week in stumps and roots barefooted, in a wardrobe of home-made shirt and pants, and go to meeting wearing kid gloves and rigged out to correspond. Even the dogs had a good time, if not by anticipation, by realization. Here they could play, fight and steal to their heart's content.

From the time the place and date were determined, all was rush and expectation to get ready, the women folks in the house and men outside. It required a deal of work to fit up a camp ground to accomodate one thousand people, besides tents and many other things at home and on the ground. Friday afternoon the moving in began and was kept up till the middle of the next week. There was all the hubbub and excitement of a whole community coming to a common center, half of them not have met since last camp meeting; howdying and hugging and kissing and "I am so glad to see you", and genuinely interested inquiry about health and prosperity. The universal good humor and confident spirit of expectancy prevading the whole, made a most exhilarating scene. A short service Friday night opened the meeting.

These scenes, so briefly and imperfectly portrayed here, still live in the memory of only a few, but are bright and greenspots in the past and move the heart with emotion hard to express; emotion similar to recollection of near and dear ones long since dead. We love to recall and live over now those almost hallowed associations.

No cloud now shades the vision, no discords mar the harmony. A softening hallowed influence prevades our better nature so it is a real luxury to sit and

dream away some of our leisure hours and hold sweet communion with the better part of the past and anticipate that, in the near future, they will be renewed forever.

But they all belong to the past. The old-style camp meeting has long since gone and no one, so far as I know, has ever written its epitaph. It has been cast into the rubbish pile and soon all its participants will have passed. It is true we have in several local centers camp meetings under control of private enterprise, but they resemble the horse show or agricultural fair more than the old-style camp meeting.

What cause or causes led to the decadence and final disappearance of a once so loved and potent institution? The chief cause was a departure from the original spirit of the meetings. As society advanced, the conditions changed that gave rise to or radical changes; an organ, a choir, an appointed leader for all singing, a restaurant and huckster shops. Many other departures so hampered and distorted it that it had only its name left.

When class distinction and conventionalities entered, the true spirit died, and disintergration soon followed. I fear our government, of which we have always boasted so much, is in a fair way to go the way of the camp meeting. When the spirit of right and equal justice to all dies, the body will soon follow.

If one were to insert a notice in a newspaper that on a certain date, at a specified place, a free table camp meeting would commence and hold over two Sundays or longer, come one, come all, free grub, free provender and free salvation, no doubt it would create, among the present population, lots of talk and speculation, if nothing more.

I have little doubt but what there are still (1902) living in and around Colusa those who hold the traditions of our old style free meetings in kindly if not loving remembrance. But, to the great majority, they are only a tradition and not of sufficient importance to be worthy of a second thought. It is now a thing of the past, like all frontier customs and institutions. It has passed away before a higher and more refined, if not a better, civilization. It may be all that is claimed for it; but still there is something peculiar to frontier customs, thoughts and emotions not easily portrayed on paper, but fully understood and held in esteem by all pioneers. There are the thousand and one trails, and frequently hardships, from which none have a security of execution but must from the very nature of the surrounding bear their proportion.

A brother to relieve; how exquisite the bliss. A sense of reliance on our fellows has a wonderful influence in expanding our better feelings and desires. I have always observed far more care and sympathy for the sick, afflicted or unfortunate from any cause on what is generally termed the rough border of society. As our refinement and conventionalities advance, these ruder, though kindlier bonds seem to retire. But all old timers will realize of what I write, but cannot explain. There seems to be a kind free-masonry or family bond felt and realized by all and in which all have a common interest and pride.

THE LAST FREE TABLE CAMP MEETING

The development from infancy to manhood and womanhood has always been to me a very interesting study. The aspirations of my own young days are so vividly recalled, that with proper allowance for changed conditions. I fancy I can tell a boy what he wants and what he doesn't want about as well as he can.

So, as time passes and the body reaches maturity, the desire and longing of the matured boy or girl takes an entirely new line of thought and aspiration. The boy has changed and proposes to make the conditions conform to the change. He has shed off the simplicity of youth and demands recognition accordingly.

Societies and communities grow up along almost the same lines. In Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and most all of the southwest, about the first innovation on frontier life was the substitution of store clothes for those home-made. And as society advanced and gleams of a higher or supposedly more refined culture began to penetrate society circles, the simpler and cruder customs gradually retired before them till the supposed time of maturity.

Then our new regime comes forth in all her regal glory and consigns her happier and simpler past to oblivion. Such was the fate of our once prized, joyous camp meeting gatherings.

The country was getting too thickly settled, and too many unassimilated elements had come into her borders. The old style enthusiasts and free off-hand frontier spirit were on the wane.

Certain of our ways once considered in good taste and most enjoyable for the occasion were looked on disparagingly by some. The war spirit had also

materially affected religious zeal. And, as if to add the least straw, we unjudiciously attempted the last effort toward a camp meeting during the year of unprecedented drought of 1864, when the country was almost bare of any supplies and money more scarce than ever before.

But a number of over-zealous spirits could not give up the camp meeting. No one had any work to do and it would cost no more to live on the camp ground than at home.

So two circuits, Colusa and Yuba City, joined to hold a meeting on the east bank of the Sacramento River.

On Tuesday night about 11 p.m. it commenced raining and rained steady till 2 a.m. Nearly an inch fell. A brush roof is a poor protection against rain and from the camp ground, if it was not pandemonium turned loose, it was near the border of it.

Camp meetings were always noted for children and dogs. With not over-amiabile fathers, nervous mothers, crying children, skulking dogs, poor lights (could not burn the lamps, chimneys all broke) only a few lanterns, it was a mess. There were wet beds, wet clothes, hats, shoes, stocking, wet everything, except the throat and all that most of them lacked of being wet was the right fluid.

One woman got so enthused she tumbled bed, bedding, clothes, kids and all out of the tent in the highest pile that she could, then got on the top, bare-headed, and defied husband or friend to remove her on her plunder. She sat there all night till broad daylight, grim and defiant, too hot inside to feel cold outside.

Soon the sun arose, bright and clear. She told John, her hubby, to hitch up the wagon and away they went and I have never heard whether she has been at another camp meeting.

Next morning was bright and clear, as only it can be in the Sacramento Valley after a rain clears the air. By noon all was dried out, the dust all gone, and all was lovely, except the finances, and they were in a bad fix. As a last resort we turned the dinner part into a pay table at 25 cents a meal and got rid of many who were seeking grub, not religion.

Then we experienced the first bad behavior and had to put our guards and notify some parties to go slow, leave the ground, or risk the consequences.

The most sanguine of us realized the old-style free camp meeting spirit was on its last legs, and that they were wobbly. The leading issue now was how to get out even.

A big crowd came out from Marysville the last Sunday and paid fifty cents for dinner, and one fellow paid ten dollars for the privilege of selling ice-cream for the afternoon.

On Monday morning on summing up the accounts we had enough money to square up and were glad of it.

Thus passed into oblivion an institution that had served its purpose and had been a source of pleasure and good to the community and was still lovingly remembered by many. Aside from religious influences, a ten days' outing, free from care, mingling together, it is the best harmonizing, socializing and re-invigorating factor I have ever seen tried in rural districts. All old scenes are obliterated and a fresh start made for another year.

But the old-time camp meeting, with its many other frontier customs prized highly in their day, has passed, and will soon be a tradition known in the experience of none. All honor to its memory. It fulfilled its mission well while it filled its station in advancing civilization and left its impression for the better when it passed.

POLITICS IN THE EARLY SIXTIES

The presidential election of 1860 found three tickets in the field and politics in a general muddle. For years there had been two wings in the democratic party. The northern wing was under the leadership of Broderic, a brave, able and uncompromising leader (killed in a duel by Judge Terry); the southern wing was led by Terry and Senator Guinn (made a duke under Maximilian in Mexico during his occupancy).

When the Charleston connection split and the anti-slavery element nominated Douglas, he was endorsed by the antis, and Breckenridge was endorsed by the pro-slavery wing. The result was a three-cornered fight, well seasoned with enthusiasm. Abolitionists were not popular in California and all claiming to be Republicans were classed as such.

I have no means of ascertaining the vote of the State, but that is im-
material in noting the gradual crystalization of California politics to the
present status.

As the slavery agitation increased and secession was agitated, the two
elements (for there really were but two--all others were side issues) slowly
but surely began to array themselves definitely and to become more closely
allied by a common unanimity of sympathy and sentiment.

So clear-cut was the issue that those attempting to hold middle ground in
a few years were by stress of conditions compelled to declare for one or the
other party. The whole Douglas element had to be absorbed by the other two,
the Republicans getting, I think, not less than 90 percent, turning a large
Democratic majority to a rather small minority in northern California remained
Secesh south of Tehachapi.

When the issue was forced to a decision the results were often far from
pleasant. Men who had opposed and fought democracy all their lives had to fall
into line, and others who had been democratic wheel horses all their lives to
turn against old comrades and fellow workers. The process was completed at the
election in '62. The Douglas democrats were never heard of after that election.

As the war progressed the animosity and bitter feeling increased. There
was much foolish talk calculated to increase the bitterness. The forming of
secret societies on both sides was a cause of unrest to all leveled-headed,
well-meaning men, regardless of personal preferences. Fortunately that element
was powerful enough to hold the less responsible and fanatical element in con-
trol. That only democratic paper in northern California which was not raided
or thrown out in the street, was saved in Marysville, through republication
influence.

Such was the political situation as near as I can recall it in 1862.
Sectional prejudice ran rampant and downed all opposition. Even a negro church
in Stockton split on the negro question. The few negroes here at time were
divided the same as the whites and were quite, if not more acrimonious, than
their white brothers.

The first year's results of the war were thought by the Secesh to assume
final success. As a demonstration of that faith and a kind of reunion or

calling together of the southern element, a grand southern barbecue was planned to be held at Marysville, on strictly old-style southern lines, by the four adjoining counties, and as many more as wanted to take part.

A quarter of a mile of barbecue pits were dug and other preparations were made accordingly. Beeves, fat hogs and sheep were driven in without stint. The old California spirit was aroused and when the love and pride of old home with its longed-for and hallowed associations were added and spiced with the prevailing enmity (it is the right word) and confidence of final success the enthusiasm knew no bonds. To contribute was considered more a privilege than a hardship.

About twenty negroes were engaged to do the barbecueing (all Secesh-- they would allow no black republican darky on the ground). In the afternoon before the meeting, the roasting began and was continued all night end till afternoon next day. A large speaker's stand was put up and a large plot of ground seated with round lumber.

The best speakers were engaged, the chief speaker being Tod Robinson, called the old man eloquent, Jim Crothforth and others. Leaving out the subject, Robinson gave the grandest display of oratory I ever heard. The crowd was estimated at twenty to twenty-five thousand and so intense was the feeling that brought the great crowd together that they met and commingled more like old neighbors than strangers. Unanimity of feeling and sentiment destroyed all formalities. One addressed another who he had never seen before with the same familiarity and confidence on what was uppermost in all minds, the same as he would an old acquaintance.

SQUATTER WAR AND RESULTS

Ever since I was boy I've heard of squatters and squatter rights. Stephen A. Douglas was the great champion of squatter rights fifty years ago, but failed to get his theories adopted.

The squatter wars of California, like all other California products were peculiar and differed in many respects from eastern squatterism. In California it had no individuality, but was a community of settlers or squatters jointly against the Spanish grant claimant.

The first was long, expensive and bitterly contested. Large sums of money and much time lost and some bloodshed were the results.

Settlers began to locate claims on the Larkin grant of eleven leagues on the west bank of the Sacramento River in 1850-51 to convert the timber into cord wood and charcoal for the boats and city trade.

As soon as settlement began, protests came from the claimant, accompanied by threats, which only made things worse, as at that time they had no titles.

There was fine timber up to the bank of the river and fine profit cutting and selling it. The Squatters chose to believe the grant was no good and proposed to fight.

A Squatters League was organized, leaders chosen, assessments collected and all were ready for business, and the fight was on in dead earnest when I arrived.

There was at stake 55,000 acres of as fine land as any in the state, most all heavy timbered. With each party feeling sure of success, a bitter war was inevitable. The first act opened a short time after my advent and before I was interested.

The effort of the grant men was to enjoin the squatter from cutting the timber. The squatters' fight was to prevent enjoinder and so keep out of court and keep on cutting wood. In April '53, one of the grant men (Dr. Stoddard by name) came from "Frisco to attempt to stop the cutting and remained all night. About midnight the squatters took him from the house where he was staying, to a squatter's camp on the river for trail. Some wanted to hang him, but better council prevailed and they took him across the river and left him on a sand bar with the admonition never to return, and the consequences if he did.

There was no chance of escape till a boat passed. There was no one living on the east bank and an almost impenetrable thicket of vines, trees and tules supposed to be well stocked with gizzles, extended several miles eastward.

The Doctor played Crusoe till four o'clock next day when a steamer came down the river and took him aboard, badly used up. He had plenty of water and skeeters and had fished up wonderfully in both face and hands.

The Doctor never rested when they got through with him till he sold out his claim. He never returned.

The issue was to prevent the service of all papers at any and all risks. Hence U. S. marshals were a little slow about going into the woods hunting twenty or more determined men, believing they were right and the others land sharks.

All was quiet for three or four months when a boat landed at Holaday's wood yard and took on what she wanted. A fellow who had been looking on and gassing a little in an off-hand way, handed Holaday a paper. As soon as Holaday looked at it he said "I serve you with an injunction," with a stick of cord wood knocked him into the river.

The boat hands fished him out and away went the boat. Now all hands were looking for trouble and were on the alert. It was a serious offense and Uncle Sam was behind it.

All went well for some time and the excitement had blown over. The boats continued to take wood and ask no questions. A boat stopped and wooded every day while Holaday was in charge and he was asked on board to get his pay. He was called up to the pilot house to settle.

As soon as he entered, the door was shut and he was a prisoner with two guards.

It made a big sensation, for he was the ruling spirit of the whole outfit and timber cutting held up for a while.

What kind of a deal they made with Holaday none ever knew. He lived there in the willows three years, but would never tell me. He was gone about six weeks, came back well dressed and left in a few days and I never saw or heard of him till I met him here.

We now formed a wider (as we thought) stronger organization, invested fifteen dollars in four-foot tin horns to be distributed in hearing of each other and in case of danger at any point, the alarm to be sounded by the nearest station and answered by the others as call to arms.

Monthly and call meetings were held to discuss news or anything for the general good and protection.

Our chief source of expense and trouble was with our lawyers. We paid a contingent fee of five hundred dollars and expense while gathering evidence. These lawyers never traveled second class and we had strong suspicion of their selling us out.

In '54 they got an injunction service and damage suit served on Corbier et al. A number joined and paid U. S. senator Bates of Iowa to attend to their interest. Paid the regular five hundred dollars and heard no more of it till 1858 and then through the papers.

I went to Frisco to look it up. Bates had virtually answered the suit away and had returned east. We invested five hundred dollars more in Cal Crocket, from St. Louis, in the hope of getting a new answer.

In the interval the first parties to the suit had sold out and turned the whole business over the Shattuck and Spencer for their fees. We heard no more of it till 1862 when we saw in the court news judgement against Corbier et al for \$3,200.

It had laid still till Crocket had gone east, when it was called and went by default. Though the parties had never cut or sold a cord of wood, they had to pay all the same. To the credit of Shattuck and Spencer they demanded only their fee and costs, \$1,300, although they could have collected the whole.

In '55 eight of us bought the grant claim on our land. Another man named Wilson bought 4,000 acres adjoining us and started in rough-shod to drive off the squatters. This soon resulted in one man being shot, and came near resulting in a dozen more. All that was lacking was competent leader.

Wilson owned a mill. Corbier went there on business when Wilson ordered him off. Corbier refused, claiming the mill was a public place. Wilson started for his shotgun and though Corbier had a revolver he started for his horse and just as he mounted Wilson fired at about 60 or 80 yards range. Five shots struck but one flattened against his pistol carried over his left breast. This saved his life as the shot struck just over the heart.

Corbier and a friend with him were able to ride home (two miles), send for a Doctor and send out the news to the settlers. In a few hours about thirty men had met at Corbier's house with word from the sheriff to meet him at the mill.

Wilson was a rather desperate man. He had a grown son and abundance of arms and was fortified in his house with his wife and girl about twelve years old. With a determined leader we would have stormed the house, but a mob without a leader is about as dangerous and much like a flock of geese--noisy and harmless. And the larger the crowd, the less the danger.

As soon as the sheriff came, Wilson gave himself up and claimed his protection. After an exciting trial of three days he was committed with bond at \$3,000, which after two days effort was procured.

We were expecting a grand row all those days. He had his friends all armed and we all went armed and not adverse to a scrape. But peace finally prevailed. Corbier got well and after four years lawing and three changes of venue, Wilson got clear. So afterward, on an adjoining ranch, he shot another man who died from his wounds a year later.

The Squatters continued to fight the grant title at a total expense of about \$50,000, but were finally beaten in '59 or '60, and had to vacate, which they did voluntarily, if not cheerfully.

All that could, moved their houses off and the others burned theirs, also the fencing. Many miles of eight or nine rail worm fencing was burned.

They also gave notice to the public not to attempt to farm the land; that if they did they would be burned out.

It was lying idle when I left the state in 1866. I don't know how long it remained so.

OLD STEVE COOPER

Steve Cooper was my neighbor and friend. We visited him and his three grown daughters (the only ones in the county at that time) often, and they were frequent and always very acceptable visitors at our home. A visit meant more than a call in those days, always including one and often two nights.

Steve was a true type of a phase of American life now extinct or very nearly so. Of magnificent physique, six feet tall, square, well-set jaw, with firmness and determination in its every movement; heavy eyebrows well arched over clear blue eyes that always expressed their meaning beyond the possibility of doubt, a man of few words, but always to the point.

What I gathered of his earlier life was through our social relations and my desire to learn all I could regarding the real life of guide, trapper and border life when St. Louis was a town and Kansas City an Indian reservation.

He was Indian agent under Jackson during the campaign of 1840 and gained some notoriety in the dispute about who killed Tecumseh. The democrats claimed it was Col. Johnson and the whigs denied this claim and sent delegates to interview the Indians.

The Indian fighter at that time politically was away ahead of tariffs, ship subsidies, isthmus and canals. Harrison on one ticket, and Johnson on the other were both Indian fighters. The leading issue in some localities seemed to be, "Who killed Tecumseh?"

Cooper's position made him a central figure in the fight. He was with Fremont, but refused to go with him into the Wind River mountains where so many of his men were snowed in and perished. He knew the danger. He crossed the plains in 1846 and settled in Benicia with his family.

When Marshall found gold on the American River, all the male inhabitants of Benicia rushed off to the mines without any preparation. Cooper took one day to get ready, and, with another man, started the third day provisioned for two weeks.

The first acquaintance he met had rushed off at first account with only a sheath knife and had sold it for sixteen dollars and now had it hired back for a dollar an hour.

At the first stop they made, Cooper and his companion took out seventy five dollars a day each. After two days they became dissatisfied and moved up the river. Next stop each took out one hundred and fifty dollars and after two days again moved. This time they doubled again, three hundred dollars each. I had

all this direct from him. When the grub gave out they returned for more. Of his future finances I got my information through other sources. At one time he had \$80,000 in dust in his safe at Benecia and kept open house for all in real frontier style.

His daughters being the only American girls in the country, and all of them pretty and good company, visitors were never scarce. Living was high. A few foolish speculations and the old trapper, hunter and mountaineer, who had all his life lived abreast of his income, found his dust gone and most of his friends ready to follow.

One incident at Benecia shows the stuff he was made of. In '51, I think it was, a wagon train came into Benecia and with it a white man who had killed a negro on the road. A mob formed to hang the fellow.

Old Steve heard of it, took his shot gun, put the fellow in a room and stood off the whole crowd. Two hundred strong, all one day and night and the second till afternoon; marched him to the Frisco boat and put him aboard. But enough of the mob hung the man on the way.

Such was the first cloud of the storm that burst over the land in '61. Cooper came to Colusa in '55-'6 with the remnant of his fortune and started to raise fruit. He did fairly well; had a good peach, apricot and nectarine orchard, and had the first home-raised fruit on the Colusa market. Peaches were eight and ten cents a pound.

His future seemed fairly well assured as his orchards increased production, and, with a sure market, all looked well. But the old Major (of course, he was a major or colonel, how could it be otherwise with the other conditions) soon found there was little difference between an open house and an open orchard. And soon he was in a hard row again.

The last I ever spent with him we had bread made of shorts when flour was \$1.50 per sack. But the same simple unassuming spirit of hospitality flourished as well on that as on the best of the land. There were no apologies or embarrassments. Just the same old spirit of frontier cabin hospitality pervaded the whole atmosphere and one felt it as though it had been written on the door post. Such as I have you are welcome to, and if it don't suit, no exceptions taken.

In '58 or '9 two of his daughters married. The other married John Wolf-skill on Putah Creek some years after.

Then come the last and hardest trial of the old man's life. When Mr. Lincoln was killed, a company of soldiers was sent to Colusa and made several arrests of copperheads, as the southern sympathizers were called.

The Major was an uncompromising secesh and as such was known to all. He was also known well enough by other standards to the other fellow to secure him from annoyance. Such characters always have bitter enemies. He had his and now they proposed to get even.

Complaints were made that he was a dangerous man and accessory to the death of the President. He said he would never be taken alive and all knew it was the gospel truth.

One of his girls had married a leading republican and union man and I think that saved the Major. He went in the night to tell her good-bye and also to tell her of his determination to resist. He said he was going to the mountains (about twelve miles) and, if they followed and found him, he felt sure of killing five or six before they could kill him.

They never looked for him. He was an expert with fire-arms and that may have had its influence.

Almost by common consent, he was Justice of the Peace. I never heard of his decisions being impeached or reversed.

He was a fair type of his guild, divested of its worst features, drinking, swearing, gambling and other excesses that usually are practiced by that class. Though a J. P., he was a law unto himself. And though he openly violated the civil law during our acquaintance, he was so clearly in the right and so endorsed by the public that after repeated efforts the prosecution of their own volition abandoned the case.

As a class, the old style frontiersman is extinct. It doesn't look hardly fair that men like Bron, Kenton, Cooper, Jim Beckwith and hundreds of others of the same class who have rendered their country such signal service as these men, should be, almost to a man, poor, and be buried in out-of-the-way places in graves unmarked and forgotten by the passing generation.

Their true history never has been or never can be written. They are gone. The great interior that was marked on our school Atlas, unknown, was supposed to be an impenetrable desert. What courage, privation, hardships and suffering it cost in the face of hostile Indians to search out the by-ways and passes necessary to blaze those deserts that led to the present development of the great northwest.

They are gone, and, so far as I know, record is left of only a very few, and that a mere mention.

But their works follow them, and those works are grand.