

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS BULLETIN

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Yuba City, California

January 1988



Is this the house Sumner Paine built or not? We have a difference of opinion.

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The News Bulletin is published quarterly by the Society at Yuba City, California. The annual membership dues includes receiving the News Bulletin. At the April 1987 Dinner Meeting it was voted to change the By-Laws to combine the memberships of the Society and the Museum. This in turn requires raising the dues of the Society to the amount of the Museum dues. The 1988 dues schedule will be:

Student/Senior Citizen, Library	\$7.50
Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Business	\$50.00
Sponsor	\$100.00
Corporate/Benefactor	\$1,000.00

The membership will receive The Historical Society Bulletin and the Muse News, 10% discount at the Museum Gift Store, advance notice of special events such as Museum Galas and Historical Society Tours and invitations to exhibit openings.

Dues will be due as of January 1, 1988.

An index and file of all the past issues of the Bulletin may be found in Sutter County Library, Yuba County Library and at the Community Memorial Museum. Extra copies of the Bulletin may be purchased at the Museum for \$2.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The last few months have been busy ones, signifying the Museum's growing role in the community. Yesterday & Today, the local history cookbook put together by the Museum and the Mary Aaron Museum has been a smashing success. During the Christmas season, the cookbook went into its third printing! Over 500 sold since September and counting!

Since September, over 150 school children have been to the Museum (we consider this our "slow" time for school tours), and Auxiliary member Maggie Moyers has already been out on the road bringing the Gold Rush Traveling Trunk to schools as far away as Dobbins. In addition, the Museum participated in the Curriculum Fair in October, in an effort to make local teachers more aware of the services we offer.

With the success of Trees & Traditions and the Christmas Open House, it is time to close out the old year and bring in the new. Starting out the New Year is the exhibit "With Nature's Children: Emma Freeman (1880-1928)." Emma Freeman was a Humboldt County photographer who specialized in portraits of Native Americans. While her work centers on the Indians of Humboldt County, the way in which she chose to depict them says a lot about turn-of-the-century attitudes about Indians in general. Emma Freeman chose to record not the reality of a civilization destroyed by disease, famine and interaction with whites; instead she concentrated her effort on the poetic metaphor of "nature's children." Her photographs will provoke a wide variety of emotions in the viewer.

Mini-arts concerts will begin again in January on the 24th with Cinderella/Cinderfella. Bill Honsinger's Brass Ensemble will perform February 14 and Harrison Hayes on March 13.

A special thank you to all of you who have renewed or newly joined the Museum and Historical Society for 1988. Your participation in this experimental uniting the two organizations' memberships should prove to be exciting. Your support and belief in the value of preserving Sutter County's heritage is our most important asset.

Jacqueline Lowe

****Be sure to renew NOW
if you haven't -- Don't miss
the April issue!!!**

Letter on file at Community Memorial Museum

Marysville Aug. 19, 1885

Mr Buckhannan

Dear sir

I want you to send me that money for the Stable Bill or I will see the reason why, send it emeadley for I kneed it.

Louis Walthers

NOTICE FROM GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF SACRAMENTO

ANCESTOR SAFARI '88

An Annual Family History & Genealogical AFFAIR sponsored by
Genealogical Assn of Sacramento

Date: Sat. April 9, 1988 - MARK YOUR CALENDAR. COME JOIN US.

Place: Sacramento City College, Student Center,

3835 Freeport Blvd. Easy to find. Near major hwys.

SPEAKERS...CLASSES...VENDORS with books, forms & other genealogical
items for sale.

Attention: Genealogical Societies and Historical Societies...Please make
room for this info in your next Quarterly or periodical, & post this card
on your bulletin board.

we will be mailing a flyer later, but if you have questions write to:

G.A.S. - Ancestor Safari Shairman

P.O. Box 28301, Sacramento, CA 95828

MEMORIALS TO THE TRUST FUND AND AG. BUILDING FUND

Mr & Mrs R.A. Schnabel	In memory of Bill Greene
Alice Willing & Frances Hall	In memory of William A. Greene Jr.
Jolene Owens	In memory of William Greene Jr.
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Mr & Mrs Ray Crane	In memory of Jessamine G. Powell
Louie & Betty Schmidl	In memory of Jessie Powell
Mrs C. B. Kilby	In memory of Bertie Brandt
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John & Audrey Breeding	In memory of Jessamine Graves Powell
Adah R. Borchert	In memory of Jessamine Powell
Dan Hewitt	In memory of Jessamine Powell
Betty Seymour	In memory of Jessamine Powell
Edgar & Virginia Stanton	In memory of Jessamine Powell
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Mrs C. H. Graves	In memory of Jessie & Owen Powell
Mr & Mrs Joseph Ruzich	In memory of Jessie Powell
Walter & Jane Ullrey	In memory of Jessamine Powell
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Robert & Ann Carnes	In memory of Jessamine G. Powell
Georgia & Wilbur Green	In memory of Jessamine G. Powell
Wanda Rankin	In memory of Ellade Kylling
Mr & Mrs Arthur Gilstrap	In memory of Jessie Powell
Sara C. Yarbrough	In memory of Jessie Powell
Caroline Schnabel Ringler	In memory of Ellade Jones Kylling
Howard & Ruth Anthony	In memory of Alberta L. Sargent
Jack & Helen Heenan	In memory of Ellade Kylling
Mary Spilman Crane, Jim Spilman and Janet Spilman	In memory of Karl & Fern Zinsmaster
Twin Cities Riding Club	In memory of Larry Smith
Jack & Helen Heenan	In memory of Larry Smith
Mr & Mrs Ronald R. Harrington	In memory of Ellade Kylling

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Fred & Helen Covell
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Maude K. Roberts
Buttes Insurance Agency
Joe & Patti Benatar
Robert & Blanche Davis
Roy & Stella Anderson
M/M Wallace Coats, Rosemary Redhair
Magic Touch Beauty Salon
Norman & Loadel Piner

Norman & Loadel Piner
Norman & Loadel Piner
Bogue Country Club
Mr. & Mrs. H.W. Menth
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Serger
Brokeoff Meadows Club, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. Hollan Jones
Mr. & Mrs. David Powell, Jr. & Family
Mrs. David Powell, Sr.
Delta Chapter of Alpha Sigma
Louis, Betty & Frederick Tarke
Roy & Estelle Welch
Richard & Elaine Tarke
Richard & Elaine Tarke
Mr. & Mrs. Austin Lemenager
Mr. & Mrs. George P. Derby
Roy & Estelle Welch
Louise Hendrix
Norman & Loadel Piner
Daniel L. Hewitt
Rosemary Redhair
Yuba City Wednesday Club
Estelle Herr

In memory of Woody Cornell
In memory of Woodrow G. Cornell
In memory of Woodrow Cornell
In memory of Jessamine Powell
In memory of Woody Cornell
In memory of Ruth Cooper Ottney
In memory of Ruth Ottney
In memory of Ruth Ottney
In memory of Nettie Fredrickson
In memory of Jessamine Powell
In memory of Vivian F. Nelson
In memory of Jessamine Powell
In memory of Jessamine G. Powell
In memory of Jessie Powell
In memory of Jessie Powell
In honor of Dorothy & Ron Ross's 50th
wedding anniversary
In memory of Henry Spoto
In memory of W.A. Greene
In memory of Marden E. Poole
In memory of Jessie Powell
In memory of Jessie Powell
In memory of Ulys Frye
In memory of Jessie Powell
In memory of Jessie Powell

Outright gift
In memory of Ellade J. Kylling
In memory of Ellade Kylling
In memory of Mrs. George Kylling
In memory of Donnella L. Winder
In memory of Mrs. E. Kylling
In memory of Lawrence C. Smith
In memory of Woodrow Cornell
In memory of Woodrow Cornell
In memory of Ruth Ottney
In memory of Ruth Ottney
In memory of Woodie Cornell
In memory of Mrs. Garth Ottney



The Community Memorial Museum has scheduled the exhibit "California Woman Suffrage 1870-1911" for September 26 through November 19, 1988. The exhibit, put together by the Women's Heritage Museum of Palo Alto, consists of eight panels comprising text, quotations and photographs that explain why women were discontented and what methods they used to achieve the vote. When, in 1911, California became the sixth state to grant full suffrage to women, 400,000 women were added to the national voting rolls, doubling the number of women who had previously been eligible to vote. The exhibit, sponsored by local womens' organizations, is important to every woman who exercises her right to vote.

Although the exhibit encompasses California's struggle for suffrage, it is designed so that we may add local material to it to help tell the story of the suffrage movement in our area. We are asking you to help the museum develop the local history of women's suffrage by loaning, for the 8-week duration of the exhibit, any suffrage memorabilia you may have. We are looking for local material, but it may also pertain to California in general. Photos, news clippings, reminiscences, objects or memorabilia of any sort that would help us tell the story are sought. If you have any knowledge of the local suffrage activity, or if you can loan any objects, please call Jackie at the Museum at 741-7141. If you know anyone who might have such information, please pass the word along. Help the Community Memorial Museum make this great exhibit even more meaningful.

Farming and the Alameda Sugar Company

As the title indicates, I would like to tell you about farming in the Meridian area of Sutter County and the part that the Alameda Sugar Company played. Having lived in the community most of my life, I was interested in the early history of the company that played an important part in the development of what used to be swamp land. The Historical Society did not have any information. I was asked to write an article and agreed to give it a try. After searching through micro-films of old newspapers in the local libraries and several visits to the Sutter County Hall of Records, I was able to get some information, but not enough. Using what information I had gathered, talking to those people who have lived in the community and relying on my memory a picture began to develop. Instead of restricting the article to the Alameda Sugar Company, also included is the early farming and the changes that have developed over the years.

A two story brick house that was to become headquarters for the Alameda Sugar Company at Meridian was built by a former miner and brick maker who came to farm the higher fields near the Sacramento River. His name was Sumner Paine, his descendants now live in Colusa County. Bricks for his house were made from the clay taken from his fields. The house is located three miles south of Meridian. The Alameda Sugar Company had their main office in San Francisco. The "Brick House," as it was called by local residents, was used for many years as headquarters for the operation at Meridian, in addition to the house there were two large barns and several sheds.

Horses and mules were used for most of the farm work in the early 1900's. A large barn was located about one half mile to the east and was used to store machinery in later years. Several other "camps" consisting of barns, living quarters for the hired hands and cooking facilities were located at various sites east and south of Meridian. Camp Number One was south of what is now Highway 20 and Drexler Road. Drexler Road used to be called Camp One Road for many years.

The company brought in several families of Russian farm workers. Houses were built for these workers along the north side of Highway 20 and also to the east of the brick house on what was known as Wilber Road. The Russians did not stay long and after they left the houses were used by the local farmers and their workers. These houses were known as the Russian house. The Home Craft Club, consisting of about thirty families, used one of the house east of Meridian for a meeting place.

The Alameda Sugar Company planned to build a sugar refinery south of town. A newspaper article in 1912 stated that representatives of the Northern Electric Railroad Company were circulating petitions among the land owners of Meridian to have the Alameda Sugar Company's plant built on the Forbes Ranch, just north of town instead of at the bigger place, which was three miles south, and thus bring it on the main line of the Marysville-Colusa branch of the railroad. The site to the south was selected because of the proximity to the fields and the river could be used for the transportation of the refined sugar to the Bay Area. Records in Sutter County reveal that in 1912 nearly all property owners in the town of Meridian, for the sum of ten dollars granted the Alameda Sugar Company the right to construct, maintain and operate a sugar factory, together with all such accessories and instrumentalities for the utilization of by-products thereof as deemed necessary and agreed that the owners and lessees should be forever exempt from all liability for any damages arising in any manner from said construction, maintenance and operation, to the property owned by them. (Boy, those lawyers sure have a way with words) There was a clause in the agreement that the company would not sell or permit to be sold, any malt spirituous or intoxicating liquors of any kind on the premises: nor should any part be used for immoral or illegal purposes. This was long before there were any county zoning ordinances; environmental studies, water quality controls or even requirements for building permits. It was not until 1935 that these grants were released by the company.

Commencement on the big plant was to be started in the near future. Fay Brothers of Sacramento had been awarded the contract to transport 800 tons of machinery up the Sacramento River from the bay to Meridian. The Weichpec and probably the escort, with barges, were to be used to transport the machinery. It was estimated that nearly a month would be required to move the plant. However, before the actual movement of the plant was started, the Alameda Sugar Company gave up the idea of the refinery when the Democratic Administration lowered the tariff on sugar import. Meridian might have been a different place if their big plans had not ended before they got a good start.

With the decline in sugar prices other crops were grown. Barley, wheat and rive were planted instead of the sugar beets. Much of the farming was done at that time with horses and mules. Steam and gasoline powered tractors were used for some of the work. One of the more interesting pieces of equipment used in the early days was a plow that was made in the shape of a vee. It was pulled across the field by a cable connected to a "donkey" or stationary engine. One half of the plow turned the soil while the other half was up in the air. On the return trip this other section did the plowing. When out of the ground these machines stood about ten or twelve feet high. Plows mounted on modern tractors use this same principle today and are rotated by the use of hydraulic cylinders.

On February 9, 1911 a big tractor plowing outfit of the Alameda Sugar Company was tested in District 70. This was one of the biggest outfits of its kind in the state and built especially for the above company. The tractor was monster engine run by gasoline instead of by steam as were most of the tractors in this part of the state. It could be used for all kinds of work, such as plowing, harrowing, etc. It could be used to pull wagons on the road as well as harvesting. Being easy to operate and developing plenty of power the work it could do was wonderful according to a news item in the Marysville Appeal dated February 10, 1911. The outfit attached to the tractor was for plowing, harrowing, discing and seeding the land in one operation. Behind the tractor was attached

Fifteen ten inch plows and following the plows were five sections of harrows, each six feet wide, which leveled and pulverized the soil turned over by the plows. Directly behind the harrows were two disc seeders, six and seven feet respectively which distributed the seed on the ground and covered it up, leaving it planted and in good condition. The width of the strip of land thus finished as the outfit moved along was twelve and one-half feet. By working ten hours, thirty acres were plowed, harrowed, seeded, etc.

The company had large interests in District 70 and were buying more land all the time. They expected to plant one thousand acres that winter and spring. That does not seem very much land now but at the time it was considered to be a large operation.

With the increased use of gasoline powered tractors the horses were mostly used to cultivate the row crops, such as beans, milo and corn. The horses were gradually replaced by small wheel tractors.

With the introduction of diesel fueled tractors another change took place. Diesel crawler tractors were sold on a two or three year term, the tractors paying for themselves and competing with the horse and mule and also the gasoline tractors for the power jobs. These crawler tractors were to change the way rice was harvested. In the early days the rice was cut and tied to bundles using horse drawn binders. The bundles were set in shocks to dry. After drying they were hauled to a stationary thresher where straw and rice were separated. This machine was sometimes called a separator. With the addition of wider tracks being put onto the tractors it was possible to pull a harvester using a header through the wet fields. It was no longer necessary to use a binder to get the grain. Today with the development of a faster maturing rice plant and the self-propelled harvesters the operation is greatly simplified. One man on the harvester and another driving the bank-out vehicle has replaced the large crew that once was required. In the early days all grain was put in sacks. Now, everything has gone to bulk handling from field to truck to warehouse.

The company sold some of their land in 1924. An extensive sales campaign was conducted to get prospective buyers to come from the southern part of California, carpenters, electricians and people with various backgrounds, including farmers, were buying. Land was also bought by farmers who had rented land from the company. Ten and twenty acre farms were not enough to support a family and pay for the land. Times became difficult, the land was high priced for those years, selling for \$150 per acre (that's right, one hundred fifty dollars). With the depression of the thirties there were failures and some of the farmers lost their places. Land that was not sold was leased to those buying farms. Every effort was made to help them.

In 1931 the Spreckels Sugar Company leased about 2,300 acres from the former Alameda Sugar Company, now called the Alameda Farms Company. They were working a crew of 40 men, seventeen tractors were in operation almost day and night to put the huge tract into shape for planting, which was done only when the ground was like a garden spot. By the middle of February two hundred and fifty acres of the beets were already up and ready for cultivation. In 1930 the crew numbered 120 men, in 1931 they expected to employ 250 as the work increased. A new unit was added to the bunk house making room for the increased number to be employed. Filipino and Mexican laborers were being used to thin, top and load the beets into trucks. The tractor pulled a blade that went under the beets to loosen the soil and raise the beets partially out of the ground. Men with long bladed knives with a hook on the end pulled the beets and cut the top off. In addition to the acreage planted by the Spreckels Company added outside contracts to local growers in the amount of about 350 acres were planted. In the final operation of the beet crop the Spreckels Company was using four thirty horse power tractors pulling diggers and could dig approximately eight acres per day per machine. Workers followed the diggers and after pulling and topping the beets they were piled in rows, which in turn were picked up by other crew and thrown into trucks. The beets were weighed and dumped into railway cars at a siding located at Farmlan Road east of Meridian. The daily average of cars shipped to the Spreckels Woodland

refinery, was nine of approximately 45 tons each. Extensive work done at the University of California at Davis in cooperation with valley farmers, resulted in the development of a machine with which it is possible to eliminate the hand work that was once required. The beet top is cut from the plant while it is still in the ground. A mechanical lifter raises the beets, knocking off the dirt and depositing them onto a belt that moved the topped beet directly into a truck for delivery to a refiner. The beet plants have been developed so that they no longer go to seed and can be left in the ground during the winter months. Years ago the sugar content was greatly reduced if the crop was not harvested at a certain time.

During the past sixty years there has been many changes in the kinds of crops grown and equipment used by the farmers. In years past, in addition to the ones mentioned, large acreages of beans were grown and English Walnuts were planted. During one period there was a large number of fields planted to alfalfa grown for seed. During another period a lot of vegetables were grown for their seed.

Some vegetable seeds are grown now but not the acreage as in years past. Principal crops of the eighties now include tomatoes grown for canning, safflower, sunflower and alfalfa grown for stock feed. Even watermelons planted for seed are no longer harvested using manual labor. The seeds are removed by a harvester. The melon and vine is picked up in one operation. The vines come out the back, the juice at the side and the melon seeds into a hopper at the top. They are then taken to a dryer where they are washed, dried and cleaned.

The modern tomato harvester no longer requires a large crew to get the tomatoes from the field to the cannery. Sorting is done with an electronic eye that picks out the green tomatoes from the ripe ones. Tomato harvesters now require about half the crew that was once required as most of the sorting is done by the machine. Fertilizer and pesticides are now applied by aircraft that were used to put the grain seed in the fields.

The sugar company became the Alameda Farms, then the organization was called the Meridian Farms Land Company and finally the change was made to Sutter Buttes Land Company which sold the last of their holdings in 1960. This brought to a close an era of farming and land sales by a San Francisco Company that had big plans to grow sugar beets and build a refinery at Meridian. In an effort to modernize the old "brick house" part of the top story was removed several years before it was sold. It has changed ownership several times and was used as a rest home for a few years. Sumner Paine would not recognize it now. Wilber Road is now called Moroni and the road once referred to as Camp One Road now has a sign reading Drexler. All the buildings that were once the center called Camp One are gone as are the other camps.

The flood of 1940, when the Butte Creek-Sutter Bypass levee broke, washed away the Russian houses and nearly all of the others. The ones on higher ground nearer the river escaped damage or were left standing and repaired. Only one of the Russian houses exists. It was moved before the flood to a location near the river. Years ago before the levees were built the high waters deposited silt making the elevation higher there. The flood in '40 covered an area from northeast of Meridian south to the Tisdale Weir levee. The water had no place to go due to the levees on three sides and rose to a depth of about twelve feet in places. A Coast Guard boat was used to rescue people and animals. Flood victims were given shelter in the homes of friends and neighbors whose houses were not flooded. Water got into the town of Meridian but was not deep enough to do much damage. Then the waters receded the houses that were repairable were cleaned of mud and debris and made livable. The farmers started farming and fields were planted. Melting snow and more rain came to the by-pass and water again came through the break once more flooding the fields. This time the water did not get as deep as before so not as much damage was done. The break was not filled until late in the summer. In the 1980's the breaks are filled within days and pumps are used to drain the land. The people of Meridian still keep a watch on the levees when the water is up and those who experienced the flood will always remember.

I have a hankering to know more about the reclaiming of the swamp land and just might get up nerve to ask a few questions. Don't know what that might lead to. If you ever go on Drexler Road you will come to a curve, sometimes called a jog. If the road had gone straight it would have gone through the Mexican camp that was there.

The town of Meridian used to have a hotel, three grocery stores, a garage and a doctor's office. Today the "commercial district" consists of one grocery and a blacksmith shop (now called the machine shop). Farm equipment is still manufactured and repaired there but no horses have been in the building for years. There is one bar open, but the café closed due to lack of business after the highway was routed to the north and no longer goes through town. The town's second grammar school has been replaced by a new school east of town. The old one was made of bricks and did not meet earthquake standards.

Thinking back over the years, a question comes to mind: "What might have been if the sugar company had built the refinery?"

Contributed by Carl Romelsbacher

About the Author:

Carl Romelsbacher was born in Marysville, California and moved to Meridian in 1918. After graduation from Sutter High and Yuba College he finished his education at University of California, Dais. He farmed with his father and for himself until 1951. Carl and his wife, Florence, and their two daughters, moved to North Highlands where they were employed as civilians at McClellan Air Force Base. Before his retirement he was an electronics and mechanical instructor. They moved back to Meridian in 1976 and reside south of Meridian on the farm that was owned by his parents.

The History of Ragtime

The 1890's were a time of musical revolution in America; a new sound called ragtime burst upon the scene, displacing the maudlin sentimentality, the pallid importations of the Victorian era - syncopation now ruled the nation. Ragtime had a freshness, a power and conception that belied a rather haphazard development out of a complex nineteenth-century musical ferment. There is no doubt that the rag has Afro-American folk roots - the spirit is reflected in the popular music of the blackface minstrels of that day.

The hallmark of this transformation was a restless energy, a brash optimism that was expressed through syncopation. At some point lost in memory the idea of a consistently syncopated melodic line played against a regular metered march bass was tried out on the piano. Ragtime thus began as a way of playing - a style of creative, syncopated transformation and embellishment of a melody. Ragtime is distinguished from most other music by its syncopation rhythm (accents on the weak and usually unaccented second and third beats of the measure in the right hand), against a precise and regularly accented bass. The thorough use of these delayed and misplaced accents (misplaced in the sense of regular meter) sets up complex and multiple rhythms and polyrhythms.

In the early 1900's, America was ready for the rag; the parlor piano was a fixture, a status symbol in American homes then, and more people made their own music, either by hand or by foot-pumping the pedals of the new pianola. Ragtime became our musical language for over two decades; it transformed our dancing, beginning with the cakewalk and evolving through the turkey trot of the 'teens. Ragtime became a craze, a highly profitable business. The popular song has always been the main staple of the music business, and as tin pan alley moved closer to centralizing the entire publishing output of the country, America was flooded with syncopated songs and simple rags. At least by 1910 everything that was syncopated was called a rag. Much fine syncopated playing was widespread in arrangements and renditions of popular song, especially on piano rolls - a continuation of the old tradition of creative performance and transformation; but the genuine rag was a separate, more complex instrumental conception, a more abstract form in the tradition of absolute music. The rags are the "crème de la crème," one of our richest musical legacies.

Scott Joplin, a young Negro boy, became the best known composer of ragtime music, writing "Maple Leaf Rag" at age 18 which has had the most lasting effect, he grew up in Texarkana with two brothers and two sisters in a house, that although poor, could afford the beautiful luxury of music. His father played violin, his mother the banjo, one brother played guitar and the other gradually grew into a rich baritone voice. By the time Scott was seven, he was already

Intrigued and fascinated by the piano which was in a neighbor's house. At every opportunity, Scott would run over there and beg to be allowed to touch the instrument. His father, seeing signs of musical promise, scraped together enough money to buy a somewhat decrepit square grand piano. The boy was at this out-of-tune instrument every hour he could manage; and before he was eleven he played and improvised with a rhythm and harmonic sense that was remarkable. Talk about young Joplin's self-taught ability reached the ears of an old German music teacher who came to the house to hear this "genius" and what he heard interested and impressed him. The old man took Scott under his wing and gave him free lessons in sight reading, technique and harmony. At age 15, he set out on his own and had no trouble finding work in the honky-tonk districts of many towns in Texas, Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley. Age made no difference - players from twelve to eighty were hired in those days. Quiet and retiring, everywhere he went he was always the center of musical happenings. He always attracted gifted young piano players, and with his sense of the importance of syncopated music, would teach and encourage.

Scott Joplin, in his short lifetime of 49 years, composed over fifty ragtime compositions and definitely left his mark on American music. He passed away in 1917; and it is sad that he did not live to receive the accolades that were due him for his original music in the motion picture, "The Sting," which was awarded an "Oscar" for best musical score in 1973, with such pieces as "The Entertain," "Solace," "Pineapple Rag," "Easy Winners" and "Ragtime Dance."

COMMENTARY ON POLITICS

By Aaron Pugh

MONOPOLY

History tells us that in all ages it has cropped out and it has always been watched by nations to keep each government on an equal balance with others that all might live. As it is said, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Even under the name of religion there has been rivers of blood shed.

So you see when any sect or clique get the monopoly of power they are dangerous and need watching. And it is time for us to move in the right way to check the monopoly in our country. You say how can it be done. We have honest men in the Country. Yet let us elect them to office and make our laws at home and have our legislators to record them on the statute books. We have the power yet to (redeem) the country.

But if we let this thing run too long we may lose the power. Let us throw off Democrat and Republicanism or any combination. Get good men in offices no matter what their politics. The offices are the servants and have really no power except what is delegated to them by the people. As with a hired man we employ him to do certain work. And if he fails on his part we turn him off have no more use for him. So it should be with our officers if they did not do as the people wished they should be turned off and another take their place. The people should always keep in view to elect the best men and if the grange would take more interest in the matter and endeavor to put farmers in office instead of lawyers I think we would have better laws and cost less money.

I would much rather risk the subordinate state and national grange to save our laws than the state and national legislature. If my view is correct it proves that farmers are better law makers than lawyers are. We all can do some thing. The only thing lacking is to try.

The farmers and labouring class if united could carry any measure they wished but there comes the trouble. United we stand divided we fall.

It is costing too much to run the government both state and national and consequentially we have too much tax to pay. We propose to reduce the expense in some way. I think that our legislature should not meet oftener than once in four years. And many other reductions in expenses could be made. Let those that know how take hold of this thing.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR

Could there not be some plan put into operation to give the wage worker a more equal share with his employer. Say that the employer gets ten per cent on his capital and divide the profits. Would it not stimulate the labourer and make him more contented and happy and take more interest in the business? I fancy there would be no more strikes and trouble of being out of employment.

I have made these suggestions in hopes that some one able to handle it might take it up and get it in such a shape that it would benefit the labouring class and do capital no harm.

Aaron Pugh

WHAT WE COMPLAIN OF IS MONOPOLY, CORRUPTION IN OFFICE, TRUSTS, AND HIGH TAXES.

When there is an evil there should be a Remedy. A monopoly is not to be blamed for holding its (trade) and making money out of it if the people will let them do it and continue to patronize them. Cut off the patronage and they will come to your terms. To illustrate, let the farmers build warehouses on the river and build flat boats and have their wheat take to tide water. Send all their freight on the river and not patronize the railroad. Let them run their cars up and down the road a while without freight and they would come to see you. It is natural of man to get all he can for his labour or his stock and it is just as natural for him on the other hand to get what he has to buy as cheap as he can. Hence if a party asks

to much for a thing we will go to some one else. So it is with the rail road. If they will not carry your produce for what it is worth we must get some one else to carry it. In order to accomplish this we must organize. The farmers must understand each other and worke together and keep a solid front and not be lead off. We can send our wheat to port Costa and ship it to the worlds market direct and let the stock exchange have nothing to do with it. And we would save their profit at least.

TRUSTS

When they monopolise a thing don't use it until they will sell it for a faire price. Be like Bostonians was with the English tea. Baring the destruction let them keep it on hand. The best remedy for any evil is to let it alone. And it will die out of itself. No artickle of trade will stay whare there is no market for it. Like a man I knowed fetched in a stock of liquor and opened a saloon and it was understood in the neighborhood that no one would patronise him or have anything to do with his house. And he soon left the neighbourhood.

CORUPTION IN OFFICE

The remedy for that is to put good men in office. Let the farmers and labouring class and all who desire good government keep out of the convention. And if neither party put up good men then let the farmers and others put up a ticket. And they can elect it if it is made up of good men. Get farmers in office and we will have better laws and will cost less. To reduce the expences will natureally lessen the taxes. We pay too much salary to our officers. Considering the amount of worke they do the legislature would not meet oftener than once in four years. And any reductions could be made to save the peoples money. If each member the legislature would vote as though he was voting away his own money, the chances is there would be less appropriations. And unless a man deals

with public money the same as if it was his own he is not fit to be in . office. Let the office hunt the man not the man hunt the office and it will be better filed.

The wish of the people is or should be the supream law of the land thairefore we should all express our thoughts for the public good. We may not all be oritors nor may we all write newspaper artickles for publication but we may express our thoughts to our neighbours or in the grange where the gold part may be colected and the (drops) thrown away. I bleave that it would be well for all men in their leashure hours to write their thoughts. The humbler of us might write something sometime that might prove to be of use in some future time. I bleave that men are so iliterate but at sometime he could advance something that would be of use to man. I have pened these thoughts in the hope that some one might see a shaft of light in them and fan them in to a flame for the good of our Country.

Pennington Jan 8, 1890
(signed) Aaron Pugh



About the cover:

The picture on the cover is one we have had at the Museum for many years. The information on the back states it was built by Sumner Paine and that the third floor had been removed.

The small picture above was contributed by the author of the article on the Alameda Sugar Company. He says the house in the background is the Sumner Paine house.

Could there possibly have been two? If anyone knows for sure would you please let us know.