

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Community
Memorial Museum
1333 BUTTE HOUSE ROAD
P.O. BOX 1555
YUBA CITY, CA 95992

NEWS BULLETIN

VOL. XXXII No. 1

Yuba City, California

January 1991

THE SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JANUARY MEETING WILL BE HELD
AT THE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM
AT 7:30 P.M. on TUESDAY, JAN. 15, 1991

THE ANNUAL SUTTER BUTTES NATURE
HIKES WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY,
MARCH 9, 1991 AND AGAIN ON SATURDAY,
MARCH 23, 1991.. THE FEE REMAINS \$15.
PER PERSON. WE MEET AT THE MUSEUM
AT 9: A.M. AND CARPOOL INTO THE BUTTES.
BRING A BROWN BAG LUNCH.
PREPAID RESERVATIONS SHOULD BE MADE
AT THE MUSEUM BY MARCH 7, 1991

THE ANNUAL BUS TRIP WILL BE SATURDAY,
APRIL 6, 1991
MORE ABOUT THIS LATER
CHECK THE APRIL BULLETIN

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS BULLETIN

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Elaine Tarke, President

Constance Cary, Secretary

Brock Bowen, Vice President

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The News Bulletin is published quarterly by the Society in Yuba City, California. The annual membership dues includes receiving the News Bulletin and the Museum's Muse News. At the April 1987 April Dinner Meeting it was voted to change the By-laws to combine the memberships of the Society and the Museum.

The 1991 dues are due as of January 1, 1991.

Student(under 18) Senior Citizen/Library	\$10.00
Individual	\$15.00
Organizations/Clubs	\$25.00
Family	\$30.00
Business/Sponsor	\$100.00
Corporate/Benefactor	\$1,000.00

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I trust all of you had a joyous Christmas and look forward to the priceless gift of the New Year.

The new year is a priceless gift for many reasons; it has no price mark stamped on it; it cannot be weighed because no scale can balance its value. The giver asks only that it be used wisely and well. The New Year is a jewel, rare and unique. It cannot be purchased, displayed or sold. No other treasure holds the possibilities this gift offers. The New Year will have a golden thread running through it, and only with great care will this jewel retain its luster. Carelessness, ingratitude and selfishness will tarnish the brilliance and break the unspoiled thread. Guard it closely, through weak fingers it will slip from the hand. Accept the New Year as it is offered from the heart of the giver. Consider the New Year as the most treasured of all possessions.

Old times, old friends, how dear are these. To treasure now in memories. Happy New Year to each one of you.

Come and enjoy an evening with your friends as the Historical Society will present a unique show of slides from Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji. David Tarke will present these slides and I am sure you will enjoy the program. The day is Tuesday, January 15, 1991 at 7:30 P.M. at the Community Memorial Museum.

We will have a Museum update from our Curator, Jackie Lowe.. Some ideas have surfaced regarding the Agricultural addition. Refreshments will be served and I look forward to seeing you.

Bring a friend

Elaine Tarke

Director's Report

Recently the Museum has received many inquiries regarding its collection policy. The policy is very simple : "to collect, preserve and interpret the cultural heritage of Sutter County". Putting the policy into effect is not so simple.

What constitutes Sutter County history ? Technically everything that was ever in the County would seem to qualify, but we know that space is a precious thing, never more so than at the Museum, and that criteria so loose is somewhat impractical and pointless. So what does the Museum staff look for when some generous citizen wants to make a donation? A "collection evaluation" sheet is filled out for every object that we consider adding to the collection. Basic considerations include the object's condition, its current and long term conservation needs, written and oral documentation of the object's history in Sutter County, other supporting information to add to our knowledge about the object and its place in Sutter County history, and the exhibit potential, be it next month or in the next decade, of the object.

One of the most important things to remember when thinking about objects to donate to the Museum is the story they can tell about some aspect of Sutter County history. Ideally we envision not having to deal with a single object, but with a group of objects that, as a group, tell the story of a single family or business, or a particular aspect of Sutter County history. For example, perhaps your father was a farmer who owned and worked several peach orchards. The family is no longer in that business, but you still have all the old office records that your father kept to do his business. Sounds like pretty boring stuff, right? Maybe, but it sounds more like gold to us. Office records can tell us things like the going wage for field workers in the past. They might tell us the ethnic make up of the workers and their ages. We can also learn things about the rise and fall of the peach industry in Sutter County and the ability of the small farmer to make a living. And you thought it was just a bunch of musty old papers!

Objects can work that same sort of magic and tell us wonderful stories too, but with objects we have to "read" the information with even greater care. The most important thing to remember about an object that you think the Museum might be interested in is : don't make it look brand new. We realize that when you give something, you want to clean it up and make it look "new". But when you do this with an object of any age, you are destroying the history of the object and erasing its ability to tell us its story. You wouldn't erase the writing off an old document to make the paper look new, so please don't erase the basic dirt and rust off an old object to make it look new. Soap and water, paint and good intentions are responsible

for ruining a vast amount of our history, history that can't be reproduced. If you have an object, or objects, that you want to donate to the Museum, brush off the cobwebs and excessive dirt with a dry cloth, then call us up and invite us to come and take a look. We won't think of you as a bad housekeeper, but as a good historian.

The exhibit, "Elegance Past, 1875 - 1940 : Sixty-five years of Sutter County Fashion", opening January 19 is an excellent example of objects, in this case clothing, telling stories. While the exhibit includes some wonderful examples of fashion with, unfortunately, no local history attached, many of the dresses do have stories and personalities that are part of their histories and enrich our viewing pleasure. One such piece is the cooper grosgrain "going away" dress of Millie Stoker worn after her wedding out on Lincoln Road to Isaac Newton Rodefer in May, 1888. Another is the white batiste dress worn by Maude Roberts at her 1906 graduation from Sutter Union High School. Maude continued to wear the dress from time to time, with alterations, up until a year before her death. All of the dresses in the exhibit are beautiful examples, that together show a surprising range of eras and styles, but the dresses you will probably remember best will be those that made you feel as if you had, if only briefly, met the wearer.

Jackie Lowe

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AG BLDG. FUND & TRUST FUND

Mae E. Brown	Outright gift
James & Claireen Tarke	In memory of Walter Ettl
Mr & Mrs L. Schmidl	In memory of Ralph E. Bud Berry
Jack & Helen Heenan	In memory of Ralph "Bud" Berry
Albert, Mary & Kelley Ulmer	In memory of Arlene Harris
Bee & Dick Brandt	In memory of Bess Harmon
Dewey Gruening	In memory of Gloria Miller Rapp
Mary C. Gillis	In memory of Willard W. Will
Dan Hewitt	In memory of Joseph E. Whitaker
Tom & Marnee Crowhurst	In memory of Bess Harmon
Tom & Marnee Crowhurst	In memory of Dave Sanborn
Eleanor Holmes	In memory of Jeanine Secrist
Ken & Vivian Calhoun	In memory of Terry Richert
Ivadel Simmons	In memory of Jeanine Secrist
Mary C. Gillis	In memory of Elsa Gibson
Robert & Jan Schmidl	In memory of Amar K. Bains
Robert & Jan Schmidl	In memory of Mason Hatamiya
Hildred A. Bailey	In memory of Guy Davis
Jim & Alberta Gilpatric	In memory of Dan Walker
Jim & Alberta Gilpatric	In memory of Lillian Birdsley
Jim & Alberta Gilpatric	In memory of John Loomis
Jim & Alberta Gilpatric	In memory of Gloria Hubbard
Bogue Country Club	In memory of Edith Ohleyer
Bogue Country Club	In memory of Don Curtis
Bogue Country Club	In memory of Barney Eubanks
Dan Hewitt	In memory of John F. "Doc" Loomis
Norman & Loadel Piner	In memory of Norma & Howard Harter

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AG BLDG. FUND & TRUST FUND

THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN BY EARL RAMEY FOR THE
JANUARY 1963 BULLETIN. SINCE SO MANY OF OUR READERS
HAVE NOT HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF READING IT BEFORE I
FELT IT WORTH REPEATING. ENJOY.

THE EDITOR

WAU-KEE-TAW
CHIEF OF THE YUBUS
BY EARL RAMEY

The subject of this paper is pretty certainly the earliest resident of Yuba City of whom we have any specific record. He was called Wau-Ke-Tau and was the last chief of the Yubu Indians who had their rancheria on the west bank of the Feather River opposite the mouth of the Yuba. This tribe and rancheria were noted as early as 1841 by John A. Sutter, and he and others, used the name of the tribe Yubu, to designate the river but which was later changed to Yuba.

Waukeetaw first became known by name to the public as a result of his prominence in the activities relative to the removal of the Yubu to a reservation in 1856. The Congress of the United States had established a system of reservations and farms for California Indians in 1853. The one nearest to this community was the Nome Lackee reservation in Tehama County. But not a great deal was done towards settling these reservations until 1855 when Colonel Thomas J. Henley was appointed Indian agent for California.

The matter of removal of the Yubus was first brought to the attention of the community by a letter signed J.H.B. and printed in the Marysville Herald of May 19, 1855. The writer had just visited Nome Lackee where nearly 1000 indians had already been gathered and where 1000 acres were under cultivation. He had high praise for Colonel Henley and his program for the welfare of the natives, especially the plan for schooling and technical training for the young. The writer urged the editor to do what he could to encourage the removal of the Yubus. And he warned that some interested persons were trying to influence the indians to resist removal.

Later another letter signed E.M. and dated at Empire Ranch told how a sub-agent from Nome Lackee, S.P. Storms, who was able to speak the language of the indians at the ranch, had succeeded in persuading about a hundred of them to go to the reservation. This writer also praised Colonel Henley for the fine program he was carrying out.

And a new item noted the fact that Mr. Storms had been working around Grass Valley persuading indians of that region to go to Nome Lackee. So the residents of Yuba-Sutter became interested in the proposition of removing the Yubus.

In the issue of Nov. 1, 1855 the editor of the Herald brought the matter to the attention of his readers in an editorial in which he wrote; "The removal of these indians from their rancheria on the bank of the Yuba to the Nome Lackee reservation is in contemplation. The citizens of Yuba City and our own citizens should give every encouragement to this undertaking of Col. Henley. At the reservation they will be kept sober and taught to work...here they are a diseased, vicious and drunken race. If they remain among us they will become extinct...They are worthy of a better lot."

Not until Oct. 1856 when Mr. Storms made a visit to Marysville and Yuba City was any definite action taken. The sub-agent was sent to learn the wishes and opinions of the white residents and to note the condition of the indians. After talking with a number of prominent people he left with the impression that the residents favored removal. In the news item giving an account of Mr. Storms' visit the editor described the Yubus as "miserable" with many sick and many intoxicated because "some white men continue to sell them liquor despite the law."

Perhaps it ought to be explained here why the "Yuba City Indians" were of concern to the residents of Marysville. Cordua had found a tribe of indians occupying the present site of Marysville when he arrived in 1842. But these Marysville indians had been dispersed completely by the settlement of the city. Most of them had gone to the foothills, but some had joined the Yubus and other Sutter county tribes. As the Yubus deviated from their primitive economy and adjusted to the urban way of life, the small settlement of Yuba City was not adequate to their demands and contributions. So they would go across the river to Marysville hunting work as well as favors- gifts of food and clothing and even money. The white residents referred to them as "bummers" and suspected them of being guilty of numerous petty thefts. There was much sentiment in favor of their removal although there is evidence that some

of this desire for removal was the result of an uncomfortable embarrassment in the presence of the former owners of the land from which the settlers had displaced these original owners without due process, a sacred principle of Anglo-Saxon culture.

As a preliminary preparation for the removal project the editor of the Herald had asked General Sutter to take a census of all Sutter County indians. The General reported that on his farm the Hock tribe numbered ten men, seven women and three children. Of the Yokulmeys there were seven men, four women and one child. The Olash tribe had ten men, nine women, and one child. As for the Yubus he could only estimate them as numbering about one hundred. They were too much scattered on both sides of the river to be counted.

Colonel Henley came to Marysville the last week of November 1856 to make plans for the removal. A general meeting was arranged to be held at the rancheria in Yuba City on Nov. 24. Henley was accompanied to Yuba City by members of the press, city officials of Marysville and other interested citizens. There they were joined by certain residents of Yuba City and General Sutter. The party went to the "council wigwam" of the Yubus where the indians had also gathered.

There were members of the four tribes including Oitey, Chief of the Hocks, Oloi, Chief of the Olash and Waukeetaw of the Yubus. And the reporter noted that there were three "good looking indian soldiers" who had served in General Sutter's army during the Civil War of 1845 when Governor Michelterreno was overthrown.

General Sutter first addressed the indians in Spanish attempting to explain to them the purpose of the gathering. There is no doubt that the General was fluent in Spanish, but it is very doubtful that the Sutter County indians understood Spanish any more readily than English. But following Sutter, Captain M.M. Dobbins of the Marysville Rifles spoke to them in their own dialect telling them of the advantages they would enjoy at Nome Lackee. Waukeetaw replied and spoke for his people. He said the Yubus were willing to go, but that they wanted to delay their departure one month so that they could hold two more dances

and also have time to eat up the provisions they had on hand. Col. Henley agreed to the delay but insisted that it must be no more than one month.

The Colonel then addressed the white persons who were present. He predicted that certain "evil persons" in the community would try to impede the removal by attempting to stir up resistance on the part of the Indians. He urged those present to do all they could to offset this obstruction. Just who those "evil persons" were we are not told. A few employers found the Indians a cheap source of common labor; and the liquor dealers who sold them intoxicants have already been referred to. But otherwise it is difficult to guess at the identity of any others who would have been interested enough to discourage removal excepting possibly a very few who might have sensed the moral phase of expelling the original owners from their humble homes. But these objectors would not likely have been classes as "evil".

In all of the later references to the Indians removed they are called Yubas. Whether or not any members of the other three Sutter county tribes were included we have no record. The name Yuba gave way to the modern version, Yuba.

Colonel Henley returned one month later and began to execute the removal. It is significant that the Marysville Herald gave very few details of the operation. It was noted that "about 50 Diggers" were arrested and held in the city jail until taken to Yuba City by the Marysville police to be turned over to the Indian agent. All accounts up to this point would give the impression that the Indians were being persuaded to move and not forced; but in this case force was admittedly used. The news item gave no idea of how the Indians were to be moved to Nome Lackee. The editor was clearly ashamed of the procedure. He added to the short item "It seems hard to remove the poor creatures from the homes of their fathers...." But he repeated the description of "deplorable" conditions under which they were living and concluded "The city will be rid of a nuisance."

But fortunately, a reporter of the Sacramento Union considered these removal operations of sufficient interest to his readers to warrant a long column containing several details which were believed by the Marysville editor better left untold. As has already been stated Nome-Lackee was south-west of the town of Tehama. So Colonel Henley used the public river transportation to get his charges to Tehama from which place the trip to the reservation could be easily made by land. But he had to take them from Yuba City to Sacramento on one boat and from Sacramento on another boat up the Sacramento River to Tehama. Consequently, when the Cleopatra arrived in Sacramento from Marysville with sixty-six indians aboard the event was news. And with the information which the reporter of the Union relayed to us we can now go back to Yuba City to complete the removal story.

When Colonel Henley arrived at the rancheria Waukeetaw told him that he and the Yubas had changed their minds about going away. They wanted to remain. He admitted that he had agreed to go a month earlier but declared that now they were unwilling. Henley then tried again to persuade him that it was best that they go where they could have better care and proper food, pointing out that if they stayed in their present location they would die.

To this warning Waukeetaw was quoted as replying "Die here - good; go away and die - no good." He assured the Colonel that they "could die contentedly on their own stamping ground but not in any strange locality." When Henley saw that further persuasion was useless he told Waukeetaw that the "Great Chief" had given him orders to remove the tribe and that they must go. The Yuba Chief tried again to reply whereupon Henley became firm telling him not to argue further. Waukeetaw evidently recognized that he and his followers had no choice; so he began collecting his people and advising them to prepare for the journey.

Many of the men of the tribe refused to prepare and let it be known that they did not intend to go. Some of them moved across the river supposing that they would be out of reach of the Colonel and his assistants. It was at this point that the Marysville police helped the

project by arresting and confining those indians they could find in the city. These were held overnight and delivered to Hanley the next morning in time to go aboard the Cleopatra.

There was unanimous resentment on the part of the Yubas at being forced to leave their homes; so they resolved to burn their pole and mud houses and all the supplies they had accumulated rather than allow others to appropriate them after they were gone. Colonel Henley tried to dissuade them from this action contending that the houses and food ought to be left for those numbers of the tribe who were not going at that time to the reservation; and he even offered to give them blankets for the food, which offer some accepted. But during the night many of them slipped away from the camp, where they were waiting to board the boat, and back to the rancheria where they set fire to the houses. The next morning they went aboard the Cleopatra.

The party arrived in Sacramento the afternoon of the same day and went ashore at the foot of I Street. They were bedded down in a freight shed beside the bank of the river. Fires were made on the bank where they prepared food which was purchased for them at the nearby stores. The following morning they boarded another boat for Tehama.

Of the sixty-six Yubas in the group there were thirty-six men, twenty women and ten children. The Union reporter obviously an alert journalist noticed two facts which made him curious. There were no old men or old women; and there were no children over eight years of age. He asked Waukeetaw why there were no old persons or older children. But the only explanation he got was the statement that "They all die."

Waukeetaw's explanation of the absence of old persons was probably quite correct. But it is not a likely reason for the absence of children over eight. A more plausible explanation is the indian apprentice law which a few years later became a scandal in California. This law allowed the courts to bind indian children into service of a family, a condition which varied little from slavery. We know that some indian children were so held in Marysville at the time.

Certainly all of the California indians were not happy on the reservations. And the Yubas were not happy, we know, because during the five or six years following their removal most of them drifted back to Yuba and Sutter counties. A news item in January 1861 noted that most of the Yubas were back. And another item quoted a returned "Digger" as declaring that Waukeetaw had come back as far as the Empire Ranch where he had been killed by some of the Empire indians. The item added that the bearer of this information could not speak well enough to give any further details. The editor expressed regret to learn of the chief's death adding that "Waukeetaw has always been recognized as a sensible and good hearted man."

A few days later the editor received the following letter;
 "Empire Ranch, January 21, 1861
 Sir---you make paper say me dead. Me no dead - me live. My sister be dead - my sister muchee cry. Tell 'em make paper say Wau-kee-taw no dead. My wife, Sue, got sick hand, but Waukeetaw no dead.

Yours, good Injun

Wau-kee-taw"

Obviously this letter had been written by some white person at the dictation of Waukeetaw. But it is doubtful that the attempted reproduction of the diction and accent is very accurate because of the habit of the time to follow stereotyped usages attributed to various groups. But there would not likely have been any reason to distort the information carried in the letter.

A few days later a delegation of five or six indians called at the city police station in Marysville and asked to be taken to the "paper man" who had printed the news of Waukeetaw's death. The police took them to the office of the Democrat. The editor, John R. Ridge, who himself was a Cherokee indian, had a long talk with the delegation in broken English and broken Digger. The Yubas of Sutter county had heard of the death of Waukeetaw and had resolved to avenge his death. They had assembled, "painted up", secured arms, and made ready to go to Empire Ranch. But they wanted more details of the killing and had sent this delegation to try to verify the report.

Ridge told them how he had first published the notice of the death on the strength of the rumor which he had heard, and also how he had received the letter supposed to be from Waukeetaw declaring that he was not dead. But he further assured them that he could not be certain that the letter was genuine. The Indians held a council and decided to send two runners to Empire Ranch to learn the truth of the matter. So Ridge wrote them a letter addressed to Mooney, or any other white man at the Ranch, explaining their mission and requesting good treatment for them.

Ridge wrote in the news item describing the visit by the delegation "The Diggers look savage and say that if it be true that Waukeetaw is killed, they will avenge his death."

Two days later the runners were back in Marysville with the best evidence they could possibly have found; they brought Waukeetaw. He called on Ridge presenting the following letter:

"Empire Ranch, Jan. 24, 1861

Sir--the bearer of this is a renowned Indian Chief, Waukeetaw, whose death has been lately reported. He visits you for the purpose of refuting the late report; he is a good Indian and drinks no whiskey. The scarcity of beef is the only thing from which we feared he would die. Any favors extended to him will be duly appreciated by

Yours respectfully

Thos. Mooney."

After printing this letter from Mooney Ridge added "Waukeetaw was warmly received by his Digger subjects in this city who were awaiting the news by the runners whom they had sent to inquire as to his death. They were much delighted to behold their beloved sovereign whom they had mourned as dead.

Waukeetaw found a new home down the river on Hock Farm where he lived nearly three years. But in August, 1863 there appeared the following notice in the Marysville Appeal:

Notable Death.

A tall corpulent, pox-marked Digger... stalked into the Appeal sanctum yesterday and informed us in a doleful manner as follows:

'Me bluth'n law Waukeetaw, Captain Yuba Injins--he muth dead;
Sacramento Injin poison no good. By'm bye **kill** em'...

"We ascertained that he is a Hock Farm Indian. He stuck to his story that the Chief of the Yubas was dead, poisoned by Sacramento indians and claimed to be his brother-in-law. Waukeetaw was a good Injin and the sorry remnants of his tribe have been for many years the inoffensive, original bummers of this city and vicinity. Waukeetaw himself was a frequent visitor at the Appeal sanctum and always applied for a letter of recommendation and two bits to bet beef whenever he went to a fandango of a neighboring tribe..."

"He was reported to be dead once before, and we still hope to learn that he has not swallowed the poison intended for some miserable cur. We had a suspicion that coppery "bluth-in-law" was playing on our sympathies; nevertheless we gave him a bright new dime and charged him to go and buy a watermellon...not whiskey. And he went."

- Some time later the death was given official notice in a Sacramento paper.

We have cited a witness who testified that Waukeetaw had not acquired the vice of drinking whiskey, the habit which was partially to blame for the lamentable condition of the California indians. However, we have noted also that he was addicted to the consumption of beef, a habit which normally would not be classed as vicious. But in the month of August, especially in the 1863 before refrigeration was available, fresh beef could become as toxic as cheap alcohol. And an indiscret quantity of spoiled beef could be fatal. So we can reasonably guess that some of his indian friends from the Sacramento River served him beef and poisoned him but probably not intentionally.

Waukeetaw's sad and violent ending hardly bears out his philosophy which he was quoted as pronouncin g "Die here---good."