

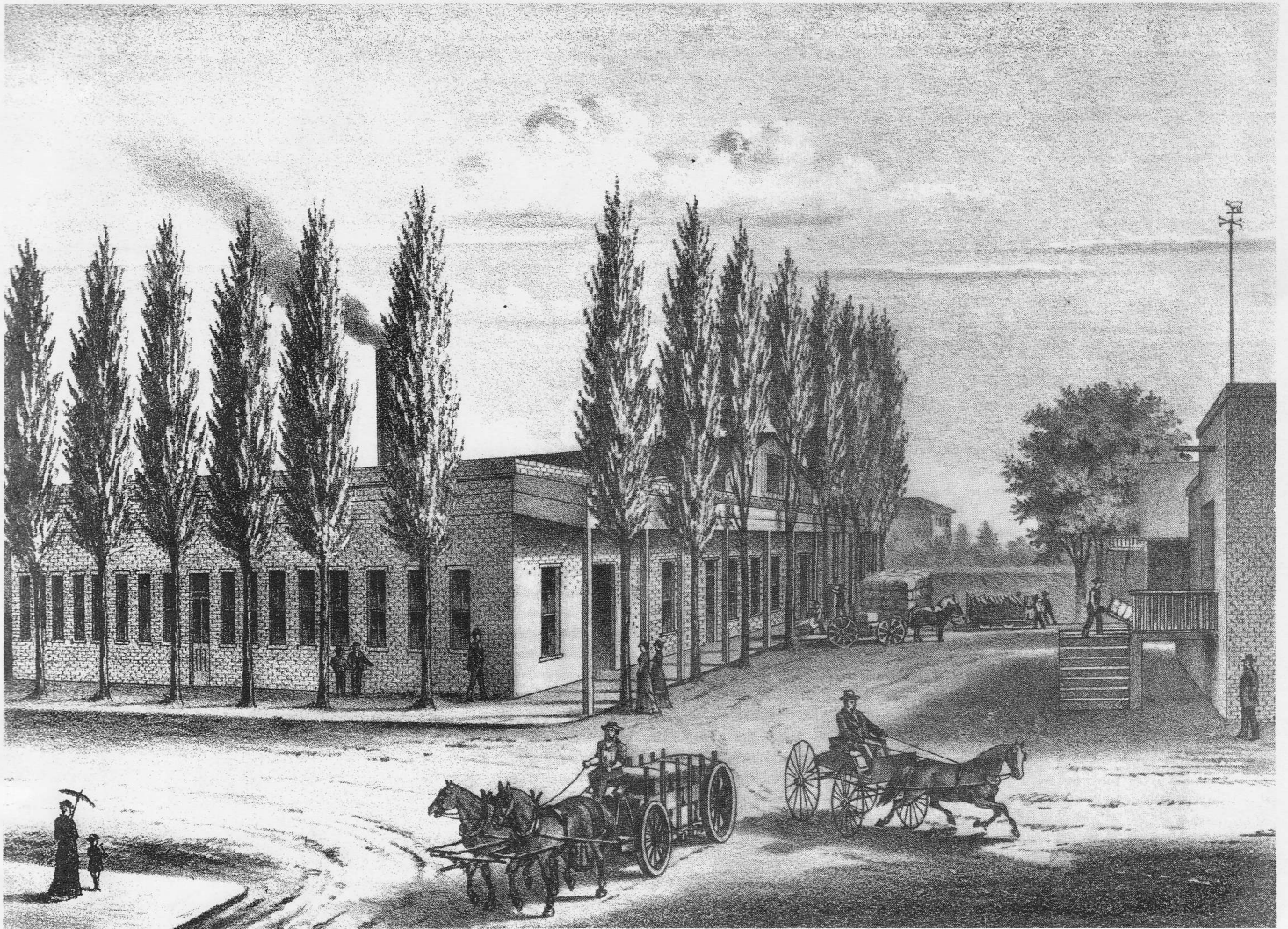
SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS BULLETIN

Vol. XXI No. 1

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA 95991

JANUARY 1982



ORIGINAL WOOLEN MILL BUILDING CIRCA 1870

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS BULLETIN

Vol. XXI, No. 1

January 1982

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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 95991. 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.

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NOTE: The name of Henry Clay Bailey, author of the article "A Journal of a California Pioneer" was inadvertently omitted from the October 1981 issue of the Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin.

Pictures in this issue courtesy of the Community Memorial Museum.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Preparing us for the winter season, Captain William C. Spaller of the Yuba City Fire Department enlivened our October meeting with timely advice on fire prevention and control. Members quizzed him closely about fireplaces, insert units, and wood stoves. Florence Arritt turned out to be our local authority on fire walls. We all got the basic message that the new electronic smoke alarms are inexpensive and very effective early warning devices, so install them wherever you think they might be useful. Loss of life to fire is needless tragedy, so plan personal escape routes from every room of your house before the emergency, and rehearse them with all family members, so that proper exits will seem easy and natural if and when need arises. The EMERGENCY telephone number is NINE ONE ONE. Memorize it.

December 7th was another anniversary of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor - an event which has receded into history. Every year fewer of us are left to recall in all its vividness the shock, the anger; and the personal anxiety of that day. My own hitch of duty in the Far East is now nearly forgotten - yet at odd moments an eddy of passing breeze tickles the nose, and I remember the smell of incense from forty years ago!

1982 Membership Dues are payable to the Treasurer. Your prompt remittance will make her job easier.

The Annual Meeting of the Sutter County Historical Society will be held January 19th, in the meeting room of the SUTTER COUNTY LIBRARY, at 7:00 p.m. Stephen Klein, County Librarian, has kindly consented to give our membership a guided tour of the facility. The California Room houses a special collection of particular interest to historians, so ...

MEET ME AT THE LIBRARY.


Dewey Gruening

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM NOTES

Jean Gustin, Director/Curator

Santa came early to four-year-old Katrina Klebe of Yuba City. Her ticket was drawn on December 12th as the winner of "Sutter House," the beautiful 1890 museum doll house. Katrina and her three older sisters had bought one ticket each out of money saved from their allowances. The four girls were told by their mother beforehand that, if they won the house, they would have to wait until they were older to "play" with it. All our museum volunteers who worked so hard to make "Sutter House" as beautiful and authentic as possible, can be assured that it has a wonderful home with these four very nice little girls.

I hope you visited the museum in December to see the Christmas decorations done by Bee Brandt and her very hard working decoration crew. Our ceiling high tree was donated again by Orchard Machinery Corporation of Yuba City. A big help in decorating was the hydraulic lift loaned by American Equipment Rentals and so ably run by Scott Hankins.

The museum's 3rd benefit Christmas Party on December 12th was attended by 247 people who enjoyed the delicious hors d-ouvres prepared and served by Steve Richardson and his students from the Yuba College Food Services program. Beautiful Christmas music was played by "The Fine Arts Quintet": Beverly Carlson, Ingrid Gaston, Rosemary Couey, Willard Couey, and Sharon Shiflett. Our thanks to the following local merchants and museum friends who provided decorated trees or merchandise for door prizes: Bunny Barfield, Pepsi Cola Bottling Co., Von Moltke-Sutter Lodge 24, Sutter County Arts Council, the Museum Staff, Miller's Interiors, The Portfolio in Gridley, the Japanese American Citizens League, Orchard Machinery Corporation, Continental Galleries, the Frame Shop, The Candy Box, The Bonanza Inn, Char's Travel Togs, California Cannery and Growers, Mr. & Mrs. William Hankins, and Mr. & Mrs. Pierre Carr. We also have to thank the Snowshoe Thompson Lodge of Sons of Norway, the Sutter Buttes Wildlife Gallery, Marnee Crowhurst, and Nancy Huston for Christmas "creations" loaned for our enjoyment.

A very special gift to the museum this Christmas was a lovely nativity scene featuring alabaster figures. Designed and given by Bob Bigham and Don Covey of Yuba City Florist, the creche will be exhibited each year for our visitor's enjoyment.

ARTS MINI FESTIVAL '82

The Sutter County Arts Council and the Community Memorial Museum present this series of exhibits and events at the museum for your enjoyment.

JANUARY

Special Exhibit: "THE FINE LINE;" pencil and graphic art;
Esther Brookman and Donna Rodemaker, artists.

Sunday, Jan. 17, 2 :00 p.m.: Reader's Theater; INTERPRETIVE
READINGS; Chris Hull, director.

Sunday, Jan. 31, 2:00 p.m.: CONCERT, Marcella Slocum, Painist.

FEBRUARY

Special Exhibit: "ART IN BRUSH AND WORDS," Jerilyn Champion,
artist.

Sunday, Feb. 14, 2:00 p.m.: Reader's Theater, "VALENTINES DAY
IN PROSE AND POETRY."

Sunday, Feb. 28, 2:00 p.m.: CONCERT, Cathy Suey Lee, violinist.

MARCH

Special Exhibit: "JAPANESE BRUSH PAINTING;" Michiko Erwin, artist.

Sunday, March 21, 2:00 p.m.: CONCERT, Kathleen Tresham, soprano.

LIST OF DONORS TO THE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL
MUSEUM TRUST FUND

August 29, 1981 through December 18, 1981

Maude K. Roberts	in memory of Marie G. Winship
Maude K. Roberts	in memory of Jack Howitt
Mr. & Mrs. Starr Poole	in memory of Marie G. Winship
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Joyce & Fred Benzel	in memory of Ludwig Huber Sr.
Mary & Roy Crane	in memory of Ludwig Huber Sr.
Janet & Jim Spilman	in memory of Ludwig Huber Sr.
Shirley & Randolph Schnabel	in memory of Everett Williams
Shirley & Randolph Schnabel	in memory of Shizu Yoshimura
Richard Scriven	Outright gift
K. E. Newton Family	Outright gift
Mr. & Mrs. George Post	in memory of Grace M. Carlin
Irminna Palmer	in memory of Ruth Metcalf
Jamie & Nancy Newkom	in memory of Hedley Hall
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Mr. & Mrs. W. R. Dawson	in memory of Junior J. Collins
Percy & Helen Davis	in memory of Rachel Williams
Caroline S. Ringler	in memory of Emma Walton
Irminna Palmer	in memory of Emma Walton

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Norman & Loadel Piner
Norman & Loadel Piner

in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Frank Close
in memory of Orva Forderhase
in memory of Grace Carlin
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Frank R. Close
in memory of Pearl Clark
in memory of John E. Murphy
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Emma Walton
in memory of Harriet Maud Noyes
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Mr. Lester Ohland
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Tess Mayfield Trefethen
in memory of Harriet Maud Noyes
in memory of Harriet Maud Noyes
in memory of Harriett M. Noyes
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Lester E. Ohland
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Harriet M. Noyes
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Harriet Maud Noyes
in memory of Harriet Maud Noyes
Outright gift
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Harriett Maud Noyes
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of Esther Meist
in memory of Eleta Hill
in memory of Eleta M. Hill
in memory of Henry W. Noreen
in memory of Matthew Scott Miller

Verna M. Sexton
Maude K. Roberts
John & Diane Alexander
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald F. Allen
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& Herbert Briick
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Jean Gustin & Caroline Ringler
John & Dorothy Mark
Dick & Bee Brandt

in memory of Eleta M. Hill
in memory of Henry W. Noreen
in memory of Stephen Del Pero
in memory of George W. Heier
in memory of George W. Heier

in memory of Mrs. Anna Herman
in memory of George W. Heier
in memory of Hallie Moore
in memory of Hallie Moore
in memory of Wesley S. Mark
in memory of George Heier

IN MEMORY OF
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THE LETTERS OF PETER ONDERDONK

Introduction

Peter Onderdonk was born on March 15, 1820, near Athens (Greene County), New York. He was the sixth of seven children born to Abraham and Rachel Appleby Onderdonk. Peter was trained as a physician and conducted a practice in New York, but came to the California gold fields like many others of his generation. His letters reveal his varying success at mining and business, but make no mention of a medical practice. The letters also shed light on the ill-fortunes which faced many of the early pioneers in their search for gold. Onderdonk died in November 1850, and his business partner corresponded with his mother in order to settle the affairs of the estate. The independent spirit of that era is evident in the letter; the business partner wished to settle the estate without "placing his effects into the hands of the public authorities."

Onderdonk's grave has not been located, and his descendants would appreciate any information which might be available on its location. They may be contacted through Jean Gustin at the museum.

The letters have been copied just as they were written by Peter Onderdonk and his respondent.

Yuba River June 2, 1850

Brother & Sister

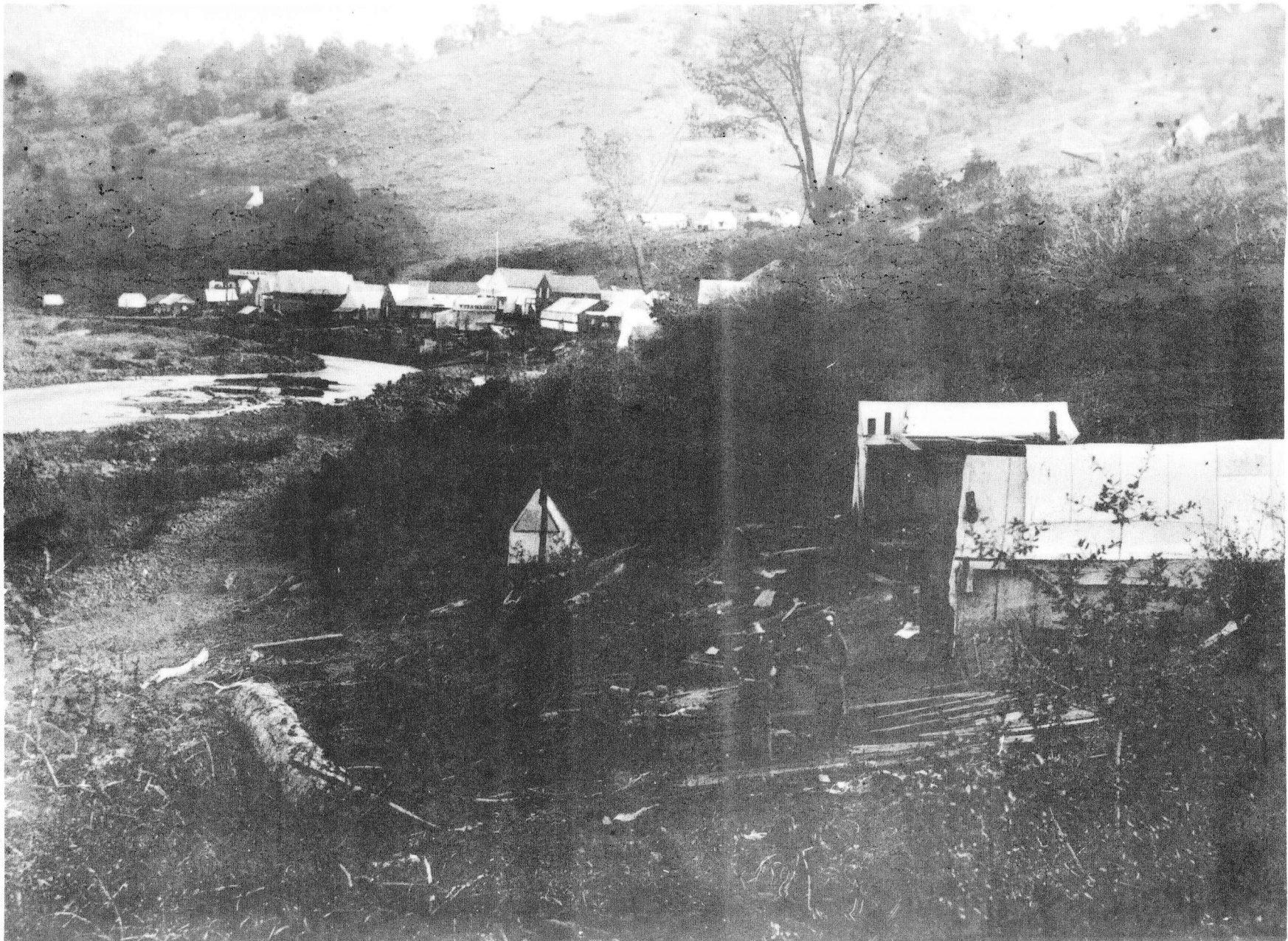
Your letter dated Feby 22 came to hand about the first of May and it afforded me much pleasure. I am well. I have enjoyed excellent health since I left the States. Trading got dull and we closed that and am mining on the Yuba, South fork Van Deusen and I remain together. We are taking out from \$10 to \$25 a day to the man at \$16 per ounce this gold I am saving for the mint it is pure and worth at the mint \$22.40 per ounce (I have been informed by a government office to recon(?) mint prices) we have taken out \$34 per day to the man. We expect to do much better when the river falls and it is now on the decline - A short distance above us on Deer Creek they are taken out from 3 to 12 pound per day but those claims are taken up and we cant get our snoots in that place if I could I would go there a few weeks and start for home Oh! what a country you can't dig any where hardly in the mountains but what you can find gold. but we think it don't pay unless we can get our ounce- The indians are getting some troublesome: They are expert with there bows and arrows but they are afraid of the white man; there has been some battles fought one was fought two miles from whare I am I could tell you much but time will not permit me to write I hope to see you soon and tell you the whole If my life and health is spared I shall start for home as soon as the rainy season sets in which will be about the middle of Nov. I wish you had my mony to take care of untill I come for it gives me much uneasiness although I keep it buried in the ground in my tent but I dont know what may happen. last season there was no fear of any think being stole but this season there is great fear It costs eight per cent to send it home in the dust which would be \$80 per thousand- I could get a draft for nothing but then I would get only California price for my gold which is \$16 per ounce when it is worth in the states from \$18 to \$24 per ounce I will try to keep it snug in my fist and carry it myself if I have to watch it day and night One of our Company Smith from Coxackie died and his business was put on my hands and his mony gives me trouble and it is trouble all-around sometimes I think a man without money is the best off

I am sixty miles from Sacramento City more than two hundred from San Francisco- Write often and direct to Sacramento City whare I can send down for letters most any time- I must give you a short sketch about coming to the mines- In the first place I got to the mines 12 miles above whare I am now on the same river between tremendous mountains and I could make no more than \$3 a day that of corse would not do I made up my mind to get out of that hole as soon as possable. there I had all my things for the season and as much as I could do to get them down- There lay some men waiting for the river to go down for daming(damming?) I looked up to the tops of the mountains and said to myself (VanDeusen had not got there yet) I won't try to get the things up that devilish mountain I will sell what I can and leave the rest- I sold at a sacrafice took my blankets and left about \$20 worth in the hole and got out discouraged and almost made up my mind to start for home- I started on for the city and on way down I prospected and thought I might do

something. on I went again for the city to get a new outfit. Got back to the mines had bad luck could not do much. then Van was with me we was discouraged, we thought it would not do to give it up so- I and another man started off to prospect Bear River with some hard bread and dried beef and our blankets- We had a days journey before we struck Bear River and then we followed up the river prospecting along. night came on to us between great mountains and when the indians are troublesome we built a fire ate of our hard bread and beef and put a large stone to put our feet against to keep us from sliding down the mountain wraped(wrapped) ourselves in our blanket and kept one eye open to watch the indians and wild beasts- Got up in the morning ate again of our interesting breakfast composed of Bread, dried beef and water and started on again to cut the story short we did not get satisfied and returned back and went to work at last we struck a spot and got an ounce then we thought we was doing wonders and of corse we learn more about mining- I shall know how to rock the cradle to a fraction for it is my business here- We work only from six to eight hours a day and that is enough for any man in the mines- Mining is very hard work _____ I could tell you much but I must wait I see you and then I can tell you things you never thought of- I would not take \$1000 for what I have learned about things and the world since I left N. York

Your Brother

T. Onderdonk



A GOLD MINING CAMP ON THE YUBA RIVER 1850 CAN ANYONE IDENTIFY IT ?

Sacramento City Aug. 8, 1850

Dear Brother & Sister,

I suppose you are anxious to hear from me frequent to know whare and how I am- I look so anxious at the arrival of evry male for letters from you and others, that when I get disappointed I am almost ready to say that my friends are either dead or they have no care to give me accounts from my native land. I have not received a Single letter since about the first of April. This day they are assorting the male from the States but I Can get no letter out before tomorrow or after I must write to day in order to send with this male as it closes to morrow morning: I live in strong hopes of getting a letter when the mail is opened- I would rather pay five dollars for a letter evry month than not receive any- I am perfectly well. I am fleshier than when I was in the states My heaviest was 144 in the States but now my average is 150. when I arrived in this country I weighed 160. thus you see my variation in the States, Sea and California- My health has been good ever since I arrived in California-

I am getting som considerable home sick and tired of living in an arab style, out of society sleeping on the ground and on the soft side of a plank being my own Cook and making the ground and logs my table. Now my dear friends as sure as my life health and money is spared you may expect me home some time the fore part of Winter- Last Spring it was nothing to make money but now you may depend it is a hard matter to get in any thing that is sure- I have not made any money since I quit business in Yuba City. I went to the mines and fell on a good Claim and done well as long as the claim lasted. I dug out in about three weeks \$315 but looking round for another it cost considerable and I came back to Sacramento City about \$150 worse off than when I started to the mines and now the mines don't see me again.

I have been to Francisco and brought up a small cargo of goods and have made nothing on them, and now I am going to try a trip up to Yuba City again I think I can make my freight as the Streamers cant go thru any more on account of low water- I can tell you if I can make no more here you will see me before winter

There has got so many here that the competition is large and the chance small for doing any thing I have done nothing since the first of April but Can Come home much better than when I started Here will be an amount of suffering this winter with those who have no money and Cal- is full of such- Four of our company has died one from Greene Co. (Smith) and Frieghler? from Leeds? ? from Cocksackie) the others from Columbia Co. the rest are well as far as I know and many of them has not money enough to go home and they have been to the mines all summer and spring so you may see what the mines are to many- The other day I came across a gentleman from Athens and he says Doc. I am dead broke will you let me have two or three dollars. of corse I let him have it.

that same gentleman ought at least to command \$2000 with what he had from the ship and the wages he has been getting I paid him last spring \$5 a day for some time and I think he has been getting \$150 per month since- no name mentioned I have seen some who left the ship with \$400.

-----now only nothing in the pocket. Calif.

-----last year considered-unhealthy but now

is considered healthier than the States, but perhaps the sickly season is to come although last season at this time it was unhealthy-

Now don't forget to write immediately wither you think it will reach me before I leave Cal- or not. if it don't no harm done if it does reach me it will fat (?) me up- Give my respects to all enquiring friends

Your brother

P. Onderdonk

California
Marys Ville Dec. 25. 1850

Mrs. Onderdonk

Madam

it is with feelings of pain and regret, that I am called upon to convey to you the sad intelligence of the decease of your son. Peter Onderdonk. He died at this place on the 28th November. after an illness of about seven weeks of fever and Diareah. he had the best. medical aid and attention that could be procured but without avail I regret. to say. that he died without making any request. or giving me any directions as. to his effects we had been engaged in business together since august last. and he had come up the river from Sacramento city after an illness of. about two weeks there of Fever for. the purpose of settling up our buisiness. and returning home but. providence willed it otherwise he was. taken with the Diareah nomore to enjoy health and. home and it continued till death relieved him according to his request. I took an account of. our. matters so that we could. settle at any time when he got well enough to leave but. the time never arrived. and the effects. in my. hands..the amount of which I cannot. precisely state in consequence of some unsettled accounts of his is subject to the order of. the lawful. heirs with legal documents accompanying or I will send it to N York there to be paid to the heirs as you. shall. prefer and direct. I trust you will approve of the course I have taken in not placing his effects into the hands. of the public authorities here. as in my judgment the expences. would have been large and unnecessary I will write you by next mail and give you. the amount. of his effects through the same. channel. that I send tnis letter namely my wife Mrs. M Y Kent. New York City you will please write me giving such. directions as you think proper.. till then I remain your humble Servant

Direct to me

Gabriel Kent.

Care of Henaru & Co

Sacramento City

California

I. think the amt. will be about Fourteen Hundrid Dolls

_____ G. Kent

New York March 5th/51

Col .. Robert Ful---?

I have just received yours of the 4- and would not delay an hour in answering- your letter gives me all that is required to assure me that this will be rec?. by the Mother of the Deceased- receive my thanks (although a stranger) for being so minute, also for responding so promptly, as I will now be able to write to my Husband , that I have succeeded in finding Mrs. Onderdonk by this mail, 11th March Should Mr. Kent enclose (as he writes ne will) a Letter or any information I will forward to you immediately- I expect him to return before May- he wrote in my Letter that Peter Onderdonks trunk was in Sacramento City, and as soon as he went there, he would see what there was there, and apprise his Mother of the Same. the mail he speaks of writing is by the Georgia now due. My address you have Yours with respect

M Y. Kent

P.S. My Husband was of the Firm you mention

THE STORY OF MARYSVILLE WOOLEN MILLS

BY

Wilbur Hoffman

On April 11, 1865, an article appeared in The Marysville Daily Appeal that "an enterprising fellow citizen," A. M. Shields, contemplated erecting a woolen mill in Marysville. At that time conditions in the city were favorable for such an enterprise. Yuba and Sutter Counties had flourishing sheep ranches that assured a ready and steady supply of wool. The area contained an available work force capable of supplying competent, low cost labor. (Potential mill operators undoubtedly had in mind the rather large Chinese community whose members were paid lower wages than white workers performing comparable tasks.) Competent entrepreneurs, financiers, bankers, and leaders were prominent in Marysville. And, while Marysville was not yet on a transcontinental railroad, one was being built and the city had daily steamer service to Sacramento and San Francisco. Marysville was also the third largest city in California.

Acting on these conditions, Mr. Shields and W. H. Parks (of Marysville) canvassed the area and received a pledge of \$48,000 in stock. By February 1867, a corporation was formed with a stock capitalization of \$25,000. In February 1867, W. H. Parks, D. E. Knight, J. H. Jewett, F. R. Lofton, S. W. Selby, N. D. Rideout, and C. M. Patterson were elected as the first Board of Directors of the Marysville Woolen Mills. The officers were W. H. Parks, President; D. E. Knight, Vice President; C. M. Patterson, Secretary; J. H. Jewett, Treasurer. (From this time on, Mr. Shields does not seem to have been active with Marysville Woolen Mills.) C. M. Patterson was also appointed general superintendent. The first call for ten percent payment on the pledged stock and the second twenty percent having been paid before March 7, D. E. Knight was selected as an agent to go East to purchase machinery for the mill. A lot was purchased on the southeast corner of Second and B Streets and construction started on a brick building 51' by 157'.

In August 1867, machinery Mr. Knight had purchased in the East began arriving. First to arrive were two carding machines. They were timed to arrive first, since the carding of raw wool is the first step involved in manufacturing woolen goods. These machines were shipped by steamship via the Isthmus of Panama, across the Isthmus by railroad and then by steamship to San Francisco and by river steamer to Marysville. Machinery for producing coarse and fine cloth was shipped by windjammer around Cape Horn.

By September, the carding machines were in operation and thirty workers were employed. By December, spinning jennies and weaving and dressing machinery had been installed and put into operation and the number of employees increased to sixty.

The power plant, a forty-horse steam engine, was built by the Marysville Foundry Company. Housed in a special room, the steamer was connected by a belt to a system of overhead pulleys suspended above various machines throughout the plant. Each machine in turn could be connected to an overhead pulley by a belt or unhooked according to whether the machine was to run or be idle. To allow for future expansion, the steam engine was built to operate twice the number of machines originally installed.

Meanwhile, the mill was purchasing large quantities of wool from sheepmen in Sutter and Yuba Counties. The Weekly Sutter Banner of September 14, 1867, reported that Boyd and Wright of Yuba City had sold the mill "a choice lot of lambs wool." Sheepmen in both counties were to benefit from the woolen mill. For many years the mill purchased most, if not all, wool produced in the two counties.

From this wool, the mill produced only the finest cashmeres, flannels, blankets, underwear, and overshirts. A specialty product during its early years of operation was splendid family blankets with the names of the owners woven into them. Another fine product was bright maroon blankets specially woven for the sleeping cars of the Central Pacific Railway that would soon be connecting with the Union Pacific at Promontory, Utah, establishing the first transcontinental Pacific railroad.

While D. E. Knight was on his purchasing trip to the East, he engaged J. W. and James Tatterson to act as Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of the woolen mill under the overall direction of C. M. Patterson. Both Tattersons were experienced woolen mill operators. J. W. had been Superintendent of the Suffolk Mills, Lowell, Massachusetts, and James had been Superintendent of the Perkinsville Manufacturing Company, Perkinsville, Vermont. Their addition to the staff furnished needed expertise in producing fine woolens.

Stockholders met in October 1868 and elected the following directors: W. H. Parks, D. E. Knight, W. H. Fletcher, L. Sachs, M. Marcuse, N. D. Rideout, and C. M. Patterson. Fletcher, Sachs, and Marcuse replaced F. R. Lofton, S. W. Selby and J. H. Jewett who were members of the original board of directors.

Competent management, efficient machinery, and low-priced labor producing quality products brought prosperity to Marysville Woolen Mills. In turn, the area prospered. Over sixty workers were employed, wool growers had a ready cash market, and profits remained home. So profitable was the first year of operation, that in October 1869, the mill declared a 33-1/3 percent dividend payable in stock. Stockholders voted to increase the capital stock to \$100,000 and to enlarge the mill's capacity. At that time, the Marysville Daily Appeal stated that the mill was the most economical woolen mill in the state and that the 33-1/3 percent dividend "clear of all taxes is better than loaning money."

Perhaps because the woolen mill employed Chinese in 1869, a rumor spread that the mill was owned by Chinese. Such a rumor reflected the racist attitude at that time against the Chinese by the whites. Marysville had a rather large Chinese community. The mill announced that only \$500.00 in stock was owned by Chinese and that amount by only one Chinese company. Resentment against Chinese working in the woolen mill was again to flare up in later years.

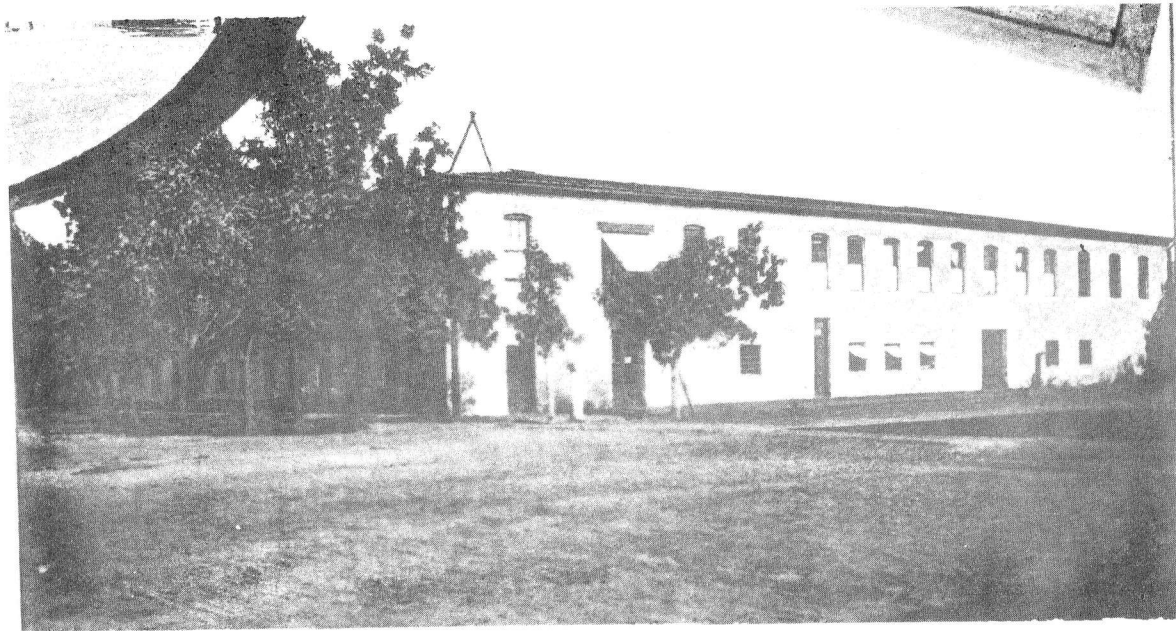
In October 1872, stockholders elected D. E. Knight, C. E. Sexey, C. M. Patterson, M. Marcuse, N. D. Rideout, and William Fletcher as directors. D. E. Knight was at this time Superintendent of the woolen mill.

A dividend of 19 percent was declared. Each year business increased. In 1873, the mill purchased 330,000 pounds of wool worth \$57,000. This wool produced \$187,000 worth of cashmeres, flannels and blankets. By that time the building had been enlarged to 170' by 170'. The capital invested was \$127,000; the cost of machinery and building, \$72,000. Forty-seven employees received \$26,400 per year or an average of \$56.80 per month. (A rather low take-home pay even for those years.)

Even though in 1874 the labor force had been increased (mostly Chinese), and four sets of machinery operated at full capacity, and even overtime much of the season, the mill was swamped with orders and unable to fill them on time. Reputation and demand of its fine products had spread far and wide. More machines and more modern machinery were required to take care of its ever increasing business. Stockholders acted on these requirements in October 1874 by voting to increase capital stock by one-third and to purchase two additional sets of machinery. Older machinery was overhauled. With the additional machinery, the mill now had the capacity to operate six separate sets of machines.

During the disastrous flood of 1875 in Marysville, four feet of water flowed through the plant causing \$45,000 in damage, mostly to bulk wool. A second story was added to the main building to store the vulnerable wool and also to install there machinery most easily damaged by water.

The problem of Chinese laborers working in the woolen mill again arose. The Marysville Daily Appeal on April 26, 1879, reported that the number of Chinese working at the mill was greatly exaggerated. A reporter visiting the plant wrote that employment of whites and Chinese was about evenly divided-- 30 white, 35 Chinese. But to assuage any outraged feelings among the white population, the article further added that the white employees "draw a much greater sum of the payroll." Politics also entered the Chinese labor question. A Democratic speaker at Democratic headquarters denounced the woolen mills for employing



MARYSVILLE WOOLEN MILL CIRCA 1875 A SECOND STORY HAD BEEN ADDED

Chinese; "better have the mill in China and import the products than the way it now is," the Democratic politician added. The Marysville Daily Appeal remarked, however, that the mill was being properly run and praised N. D. Rideout, D. E. Knight, and others for the fine manner in which they operated the woolen mill.

The mill operators in the Marysville Daily Democrat vehemently defended their employment of Chinese. They listed as employed 72 Chinese with a total yearly salary of \$25,950 and 26 whites at \$15,180 total yearly salary. "why, because Chinese labor is cheaper than white . . . the mill would employ all Chinese except they are not capable nor reliable in positions of skill so whites are employed, otherwise all Chinese would be hired--they are cheaper." The article, however, failed to give details as to why Chinese were "not capable nor reliable." The operators also contended that "the mill is operated for stockholders, not for the good of society." In a very partisan manner, they stated it was "Republicans and their protectionism that protects aristocrats against labor." It would appear that the mill's prosperity and favorable competitive position in the market place was due to what present-day standards term labor exploitation as well as efficient management.

In addition to its other lucrative markets, the mill sold considerable woolen products to the local Chinese community. These customers purchased fine woolens, namely extra-heavy, twenty-one pound blankets and a very fine soft felt at a cost of \$1.60 to \$1.80 per yard. The mill also sold excellent products such as flannel for underwear, blankets, flannels, and tweeds to only three distributors: Walker Brothers of Salt Lake City; Sachs, Haller and Co.; and Neustader Brothers, both the latter firms were in San Francisco. In turn, these wholesalers sold Marysville Woolen Mill's products in the West from Canada to Mexico, a market where the factory enjoyed a very high reputation for quality woolens. To prevent cheap imitations of these fine woolens from flooding the market in the name of Marysville Woolen Mills, the mill created and registered a trademark which was woven into all woolens produced by the plant. The mark was a picture of a sheep with the words "Marysville Woolen Mills" surrounding it.

Such a large quantity of soap was used in washing and processing the wool, that the factory produced its own soap. The plant's purchases of dye stuffs amounted to \$6,000 to \$8,000 per annum. For lubricating the wool, a special peanut oil was imported from China. For making tassels, large prickley burrs were especially cultivated for the mill.

Demand for its merchandise continued to increase rapidly so that by 1881 the plant again needed to be expanded. Buildings were enlarged and additional machinery installed. So extensive were these alternations that the mill was shut down for some weeks. During 1880, the mill paid \$102,000 in cash for 400,000 pounds of wool to wool growers (purchasing the entire production in the Yuba and Sutter area), and paid out \$38,000 in wages to its employees. At that time, the

stock was in the hands of a few men: N. D. Rideout, Decker and Jewett, D. E. Knight, and R. G. Stanwood being the principal holders. Mr. Knight managed the plant and had done so almost from its inception.

According to the Marysville Daily Appeal, Marysville Woolen Mills was, at that time (1881), second largest on the West Coast next to the Pioneer Mill of San Francisco. There were eight woolen mills in California and only three were profitable; Oregon had five, with only one profitable.

The issue of the preponderance of Chinese labor in the woolen mill flared up again in early 1894. The Marysville Woolen Mill apparently had been selling blankets to state institutions by underbidding its competitors. The Stockton Mail published this information calling attention that selling merchandise to state institutions by industries employing Chinese labor was illegal. Stockton was the home of a woolen mill that employed only white labor. Reacting to this disclosure, the Marysville Daily Appeal vehemently castigated D. E. Knight's policy of employing many more Chinese than whites in the Marysville Woolen Mill. The Appeal made no mention of lower wages paid the Chinese, but was reflecting the contemporary bias of hiring Chinese to the exclusion of whites. The article admonished "the labor organizations of the state . . . institute an investigation of all contracts made by Knight's coolie concern." And the article also admonished the stockholders of the Marysville Woolen Mills to investigate "Knight's method of doing business . . . to put a bridle on the old man . . . unless they want the light of day to shine upon the operations . . ."

The Appeal article continued by saying that the "Stockton mills are conducted by humane and ordinary business men, while the Marysville institution is in charge of an old bulldozer whose consideration for the manhood or womanhood . . . is to be likened unto the task masters in Southern slavery."

On the same day the Marysville Daily Democrat responded by praising D. E. Knight as an astute businessman whose varied enterprises had brought prosperity to Marysville. The Democrat, while acknowledging the Stockton Mail's effort against the mill as understandable, criticized the Appeal for attempting to cripple a home industry. The report stated that since its inception, the woolen mill had paid \$2, 214, 287 to people (white) of the vicinity for wool, \$852,907 in wages, and \$250,000 for wood cut by whites (this last item for wood used in firing the boilers, etc.).

At that time (1894) the Marysville Woolen Mills had forty-six stockholders. The board of directors included N. D. Rideout, F. W. Aaron, L. T. Crane, D. E. Knight, R. S. Stanwood, M. Marcuse, and S. H. Heller. The largest shareholders were Rideout (300 shares) and Knight (172 shares). D. E. Knight was president and general manager.

Another article appearing in the January 1, 1897 Marysville Daily Democrat again praised D. E. Knight for his very successful management of the Marysville Woolen Mills. And statistics given stated that during its years of operation, the mill had purchased fourteen million pounds of wool from area growers for which these growers received \$2,000,000 in cash; more than \$1,000,000 in wages, more than two-thirds of which was paid to white labor. Total sales at this date were \$4,000,000. During this time, the mill has kept "a healthy balance at his bankers." Cash dividends paid to stockholders was \$121,538 in addition to stock dividends.

Marysville Woolen Mills continued to operate smoothly and profitably until March 10, 1899. At approximately 8 o'clock in the evening, night watchman Titus noticed a red glow near bins where wool is dried--others say in the carding waste near the drying bins. Titus ran to the ever-brightening glow with a garden hose. Water from the hose merely agitated the blaze. Since carded wool was saturated with oil, water proved to be inadequate to quench such a blaze. Titus ran to sound the alarm, but the fire department had already been summoned by a passerby who saw through a window the red glow bursting into flame. With so much combustible material about, the fire spread with a fury. Within a short while, the entire building was in flames. Firemen brought the blaze under control in two hours. Walls collapsed and the corrugated roof fell into the smoldering ruins. The boiler house and woodshed were saved and two brick storerooms that contained blankets and wool were saved.

The greatest tragedy of the fire by far was the death of Frank Gilson Peck, aged 18, of Yuba City, who was trapped in the flames. He had entered the main building with a fireman who was pulling a high pressure hose. The lad may have intended to help with the hose; he was not a member of the fire department, however, merely a bystander. After Frank had penetrated the building with the fireman, the fireman sensed that they were in danger of asphyxiation. Partially overcome by smoke, the fireman yelled a warning to leave at once. Thinking the young man was following, the fireman retreated to the street. The fire by now furiously roared through the building, walls cracked, and Frank Gilson Peck was seen no more until his body was dug from the smoldering wreckage the following day.

Both communities were stunned by the tragic death. Frank had recently graduated from Marysville High School with honors. He was a football star and an outstanding athlete. He was popular and well known. His father, W. F. Peck, was in the surrey business where his son worked with him. Frank was his only son.

Stockholders of the woolen mill met to review and assess the radically changed situation caused by the fire. Twenty white men, eight white women, and about forty-six Chinese lost their jobs. Concern was voiced about the now unemployed white workers, but it was felt that since the Chinese lived cheaply and could work in the orchards, loss of their jobs was not a great problem.

Financially the corporation was in good shape in spite of the fire. Originally the mill was incorporated for \$50,000 and the stock had been increased from time to time until in 1899, it stood at \$200,000. The increase represented \$75,000 in cash dividends and \$125,000 in stock dividends. Of the plant, two brick storerooms that contained wool and blankets were saved--a definite asset. Fire insurance amounted to \$75,000.

Some stockholders favored rebuilding the mill; others did not. Of the major stockholders, Rideout wished to rebuild; D. E. Knight did not. Those wishing not to build prevailed and in April 1899, stockholders voted to dissolve the corporation. Each stockholder received a \$20 per share dividend. Cash left in the treasury was distributed in the amount of \$35 to \$40 a share. Thus, no stockholder lost on his investment, but, except for loss of future stock dividends, actually he came out ahead on his investment.

The area, of course, lamented the closing of Marysville Woolen Mill. Sheepmen lost their ready cash market for wool, laborers their jobs, and various suppliers such as wood, a steady market. According to the Marysville Daily Appeal of March 14, 1900, investors had received \$500,000 in dividends during the lifetime of the mill on an investment of only \$75,000. A final dividend of \$2.42 per share was paid in January 1901.

Several months after the fire, N. D. Rideout and John Martin of Yuba Electric Power Company and Marysville Gas Company discussed how the woolen mill might be rebuilt. In March 1900, they planned to canvass Marysville for possible investors. Those interested included W. H. Parks, and Mayor C. S. Brooks. Rideout and Martin each pledged \$10,000 if plans could be worked out to rebuild the mill.

Meanwhile, President E. A. Forbes and Secretary A. C. Irwin of the Marysville Chamber of Commerce sent letters of inquiry to woolen mill operators who might be interested in coming to Marysville. The Chamber received a response from two Oregon woolen mill operators who wished to add another mill to supply business already under their control. But they lacked sufficient capital to build one themselves. They were able, however, to invest \$8,000 and lend their expertise in operating a mill in Marysville. They were Messrs. Carter and Walker. The Chamber of Commerce and other interested Marysville men investigated and personally talked to these two gentlemen and found them entirely reliable. Rideout and Martin, however, wanted small investors in Marysville to purchase \$17,500 worth of stock in the mill so the community would feel that the woolen mill was also theirs, thus lending local support, enthusiasm and good labor relations. The \$17,500 was pledged in one day. Larger stockholders pledged \$50,000. The larger holders were N. D. Rideout, \$10,000; John Martin, \$10,000; J. Q. Packard, \$5,000; Capt. Barneson, \$5,000; E. J. DeSabia, \$5,000; A. J. Hectmann, \$2,000; W. M. Pierson, \$5,000; F. Carter, \$8,000. By December plans were made to rebuild the woolen mill.

New directors were John Martin, President; H. Cheim, Vice President; R. G. Stanwood, Secretary; Harold Cornforth; N. D. Rideout; and Fred Carter. Carter was also to be plant superintendent.

The mill was rebuilt with brick in the same location. It was well ventilated and the roof was half glass. Instead of a central steam power plant, all machines were operated by electric motors, each department having its own separate motor. Five sets of wool machines were installed and thirty-five looms. The five sets could produce more wool than the six sets of the burned-out mill. The wool scouring plant could scour 10,000 pounds per day enabling the plant to make their own shoddies. These inferior woolen fibers were marketed without the mill's label. Nine-five percent of other mills in the country had to purchase their shoddies. In addition, the company, however, planned to manufacture high quality wools--white blankets, Meltons for ladies, men's overcoatings, and fancy wool suitings.

It was thought the mill could compete in price and quality with any mill in the country. Wool would be purchased locally from the growers by-passing the middleman at a savings of 5 percent over what Eastern mills had to pay. Plant overseers were picked men from Eastern mills.

To assure a contented work force, President Martin proposed a profit-sharing plan for employees. And the mill paid its skilled employees 10 percent above going wages in other woolen mills. For workers from out of town, ten cottages at \$8 per month rent were provided. And only white people, including women and girls, would be hired. It seems that the new management tried to avoid bitterness generated in the community by the old mill in hiring Chinese workers. With stock held by numerous small shareholders and attempts to create a satisfied work force, the company felt that the community would have pride in the mill.

Before the mill began full operations, samples for sale in the Eastern markets were manufactured. Before the mill opened, orders for three months' production had been received.

In March 1901, a dedication ball was held in the new building before machinery had been installed. The ball proved to be a gala event with 2,000 from the area attending. The Marysville Brass Band played the latest two-steps and waltzes from 8:30 p.m. "until long after midnight." The building was decorated with green boughs, lighted with electricity, and the smooth floor waxed. Off to one side the Lamb sisters performed "a smooth cake walk--poetry in motion." During the several intermissions, ladies of the Presbyterian Church served refreshments.

The mill began limited operations in June 1901, with forty employees; ninety days later sixty^{were} on the payroll. As was the practice in most industries in those days, workers in the woolen mill labored 58 hours per week. The mill started operations at 6:50 a.m.; lunch was from 12 noon to 12:50 p.m.; final work day whistle blew at 6:10 p.m., unless the plant happened to work overtime. To placate workers and increase morale, employees were given Saturday afternoons off, but they worked from 6:50 a.m. to 1 p.m. with no break for lunch.

The stockholders met in January 1902, and elected the following officers: John Martin, President; H. Cheim, Vice President; N. D. Rideout, Treasurer; and Henry Malloch, Secretary and General Manager. A new plant manager, J. D. Ladley from Cleveland, Ohio, was named to replace Mr. Carter. Apparently Mr. Carter's expertise was not as good as expected, since Mr. Ladley initiated several changes in the workings of the mill. It was reported that within ten days of his assumption of office, each worker knew his place and exactly what his duties were. And all orders were now filled and shipped on time, and future orders were to be restricted to blankets and flannels, including two specialty lines. Evidently there had been some confusion in plant management. The stockholders approved an issue of \$100,000 in bonds, the money to be used to extend the scope of operations.

Six months later, however, matters at the woolen mill were still unsatisfactory, since the mill was leased on a yearly basis to Henry Malloch, the company's Secretary. The mill's total operation was not his responsibility. Changes such as those that had taken place usually do not happen if a company is prospering.

Then, in October 1903, management announced that the mill would be shut down next January through March. Mr. Malloch blamed the closure on excessive taxes set by the City Assessor, Mr. Bevan. According to Malloch, the city taxed on 80 percent of material on inventory; this tax being in addition to a county tax on inventory of 4 percent. Enough orders were on hand for delivery during the shut-down period, but the company could make only a net profit of \$450.00 per month due to the high taxes. This profit was too low to risk operating the plant. Mr. Malloch complained that high taxes prevented the company from successfully bidding against the American Woolen Mills Trust, and asked for assurance from the city of Marysville that these taxes would be reduced.

Eleven months later on the evening of September 14, 1904, the woolen mill was again struck by fire. It was not as disastrous as the previous fire, destroying only the dye and scouring house, a corrugated building 60 by 160 feet. But the damage shut the entire mill down preventing the filling of orders on hand. Losses of machinery, materials, and building was estimated at \$17,500 covered by \$10,300 insurance. Loss of goods in process of manufacture came to \$4,000 covered by \$3,000 insurance.

By this time control of the company had passed into the hands of San Francisco capitalists. And the mill was not profitable--not a dividend had been paid since reorganization after the previous damaging fire. According to the Marysville Daily Appeal, these San Francisco capitalists were not satisfied with "the treatment accorded their concern in the matter of local assessments for the purpose of taxation." These high taxes had forced management to conduct the business on a very narrow margin in order to compete with Eastern competitors.

Several weeks passed after the fire and no move had been made by management to rebuild the mill. Rumors were rife that the plant would be moved to another city, a city that was offering better inducements than Marysville offered. The Appeal urged "the community to wake up ... at once" and do something to retain an industry that monthly dispensed a payroll of \$4,000 to \$5,000 to some 115 workers (90% of whom were white) in addition to purchasing wool and other supplies locally.

On October 28, 1904, the directors of Marysville Chamber of Commerce met to discuss an appeal by the woolen mill that something be done by the Chamber to induce the city of Marysville to reduce taxes levied on the mill. The appeal listed the benefits of the company to the community and compared tax assessments of Marysville Woolen Mill to those of woolen mills in Stockton and Napa. The Stockton mill had double the Marysville Woolen Mill's capacity but a tax assessment of only \$30,000 as compared to an \$80,000 assessment for the Marysville mill; the Napa mill had equal capacity with Marysville's mill but only a \$16,000 assessment. In what amounted to an ultimatum, Marysville Woolen Mill's management declared that if its taxes were not reduced, the plant would not be rebuilt, but would be moved to another city.

This threat produced results. On August 25, 1905, the Marysville City Council voted to reduce the tax assessment to \$20,000. Prior to this action, an assurance had been made to the mill that taxes would be lowered. So in February 1905, new machinery was purchased and construction of a new dye and scouring house commenced. The stockholders also voted to increase capital stock from \$100,000 to \$400,000.

The Marysville Woolen Mill again changed management in November 1905. Mr. Malloch announced that a Mr. Tatterson, a major stockholder in the Stockton Woolen Mills had leased the Marysville firm for five years. Mr. Tatterson announced that Mr. E. J. Goodpastor, an accountant at the Marysville mill, would be the new general manager. Tatterson also said that the mill, which had been shut down for repairs would be reopened with about 110 employees. The Marysville mill had not as yet produced a profit in spite of reduced taxes by the city of Marysville.

To add to the problems that plagued the woolen mill, another fire broke out in the stockroom at 7:30 p.m. January 15, 1906. For some reason the fire department was unable to get enough water pressure to quench the fire. A bucket brigade formed and put out the blaze before it did major damage. Manager Goodpastor and Secretary Henry Malloch were partially overcome by smoke. It was not determined just how the fire started. Actually two separate fires started, both rather easily contained. Some believed the fire was incendiary. Management offered no opinion on how it started. Strangely, the fire started on the evening before the annual stockholders' meeting.

At the stockholders meeting a year later, January 8, 1907, the following directors and officers were elected; John Martin, President; H. Cheim, Vice President; Henry Malloch, Secretary and Treasurer; C. S. Brooks; Harold Cornforth; and A. C. Bingham. At this meeting a decision was made to add another concrete building, 80 by 20 feet, two stories high on the east side of the main building. In spite of problems and no dividends, the stockholders were optimistic about the company's future.

A year later, in January 1908, however, it was decided to close the mill until March 2, because too few orders had been received. Then in March John Martin (now the controlling stockholder) announced the mill would continue closed due to lack of business. One hundred-thirty employees were thrown out of work. The mill never reopened, although in 1910 rumors spread that the mill would start up. John Martin had said he was anxious to find a tenant who could operate it. But none ever took over. In December 1915, the buildings and machinery were sold at a tax sale to Waldo S. Johnson, a Marysville attorney.

Just why the reorganized mill was unsuccessful is an open question. In spite of management's initial attempt to make the mill more popular in Marysville, such as hiring mostly white workers, selling small amounts of stock to many share holders, and offering incentives to workers, the mill continued to be somewhat controversial locally. Reduction of city taxes in 1905 also failed to increase profits sufficiently. Perhaps not having D. E. Knight's guiding hand was a factor. Then too, having been closed for over a year between the first destructive fire and the reopening, the plant may have lost its former steady customers. Competition moved in and was difficult to dislodge. The closing cost the area thousands of dollars in wages, wool purchases, and other local purchases in addition to the losses investors sustained.

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