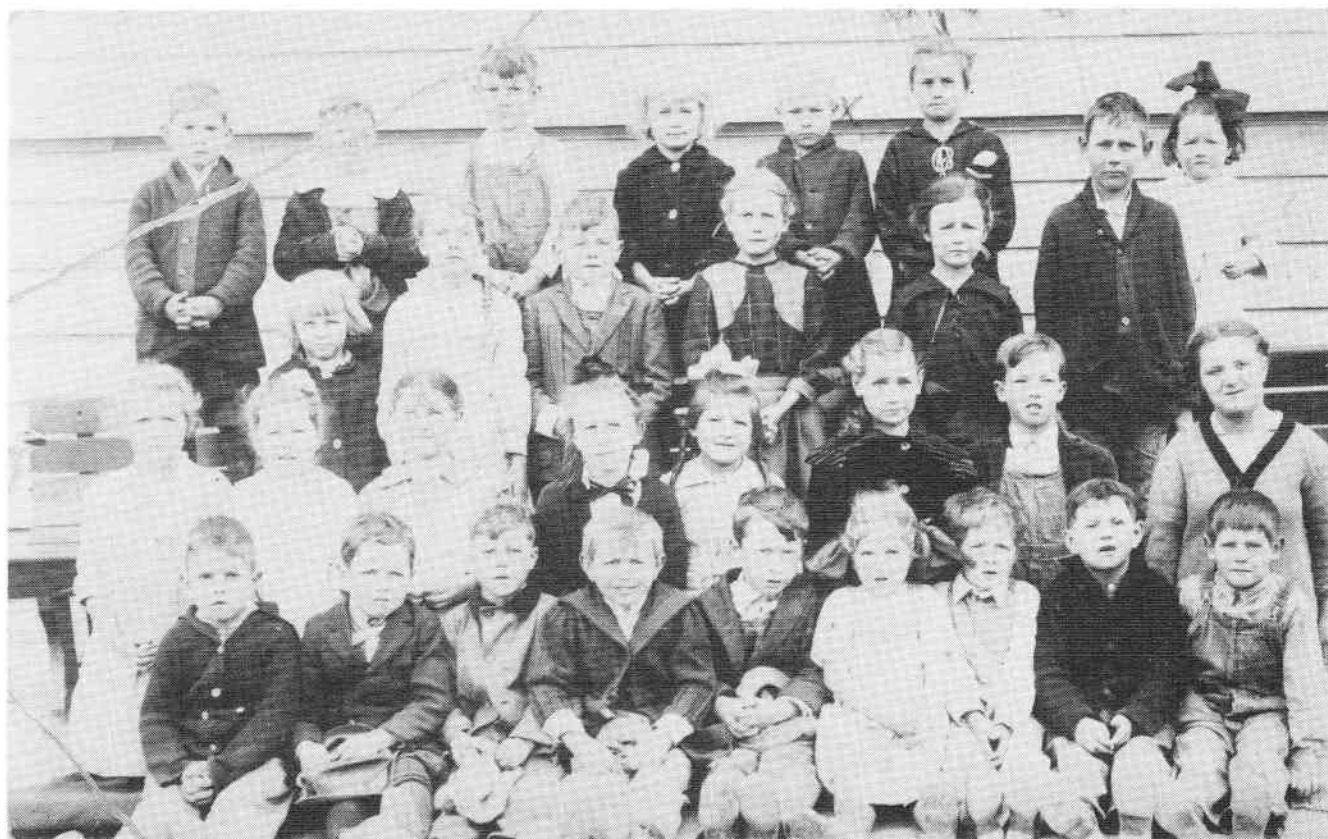


Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin

VOL. XXXX NO. 2

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA

APRIL 1998



**First and Second Grades
Brittan School – 1917**
[See page one for student identification]
(Photo Credit: Ray Frye)

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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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 Annual Dinner Meeting it was voted to change the By-laws to combine the memberships of the Society and the Museum.

The 1998 dues are payable as of January 1, 1998.

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 have been told that this is an historic year, as it is the wettest winter in Sutter County history. Is that true? As I peer out my front door, it seems to be Spring with the sunny skies, warm temperatures, and slight breeze. The weeds are growing in the fields, and the grass is nearly dry enough to mow. It's hard to believe that just a short time ago we had torrential rains and whitecaps on the By-Pass. With any luck, our friend, El Nino, has left us.

We have good news about the Agricultural Wing addition to the Community Memorial Museum. On March 24, 1998, the Sutter County Board of Supervisors cast their votes on the future of the new Ag Wing. Their "yes" vote allows construction to begin as soon as the weather permits.

Our annual dinner will be held in Meridian on April 21. Hope to see you all there.

Steve Perry
President



Cover Photo Identification

1st and 2nd Grades - Brittan Elementary School - 1917

Top Row (*left to right*): Elmer DeWitt, Ronald Bates, Gerald Smith, Nedra McLean, Ray Frye, Lorena Nunes, Melba Forderhase (who was a visitor that day)

2nd Row: Isabel Correll, Eunice Farrington, Harvey Thomas, Verna Smith, Evelyn Forderhase, Oscar Borsen

3rd Row: Ethyl Griffith, Meribah Wyncoop, Juana Hawley, Lucille Borsen, Ada McVey, Marjory _____, Earl Forderhase, Fanny Wyncoop

Bottom Row: Ted Farrell, Clarence DeWitt, John Catlett, Abbott Todd, Charles "Oat" Hill, Dorothy Farrell, Bill Riddle, Delmer Frye, Alvin Lemenager

Director's Report

What an exciting time this is at the Community Memorial Museum! We are looking forward enthusiastically to the imminent expansion of the Museum with the construction of the agricultural wing due to begin soon. All of you who have made such generous donations over the years to the Historical Society Building Fund will soon be able to see the realization of this longtime goal. We look forward to being able to present the agricultural history of Sutter County and to housing the newly purchased Yuba Ball Tread Tractor in the new wing.

Two new exhibits on the horizon are *Azama and Murai: Sculpture and Photography* from April 15 through May 10 and *The California-Oregon Emigrant Trail of 1841-1870*, a CERA traveling exhibit featuring black and white photos of present day remnants of the trail, showing from May 15 through August 7. A reception for the sculpture and photography exhibit is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with sculptor Gil Azama and photographer Rick Murai on hand. The opening reception for *The Emigrant Trail* is Friday, May 15, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The Museum's Spring Vacation Children's Program took place on Wednesday, April 15. Pioneer and Gold Rush era songs were presented by the husband and wife musical duo *Hawks and Eagles* from Chico. The children attending enjoyed this free program, a musical trip back to the time when the West was settled.

The Community Memorial Museum Commission is working on a Heritage Plant Sale. Some of you have already graciously donated planting containers to the project. Now the Commission would like to request any information you may have about the location and ownership of historic and native plants that might be propagated for the sale. An historic plant might be described as one that was brought to our area with early settlers or one that has some sort of interesting history here. Examples are trees, shrubs, flowers, etc. that were planted on early homesteads or in old yards or near historic houses or buildings. Perhaps they were planted by your parents or grandparents. The Heritage Plant Sale committee would like to gain permission to propagate such plants (i.e. take cuttings, collect seeds, divide bulbs, etc.) to create new plants for sale. Each plant will have a tag explaining plant care and its particular history. The Heritage Plant project will benefit the Museum and help to create an awareness of heritage and native plants. Please contact the Museum (822-7141) or Commission President Greg Glosser at 656-2469.

Julie Stark
Museum Director

Letter from the Editors

We want to thank Ray Frye for his article about growing up in Sutter County. Ray has wonderful memories and we hope he continues to share with us. He also generously lent us the photographs which appear in this issue.

Our thanks to Lance Cull who shared some of his memories about his mother, Esther Cull. We hope to use Lance, and others, in a future article about growing up in the Buttes.

Carol Withington writes articles for one of the local independent papers, has been an Historical Society speaker and has previously contributed articles to the Bulletin. Thank you, Carol, for the article about Samuel Jordan Stabler. We are pleased to be able to include a copy of a letter which was written by Mr. Stabler.

The winning entries in the Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest will be printed in the July issue of the Bulletin. We're sure you will enjoy them.

Also included in the July issue will be an up-date on the Ag Addition progress. We have exciting news now and it should be even more exciting by then. We will be thanking some very special people who have been a great help with this project.

The October issue will focus on the southern part of the county. A history of the Hermann Son's Lodge will be included. (Yes, we're hoping to go back for the October meeting again this year!)

As always, we are encouraging our members to share their stories, local histories, names of friends or relatives who have information to share and ideas for future articles. It is not necessary to be a member of the Society to participate in the gathering of Sutter County history. If you

have information or ideas to share, please call Linda (673-2721) or Sharyl (674-7741).

Don't forget about our Honorary Member category of membership. Anyone who is at least ninety years of age and was born in Sutter County can be an Honorary Member. It is not necessary for the individual to currently reside in Sutter County. We do ask that information be supplied about the person so we can feature them in an article. If you or someone you know meets the above criteria, please contact us. We have developed a form to be completed and returned. Many times, interviews have been done with the people to expand the knowledge about them: where they grew up, their family and it's arrival in Sutter County, their memories and current interests and what they have to share about their life and the history of the area.

When you move, don't forget to let us and the museum know the new address. The Bulletin is not forwarded and it costs 78-cents to buy-back each returned issue. We do not re-mail issues, but do up-date the mail list. If you have moved and have not received your quarterly, it's probably been returned and is at the museum.

Linda Leone

Sharyl Simmons

Memorial Contributions

In Memory of **Joe Alves, Sr.**
Orlin & Johanna Schuler

In Memory of **Manuel Barch**
M/M Bob Bryant

In Memory of **Leona Bryant**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Lyle Chumbley**
Jan Schmidl

In Memory of **Blanche Clark**
Randy & Shirley Schnabel

In Memory of **Stella Mae Cloninger**
Hardy & Ardis McFarland

In Memory of **Betty Coats**
Ann & Andy Karperos

In Memory of **Jack Coon**
Randy & Shirley Schnabel

In Memory of **Dan Dillon**
Frederick & Jane Boone

In Memory of **Vera Engstrom**
Dale & Alma Burtis

In Memory of **Margaret Fletcher**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Robert "Bert" Galligan**
Connie Cary
Wanda Rankin

In Memory of **Katherine "Kay" Goodman**
Connie Cary
Naidene Evans
Kathryn Forderhase
Grace Meyers
John & Dot Reische
Burwell & Loretta Ullrey
Walter & Jane Ullrey

In Memory of **James Henderson**
Judith V. Barr
Joe Benatar & Fidelity
National Title Insurance
Elenor & Byron Henderson
Gene & Babs Lonon
Carolyn Mock Oswald
Yuba City Wednesday Club
James & Loyola Zeller

In Memory of **Eunice Jensen**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Olga Aschwander Johnson**
Marian Regli

In Memory of **Syd Kahn**
Norman & Loadel Piner

In Memory of **Edward LePine**
Frederick & Jane Boone

In Memory of **Larry Lutz**
Ken & Vivian Calhoun

In Memory of **Olga Messick**
Leo & Alice Chesini
Phyllis & Warren Hall
Jessie Jeffries

In Memory of **Olga Messick**
George & Dottie Post
Orlin & Johanna Schuler
Burwell & Loretta Ullrey
Dewain & Pat Vick

In Memory of **Elmer Miller**
Connie Cary
M/M Warren Hall

In Memory of **Monica Miller**
Dewey Gruening

In Memory of **Myrtle Newcomb**
Helen H. Abbott
Harvey & Betsy Lee
Randy & Shirley Schnabel
Douglas & Norine Shamberger
B.C. Wheeler

In Memory of **Jackie Peters**
Donna & Barry McMasters

In Memory of **Helen Pierce**
Jeanette McNally

In Memory of **Leona Wilbur Redding**
Evelyn & Harold Quigg

In Memory of **Monroe "Andy" Riese, Jr.**
Marie E. Fuller

In Memory of **Ellis Ruiz**
Wanda Rankin

In Memory of **Joe Schmidl, Jr.**
Jennifer & Joel Daven
Ron & Lila Harrington
Helen Heenan
Julie Large
Sutter Orchard Supply
M/M Walter Ullrey

In Memory of **C.J. "Jim" Schnabel**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Bill Shingle**
Joe Benatar & Fidelity
National Title Insurance
M/M Bob Bryant

In Memory of **Arthur Ulmer**
Randy & Shirley Schnabel

In Memory of **Janet Wales**
Joe Benatar & Fidelity
National Title Insurance

In Memory of **Melba Wilson**
Dale & Alma Burtis
Burtis Ranch
Wanda Rankin
Ivadel Simmons

In Memory of **Rosemary Mayfield Wilson**
Randy & Shirley Schnabel

Outright Gift to Museum
Wilma L. Richert



Historical Society News

Hikes 'N' Buses

The Historical Society's hikes into the Sutter Buttes filled fast. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Schnabels and the Deans for use of their property for this event. Margit Sands deserves a big "Thank You" for the many hikes she's led, as well as for providing additional "guides" for the twice-a year hikes. The money generated from the hikes is helping pay for the new ag wing.

The bus trip around the Buttes is always interesting, with new facts and memories added each year. We're glad Don Burtis retired so he can do his research and share his findings with the group on the bus. We're glad Randy Schnabel hasn't been allowed to retire so he can put in his two-bits worth.

April Annual Dinner Meeting

The Annual Dinner Meeting of the Society will take place on Tuesday, April 21st, at the West Side Veterans' building in Meridian (corner of Bridge and Fourth Street). The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. The dinner will once again be prepared by the Lilac Rebekah Lodge; there is a \$10.00 charge for the evening.

Following the dinner, the Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest awards will be presented. The evening's program, presented by Tom Harrington of CalTrans, will be "The Old Meridian Bridge." Thanks to the Meridian Lion's Club and Tom Teesdale's time, we will once again have use of a PA system which will enable everyone to hear what's being said.

Steve Perry will give an up-date on the status of the Ag Addition. Bruce Harter will be in charge of the raffle and the door prize drawing. For reservations call Linda (673-2721).

July Picnic In the Park

The July picnic in the Howard Harter Park behind the museum will take place on Tuesday, July 21st. The evening has become a traditional pot-luck meal and program. Tom Crowhurst is the chairperson and in the process of lining up the program. Complete information will appear in the July Bulletin.



After a feeshun trip.

Growing Up In Sutter County

by
Ray Frye

My sister, Gladys Estep, wrote a history of the Frye family for the News Bulletin of April 1974, so I will dispense with all the preliminaries and limit my remarks to growing up.

My father was born in 1870, about one hundred yards from where I was born. His name was Hiram Thomas and he was known as "Tom." He signed his name as "H. T. Frye."

My mother was born in Nashville, Illinois, and came to California in 1890. Her maiden name was Wilhelmina Christina Elizabeth Koenaman. She went by the name of "Minnie" Frye. I think I understand why.

I was born on the fateful day of March 7, 1910, at our house at the west end of the old Long Bridge. The birth was officiated by Dr. Jacobs of Meridian. There were five siblings in the family of whom I was the last, but not the meanest. That honor goes to my brother, Emmet, who was four years my senior and never hesitated to show his superiority. I still have scars to prove this.

Our house was very comfortable with a bathroom and hot and cold running water, a luxury in those days. Of course, we also had the proverbial privy which we used to save water from the tank house. The water was pumped by a windmill atop the tank house. The windmill and tank house were installed by my father and older brothers, Ulys and Gerald, after tiring of carrying the water from the Douglas

hand pump. Ulys was 14, Gerald 12, and Gladys eight years older than I.

My mother told about "Pop's" proposition of marriage. She asked him about his financial status and he replied, "I have five dollars." The five dollars consisted of a five dollar gold piece which he lost while pulling weeds in the bean field. Could you start a marriage on that today? Probably, with government assistance.

One of my first recollections was of an old black hound dog we had. His name was "Old Pete" and he was in bad shape with mange and old age. My father told Ulys to take him out and shoot him. I was about two years of age and Emmet was six, but we managed to hide "Old Pete" under the house. The house was built on stilts about three feet off the ground to combat the winter floods which occurred every year. I remember my mother telling of Ulys and Gerald paddling around in the backyard in wash tubs. Wash tubs are what they washed their clothes in in those days with a washboard. By the way, I don't recall seeing "Old Pete" again.

Another thing I remember at the age of three, a dramatic thing happened. My father had just come in from work and was unlatching his team of horses when he was attacked by a drunken, knife-wielding Indian who lived on the levee nearby. My dad calmly removed the neck yoke from the tongue of the wagon and knocked him

in the head. Incident closed, but to Emmet and I it was a big event and we stood at the back door snapping our cap pistols to protect the family from any more Indians.

One of the things I loved to watch was Pop reloading his brass 12-gauge shells for the next morning hunt. He was a market hunter of ducks and geese before there was any game laws, and would stay up until midnight reloading his shells over a coal oil lamp. How he ever managed to rise at 4:00 a.m. and get ready for the next morning's hunt is a mystery to me. He planted a small field of buckwheat in the overflow land which the ducks really savored. He would bring in a duck boat full of birds about noon and Ulys and Gerald would meet him at the levee of the slough and carry the ducks to the house to be drawn. That means removing the guts. Then Pop would go out for more ducks. These ducks were shipped to San Francisco from the ferry at Meridian. Pop received fifty cents per pair for mallards, sprig and canvasback. I think twenty-five cents for lesser ducks. This market hunting was a great supplement to our daily lives of farming beans and raising hogs, chickens, eggs, vegetables, melons and fruit to ensure a healthy and happy life.

At about three and a half years of age, I remember my mother throwing bits of food to a gray squirrel who lived in a giant walnut tree in our back yard. These tree squirrels were delicious eating which proved my dad was just a pussycat because he wanted the squirrel to stay alive.

One of the great treats in our lives was when the boat docked at Meridian on

the Sacramento River. On a Sunday or whatever, our dad would take the horse and cart and purchase a chunk of ice off the boat, and you guessed it. We would have homemade ice cream. We always had a milk cow and all the milk, butter, and smearcase we could use. I hated buttermilk and smearcase, known today as cottage cheese. It was good feed for turkeys and chickens.

One day Pop brought home from the boat a whole bunch of bananas, and for once in our lives we could have one banana per day until they were gone. That did not take too long with seven people. Maybe we cheated a little.

One big event in our lives occurred during the reign of Jack Johnson, the colored heavyweight boxing champion of the world. A move was on to find a "Great White Hope" to defeat the black champion. That hope was Jim Jeffries who had held the championship at one time. As it happened, he came to Marysville to train for the bout and stayed at the Western Hotel. He was a frequent visitor at my Uncle Zan's (Alexander Frye) saloon on "D" Street where he professed a desire to hunt geese. He was introduced to my dad and a hunt was set up for my Uncle Albert Graves place, which is now the Brady estate. My mother cooked breakfast for the trio and remarked how my father and uncle looked like two little boys as they left the house alongside of the former heavyweight champion of the world.

Now, a happenstance comes up that I had never heard of before. I was talking with my neighbor, Yuil Joaquin, who told me that Paul Morehead had informed him that my father and Bob

Morehead (Paul's dad) and my uncle, Zan Frye, had attended the fight in Reno. I knew that my dad had been at the fight in Reno, but what I did not know was that he had sized up our "Great White Hope" and decided he was not capable of the job. The betting odds were ten to one, favoring Jeffries. Where Pop got the one thousand dollars to wager, I'll never know, but he apparently ended up with ten grand. This helped him to purchase the Pinch Gut ranch in the Buttes. The date was 1912. The price was twelve thousand dollars. This was for eleven hundred seventy-four acres of hill and valley land.

If this be a true tale, none of the family ever knew about it. If my mother had known, she would have killed him for gambling. This property is now known as the Southridge Golf Club.

The family moved to our new location in 1914. I was four years old and remember handing up a toy horse to my dad who was loading our possessions on a hay wagon. We had a four-cylinder Cadillac, one of the first cars in Sutter County. I called it the "Goop." Where I got that name, I will never know, but we rode in it to our new home. Two of the older boys drove the wagons. The "Goop" was gray and had two straps from the top to the front end to hold down the canvas top.

The first night in our new house, a two-story affair with nine rooms, a bath and two porches, we were sitting around the fireplace burning some leftover lumber. I was getting sleepy, and asked to go home. My mother replied, "We are home, honey, we live here now."

This began a new era.

My dad's brother "Thede" (Theodore Frye) had done work for him building a barn and granary. As part payment for his labor, Pop took over Thede's son, our cousin Dick Frye, who lived with us for a year or so. This is when my outdoor education began. I was five years old now, Emmet was nine and Dick was about ten. We roamed over the hills barefoot and explored every rock and bush on the hill. I don't recall wearing shoes until my first winter in school. When summer came, we took them off again. My mother never seemed to buy my shoes big enough. After going barefoot all summer, they were too tight and pure hell to wear.

The only time I suffered discomfort in bare feet was when my dad sent me into the stubble field to bring in the milk cow. That short stiff barley stubble was like walking on nails.

Whenever we kids stepped on a rusty nail, Pop would pull it out and douse the wound with turpentine. Same thing if we stubbed our bare toe on a rock. The turpentine did the job alright, but it smarted worse than the accident.

I was the only one in the family who did not attend Slough School near Meridian. I started first grade in the old two story high school in Sutter which also served as Brittan Elementary School. Same location as it is today. This was 1916. The building was torn down to make way for the new cement school which was completed the same year I started. That building has since met the wrecking ball to make way for the present buildings.

Our dad purchased bicycles for us to ride to school. We had pestered him

until he gave in and bought the things. This was great for a couple of years. The trouble was, it was about four miles to school and a mile and a quarter to the county dirt road from our house, all down hill. It was fine going to school, but coming home was a different matter. When the north wind howled down that road it was impossible to pump a bike against it. We finally gave up and started riding the horses.

In 1924, my sister started teaching at Sutter High School, the same year I started as a freshman. Our dad purchased a brand new Ford Tudor sedan for us to ride in. This was really "up town" -- some times it pays to have a sister.

My first encounter with firearms occurred at age three. My father had just returned from a deer hunt in the Coast Range. They had just unloaded the spring wagon, but the old 45-60 Springfield rifle was still lying on the floorboards. Emmet was seven at the time, but had a knack for getting into trouble as well as a burning desire to discover what made things tick. He said to me, "Let me show you how this thing works." He succeeded in jacking a shell into the chamber, then laid it back on the floorboards and found a stick with a nail in the end. With this he managed to reach into the wagon and pull the trigger. With the resounding roar of the rifle there was a piercing scream from the kitchen as my mother crashed through the screen door shouting, "Oh, my baby! My baby!" Her baby was ok, but she was one distraught woman. Emmet and I never saw a gun again until we moved to the Buttes.

When I was about six years old,

Emmet and Dick taught me to shoot the .22 rifle at which I became proficient. We did not do much shooting with the rifle at that time because we had to filch the shells from our older brothers.

Incidentally, Ulys and Gerald gave us each a Daisy pump B.B. gun for Christmas. They held fifty shot each and were powerful and accurate. More so than today's B.B. guns. You could buy a 250 package of lead shot for five cents. Nevertheless, our dad caught us shooting grasshoppers and took away our guns for two weeks. We were only allowed to shoot birds. Anything else was wasting shot.

There were two very large fig trees in front of the house and the birds loved figs, but woe to any of them if they ventured within fifty feet of our trusty weapons.

We had two crops of figs per year on these trees. The first crop were large ones which we ate and of which Mom made delicious jam. The second crop were smaller and excellent for drying. They were very good stuffed with walnut meats and rolled in powdered sugar, delicious at Christmas and Thanksgiving.

Back to hunting. Emmet also taught me how to make a slingshot out of a crotch from a tree branch, rubbers from an old tire tube and a leather pouch from an old shoe. I was a pretty good shot with it too, but Emmet was a dead eye. He could kill birds up to twenty feet with deadly accuracy. One day our dad caught him shooting rivets that he was using to join well casing in a well he was drilling. Emmet got a good wallop for that and had to go back to gathering rocks for his

ammunition.

At age twelve, Pop took Emmet deer hunting and he killed his first deer. At age 13 he met with a deer hunting accident that claimed his right arm up to the shoulder. This slowed his hunting days down for a while, but not for long. He soon became proficient with both rifle and shotgun, having had to learn to shoot left handed with one arm.

We did a lot of hunting and fishing together in our lifetime. Emmet would rather fish than eat. To me, the choice was about equal.

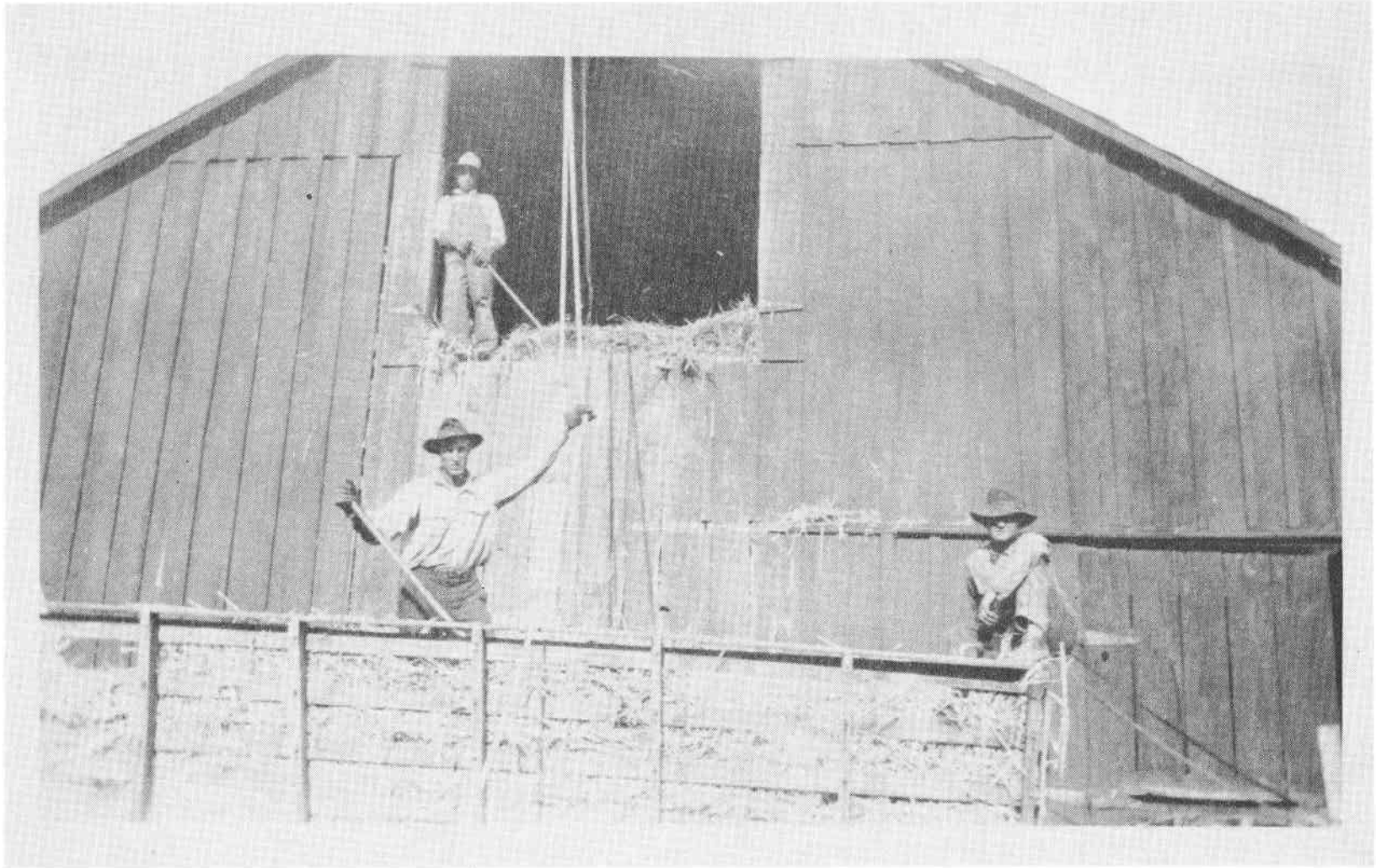
Everybody should learn to swim. I was about seven years old, Emmet was eleven. This was the era when we were riding our bikes to school. We usually met our two nearest neighbors (about two miles) and went to school with them. Ranious and Abbott Todd were about the same age as us. The two older ones decided we should learn to swim. There was no water in the Buttes, but the Todds knew of a water hole near Summy's Station on the Northern Electric Railroad. This swimming pool turned out to be either a buffalo or a hog wallow. I'm afraid it was the latter. It was barely three feet deep and fifteen feet across, but deep enough to paddle in. We took our first lesson and arrived home a little late to do our chores, which included milking the cow, gathering the eggs, and bringing in wood for the kitchen stove. We each got a licking for this felony. The next day was a repeat of the same thing and another licking. After about four days of this, we were able to swim but found it difficult sitting down.

We spent quite a lot of time with the Todds as there were no other

neighbors our age. On one of our other escapades we were playing around the railroad tracks near this same Summy's Station. There was a third rail on the tracks that was highly electrified and furnished electricity to run the electric trains. This electric rail caused the death of any horse or cow that came in contact with it. We four kids decided it would be exciting to walk on it and this we all accomplished by jumping on it with both feet at the same time. If we had let one foot touch the ground, it would have been curtains. This pastime was sort of like a game of chicken. We discontinued this pastime after Emmet tossed a piece of barbed wire across the third rail and one of the other rails and it disintegrated in a great hiss of fiery smoke. Yes, we all grew up to adulthood.

Kids had their experiences with tobacco in those days too. We used to pick up "snipes" - that's a partly smoked cigarette or cigar - and extract the tobacco from it and when we had enough, put it in a pipe or roll it into another cigarette for smoking. We were not adverse to rolling a little dry horse manure in a newspaper either. I never did inhale the smoke because I did not want to get sick, but Emmet went all out and developed the habit. He lived to be eighty-seven, but paid for his sins the last few years of his life with emphysema. Thank God that is one bad habit I did not acquire.

After arriving at the Butte ranch, our dad ran a dairy of about thirty cows. He sold the cream after it was separated from the milk. We fed the skim milk to the hogs and chickens. After a few sanitary laws were enacted, he changed to



Putting hay in the barn – Ulys, Gerald and Arthur Frye.

beef cattle and ended up with a hundred and fifty head. They, with about twelve head of horses, consumed a considerable amount of hay which was mowed and raked with horses. Then it was put into shocks with pitchforks. When hay hauling time came around, we hired extra men who slept in the bunk house and were cooked for by my mother and sister. They were paid one dollar per day and board. This operation was a well organized affair. We had a large horse barn and a double cow barn all equipped with derrick and trolley equipment. We had three hedder bed wagons drawn by two horses each. [ed note: hedder beds could be moved from wagon to wagon] There was one man on each wagon and two men in the field to pitch the shocks of hay onto the wagons. The man driving the wagon would spread out the hay with a pitchfork and tramp it down for a good solid load. It depended on his skill to form a good load. The wagons, when loaded, would take their place at the front of the barn. Here a large derrick fork called a Jackson fork was lowered to the wagon where it picked up a large load of hay. The man handling the Jackson fork had to be highly skilled in order to place it correctly in the hay. This man was my older brother, Ulys, who could unload an entire wagon in about five or six forks full. The hay was pulled to the top of the barn by the derrick horse hooked to a cable and a series of pulleys. When the fork and carrier hit the top of the barn, it engaged with a trolley that carried it to the end of the barn or wherever the spreader wanted it dumped. When it got to the right place, they would holler, "Dump" and Ulys would pull a rope

that dumped the load, then pull the fork back down to the wagon with the same rope. The two spreaders were usually my brother Gerald and Cousin Cecil Frye. It was their job to see that the hay was spread evenly and tramped down solidly to get as much in the barn as possible. When the derrick driver heard the shout, "Dump" he stopped the horse, picked up the single tree, hooked to the cable, so it would not bump the horse heels, and backed up to the starting point. One day, for some reason we had no derrick driver. Emmet had just lost his arm so he was out. You needed two arms for this job. You guessed it. At eight years of age, I was elected. Things went pretty well for a while til I got too close to the horses heels while backing up, and found a horse's hoof with eleven hundred pounds of horse on top of it on my bare foot. Ooh! that smarted. Pop finally came to my rescue and pulled the horse off. I continued to work until noon but by then my foot had swelled to the size of a catcher's mitt. My sister Gladys took over for the rest of the day. She was sixteen at the time. The next day Pop had a new derrick driver.

We had a friend, Floyd Smith, who was hunting with us on the hill one day. We had told him about the many rattlesnakes we had killed there. We were all bare foot, as usual, and had only one gun amongst us. Sure enough, on top of the hill a snake rattled and struck short of us. "Smitty" took off down the hill at a dead run and we had to chase him half way to the house to get the gun that was in his possession so we could go back and kill the snake.

There were many things we did on the ranch for entertainment and subsistence such as:

Hunting rabbits, doves and quail;
Throwing up tin cans and walnuts and hitting them on the fly with a .22 rifle;
Playing horseshoes and marbles;
Playing mumble peg on the lawn with our pocket knives;

Shooting hawks and horned owls to protect our chickens;

Watching an eagle kill a rabbit by catching it and dropping it from three hundred feet in the sky;

Hunting bird eggs for a blown egg collection;

Making a butterfly collection;

Helping in the butchering of seven hogs each winter;

Cutting up the fat and rendering it into lard in a large black kettle;

Playing with the blown up hog bladders which served as balloons and footballs;

Eating hog livers for a week and hating it;

Enjoying home smoked sausage, bacon and ham all year long;

Eating the cracklins from the rendered lard;

Taking headcheese and duck and goose breast sandwiches to school in our tin lunch buckets which consisted of empty tobacco cans;

Playing Pedro with the family around the kitchen table with the lights from the coal oil lamps;

Watching Mom knead bread dough after all had gone to bed and putting it in the warmer of the wood stove to rise overnight;

Coming home from school to cut off the heel of a loaf of fresh baked bread and spread it with fresh churned butter melting into the warm crust - yum!;

Eating crackers and milk for a bedtime snack;

Popping corn around the fireplace;

Occasionally attending a movie at Bert Paxton's theater in Sutter featuring Tom Mix or Hoot Gibson. These were silent movies, black and white with the words spelled out on the screen. They were usually of six reels with a two reel comedy at the end. Half of the audience read the words aloud which took care of the sound effects. Clair Paxton sold boxes of crackerjacks during intermission at fifteen cents per box;

Making wine out of Thompson Seedless Grapes on our grandfather's wine press;

Making alcohol out of the sour wine with a homemade "still";

Watching about five hundred quail thunder down off the hill at sunset to roost in the fig and orange trees. The heat from these numerous small bodies kept our oranges from freezing in the winter;

Picking wildflowers to surprise my mother;

Helping Mom plant a vegetable garden;

Going to the Stohlmann's lake in the horse and buggy to fish for catfish;

Hunting ducks and geese at Butte Slough;

Wearing homemade shirts and underwear that read Sperry Flour across the bottom.

SAMUEL STABLER
A Sutter County Southern Gentleman
by
Carol Withington

In 1887, a publication, under the direction and the authority of the Immigration Bureau, advertised the Sutter-Yuba counties as offering a "winterless climate."

"We have room for people desiring a home in a pleasant and healthful location," the pamphlet read, "where land is still cheap, where the laborers can get good wages, where there are so many opportunities for industry and capital that there are not enough of us to more than commence to develop them all."

Among the Sutter County members of the Board of Directors for the Bureau of Immigration was Samuel Jordan Stabler, an early day district attorney and pioneer commercial fruit businessman.

Stabler was born at Sandy Spring, Maryland, on February 12, 1820. Studying law at a young age, he was eventually admitted to the bar and there began the practicing of his profession in his home state.

When news of the California gold discovery arrived in his area, Stabler foresaw the great possibilities of this state and soon after set out for the Pacific Coast.

Stabler arrived in San Francisco in 1850 where he engaged in business as a merchant and auctioneer. Three years later, he went to the mines in El Dorado County and later moved to Sierra County.

In 1860, he arrived in Yuba City and the following year he married the former Alice Fronk, a native of Indiana.

They had three children: a son, Harry P., and daughters Kate and Marguerite.

Upon his marriage, Stabler purchased land from the estate of Judge R. B. Sherrard. Now serving as a Sutter County Clerk and Recorder, Stabler paid the estate \$180 for about two and a half acres which consisted of an irregular piece at the corner of Second and C Streets in Yuba City, running west on C Street for 782 feet and south on Second Street for 184 feet.

He built a residence of Italianate design on C Street around 1862, where the family lived for the next twenty years. Stabler sold the residence to Robert C. and Harriet Kells for \$3,500 in 1887.

Stabler was elected Sutter County District Attorney on the Democratic ticket. He served for two terms, from 1868-1871. He also was a senior member of the law firm of Stabler and Bayne, which was in existence for eighteen years with offices in both Sutter and Colusa Counties.

Due to poor health, Stabler was eventually forced to retire from active law practice. He moved to Oakland, but still retained his interest in Sutter County.

In 1886, he purchased a homestead of 208 acres, where he planted a variety of fruit trees. Through trial and error, he discovered that more money could be made by raising Thompson seedless grapes. The enterprising Stabler therefore took up 120 acres of fruit trees and replanted the land with grapes. In

addition, he improved his place by erecting a "fine set of buildings" which included warehouses and a large dryer.

Stabler eventually was able to cure all the raisins his vineyards produced, as well as many of the neighboring vineyards, where he reportedly carried on an extensive business.

In 1896, he returned to the area. He lived on his homestead until his death at the age of eighty-four on February 8, 1914.

Although he had been a California resident for over 60 years, Stabler continued to retain "the courtly and polished manners" of a Southern gentleman, which early in his law practice earned him the title of "Judge" among his many friends.

A member of the Sutter County Board of Trade, Stabler took much interest in community affairs where he assisted materially with his time and funds. He also aided in church and temperance endeavors.

Throughout his lifetime, Stabler was regarded as a great student and a deep

reader. He stood high in his profession and his counsel and advice were sought by young and old alike.

Son Harry continued in his father's fruit industry and was regarded an authority and was one of the first to employ a systematic approach to protect the industry from pests and diseases. Through his efforts, laws were passed which created Boards of Horticultural Commissioners. Young Stabler served on the board in Sutter County for thirty-eight years. He was also a member of the State Legislature.

The family name of Stabler is attached to one of the most popular roadways in Yuba City. Beginning at Pease Road as a typical rural roadway, Stabler Lane eventually widens to accommodate the many residences and large apartment complexes on either side. Crossing over Butte House Road, four lanes are highlighted with a variety of businesses including the popular Feather Down Shopping Center. Stabler Lane ends at Colusa Highway, but what a lasting tribute it has become.

Another Splendid Building

The work of building goes nobly on. Our old townsman and attorney-at-law, S. J. Stabler, has begun the erection of a \$5,000 residence, on his premises south of the Court House. The building is to be a two-story frame 26x34, with an L 14x14, on a three-foot brick foundation. The plan was drawn by R. C. Hall of San Francisco, and presents a beautiful design.

Weekly Sutter Banner - 16 March 1874

[Note: This is the home on "C" Street in Yuba City in which Mr. and Mrs. Stabler raised their children.]

Yuba City Oct. 25-1879

Sam Sweeney Esq }
Meridian }

Friend Lon

I see by the No. 70 assessment Roll, that we on the South line are taxed for our full number of acres, including that we have promised to deed to the District; that certainly is not right, for if we give it away we certainly ought not to be compelled to pay taxes on it; I think the Board of Trustees ought to strike that off; I write about it now because I do not desire to leave a matter of that kind until the last days of the paying; — when you come in I would be glad to see you.

If you can send me some No. 70 scrip at 30 cents, I would like it.

Yours Truly
A. J. Habler

Ag Addition Up-Date

Those of you who are long-time members know that the dream of an agricultural wing addition to the museum has been a goal of the Historical Society for many, many years. The addition was on the original plan for future development at the time the museum was built in 1975. In the early 1980s, the east side addition was added with monies from the Museum Trust Fund. This addition added office and storage space to the existing building.

Since 1975, donations to the Historical Society's "building fund" have been earmarked for the addition on the west side of the building which will house the museum's "agricultural wing." Finally, this dream is in the process of becoming a reality.

Many of you have wondered why it has taken so long to reach this point. Part of the reason is the unique situation in which we find ourselves. The museum building and grounds are owned by Sutter County. In fact, the museum is a "county office" partially funded by the County and partially funded by itself (e.g. dues, fund raisers, donations). The Historical Society is an independent, non-profit organization which wants to add a room to a County building.

If the Society owned a piece of land and wanted to construct a building, it could be done totally by donation of labor, materials, etc. But that's not what we're doing. There are State laws in effect under which we must operate. Since no Federal money is being used to construct the addition, we do not have to worry about the laws which govern that. However, because the addition is being attached to an existing County building and the project is on County property, there are laws we have to follow. The most expensive law for us is California's prevailing-wage law which requires construction workers on "public-works" contracts to be paid as much as the local average in wages and benefits. The word "local" doesn't sound bad until you learn that it doesn't mean the Yuba-Sutter area, but in fact includes the San Francisco area. The July 6, 1996 issue of the Appeal Democrat carried an article on page B-4 about the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upholding the law in a 3-0 vote. (The Ag-Addition Committee has tried to keep an eye on these things.)

That's where we've been, so where are we now? We're excited! We have a high-end estimate of what the construction will cost, with a cost-breakdown. We have operating plans drawn which have been viewed, revised, and approved by the County. Steve Perry, Chair of the Building Committee, and Linda Leone met with the Museum Board of Trustees to discuss additional financing of the project and we are pleased to announce the Trustees have targeted funds to help pay for the construction. On Monday, March 23, a special meeting of the Society was held at the museum to show the plans to the membership, discuss costs, and answer questions. Twenty-five people gave up the Oscars and braved the weather to attend. On Tuesday, March 24th, the proposal was presented to the Sutter County Board of Supervisors and the project was unanimously approved. The bid forms are being prepared and the Historical Society will be putting the project out to bid shortly. This is really getting built!

My Thoughts of Esther

by

Lance Cull

Return with me to 1953. I was just ten years old when this story takes place. The time of year is May and a wet spring has kept the Buttes an emerald green and many wildflowers linger waiting for the first north wind to change them nearly overnight to shrivel in one short breath. Mom was quite the painter, but before she painted in her pastels she would sketch her scene in pencil. So many an hour was spent sitting on her mustang, Babe, trying to catch that special shadow crossing the canyon or the color of a certain cloud. Her horse, Babe, was most patient and stood well on her command; sometimes she would sit on her backwards and sketch her pretty pictures.

I would go along and hold the horse for her and steady the easel when the wind would blow quite a bit. Sometimes she would show off a little and reach in her scabbard and pull out her .22 single shot and mirror, thus to demonstrate her accurate shooting. By doing so, she would place a can on every other fence post west of the barn. Now sitting sideways on old Babe she would shoot each can off the post, resting the gun on her shoulder, shooting backwards looking through her mirror. I'll never forget this memory tucked away in my mind. She loved to Roman Ride also. I never forget the smile on her face as she would take time to play.

When Mom was a young girl she told of tall Bunch grass that used to grow over the Buttes. Water was short at home

and come summer the milk cows had to be watered once a day up at the Big spring near Twin Sister. Each day, seven days a week, she would take Jezebel and Lulu and four steers to the water where they could fill up for another twenty-four hours. The range fires we have had down through the years have burned out most of the Bunch grass and Juniper. Only a few Juniper remain up on the west side of Twin Sister, high in the crevasses where the range fires could not reach them. A small grove remains in the canyon just below Potato Mountain and near South Butte. A small seep in the ground keeps them in good growing order. Just over the next ridge to the west of Potato Mountain is where the first two gas wells were drilled and they are still producing since 1931. Prior to their installation, the gas would leak up through the cracks in the ground and one summer about 1927 a bad fire came over the Buttes from the Pennington side and burned the entire range with the help of a gusty north wind. After the fire passed through the Brookman Canyon, many small blue fires could be seen for many days until an early fall shower put them out. Mom always called them "Dancing Blue Angels."

Mom was quite the gardener. She loved to raise gladiolas; some got to be four feet tall. She knew how to get the mixed colors by taking pollen from one plant to the next. She also had a bed of zinnias every summer. Down next to the rock wall, she had started a cactus garden

and today it still grows. In early summer the pipe cactus would bloom, but only at night and early morning. The big white blossoms looked like a trumpet. Soon as the bright sun warmed a bit, they would close and wither away never to bloom again until next year. The cholla would bloom producing a bright purple blossom.

In about 1930, Mom met my dad. That must have been quite a love story. The first two gas wells were being drilled in the Buttes and my dad, Howard, was hired on in the fall of 1931 by the Buttes Gas & Oil Company. The wages were \$3.00 a day for a ten-hour shift and the ranch wage was \$1.50, a little short but the country was recovering from a bad depression and one was glad to get what he could get. Mom was a young lady in 1930 and at 24 she was at her best and full of vinegar at that age. She would ride her big bay horse, Buster, over the ridge by Potato Mountain and watch the drilling crew from the ridge top as they tightened the ninety foot sections of drill stem and lower them into the well. The drilling rig was 110 feet tall and 50 feet square at the bottom. The rig was assembled one section at a time with a large crane. Mom would ride over the hill twice a week and take Dad his lunch and little by little they became very close. The drilling rig was run by two double twin steam engines – one for the mud pumps and one to run the turntable and cat head. The water for the rigs was pumped from a well down on Pass Road near the big spring just below the Hoke place. A flat head V-8 Ford engine ran all night and day to keep the

10,000 gallon tank full or at least keep up with the two steam engines' enormous appetite for water. Dad worked high on the monkey board about 2/3 up the rig. Mom would situate herself where she could see him and catch an occasional smile. When it was time to change shifts, the Driller would play his song on the steam whistle, what a pretty sound that must have been ringing down through the canyons. In June of 1931, Dad and Mom were married and in November of 1937 my sister was born. I was born in September 1943. Mom and Dad lived in Sutter at the corner of Mulberry and Sutter Streets in a small house they rented at \$25.00 a month. They stayed here for one year, then moved to the ranch at the end of Moore Road with her parents, Annette and Thomas Jefferson Moore. This move took place five years before my sister was born. They settled down and raised oat hay, almonds, ran a small dairy for several years from which they sold cream only. Later on they raised Hampshire hogs and at one time we had 150 sows.

As time gently touches us all, Mom passed on in 1961 and Daddy lived to be 83 and he crossed the Great Divide in 1995. Quite a life they had and I stop and think what would they think of today's world and all its new inventions.

Though work was hard at times, we had our good times also. What a fantastic childhood I had and I'll never forget my younger days. Yes, my thoughts of Esther will forever live in my heart and it's been a pleasure to share them with you.

OLD MERIDIAN BRIDGE

1906 - bridge started; financed by Sutter & Colusa Counties & the railroad

1907 - Railroad bought out 1 block of homes for right-of-way

1912 - built by Northern Electric Railway

1913 - completed & opened to traffic

365-ft long; rotates on pivot point in river bottom

Sacramento Northern Rail Road - passenger & freight train (Marysville-Colusa route); later traffic lanes (1 each way) appended to original structure

1 Sept - wagon portion opened wagon lanes: 12' or 14' paved w/wooden blocks set in concrete and covered w/asphalt

6 Sept - big celebration; dedication, bands, dancing, auto parade, races, ballgame, picnic; more than 1500 people; 8 p.m. electric illumination of bridge; 17 fireworks thrown from bridge house window while bridge in motion

6 Sept - received news John Fouts had died in Oakland

Center of bridge railroad tracks; outside lanes for wagons/cars
Trolley car ran from Marysville to Colusa

Cost: more than \$250,000 including approaches

Gothic style

Paraphernalia, controls, ornate lightening arresters (spires) will be preserved in area museums:

4 decorative copper spires:

2 spires - Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County

2 spires - Sacramento Valley Museum - Williams, CA

roadways - wood plank supported by heavy wood crossbeams; beams still in place covered with blanket of asphalt

1922 - the road & approaches taken into State roads system

1933 - bridge into State system; railroad tracks later removed

1940s - M/M Ben Marlin lived in control house on bridge

1960 - Division of Highways responsible for bridge; railroad abandoned service

since 1967 - bridge opened only once or twice a year - workman from CalTrans Dist. 3 office in Marysville drives out to Meridian to open it; need 12 hr. advance notice

after 1968 - big drop in requests to open after Standard Oil completed the pipeline crossing the river near Colusa

Primary reason for replacing bridge: \$6,000/yr maintenance and narrow single lanes across the bridge; Division of Highways: "the bridge is structurally sound but its appearance on a modern highway is ludicrous"

1971 - (Appeal Democrat - 12 Nov) Bill Johnson, Manager of UCB in Marysville: looking for an Englishman to buy the Meridian Bridge, take it apart piece by piece & ship it to London or anywhere (like the London Bridge we brought over)

approximate replacement cost: \$3 million - Sutter & Colusa Co. gas tax monies - new bridge construction will delay other State highway construction in both counties (no effect on Colusa Co. because I-5 will be complete before bridge started; it will slow down highway building in Sutter County where freeway construction is needed)

1970: Meridian Bridge average - 2,900 vehicles/day

10th Street Bridge average - 29,000 vehicles/day

Onstott/Lomo Crossing - 5,000-6,000 vehicles/day

by 1990: Marysville/Yuba City - 75,000 vehicles/day

3rd bridge between Mysv & YC in planning stage

by 1995: Hwy 99 to Live Oak - 12,500/day

Meridian Bridge - 4,700/day

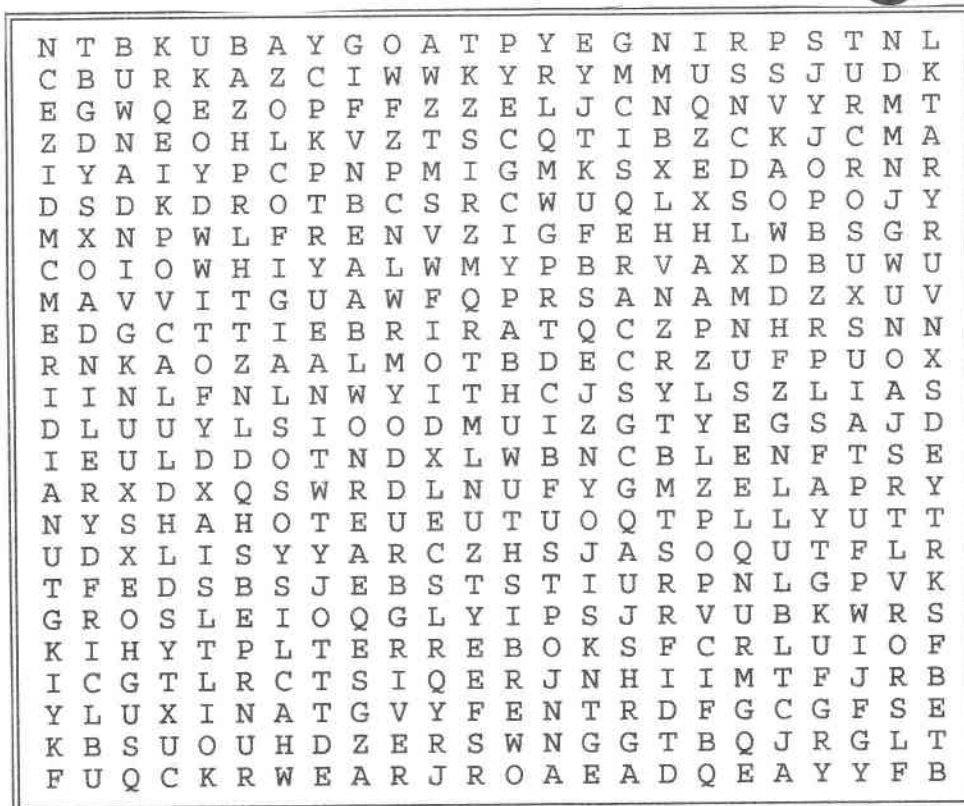
Little need for drawbridge today - River traffic is caused by US Army Corps of Engineers; research & dredger boats up Sacramento River occasionally

New Bridge Plans: two plans; both low level, swing type bridge; clearance must be allowed for River passage; a non-swing bridge would have to be 55-ft above water

1975 - "In its (old bridge) place, a cable suspension swing bridge will be built to carry 4 lanes of traffic across the river"; a detour bridge will be built about 100 yards upstream from the old bridge

1976 - 28 Jan: last time bridge opened (90% open)

Kid's Page



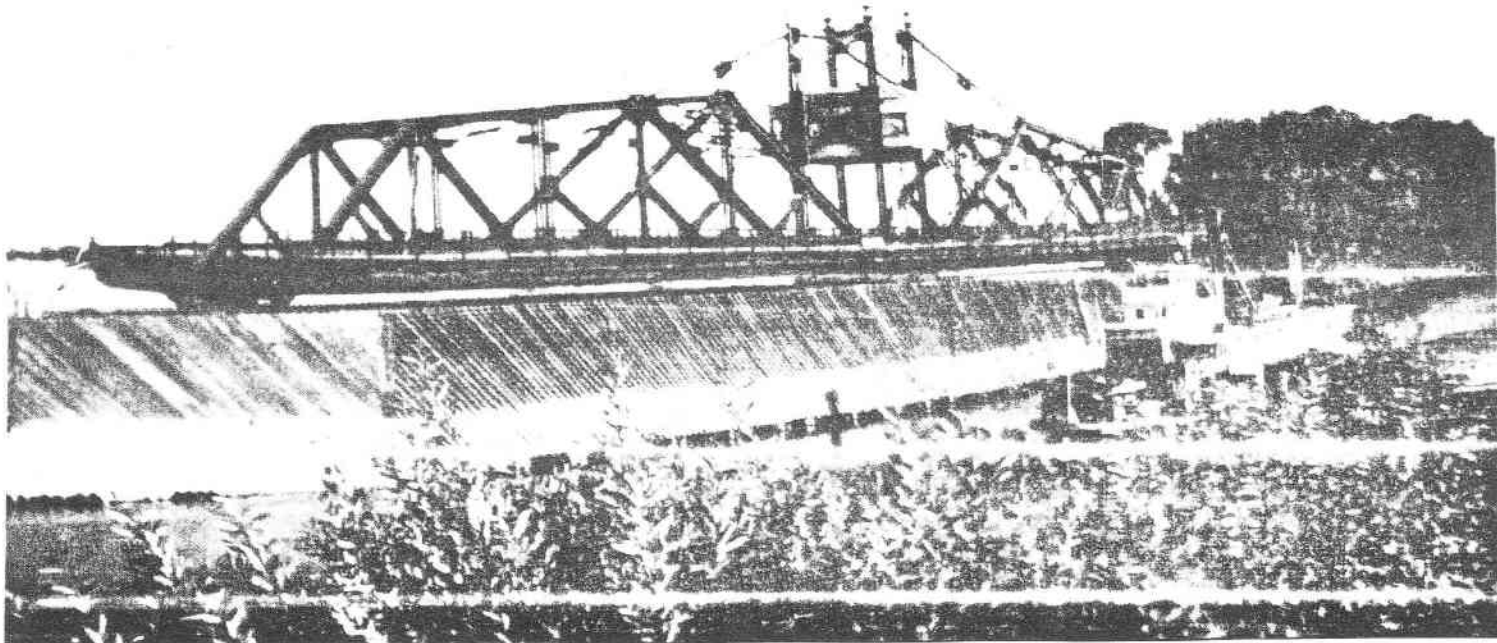
AGRICULTURE
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MERIDIAN
STABLER

BRIDGE
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FLOWERS
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GREEN
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BUILDING
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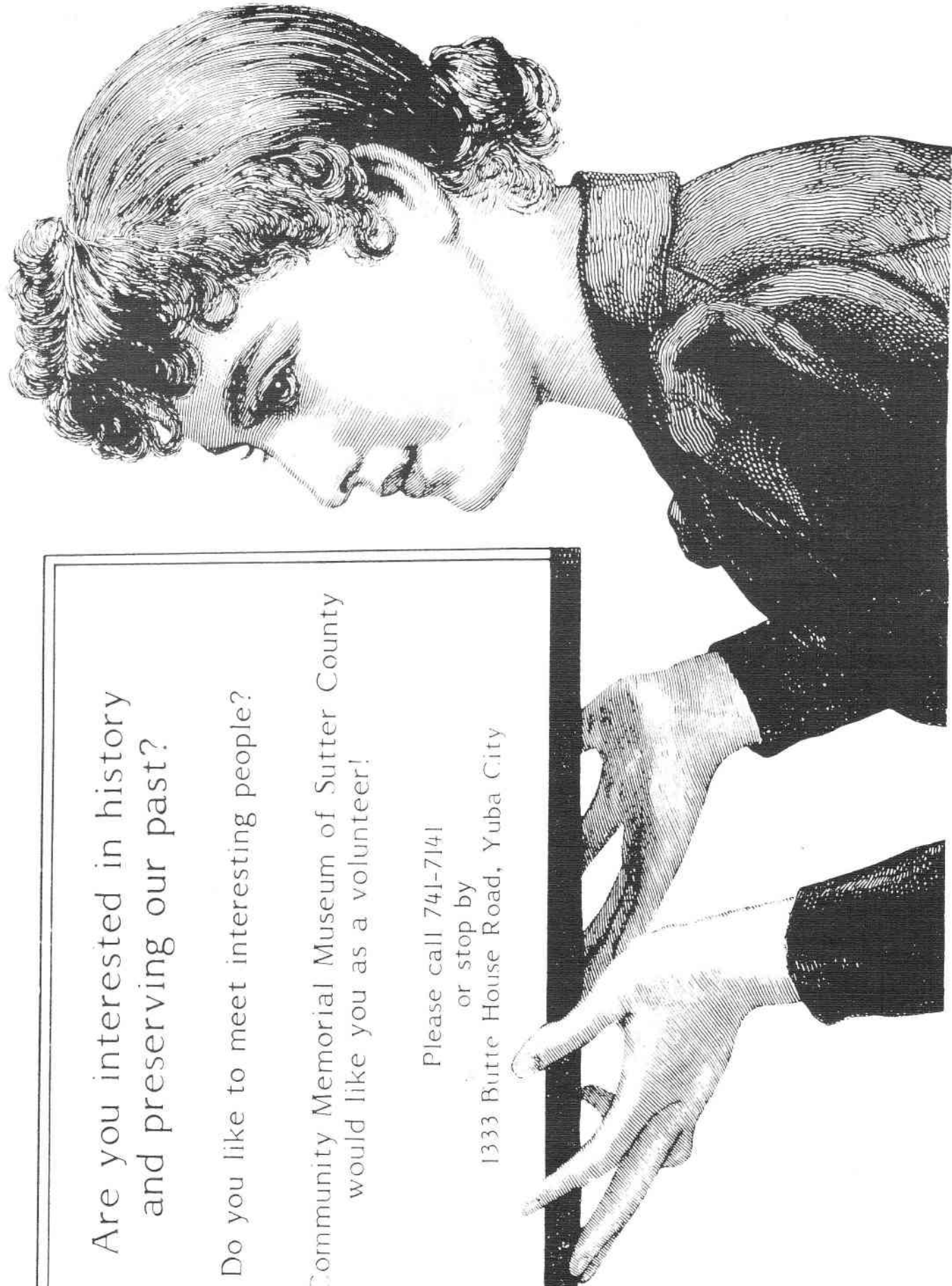
Are you interested in history
and preserving our past?

Do you like to meet interesting people?

The Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County
would like you as a volunteer!

Please call 741-7141
or stop by

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City



COMING EVENTS

April

- 15 Sculpture & Photography - exhibit opens
Sculpture - Gil Azama Photography - Rick Murai
- 18 Mary Aaron Museum - Prisoners Exhibit Opens - 6:00-7:00 p.m.
- 21 Sutter County Historical Society Annual Diner - West Sutter Veterans' Hall - Meridian
Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest Awards
Program: The Old Meridian Bridge - Tom Harrington of CalTrans
Dinner - Awards - Program - Raffle - Fun - \$10.00 - Reservations Required
- 25 Wear & Remembrance Vintage Apparel Fair - Fairgrounds - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- 26 Wear & Remembrance Vintage Apparel Fair - Fairgrounds - 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

May

- 2 Sculpture & Photography - Exhibit Reception 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- 10 Sculpture & Photography - exhibit closes
- 15 The California-Oregon Emigrant Trail of 1841-1870 - Exhibit opens - 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- 16 Mary Aaron Museum - USO Dance
- 25 Memorial Day

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