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Yuba City, California

January 2004



Lieutenant Charles Barnett, 1943



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*The year the director joined the Board.

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The 2004 dues are payable as of January 1, 2004. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at P. O. Box 1555, Yuba City, 95992-1555.

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| Student (under 18)/ Senior Citizen/Library | \$ 15 |
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| Family | \$ 35 |
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President's Message

Our Board of Directors laid out the 2004 schedule for the Sutter County Historical Society. First up is our January membership meeting, **Tuesday, January 13** at the Museum. Board Member Bob Mackensen will talk about historic preservation and bring us all up-to-date on Sutter County's efforts to create a meaningful historic preservation ordinance. The program will be followed by dessert, coordinated by Vice President Audrey Breeding.

Our next event is the Sutter Buttes Hike, **Saturday, March 13**. The hikes are very popular, so if you're interested be sure to get your reservation and payment in early. Don't worry if you're not a big hiker - there will be a group of "casual strollers" as well as those who want to do something a little more strenuous.

Saturday, March 27 is our Bus Trip through the Buttes, with commentary by Don Burtis. This is another event eagerly anticipated by many, so again, get your reservations in early. This bulletin contains a sign-up sheet insert for both events.

Our annual meeting will be **Saturday, April 24** in the West Sutter Veterans' Hall in Meridian. The program is not yet set, but we will be giving awards to the winners of the Judith Barr Fairbanks Award, and once again our tri-tip lunch will be catered by Dena Singh of the El Rio Club. Watch for the April bulletin for information on making your lunch reservation.

Our other quarterly meetings, the Picnic in the Park and the German luncheon in Nicolaus, are not yet scheduled, but expect them in mid-July and October, respectively.

We look forward to a full year of fun and productive events. Please join us as we celebrate Sutter County's history!

Tom Crowhurst
President

Trees and Traditions Rousing Success

Trees and Traditions returned to its glory days this year with the help of Chef Steve Richardson and more than 40 outstanding volunteers, who made the beautiful decorations, prepared and served food and drink, sold tickets and cleaned up after the party. Numerous trees and prizes were donated by individuals and local businesses. The MARKS ensemble from the Yuba-Sutter Oratorio Society played seasonal music throughout the night. All in all it was a beautiful evening - thanks to everyone who helped make it a success!

Director's Report

As I write this, we are gearing up for the last week before the big fundraiser, Trees & Traditions, and it is difficult to look beyond this week and into 2004. I can assure you that planning frequent trips to the museum in the coming year is a necessity in order to see the six exhibits scheduled for the main gallery.

Opening in mid-January and continuing to March 12th is an exhibit focusing on Chinese porcelain. Guest curator Der Hsien Chang, a scholar in the field of California archaeology and history, is exhibiting her collection of porcelain recovered in digs in California. The heart of this exhibit focuses on her study of the common porcelain dishes used by early Chinese immigrants to California. This examination of "everyday" items used by the Chinese who came here during the gold rush, and later to work on the transcontinental railroad, allow us to understand the daily life of these early Californians. Also in the exhibit will be early photographs from the Museum's collection, including a turn-of-the-century look at the Bok Kai parade, and items on loan from other individuals and institutions to help tell this fascinating story. The program date has not been finalized yet, but watch for an announcement.

Fund-raising is a fact of life for the Museum and we are already preparing for Love's Messenger. This year's gift bag will be a sure hit with your Valentine and this token of affection also helps the Museum keep its exhibits and programs coming. Remember, Love's Messenger includes delivery of the gift bag to your Valentine. Be sure to get your order in early - there are a limited number of bags available.

High energy returns to the Museum on March 19th when the Yuba City High School Art Department takes over the main gallery for the third annual showing of students' art projects. The energy of the art is matched only by that of opening night when students and families come to view this exhibit. Find time in your schedule to admire the talent and creativity of our local students. This exhibit closes April 2nd.

As you can see, activities at the museum will be jumping this year. Still to come are two traveling exhibits and a photography exhibit of Shanghai Bend by local photographer Tim Moen. Look for more information about the schedule in future *Bulletins* and in the *Muse News*.

Of course, in order to receive these publications, you must take the time to renew your membership in the Museum and Historical Society. I want to issue a big thank you to those of you who have renewed your membership and hope that those who haven't will do so soon so you don't miss an issue of the Bulletin.

All of us at the Museum hope to see you in the coming year. I'm sure that with the variety of exhibits planned there will be something that piques your interest and brings you back to the museum for a visit.

Julie Stark, Director

Memorials

In Memory of **Max Alexander**
Arnold & Murleen Schneiter

In Memory of **Lilly Sanders**
Betty Taylor

In Memory of **Lucille Berry**
Georgia Green

In Memory of **Orlin E. Schuler**
Ruth Anderson
Jean Gustin
George H. Inouye
Ivah & Evonne Meischke

In Memory of **Esther M. Chandler**
Randy & Shirley Schnabel

In Memory of **Arthur Childs**
Louie & Betty Schmidl

In Memory of **Thelma Severe**
Marie E. Fuller

In Memory of **Margaret Christensen**
Audrey Breeding

In Memory of **Elsie Sharp**
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Whitten

In Memory of **David R. Cole**
Marie E. Fuller

In Memory of **Ila Shaw**
Norma Garrison
Theresa Silver
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Harvey R. Craig**
Pauline Masera

In Memory of **Lawrence Souza**
Bernice Amarel

In Memory of **Sarah Madsen**
Mr. & Mrs. L. Schmidl
Audrey Breeding

In Memory of **Donald Strachan**
Mr. & Mrs. Gene Lonon

In Memory of **Judy McPherrin**
Mrs. Dorothy Munger

In Memory of **Fred Ziegenmeyer**
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Bryant

In Memory of **Lorene Osgood**
Mary Watanabe
Dianna Kitamura



Remember the Onstott House!

The committee preparing a Historic Preservation Ordinance will hold a public presentation on **February 12, 2004** at 7:00 p.m. at the Sutter County Veterans Hall. At the hearing the committee will explain the work it has done to date and the concepts it is planning to include in the ordinance. The committee wants public input on the ideas being discussed.

The committee and the Board of Supervisors need to know where the community stands on historic preservation - they need to know that YOU care about our historic resources! It is very important that as many Sutter County Historical Society members, friends and supporters as possible attend the meeting to show that we will not sit idly by while valued resources such as the Jacob Onstott House are bulldozed.

Attend the meeting - NUMBERS COUNT!! Listen to the presentation, ask questions, and let the committee and supervisors know a meaningful Historic Preservation Ordinance is important to you and to your community!

For more information, call Phyllis Smith, 671-3261; Bob Mackensen, 673-1191; or John Reische, 674-8106.



Directors Needed!

The glamour! The prestige! The adulation!

If you're looking for those things, don't call... but if you'd like to help preserve and promote Sutter County's history, the Sutter County Historical Society can use you on its Board of Directors. The Board meets quarterly and directs the activities and fundraisers of the Historical Society. The duties of Board members are to attend the meetings, help with the membership events and if you're up to it, assist with other projects. It's a breeze!

Please call President Tom Crowhurst for more information at 755-0445.

Sixty Years in Sutter County

An Interview with Chuck Barnett

by
Phyllis Smith

Chuck Barnett is a long-time Yuba City resident well known to many locals - anyone who graduated from Yuba City Union High School in the 1950s or early 60s was in his class, and those who attended Yuba College in the 70s and 80s saw his handiwork in the school newspaper and photography department. Chuck first came to the area the way many still do - he was stationed at Camp Beale during World War II, then met and married a local girl, Barbara Johnson. After retiring from the Army he and Barbara came back here to live.

Chuck says that whenever there was one person in the world who he needed to see, that person would arrive and help resolve a situation. Chuck calls that phenomenon "help from upstairs." Throughout his life there have been numerous incidents of "help from upstairs."

The Army

Chuck began his Army career when he joined up between his junior and senior years at the University of Illinois in July 1941. He knew the United States would be going to war. But the Army was not all he hoped it would be, and as a private making \$21 a month he was discouraged. He was sent to participate in the Louisiana Maneuvers, a war games exercise where the generals, including Patton, Bradley and Eisenhower, practiced their craft, while the soldiers did their part. Chuck had to swim across a river in Fort Bragg, NC with his rifle and

equipment, and this was his forte - he was a good swimmer, learning as a child in Chesapeake Bay, and had been a swimmer at U. of Illinois.

The most experienced person present was a full colonel who had known Chuck from his cavalry days at Champagne, Illinois, and he saw Chuck beat everyone else across the river. That colonel sent Chuck to officer's school the next day and he emerged a Second Lieutenant. This was "help from upstairs."

In 1943 Chuck was assigned to the 13th Armored Division, a "paper" division based at Camp Beale. In 1944 he married Barbara and they headed off on their honeymoon. When he returned to camp ten days later he found the division had gone to Texas. He was ordered to join his group and he had gas coupons, but no car. One of Barbara's friends was going to Texas to marry a sergeant - she had a car and no gas, so Chuck and Barbara joined her on that trip - more "help." The friend and her sergeant were married a few days after they arrived in Texas.

After a year in Texas, Chuck was finally sent overseas. Barbara came back to Yuba City and attended Yuba College.

Chuck was in Cologne, Germany in April, 1945 when his jeep ran over a mine, and he spent the next couple of years in the hospital. He spent two months on the Isle of Wight, and his mother received a letter from a man who told her he had been schoolmates with Chuck and had played football

with him, and he was now stationed at the hospital where he could visit Chuck every day. He said Chuck was not hurt badly. The letter was meant to make Mrs. Barnett feel better - not only were his injuries severe, Chuck doesn't remember this man visiting. He does remember being visited by Will Rogers, Jr., who would bring him the New York Times.

From England Chuck came across the Atlantic on a Red Cross ship because his injuries prevented him from flying. He was in a full body cast and placed down in the center of the boat so he wouldn't be affected too much by the action of the sea. But Chuck thought he'd go crazy - he'd spent his Army service in tanks and he didn't like to be closed up, and this was a ten-day trip. He asked to go up on deck and several guys took him up to get some fresh air. The spray felt good but was softening his cast, so they threw a tarp over him. When it was time to go back down he said he couldn't stand to go. A merchant marine came over to him and said, "I know that guy from Elgin, Illinois - I'll stay up here with him." Johnny's dad had owned the biggest department store in Elgin and had gone to the local private school, and he spent the rest of the trip helping Chuck. Upstairs was listening again.

After arriving in New Jersey Chuck was transported by train to Birmingham Hospital. He thought he was going to Alabama, but this hospital was in Van Nuys. The train stopped as it crossed the country, dropping off soldiers as it passed hospitals. Barbara was waiting in Van Nuys for Chuck, and she continued to follow him wherever he went.

As the war ended some military hospitals became veterans hospitals, and active military were transferred out. Chuck first moved to Dibble General Hospital in Palo Alto, then to Valley Forge General Hospital in Pennsylvania. Finally, in March 1947 Chuck was discharged from the hospital and retired from the Army. He ended his career as a Captain.

Upon his retirement Chuck was given a new Chevrolet and two years back pay. He and Barbara drove around the country looking to see where they'd like to live. They checked out the mid-west, but decided it was too cold. Barbara was homesick so they came back to Yuba City. It was nice and warm here and he began to feel better.

Early Yuba City life

Chuck and Barbara started their Yuba City life in a Quonset hut placed in a large vacant area that later became Alta Park, and is now a medical office area across from Fremont Hospital. There were several dozen huts, some made into inexpensive apartments, and the Barnetts had one with a porch that ran the full length of the hut. They made friends with the neighbors and still call many of them friends.

Chuck needed a job. Barbara's dad asked him if he could do an honest day's work. He went to work at Blazer Station, a fruit slab north of Yuba City, and after a couple of days told the station master he didn't like the way it was run and asked to try it himself. The practice was to wait until the end of the day, then count the boxes and do the balancing and no one got home until 10 or 11 at night. That didn't suit Chuck, who had a new bride at home.

He had been an accounting major in college and had different ideas. The station master was younger than Chuck and let him try them out.

Chuck took inventory four times during the day and when they closed up at 6:00, he added the final numbers and was done and ready to leave by 6:30. The next day a whole group of men from the main office in San Francisco came, wanting to know how the station had gotten done so early and still had everything correct. Today Chuck is quick to point out this didn't happen because he was so smart, but because he was familiar with the concepts. Perhaps he wasn't so modest back then, because he was asked to go to the big Del Monte cannery and be employment supervisor. He did all the hiring for three shifts and was at the same level as the office manager and superintendent. He hired 3,000 people one summer.

Del Monte treated him well. He made a lot of money at the cannery, and when he had his appendix out, Del Monte put a trailer outside his office so when he got tired he could rest, and therefore keep working. Later, when he had started teaching during the school year, Del Monte continued to treat him well, even though he didn't always recognize it at the time. He was hiring specialized workers who made more money than he did, so Del Monte paid him extra to keep him above their pay level.

Chuck still needed a year-round job. He had finished three years of college and wanted to complete what he started, so he went to Chico State and finished his degree, but he wasn't sure what he'd do with it. When duck hunting with Foon Harter (Orland Clyde, Jr.) he ended up in a duck blind

with two men he didn't know, both sporting ten gauge shotguns, which are like cannons - few ordinary people can shoot one. One of these guys was a Chicago Bears football player, and the other was the superintendent of schools, Marion McCart, also the principal of Yuba City High. McCart told him if he'd get his teaching credential by fall, he'd have a job. Chuck knows it wasn't his hunting skills that helped him - there were so many birds they blocked out the sun, and Chuck still had trouble bringing one down. But his future was now mapped out for him, and he got his teaching credential from the State of California.

He had to do one semester of practice teaching and finding a slot was not easy. He knew someone whose father was a superintendent in San Francisco, and Chuck did his teaching at George Washington High School in S.F. He was there six weeks, and his wife came along. He was assistant to a coach who was assigned a history class, and the coach never came to class. The only instruction he got from the coach was about a box near the door "you talk into." The coach said if Chuck were to ever see a red light on the box, he was to crinkle paper into the phone and keep doing it until the light went off. Chuck did it several times without knowing he was crinkling paper into the intercom when someone tried to listen in on his class.

Neighborhood Concerns

The Barnetts bought property on Ainsley Avenue from Mr. Ainsley himself and built their house. At the time, Ainsley ran several lots west of Maple Avenue and then ended - it didn't go through to Clark Avenue. The park across the street, now Maple Park, was

called Ainsley Park. To the north was a big walnut orchard that ran all the way to where King Avenue School is now, owned by Walter Barrett. To the west was a prune orchard.

Where Ainsley dead-ended at the prune orchard, cars would often drive off-road and through the orchard. Chuck tried to put a stop to that by laying a telephone pole across the end of the road. He also put one at the other end, but people would sometimes move the poles and drive around them - there was no stopping people from using the orchard as a thoroughfare.

Chuck asked to buy ten feet off Barrett's orchard - he wanted more room and only needed enough for a driveway. His neighbor, attorney (later judge) John Hauck, helped with the paperwork. Barrett, however, wanted to sell Chuck the whole orchard. He offered to carry it at 1½% interest and said even though the orchard was old, the walnuts would pay the taxes until Chuck could decide what to do with the land. Chuck said he didn't have enough money, but if he'd known then what he knows now, he'd have spent the rest of his life developing the area one house at a time. The property was sold to a builder who then moved to Alaska.

For a short time, Chuck did own a piece of land between his house and Clark Avenue, and he saved the area from becoming commercial with \$1. The Sutter Market wanted to build a warehouse behind the store. Access to the warehouse would have to be from Ainsley, and Chuck and his neighbors feared the influx of large trucks that would be loading the warehouse. Chuck wanted to buy a lot near the corner of Ainsley and Clark for his mother (he wanted her closer, but not too close) but now he asked Joe

LePine, who owned the property west of Chuck, for an option to buy all the lots to stop access to any warehouse. Chuck gave him \$1 to hold the option. When the owners of the Sutter Market approached LePine about buying access to their warehouse site, he said Chuck had the option, and then Chuck had to exercise it. He went to all his neighbors and asked if they would contribute toward buying the property to keep out the trucks and he got 100% participation. However, Orrin Daniels, owner of Sutter Orchard Supply, said this was going to be a messy affair with so many owners, and he told Chuck to go to the bank the next day and get the money he needed. When Chuck arrived at the bank they asked him how he wanted the check made out - Daniels had arranged everything.

When Chuck went to LePine with the money, LePine told him how much he wanted and Chuck said, no, he had agreed to pay more than the owners of the Sutter Market. LePine asked how much more; Chuck said "one dollar." LePine laughed and laughed and took the asking price plus \$1. Chuck gave what became the rest of Ainsley Avenue to the city if they would agree to put in gutters, sold the rest, and paid back Daniels. Attorney Hauck wrote in each sales agreement that there were to be no streets running north-south from Ainsley.

Teaching - Yuba City Union High School

Chuck started teaching at Yuba City Union High School in 1949-50. He taught bookkeeping, business law, and modern problems. He was also a counselor, president of the teachers association for a time, in charge of student body finances, and taught night classes.

Every senior was required to take either business law or modern problems, so Chuck taught every senior. He had three classes of modern problems. They had no text book and each class moved at a different rate, perhaps working on different problems because sometimes students introduced the topics. They talked about all kinds of problems and Chuck sometimes told stories, not always sticking closely to the truth because the idea was to make a point. He still sees kids from his classes who remind him of a story he told and, more importantly, the point that he made.

The 1955 flood prompted several interesting projects. Many of the students had tremendous experiences that night. As a class they helped take things out of trees, picked stuff off of power lines and helped any way they could. They also discussed rumors that were flying, for example that over 600 farm laborers were lost on the levee and that so many were killed they were being stacked in cold storage lockers like cordwood. The students knew the rumors were not true and they decided to get some real facts. They organized into teams and Chuck made sure there were smart kids on each team. They did research and collected materials and thought what they had done should be in a book, but they had no money. But an energetic, wonderful lady named Helen Belz came up with enough money to print the booklet, and they sent copies to the legislators in Sacramento. They heard later that some legislation passed subsequently used their book as a resource.

Teachers were paid \$100 a year extra for every six units of continuing education they earned. Chuck built school into his schedule and went to

class every Wednesday night his entire teaching career. He earned a Master's Degree in School Curriculum and by the time he retired he was making as much as the PhDs.

Chuck is invited to all the class reunions and is usually the only teacher present. The students make a big fuss over him and he loves it. The Class of 1951 had its 50th reunion two years ago and was one of the best parties he's been to. Kids told him what they were doing in the teaching field, so when he was asked to speak, he asked everyone who's been involved in teaching in the last 50 years to stand up - and the whole room stood. Chuck says that's what makes a teacher feel really good about what he does.

Photography

For his 12th birthday Chuck received a box camera. It was a good camera if your shot required 1/50 of a second at F4. That started his lifelong interest in photography.

In 1956 he heard from other high school teachers that seniors were paying too much for senior photos. He said he could do it cheaper, and the superintendent told him he would take the senior photos the next fall. But he didn't know how to do portraits, so he went to school at Brooks Photography School in Santa Barbara during the summer. He also didn't have the right equipment, but he had a neighbor, a baby photographer, who had her studio in her basement. All of her equipment was underwater during the flood so she sold it to him for a low cost and he cleaned it up. By September he was ready to shoot.

He did a good job, and gave the kids at least 12 proofs. Barbara helped with the kids, signing them up and

getting them dressed. He had two girls working for him doing enlargements and touch-ups. That year there were 209 seniors and he photographed them all.

Then he started doing photos of sports and some classes, and kept on with the senior photos. As the kids left school and got married, it became a natural thing for him to shoot their weddings. He has photographed over 200 weddings. He also continued to take portraits, shooting over 8,000 8x10s.

Teaching - Yuba College

Chuck decided he wanted to leave the high school because his sons were about to start attending and he didn't want to be there with them (and vice versa). So in 1964 he was hired at Yuba College to teach accounting and bookkeeping. All business teachers also had to teach remedial math, and although he didn't at first feel qualified, he enjoyed the classes because the students were eager to learn.

He also taught journalism, although he knew nothing about it. He got students who had been in high school journalism classes and had them do what they had already learned. They published a weekly newspaper, Yuba's first, and in 13 years never missed a deadline.

The summer after Chuck's first year teaching journalism, he got a scholarship from the Wall Street Journal and went to journalism school at the University of Oregon, learning

how to put out a newspaper.

The first year of the paper Chuck took the photos, then in the second year he borrowed photography equipment from Physics and the students helped. By the third year he was teaching photography but barely had a budget. Over time the photography department became one of the largest in the school.

The paper was printed by Bill Burleson at the Gridley Herald. Burleson bought an offset printer just to do the Yuba job. One night photographer Ansel Adams and Burleson were at Chuck's house and Adams told Burleson that he'd made enough money, he shouldn't charge the school for the paper.

Chuck agrees that in harsh budget times, photography is a class to cut. However, there is a lot to be learned from photography. It isn't valuable because of the pictures you're taking, but because it teaches you to look at everything and everyone differently. Because of his study of people's faces, he knows what to expect as people age. He recognizes a lot of former students even though 50+ years may have passed since he had them in class.

Chuck retired from teaching in 1980, but he hasn't retired from life. He swims three days a week at Butchie's Pool and tries to golf as often as his 86-year-old body will allow. He is convinced that exercise and being interested in people is the secret to longevity. And he's living proof of that philosophy.

Poppy to Prickly Pear: California's Native Plants

The oft-repeated comment after the opening reception for the photography exhibit, Poppy to Prickly Pear? "The best presentation ever!"

It's true - the program by Marcus and Rosalie Wardell, photographers, and Leana Beeman-Sims, horticulturist and author, was outstanding.

The Wardells hail from Great Britain but now live in Healdsburg. Their interest in California's native plants prompted a tour of the Sutter Buttes, where they photographed our beautiful wildflowers. And now their stunning photos are traveling around the state, cultivating that interest in others.

The Wardells presented a slide show of plants and areas where the plants were found, and explained the technical aspects of their photography.

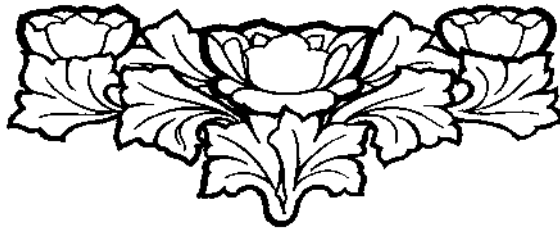
Their photos were complemented by Leana Beeman Sims, owner of Wayward Gardens in Sebastopol. The Wayward Gardens' motto is "Flora for Fauna," and Leana helps gardeners plant with the goal of attracting animals of all kinds. Her own garden brings

butterflies, bumblebees, birds, rabbits and deer, and she welcomes them all.

Leana explained the importance of some animals we might consider pests: caterpillars. If you want butterflies, you must have caterpillars. Caterpillars also serve as food for birds. It's true that caterpillars eat your plants, but you can plant plants specifically to serve as food for the caterpillars to you enjoy the butterflies and birds.

Leana suggested a garden can be more enjoyable with less work. She dismissed the air-brushed photos of glossy garden magazines, saying you shouldn't think your garden has to look pristine. In fact, everyone should stop the constant cleaning up. Don't deadhead your flowers - leave the seeds for birds. Don't cut down every dead branch in your trees - birds need them for nesting.

Wayward Gardens is closed for the winter but will open again on weekends in March. Plan a visit in early spring to ready your garden to welcome fauna. You can contact Wayward Gardens at 707-829-8225, or www.waywardgardens.com.



The Cheever Family and the Founding of Yuba City

by
Earl Ramey

Reprinted from January 1960

The title of this account may be a little misleading because the word 'family' usually includes some women and children. There were five male members of the Cheever family in Yuba City, but not any of them brought their women and children; and not any of them stayed long enough to acquire women and children. But these Cheevers came from one of America's oldest families.

The first Cheever came as a colonist from England to Massachusetts in 1635. The first descendant of whom we have any knowledge is one James Cheever, a soldier in Washington's army from 1776 to 1783. This soldier is credited with distinguished service in the revolutionary struggle.

To this revolutionary veteran a son, James W. Cheever, was born in 1791. The son became a seaman at an early age and by 1812 had qualified as master of sail vessels. During the war with England (the War of 1812) he was given command of a fighting ship of the United States Navy, a ship of twenty guns and a crew of 300, at the age of twenty-one years. He was thereafter known as Captain Cheever. His military career was also obviously a distinguished one.

Captain Cheever had three sons, Henry, David and Edward, who were to

have a prominent role in the founding of Yuba City. The youngest of these sons was born in 1828, and the other two between 1812 and 1828, but we do not know the exact dates.

Henry, the oldest son, followed his father's example and went to sea at an early age. By 1840 he was master of his vessel and sailing out of Valparaiso, Chile, where he made his headquarters and where he had business interests. It was a common practice of that time for the master of a ship to own an interest in the ship and even in a commercial establishment whose merchandise the ship was carrying. Such was Henry Cheever's interest in Chile and the Pacific.

By 1844 he had moved his headquarters to Honolulu where he established a wholesale and retail business, but from which place he yet sailed his brig Hannah to China, the Philippines and to west coast American ports. On one of these voyages in 1845 his ship was attacked by pirates off the coast of China. Cheever and his crew made an unsuccessful attempt to resist the attack, and the ship was plundered and the crew dispersed. There were rumors to the effect that he and the crew had failed to resist and had abandoned the ship in an unbecoming manner.

In order to refute this unfavorable rumor Cheever wrote a letter which was published in a Honolulu paper in which letter he gave a classic description of the pirate's attack, a description which would do credit to a Hollywood scenario writer. His letter ought to have exonerated him and the crew, but one suspects that he did not live down the disgrace. This was his last voyage as master of a ship. He retired from the sea and spent his time in the business of McClurg and Company of which he had become a partner.

In 1846 Cheever was named by the Chilean government to serve as Consular Agent for that Republic in Honolulu. But the official notice of the appointment published in the Polynesian added that "his majesty (the King of Hawaii) declines granting him an exequatur for reasons which the Minister of Foreign Relations has been ordered to make known to the government of Chile." We were not told the "reasons," but again one suspects that his disgrace at sea was going against him.

Later in 1846 Henry Cheever moved to Los Angeles, California where his firm, McClurg and Co., maintained a branch store. They also had a branch in San Francisco where he spent some of his time.

The reader will recall that gold was discovered on the American River the last day of January 1848, but that the news of the discovery was not circulated at once. Only after two to

three months was the event generally known as near as San Francisco. Henry Cheever happened to be in San Francisco when the news came to that place. And evidently he was one of the first to take the discovery seriously and to recognize its importance. He sent a letter to his father, Captain Cheever, in Salem, Massachusetts telling him of the discovery and advising his father to send merchandise to California, even suggesting the commodities which would be in demand. His father received the letter and had a shipment consisting of beef, pork, flour, hams, blankets, clothing, crowbars, picks, shovels, pans, liquors, wines and other items needed in California at the time, on board the Mary and Ellen which sailed October 28, 1848.

At this point we must bring into the narrative the second brother, David Cheever. He had served as midshipman in the United States Navy during the war with Mexico and had participated in the siege of Vera Cruz. He had been discharged from the service during the summer of 1848 and was visiting relatives in Illinois when his father received the letter from Henry. But the father sent the news to David who was able to return to Salem in time to sail on the Mary and Ellen as super-cargo of his father's goods. He arrived in San Francisco on March 28, 1849 after a voyage of five months around the Horn.

In the meantime Henry Cheever had gone to Sutter's Fort where he entered into a business partnership

with John Sutter and two other partners named Hastings and Gordon. These four under the name of Hastings and Company opened a store at Coloma where they traded supplies to the miners for gold dust. The important result of this close association with John Sutter - important to this present account - is that Henry Cheever became a partner with Sutter in the founding of Yuba City.

There is some evidence to suggest, if not to prove, that the founding of Yuba City was provoked by the rivalry which developed between John Sutter and his son, John Sutter Jr. The conditions which brought about this rivalry are too complicated and involved to be described here. Only a brief reference to them will be made as follows:

When John Sutter Jr. arrived at the Fort from Europe the latter part of 1848 he found his father's business affairs in a bad state. He assumed complete control of the Fort and the grant while Sutter Sr. spent his time in the mountains at Coloma. During this period a large number of would-be speculators and promoters had gathered at the Fort. Some of them persuaded Sutter Jr. to lay out a town on the river near the Fort to be called Sacramento. But Sutter Sr. with other promoters had already established a town south of the Fort which they called Suttersville. There was a contest for survival between the two towns and Sacramento won.

Sutter Sr. was very much

disappointed by the defeat of his pet project, Suttersville; so it was easy for a new alignment of promoters to persuade him to furnish the necessary land for a town near the Yuba mines on the Feather River.

On July 27, 1849 J.A, Sutter, party of the first part, deeded to himself, Samuel Brannan, Pierson B. Reading, and Henry Cheever, parties of the second part, for one dollar and other valuable inducements, lands on the western bank of the Feather River commencing at a point below and nearly opposite the mouth of the Yuba River (said point to be fixed by a survey to be made by the parties of the second part) running down the west bank of the Feather River at low water mark four miles; thence back from the Feather one mile; thence north-east parallel to the river to a point directly opposite the point of starting; thence to the point of beginning. The tract was to contain four square miles more or less.

Again we must interrupt the narrative of the founding of Yuba City to introduce the third Cheever brother, Edward. This youngest of the three brothers was born 1828 being just twenty years of age in 1848. He was residing on a farm in Illinois when his father relayed to him the news carried in the letter from Henry. He could not leave his farm at once when David returned to Salem, so he was not able to come to California on the Mary and Ellen. But he sailed from Boston on the Saltillo December 27, 1848 and after

transferring to the Sea Witch in Chile arrived in San Francisco June 15, 1849.

Edward found his brother David yet in San Francisco. Just what David had been doing the two months since he had arrived in California we do not know. However, we know that he had been making preparations to go to the mines having purchased a whale boat with which to move merchandise up the rivers to get as close as possible by water to the diggings. So during the latter part of June David, Edward and some others made their way up to Sacramento in the whale boat. There they found Henry who had a room at the Fort where the three brothers spent some days together.

At this time (about the first of July) the plans for Yuba City were being made. On July 8th a party of interested persons made a trip to Hock Farm to see Captain Sutter. This party was made up of Henry Cheever, Jacob R. Snyder, Mr. Barlow, an engineer who was to survey the new town, James King of William, Henry Schoolcraft and a crew of five Indians to row the boat. Edward Cheever was allowed to go along; and this was fortunate for us because it is from an account of this trip which he wrote forty years later that we have the little first-hand information available.

The party reached Hock Farm the third day and after a few hours visit with Sutter decided to return at once to Sacramento taking Sutter with them. But Edward, having no direct interest in the business affair, chose to

remain and the next day, July 12th, rode up to the site of Yuba City. The next day, July 13th, he caught a ride in a boat with some miners and returned to the Fort. But before we follow further the adventures of Edward, we must give some attention to the activities of David.

David had become acquainted with a young printer named Tallman Rolfe. He probably met Rolfe first in San Francisco where the latter had been working for Sam Brannan getting out the California Star. But when the gold rush disturbed life around San Francisco, publication of the Star was suspended. So Rolfe had moved to Sacramento where he was working for Brannan in a store. Sometime during the months of July and August Rolfe and David Cheever formed a partnership to operate a store in Yuba City. They purchased, or probably received gratis, two lots from the proprietors, loaded the whale boat with building materials and merchandise (probably some of which had come on the Mary and Ellen) and moved to the new settlement where they set up their business. But for details of this venture we depend on Edward; so we must turn again to his movements.

After Edward returned to Sacramento July 13th from Hock Farm he made a tour of the mines. He went first to Coloma then to Greenwood Valley and over to Grass Valley trying his hand with little luck at extracting gold dust in the crowded diggings. From Grass Valley he moved over to the

Yuba where he worked with some partners and succeeded in earning two ounces a day for some time. But early rains the last of August drove them out, and he returned to Sacramento where he learned of the store which David and Rolfe had established in Yuba City. By this time he had acquired a mule which he rode up the east side of the Sacramento and Feather and joined his brother in Yuba City the first part of September.

As has already been noted Edward Cheever gave us one of the few intimate accounts of the beginning of Yuba City, and we can best convey these details by quoting directly certain passages from him. He wrote: "When I returned from the mines to Sutter's Fort, I learned that my brother, David A. Cheever, and Tallman Rolfe had gone to Yuba City and opened a store. So I rode up there on my mule - up the eastern side of the Sacramento. When I reached Yuba City I found my brother and Rolfe the sole white inhabitants of the City." "The store was made of rough posts split from trees growing in the vicinity. These were set upright in a trench as palisades, and cotton cloth was stretched over a light ridge pole overhead to form a roof. A flat boat had been brought up from Sacramento loaded with goods of various kinds and including sufficient lumber to make the counters, shelves, door frames, etc. The store was located not far from the bank of the Feather River and above the Indian Village which was nearly

opposite the mouth of the Yuba River."

"Shortly after my arrival the first storm of the season came at night - high winds. The rain softened the earth around the sides of our house, and the wind pushed one side over towards us threatening the safety of the whole structure. We were compelled to stand all night as braces leaning against the wall. The next morning we drove stakes outside and made the house secure by using guy ropes ..."

Edward Cheever has left a bit of testimony which we ought to consider in connection with the unsettled debate about the origin of the name Yuba. He states, "The name of Yuba City was spelled Yubu City on the first map of the townsite, this being done to preserve the original Indian name of the rancheria which also gave its name to the river. The Indians, however, pronounced the name Yubum (Youboom) and the village at Hock Farm was Hockem. But the newcomers changed the names to Yuba and Hock without regard to Indian origin or original pronunciation."

There is also a rare human interest story in Cheever's account as follows: "Soon after the storm John Bidwell came and told us of two men who were destitute up the river a few miles. We had a wagon and a yoke of oxen and with these we brought them to the store. One was unconscious and dying and the other helpless. They had taken sick while traveling from the mines and had been exposed to the

storm without fire, food or shelter. Both died and were buried side by side under an oak tree back from the store and toward the Buttes. We had to bury them without coffins because of the impossibility of getting lumber at the moment. These were the first white persons buried in Yuba City."

He accounts for the relative failure of Yuba City as a business center with this passage: "We lived quietly for some time at Yuba City before we received any increase of population... Before winter quite a large number of emigrants who had crossed the plane arrived, and many small houses were built for winter quarters. Before Yuba City had much trade, however, the town of Marysville had been laid out ..."

It is difficult to describe to the reader exact locations of these first settlements in Yuba City for several reasons. The first is that the original plan of numbering blocks and lots has been changed entirely. And another reason is that the lots occupied by these first settlers are under the levee. But fortunately the lots owned and occupied by Rolfe and Cheever were a part of a block which we can now identify very clearly as will be done shortly.

A further reason that it is difficult to locate early landmarks in terms of the modern city is that very few of the original streets have been retained either by name or by location. But again fortunately, three of the original streets which have been

retained will serve to locate Rolfe and Cheever's store. These are Second, B, and C Streets.

The street of the original town which ran along the bank of the Feather River, and which logically ought to have been called First Street, was called Water Street. Then to the west running parallel to Water Street came the present day Second Street followed by Third, Fourth, etc., but which no longer exist. The street on the north edge of the town running east and west and at right angles to Water Street was called A Street. Then to the south came the present day B and C Streets followed by D, E, F, etc. but which do not exist today.

Block number one of the original town was the northeast block bounded by Water, A, Second and B Streets. Then block number two was the next one to the south bounded by Water, B, Second, and C Streets. It was in this block number two that the first improvements of Yuba City were made.

Each block contained eight lots which measured 83 by 166 feet. In this block No. 2, Lot No. 1 was at the corner of Water and C Streets. They were numbered to the north so that lot No. 4 was on the corner of Water and B Streets. Lot No. 5 was on the corner of Second and B Streets, the numbers then running south with Lot No. 8 on the corner of Second and C.

As has been stated, this block No. 2 can be identified easily because the west half of the block (or lots number 5, 6, 7 and 8) is now the site of

the new county office building and library while the levee and river bank now cover the east half of lots Number 1, 2, 3 and 4.

When Rolfe and Cheever opened their store in August 1849 the proprietors gave them lots Number 3 and 4 of block No. 2, and it was somewhere on these lots that they constructed their first shelter of poles and canvas. But by April 1850 they had erected three board houses on Water Street facing the river. These lots were opposite the mouth of the Yuba River, and were chosen to be the beginning of the town because they were thought to be the most convenient spot to the miners coming down from the Yuba diggings. And this choice was later proved correct by the location of the first hotel (Western) on the corner of Water and B (Lot No. 4) and the landing for the first ferry connecting Yuba City and Marysville opposite the hotel.

Two other members of the Cheever family came to Yuba City in the spring of 1850. They were George F. Cheever and Charles G. Cheever and were probably cousins of the three brothers, Henry, David and Edward. We have no record of their activity or occupation other than that they owned some lots. Their names appear as witnesses on deeds a few times.

It is not possible to state exactly how many lots in Yuba City were owned by members of the Cheever family because all of the early deeds were not recorded. This failure to record all deeds was the result of the fact that

lots were being sold and deeds given as much as a year before the county government was fully organized. Many deeds were never brought in to be recorded after the Recorders office was opened.

Henry Cheever as one of the four original proprietors owned an undivided one fourth of the town before any lots were conveyed to individual purchasers. Each of the proprietors took title to certain lots in the beginning but left the larger fraction of the town as joint property. They jointly sold many lots and each one sold some of his lots individually. But inasmuch as all of the deeds were not recorded we cannot account for all ownership.

David Cheever as partner of Rolfe owned at least 24 lots and Edward owned a half dozen. The cousins, George F. and Charles G., owned only a few each. As will be noted later, the father, Captain James W., inherited Henry's holdings but we have no record of the extent of the property.

The partnership of David Cheever and Tallman Rolfe was dissolved in April 1850. Each one deeded to the other his interest in certain lots until there was no joint ownership. Rolfe became active in county politics and David took over the store which he operated with little success for a year or more. He left California in 1854, returning to Salem, Massachusetts, but later became a pioneer of the Territory of Colorado.

There he became prominent in politics serving in the territorial legislature and as secretary to the governor. During President Grant's administration, he was appointed postmaster of Denver. He died in 1881.

There is no evidence that Henry Cheever ever resided in Yuba City or had any active interest in the town other than ownership. In May, 1850 he sold one fourth of his one-fourth interest in the unsold portion of the town (one sixteenth) to his two brothers, David and Edward, and his two cousins Charles G. and George F. He received 4000 dollars for this one-sixteenth share, each of the four purchasers paying 1000 dollars for his one sixty-fourth share. A few years later David sold his one sixty-fourth for 400 dollars.

Evidently Henry's business affairs were in a poor state, and he needed to secure some cash. He borrowed 17000 dollars from a group of four men including his father, Captain James W., and as security he deeded his remaining three-sixteenths interest in Yuba City to a trustee who was to sell as much property as possible to liquidate the debt. But before the debt was satisfied Henry died in San Francisco in 1853. His father paid off the other three creditors and was given possession of what remained of the three-sixteenths.

Edward Cheever remained in Yuba City for a year or more. In November of 1850 after the county government was operating the sheriff

sold many lots for taxes including several owned by Edward. One of these lots is of particular interest.

It is the corner lot 83 by 166 at Second and C Streets now a part of the site of the court house. Edward had also speculated in some lots in Linda, but the sheriff of Yuba County sold them for taxes.

Edward returned to Salem with David in 1854 and later to Illinois where he had lived before coming to California. In 1862 he enlisted in the Illinois Volunteer Infantry with which he saw action in several of the principal battles of the Civil War. He later joined his brother, David, in Colorado, but in 1883 returned to California. He did newspaper work in San Francisco and was active in the Grand Army of the Republic and the Society of California Pioneers until his death in 1892.

The father, Captain James W. Cheever, probably never came to California. We have no record of his affairs after he assumed ownership of Henry's share of Yuba City. And we have no further record of the affairs of the two cousins, Charles G. and George F. We can be pretty certain that their property went the way of most town lots owned by the early settlers. It was sold for taxes because there was not enough demand for lots in Yuba City to justify paying taxes on more than a few on Water Street facing the river.

The last official record we have involving the Cheevers and Yuba City is a judgement given by Judge K. S.

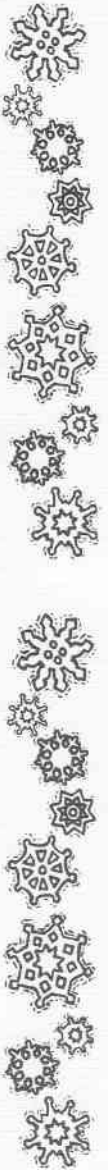
Mahon of the Superior Court of Sutter County. The California Fruit Cannery Association (the forerunners of C.P.C.) brought suit to quiet title to property "on the southerly side of B Street produced ... where the Northern California Railway intersects B Street..." The judgement, handed down July 28, 1903, gave ownership in

fee to the association. Among the twenty-two persons invited to appear in court to defend their claim to title were Henry, David, Edward, George F., Charles G, and James W. Cheever in accordance with the droll and macabre legal tradition of challenging dead men to come forth and do legal combat.

References

1. Edward E. Cheever, First Settlement of Yuba City, Quarterly, Society of California Pioneers, December 1932, Vol. 9, p. 228
2. Edward E. Cheever, Through the Straits of Magellan in 1849, Quarterly, Society of California Pioneers, Vol. IV., pp. 137-163
[This article by Edward Cheever gives an excellent description of the difficulties a sail vessel had getting through the straits. He read the paper to a meeting of the California Historical Society at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco January 13, 1891. It was published some thirty years later in the Pioneers Quarterly.]
3. Edward E. Cheever, The Indians of California, The American Naturalist, Salem, Mass, Vol. IV, May 1870, No. 3, pp. 129-148
[Cheever was accepted as an authority on the Indians of California, but this treatise in the Naturalist is very general and formal and does not read as if the author were recording his observations. He served for several years as historian of the California Pioneers and is credited with inducing many pioneers to write memoirs. The Pioneers did not have ample publishing opportunity at the time, but these memoirs were kept and published in the Quarterly many years after Cheever's death.]
4. John H. Eagleston, An Early California Voyage, Salem, 1874 p. 26 [Captain Eagleston lost his crew in San Francisco. They jumped ship and went to the diggings. So he sold the Mary and Ellen and returned to Salem on other ships. He claims to have taken to Salem the first samples of California gold.]
5. Larkin Papers, George P. Hammond, Ed., U.C. Press, Berkeley, Vol. VI, p. 152 and 339
6. Frank E. Myers, Defenders of the Union, Overland Monthly, Second Series, San Francisco, Vol. 27, pp. 434-462
7. Polynesian, Honolulu, March 15, 1845; August 16, 1845; October 25, 1845; January 10, 1846; April 4, 1846; July 18, 1846
8. John A. Sutter, Jr. Statement, Allan R. Ottley, Ed. Sacramento 1943, p. 93
9. Sutter County Deed Books A, pp. 1 and 6; C, pp. 58, 96; D, pp. 236-236, 335; E, p. 63; 31, p. 109
10. Deed Book E, p. 63 Sutter County, "Map of Yuba City. Situated at the Head of Navigation on the Feather River opposite the Mouth of Yuba River as Surveyed by Jos. S. Ruth."
[Some readers perhaps needs to be reminded at this point that in 1849 the mouth of the Yuba River was further to the north than its present location. In later years the channel was diverted to the south to allow a more gradual merging with the Feather.]
11. Thompson and West, History of Nevada County, p. 228, Sacramento Union, Nov. 22, 1872.

The Puzzler



X D I B F Z L G D N F Y C E V A P B
W P Q I P O L A E G R I D L E Y S A
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BARNETT
BIDWELL
BIRMINGHAM
BUS

CHANG
CHEEVER
COLLEGE
ELGIN
EXEQUATUR

GRIDLEY
HOCKEM
ORDINANCE
PHOTOGRAPHY
POPPY

PRESERVATION
RAMEY
SALTILLO
SMITH
SUTTER

Coming Events

January

- 13 Historical Society Meeting, at the Museum, 7:00 p.m.
Program: Robert Mackensen on Historic Preservation
Dessert follows meeting
Gold Rush Chinese Porcelain exhibit opens at the Museum

February

- 13 Love's Messenger Valentine Gift Bag Fundraiser
(see order form inside)

March

- 12 Gold Rush Chinese Porcelain exhibit ends
13 Hike in the Sutter Buttes
19 Yuba City High School Student Art Show begins at the Museum
29 Bus Trip Around the Buttes
- 24 Annual Luncheon, Meridian Veterans' Hall
11:30 a.m. social, 12:00 luncheon
Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Awards

