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Yuba City, California

January 2005



Noah Noble Piatt
(Photo provided by Bob Bryden)



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Constance Cary, Secretary

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Bonnie Ayers-2001*

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Cynthia Pfiester-2004

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Bud Doty-2002

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Helen Heenan-1996

Phyllis Smith-2000

Bill Stenquist-2004

*The year the director joined the Board.

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The 2005 dues are payable as of January 1, 2005. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at P. O. Box 1555, Yuba City, 95992-1555.

Student (under 18)/ Senior Citizen/Library	\$ 15
Individual	\$ 20
Organizations/Clubs	\$ 30
Family	\$ 35
Business/Sponsor	\$ 100
Corporate/Benefactor	\$1000

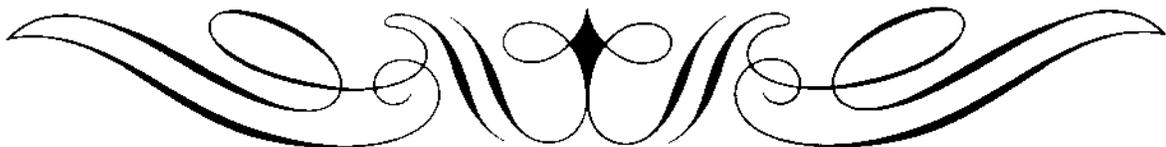
President's Message

Happy New Year! In this past year we accomplished several important projects. We celebrated our 50th anniversary with a well-attended picnic in the Howard Harter Park. We contributed to the acquisition of new lighting for the Museum. We made significant progress on the restoration of the Hock Farm doors.

In 2005 we will be continuing our preservation efforts and hope to complete the Hock Farm doors project, and we will bring you interesting programs at our quarterly meetings.

Preservation efforts continue in Sutter County. In December the Sutter County Planning Commission approved the draft Historic Preservation Ordinance prepared by the Preservation Committee for action by the Board of Supervisors. The Committee had 13 members, three of whom are on the Historical Society's Board of Directors. The Board views the draft ordinance as a good start toward preserving Sutter County's history.

Tom Crowhurst
President



Correspondent Seeking Information

I am seeking a picture of Francis Lofton who died April 30, 1900, in Wheatland, Yuba County, California and who is buried in the Lofton Cemetery. I would like to hear from any descendants. I'm writing a book on the Pontoosuc Company of the Mormon War in Hancock County, Illinois in the 1840s. Mr. Lofton was a member of that company.

Suzanne Miller
119 E. Madison St.
Rushville, IL 62681

Director's Report

The new year 2005 starts with a flourish at the Museum as Sutter County Facilities Management provides a fresh coat of paint to the main gallery during the first week of January. Although this necessitates closing from January 4 through 9, we welcome the first complete paint job since the Museum opened in 1975. During the year, the other galleries will be painted in turn as schedules permit.

Look for the exhibit *River, City and Sky: Sutter County's Shanghai Bend, Views from an Urban River* to open with a reception on Friday, January 14 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. Local photographer Tim Moen has created a stunningly beautiful photo documentary that also details the area's remarkable history and its current precarious situation. This important exhibit will remain through February 27.

Those talented Yuba City High School Art Department students will show their work in a variety of media February 28 through March 13. Plan to attend the opening reception on Friday, March 4 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The first traveling exhibit of the year opens with a reception on the evening of Thursday, March 24. *Discovery, Devastation, Survival: California Indians and the Gold Rush* will be here through May 16. Program information will follow in the March *Muse News*.

Be sure to fill out the *Love's Messenger* form in this *Bulletin* to send a surprise Valentine treat to a special someone. Delivery of the gift bags takes place on Monday, February 14.

Save the date of Friday evening, March 18, when Walt Anderson will present a program on the Sutter Buttes. Renowned naturalist Anderson has studied the natural world of the Buttes for many years. His recently published book *Inland Island, The Sutter Buttes* is the definitive study of the flora, fauna and natural history of the Buttes. It is available in the Museum Store.

As you can see, the new year is filled with interesting and meaningful events, exhibits and programs. I hope you will resolve to become involved with your museum this year.

Happy New Year,
Julie Stark
Director

Memorials

In Memory of **Helen Abbott**
Bob & Katie Bryant
Ken & Vivian Calhoun
Chipman & Renfrow
Accountancy Corporation
Diane Covert
E. Mildred Deeds
Stan & Rose Marumoto
Bob & Karen Penning
Paula & Gordon Raub
Pete & Margit Sands
Randy & Shirley Schnabel
Kathryn Smith

In Memory of **Vi Amarel**
Perry Mosburg

In Memory of **William Andreason**
Eleanor Holmes
Susan Micheli
Gayle & Mitzi Morrison
Cynthia Struckmeyer
Walter & Jane Ullrey

In Memory of **Jeff Arthur**
Anne Adams

In Memory of **John Brownlee**
Jean Gustin

In Memory of **Blair Butler**
Ron & Merlyn Rudge
Russ & Rita Schmidl
Sharyl Simmons

In Memory of **Dan Dillon**
Jane Boone

In Memory of **Wally Herger, Sr.**
Gene & Jim Taresch

In Memory of **Della Johnson**
Janice Mondavi & Family

In Memory of **Honora Anita Laney**
Jean Gustin
Susan Micheli

In Memory of **Geraldine Leech**
Jim Staas

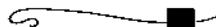
In Memory of **Edward Le Pine**
Jane Boone

In Memory of **Jesse M. Ohrt**
Bob & Katie Bryant

In Memory of **Albert W. Onstott**
Walter & Jane Ullrey

In Memory of **Ernest C. Shippen**
Dub McFarland

In Memory of **Stephanie Siller**
Jim Staas



In Honor of **Igurna Otto**
Ray Frye

Gift to the Historical Society from
Jane & Don Pinkerton



January Meeting

This year our January dessert meeting will be held **Tuesday, January 11 at 7:00 p.m. at the Museum.** Mary Knapp of the Rotary Club will present a slide show on the Bok Kai Temple. This one-of-a-kind temple is on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of most endangered historic places. Interest in this topic is high, so be sure to arrive early for good seats. After the program, scrumptious desserts will be provided by Audrey Breeding and other Board members.

A New Coat of Paint

The Museum will be closed **January 4th through 9th** while the main gallery, the adjacent gallery and the gift shop are painted for the first time since the Museum opened in 1975.

During that week, staff will be moving exhibit furniture to make way for the painters, and will also be constructing the new exhibit, *River, City and Sky: Sutter County's Shanghai Bend, Views from an Urban River*, which opens January 14.

Dues Due

Your dues for 2005 are due! Just return your membership envelope, inserted in the last issue of Muse News, with your check for uninterrupted delivery of the Bulletin. If you do not have your envelope, look at the inside cover for membership information.

Errata

The following corrections apply to Part I of Uncle Dickie's Reminiscences, published in the October 2004 issue of the Bulletin.

The cover picture was misidentified and should be captioned "The Original Piatt Ranch House."

The Yuba County map referred to on page 4 was published in 1861.

The photo caption on page 10 should read "Kate Piatt ... born on the Piatt Ranch in Honcut in 1860."

Uncle Dickie Reminisces

by
Richard Piatt

In our last issue we met Uncle Dickie about Christmas, 1849 and followed him as he worked gold claims along the Yuba River. We now pick up the story about July, 1850. In the remainder of the reminiscences, brother Noah comes to California, along with James Bryden and the Sadorus family.

We had then about \$15,000 belonging to Uncle Bill, Geo. Matsler, Henry Sadorus and myself and it was proposed that I should take our gold to Nevada City and deposit it at "Prother and Oglisby." They were merchants at the time and the gold would be more safe than laying in camp. We had \$15000 in my buckskin purses. I had leather saddle bags that I brought from home so one morning, August, we put gold in the saddle bags with some shirts that we wrapped around the gold, strapped the bags onto the saddle on the mule and Spangler and myself set out for Nevada [City]. We went over our foot log all right and down through town and got supplies for the trip. Then over the log where Downy's mule had fallen off but Jack it liked a goat and then through the sailor's claim, they were cleaning up a big lot of gold. Spangler stopt to see the gold close. Close by was South Fork which had been turned into a race. The water was deep and swift. The foot log was a pine hewn flat and only 15 inches wide. I started over leading the mule. He jumped onto the log, his feet slipped and fell on his back in the middle of the race and went rolling over and over and finally lodged against the bank

where I got hold of the rope and held him until Spangler came to my assistance. The saddle and saddlebags, blankets and all were under the mule. We had to get into the water and take the saddle off, undo the straps and get the saddlebags. They were full of water but the gold was all there. We took everything up on to the flat and took the gold and everything out and spread out to dry. While the things were drying in the sun, I took a look at the flat. I had never been on the flat before. It was evidently the old river channel and all probability rich in gold and I proposed to Dan that we take it up and go to work. Dan said it was too deep. There was a hole on one side that someone had dug about 6 feet deep and abandoned. It was my intention to return with hired men and work the place but soon after that other parties took possession and went to work and in less than a year over three million dollars were taken from that flat. Uncle Bill bought a small piece of ground 30 ft square I believe from which we took out the following season about 3,000. Soon after I left, a Mr. Durgan on the flat erected a saw mill, the first that was built in the mines of Cala and the place Durgans

Flat is now a part of Downyville and some mining is going on there to this day.

Well to return to the subject of the trip to Nevada City, after our things had dried a little we packed up and took the trail up the mountain. It was steep and rugged for three miles to the spring on the divide where Uncle Bill met the Scotchman that told him of the mine the year before. I found this a far better trail than the one we came in on.

I remember nothing of interest until the second day. We got to Nevada [City] and found a lively town with better buildings than any I had seen with hotels, saloon and grocery store on both sides of the main street. Saw the sign of Prather & Oglesby and went in. Prather was behind counter and greeted cordially. I handed him my saddlebags as though they were light. He was not prepared for their weight and they fell behind the counter. It had been agreed between Matsler, Sadorus, and myself to invest a part of our funds in cattle if I met with an opportunity to do so on this trip. I was also to go to Sacramento for letters as there was the only post office in the upper country. We spent a few days at Nevada [City] looking at mines with which was very different from river mining. The gold was mostly very fine as fine as powder on the hillside and mingled with earth from the surface down while in the ravines and flats there was a great deal of coarse gold. Those mines were rich and extensive. Here they used quicksilver in their riffles. We had no quicksilver in Downyville and lost most of the fine gold for the want of it.

Spangler bought a horse and

saddle and were ready to go. I took \$5000 in gold with me leaving about \$10,000 with Prather and Oglesby. From there to Sacramento was a good road. We were arrived early next morning in the city and put up at a hotel. I was surprised to see such a town. Ships had come from Maine and New York with crowds of passengers with houses ready to be set up and loads of lumber and merchandise. Long trains of immigrants were arriving from the plains. Many thousands were yet on the road. I went to the post office. A hundred men were in line. I took my place and after an hour when near the delivery remembered I had no coin and was about to give up my place in despair when a stranger next ahead of me said keep your place, I've got a dollar you can have if you get a letter. I could hear my heart beating with anxiety. I had no word from home for months. I knew Bro. Noah had started but didn't know which route he had taken and many were dying of cholera and some were killed by Indians and oh I wanted a letter so bad and when I at last got to the delivery I could scarcely speak my name and when the clerk turned and said no letter for Piatt, well I will not attempt to describe my feelings. There was a crowd in front of the post office on the river bank. The little steamboat Senator was about to leave for San Francisco. The fare was \$48 dollars. There was a man with a table and scales weighing the gold. It took three ounces to pay the fair. (\$16 an ounce) Meals on board was one dollar. There were two hundred passengers. Some went expressly for letters. I joined a company of four to send a man to the post office at San Francisco. We each gave \$32. His

name was Sydney Smith. He never returned. I heard later that he died in the city. I went back to the hotel, bought paper and wrote brother Wm telling him I would return to Downyville and work on a flat - I had this covered as I came away. I had not finished the letter when Spangler came to me and said he had a sure thing. He had heard that people were starving on the plains and would give any price for something to eat and he had already bought \$2000 worth of provisions and hired a pack train to take them to Carson River. I demurred at first but brot a friend he had met who was anxious to put all his money \$800 into enterprise. I gave my consent as there was no postal arrangement we had to send for letters and to send out letters or packages by parties going on business. A bartender by the name of Frazer posted notice on the 4th that he was going below and would take letters and mail them for \$1 each and bring back letters at the same and if anyone had gold that they wished to have taken to be deposited in the band he would take charge of it for them. I wanted to send letters home and spent the 4th in writing letters. I wrote two letters. Then took a pan of dirt from under my feet and washed out two dollars to pay the carrier. The next day I went to Capt. Downy thinking I would make some arrangement to go in partnership with him, but I found him asleep and when he woke he looked so bad I thought I had better not have anything to do with him. I learned later that he and the salors who came there with him had sent fifty thousand dollars by Frazer to have deposited in a bank but they never saw Mr. Frazer or the money again. But, some two weeks later a

man came to town who said he met Mr. Frazer in San Francisco and he was about to leave the State and he recommended him to go to Downyville. Said he had been there two months and had made 50,000. He also gave the man a letter of recommendation to one of the his victims, but there was one lucky humby Whiskey Jack by name who had \$10,000 buried somewhere but was dead drunk and his chum couldn't find his money to send off by way of Frazer. He would often say to his chums, you should have known better than to send your gold by that raskele Frazer. I wouldn't trust him with mine.

Downy was working a claim ten miles up the South Fork near Sierra Butte. Had a lot of Kanakas at work and often invited me to come and see him. One day I thot I would go with a young man [who] was taking a mule load of supplies. My mule would walk the foot log across the river like a goat or a dog. The log crossing the north fork was in front of the store. I went on acrost the river on the log without thinking of any trouble and heard a splash. On looking back saw the pack mule in the middle of the stream and the groceries all afloat. I ran in to save the thing and a crowd gathered on the bank. One young man who owned a train of mules swore at me and said any dam fool ought to have more sense than to try to make a blind mule walk a log. I thought much but said nothing. I hadn't noticed that the mule was blind in one eye.

The day before I went to see Capt. Downy Sadorus and me went up the river a short distance to look after our animals who were running at large. We had gone but a short distance when we came to a small flat or high bar only

about 20 feet above the channel of the river. I remarked that this is where the river ran a great while ago when the gold was deposited and here is where we can work and [not] be troubled with water. He said it was too far to the bedrock, too deep to work. I went to the bank and saw that it wasn't more than 6 feet and intended to return next day and go to work but put it off until my return. While I was gone Old Man Zumwalt and sons came on to the flat and dug a hole 4 feet deep and struck it rich.

Gap in diary

I demurred at first but he brot a friend he had met who was anxious to put all his money \$800 into the enterprise. I gave my consent thinking more of the good we could do than of the money for well I know that they suffer on the plane had but little to give. We went down to the store on front street and had the goods put up. The Mexicans came with 25 mules and loaded up and went outside of town and camped for the night. Next morning we started out over the road that I came in 49. Our journey over the mountain was tedious. The Mexicans would not drive their mules more than 15 to 20 miles a day. I became impatient the first day at noon. They stopped as I supposed for dinner and to give the mules a rest, but I could not persuade them to load up and go on and from that on when they came to a good place to camp about noon they would stop for the day. I learned later on that they were right in doing so as their load was heavy.

Gap in diary

During the fall of 49 and spring of 50, gold was found in paying quantities on the tributary of the American River and also on the Cosumnes. Along the divide between these streams the Carson River road came and was first traveled by miners going to and from the mines. To accommodate the travelers and teamsters, hotels and stores had been built at convenient distances along the road as far as Pleasant Valley at the foot of the high Sierras and beyond away in the heart of the mountains. Trading posts had recently been established to trade with immigrants for their worn out stock which then turned out to recruit.

Gap in diary

Not far from the [??] there were small meadows [??] and beautiful valleys and lakes of pure water and a [??] of wild flowers at the [??] of the American and the atmosphere was delightful through the last of August. I ran up and on to the summit of the Sierras. The road was lined with covered wagons drawn by long teams of oxen and on each wagon there was painted in large letters Pike County Missouri. Twenty-five big wagons and long teams were ascending from the east. Fifty men were beating and cursing the oxen while twenty five or more women covered with dust, each with a child in her arms were tailing up the steep mountains. This was the highest point on the road and the most difficult of assent and well I remembered that thirteen months ago we had toiled all the afternoon unloading and packing a part of our goods on our backs to the summit

where we camped for the night by a bank of snow on the third day of August 1849. Descending the mountain going east we come to a valley at the headwaters of one of the streams running into Carson river. Here we stopped for the night. Our road from here followed a tributary of Carson River down to Carson Valley which was as far as the contract with the [??] called for an we dismissed them.

We unloaded our goods on the bank of a small stream on the west side of the valley at the base of the mountain and were soon ready for business. But trade was dull and other traders had gone ahead of us and established trading posts down along Carson River and out on the edge of the Great Desert and were satisfying the wants of all who had anything to give in return, and those who had nothing to share came to us and it was our privilege to relieve the wants of a goodly number. We remained only a week. One evening a man came to camp and said there was a young man down the road a short distance that was sick and alone and so far gone he could [not] walk. We found him and brought him in to our camp and gave him brandy and nourishment and brought him to. He was nearly starved to death and had hemorrhage of the nose. We laid him in my bed and stopped his bleeding by inserting a sponge on a wire and I sat with him all night holding a key between his teeth so that he could breathe through his mouth. I thought he would die that night - he was so completely exhausted, but he slept some and next morning was able to eat and in a few days recovered. This boy was only 17 years of age and had left home for Cal

with friends and had taken sick on the road and was left at Salt Lake to take care of himself. As soon as he was able to travel, he joined a company that was passing thru Salt Lake and was again taken sick and left at a trading post. From then he made an attempt to walk through to Cal alone and without money. He gave out on the desert and would have perished (I am glad I found him). As soon as he was able to talk, he thought he was about to die and gave me his mother's address and requested me to write her but he recovered and we brought him thru Sacramento. I am sorry I've forgotten his name.

We found trade very dull but traded for a few cattle. Spangler went on down to the desert and sent me word to bring down a part of our supplies. I bought an ox team of three young men who decided to climb the mountains on foot and after establishing a store at the head of the valley I loaded the wagon with supplies - flour and bacon mostly - and set out for the great desert a 100 miles below. I hired one of the men from whom I bought the team to drive for me and I rode on ahead. About noon I stopped to wait for my team and there came two men and a boy about 12 years. They were on foot - had an old worn out horse with a small pack of blankets. They looked as though they were starving. The oldest of the company was about 40. He saluted me with a wave of the hand. I returned the salutation then he mistook me for an odd fellow and shook my hand in a way I was not use to then laughed and said thank god we are saved. Then he wept saying my poor boy and I have had nothing to eat for a week. My team

come up. Then taking out of his pocket a casket of jewels hand it to me saying take that and give us food. I handed it back saying I had no use for jewelry. Then his hopes fell but taking out a beautiful breast pin and odd fellows emblem said you surely will give me something for the emblem of our order. No sir, said I. I am no odd fellow. Then he became the picture of despair. Then another though seemed to strike him and he greeted me as a mason and I returned his greeting as a brother. Then he embraced me and wept for joy. Then taking out my pocket book I wrote an order to Mr. Hite saying give Mr. Prother all the provisions he wants to do him to Sacramento and told Mr. Prother where he'd find Mr. Hite. But said Mr. P, we won't live to get there without you give us something to eat. I took him to my wagon and gave him a supply for two days and taking out a diamond pin said again "Wear this until we meet." But we have never met and I have lost the diamond pin. I must state the fact here that I should have done the same by these people if they had been no fraternal obligation, for I could not have turned away any man hungry while I had it in my power to relieve them.

The next day as I was starting out on the 12 mile desert I met an Irishman on foot and alone. He told me a pitiful story. He had nothing to eat for two days. That at the other side of the desert there was a Dutchman had a trading post and wouldn't give him a bite to eat and he was starving. I took him to the wagon and gave him some bacon and crackers. He began eating the raw meat. I told him go on to the water and [cook?] his meat and eat his breakfast. He thanked me and after I

got a long ways from him, he turned and shouted God will bless you for saving my life. On went on crost the desert to where the road crosses Carson River. There the Dutchman had a trading post. He had pies and bread to sell at a high price. He came to the wagon and asked what I had. I told him flour and bacon. He offered me a good price for all I had but I wouldn't sell him a pound because he had turned away a man that was starving. I told him I would take it to the desert and give it away to the destitute. The next day I think it was I saw a small tent a half mile or more from the road in a bend of the river and I rode down to it and stopt near by to let mule feed on the grass when a young man came out of the tent and told me he belonged to a train that had gone on to Cala. It was Splitags [?] train (84) train. He said they had a drove of cattle. One of their men had taken sick and they thought he would die and he remained with him to take care of him and bury him when he died, but contrary to their expectations, the man was still alive and getting better whilst he himself was sick and was afraid to remain longer and [??] me to send someone to take them in to Cala. Said he would give a \$100 or more to anyone who would take them in. He was a fine looking young man. I had hailed a couple of wagons back near the road that had stopped for the noon rest. I rode over to see them and they agreed to go and get them and take them through to Cala, but a week later on my return I overtook them at the head of the valley where they were filling in a large grave. They said the men had both died and they buried them in one grave. If these young men could have

had proper care, they would have recovered.

At this time the main part of the immigration had got through but there was a great many who had been detained by sickness and others had started late and when I got to the desert there was quite a village of tents and two or three trading posts all constructed of canvas and it was properly named Ragtown. Some there were whose teams had failed on the desert - more waiting to recruit their stock. Many were sick and some were dying of cholera which had broken out in St. Louis and followed the emigration to Sacramento City and by the last of October was raging in that city and to some extent in the country. As many as 100 died in one day.

I met Spangler at Ragtown. He had bought a few cattle and found a meadow several miles down the river where grass was plenty where he kept them. I spent a few days at the meadows and at Ragtown going back and forth. One morning I was looking after stock and went up into a bend of the river and came unexpectedly upon two men in a secluded spot just as they were about to fill up a grave. Looking down I saw what appeared to be a man with a tent cloth wrapped around him. They told me it was a friend who had died that morning. There was no one else in sight and as they shoveled in the earth I left them. This incident left a sad impression on my mind.

I was discouraged and tired of the trip. Had heard nothing from my brother, had not met no one from our part of Illinois and came to the conclusion that they had taken some other route and as I still had over \$3,000 in gold with me which I wished to invest

in cattle, I decided to return to Cala and buy at the end of the journey as most all who came with ox teams would sell their teams after they got through. So I turned my team and goods over to Spangler. He was to come on later to the head of the valley and join Mr. Hite and bring stock [?] we had there. As soon as I had completed these arrangements, I set out on my return to Carson.

Gap in diary

I made the journey in less than three days. I put up one night with a family who we camped about where Carson City now stands. I accepted their invitation to sleep in their tent on a feather bed which was the first real bed I had slept in for years. The next day I got to our trading post at the head of the valley. Found Mr. Hite had sold most of the goods on credit to men he had never seen and never saw again. He had \$1500 on his book, one old mare and two or three poor cattle was all he had for the store of provisions I had left with him, but I heartily approved of all he had done. He was anxious to get back to Cal and decided to leave the stock and camp in care of the sick boy. He having [necessarily?] to come [??]

I completed the journey in less than three days without incidence worth relating. I remember only one besides that I made mention of on my trip down, that of the burial of the two young me. I stopped one night with an emigrant family who persuaded me to sleep in their[this page ends here]

Gap in diary

We put up a few provisions but not enough to do us for I remember I got very hungry. We had a rain storm and I remember when on the summit of the mountain we saw the clouds below and we rode down in to the cloud through a thick mist for a mile then we were under the clouds in a rain storm and camped for the night under a large pine and had no supper that night. Next evening we overtook Col. Gillespie's train. Hite was acquainted and borrowed a coffee bop so we had coffee and crackers. On the third day we got to Pleasant Valley where there was a trading post and an eating house and from there on we had plenty to eat. Here we overtook John Ross, the high chief of the Cherokee Indians, with a small company on horseback and we kept company with them. Mr. Ross was the [first] blue eyed Indian I ever met. Mr. Ross was then about 35 years of age, was large and well proportioned, was as dark as a full Indian, but his blue eyes showed he must have some blood of the white race in his veins. His conversation was that of an educated man and I have been told since that he was well educated. I remember to have heard him say that it was very evident that his nation would become eventually amalgamated with the white race and become extinct as a nation but would still be a part of the great American nation. They had lost some of their ponies and it was supposed Indians had stolen them. One of the Cherokees said to the Chief, our brothers treat us badly. And the chief said, yes they do and ought to be taught better manners.

We separated that day. Mr. Ross and a part of his co. turned off in the mines on the American River. Mr. Hite

went out on the Cosumne. One of the Cherokees, Field was his name, kept me company. We stopped for supper ten miles from Sacramento at a wayside house. I left my mule standing near the door. All my gold was on the saddle. Dark came on and after supper I went to the mule and felt over the saddle and the sack was gone. Thought perhaps it was stolen, but after feeling around a while I found it. The mule had laid down and rolled over and sack came off. I took the sack and handed it to the landlord and asked him to take care of it. Then we unsaddled and turned our mules out to graze. Then selecting a smooth place for a bed, we spread down our saddle blankets and taking our saddles for pillows, the Cherokee and I laid down together and slept til day break. Next morning had breakfast. When I went to settle with the landlord, looked at me quizzically, are you the man that handed me a sack last night. I said yes. He stepped back to his bedroom back of the counter and handed me the sack. I mention this circumstance to show you how far we could trust strangers. The sack I carried purses in had 5 pounds of oats in so as to hide the purse, but anyone taking hold of it would guess what it contained. It seems to me now I was very careless with my gold and wonder I didn't lose it. Sometimes when I would stop for the night or at noon I would throw the sack down on the ground and throw my saddle and blankets on top of it and go away and leave it for hours at a time. It was too heavy to carry around wherever I went.

On the way to town that morning, Fields the Cherokee informed me his white ancestor was a Scotchman

who a 100 years ago came to the nation and married a squaw and that at last count had 700 descendants. We got in to town early, put up our mules and walked down to Front St. where I left him looking at the schooners and barges that tied up to the trees in the bank.

I think it that day at noon I met my friend Peter Henry from Logtown. We dined at the Lone Tree House. We were sitting in the shade in front of the house talking over our experiences together when a man from the plains approached and asked if I could tell him where he could get work to earn a meal. I saw that he was unwell and asked what ailed him. He said bowel complaint and hunger. I handed him some money and told him to go in and get his dinner and then buy medicine. He was trying to same something when Mr. Henry stepped and handed him two dollars. That dazed him. He stood looking at us a moment - the tears trickling down his cheek and said boys, I'll pay you back some day. There were not many objects of charity in those days, but much sickness and consequent distress but there were always those ready to lend a helping hand and men contributed liberly. I was told the gamblers and they were numerous, were remarkably generous and gave freely. It is hard to picture the state of society at this time. It was decidedly cosmopolitan. There were no regular organized societies. The free Masons were first to organize for the care of the sick. I believe that nearly half the men that crossed the plains in 49 were Masons and they were generally speaking good men. They didn't require that a man should be a mason but gave to all alike. The

Methodist Church sent out Elder Owen and several young ministers to establish churches in 1849. I attended services one Sunday here in a blacksmith's shop. It was in open shed without seats. The minister used the anvil for a desk. There was a good attendance of men, but no women.

In February 1850 I attended church one night in a new frame building. It stood not far from where the Capatol Hotel now stands. The house was crowded. There were a few seats in front but back by the door there was as many men as could find standing room. The stuart passed the contribution box to those on the seats and looked at the crowd back. A man [??] the door called out come this way old hose, I have a dollar I want to put in there. The stuart took courage and walked back among us and each one of us put in a dollar. We were a ruff looking crowd in our flannel shirts of all colors. Very few of us wore coats, but there was more money in the pockets of that audience than could be found in the pockets of the more respectable looking church goers of the present day and perhaps more charity and love of God in their hearts. I remember the close attention that was paid to the sermon to the end. The minister began the discourse by saying he came at the quest of Brother Owen who was stricken with grief at the loss of his little daughter, a beloved child of twelve summers.

We had very little reading matter in those days in the [??] 49 the first news boy appeared on the streets of Sacramento in the person of old Jo Grant as he called himself, a stout built man of 45. How he got his supply of Eastern papers I don't know but he

would come up the street with an arm full at the horse market would mount a box and begin making a speech about some wonderful news from N. Y., Boston and Bangor. All the vessels were chartered to bring everybody to Cala, then he would read something of interest part way thro and stop and say boys, I have time to read to you. Take the paper and read it. Only a dollar. They were all taken.

After my return from Carson River I rested often days then started to Nevada City at a mining camp on the road. I bought a team which I brought back to the City and left in the car of a Mr. Hill who was to wait there until Spangler came with the cattle from the plains. I then went to Nevada and remained a week and bought a few cattle. Spangler came in and we got out cattle together and drove them on to Feather River a few miles from its mouth where we remained a month. While there I had a severe spell of cholera mostly. And at the time the cholera was very bad in Sacramento.

We knew the bottom lands were subject to overflow in winter and Matsler and Sadorus having joined us. We moved upon to the Yuba River and stopped while Matsler and Sadorus went to look out a suitable place to winter. They selected a place at the head of the Honcut Valley and built a cabin near the foothills. Nearly all the bottom lands was already claimed but the range was good and we moved over. I remember we were late starting and it set in to rain a cold beating rain and I got wet and chilled through and nearly perished before we got to the cabin after dark. But the boys soon had a good fire and made tea. And I soon recovered and we glad

that all had a home for the winter. The weather cleared up and we had sufficient time for the grass and the wild flowers to come into bloom and the country was just beautiful. It was the most pleasant winter season I have ever known but we had to look out for our stock. The Indians from the mountains and drove off two one night. After that we built a corral near the cabin and put the cattle up of nights. There was also some young men who made a business of stealing horses and mules and driving to Sacramento and selling them. We lost four of our best animals in that way.

Soon after we settled on the creek the salmon came up and we caught saled down enough to do us all winder. Besides that we had an antelope or two. We found it necessary for one of the company to stay about the cabin on account of our gold. We had in all about \$20,000. I had brought from home two canasters that mother used to keep tea and coffee in and we still used them for that purpose. We filled them with gold and dug a hole in the middle of the fireplace about two feet deep and buried \$5,000 there. There then was two big lumps that wouldn't go in the cans. We put them in the bottom of the pit. After depositing the gold we filled up the hole and leveled down the hearth and rebuilt the fire and although we abandoned the cabin in May and left the gold there until July, I found it all there although the Indians often occupied the cabin. No one suspisioned that gold lay under the ashes.

It was in Dec. that Bro. Noah came to the cabin alone and on foot. He had had a hard time in getting to Cala. He and James Bryden and Alen

Sadorus went to Texas and joined a company headed by John Jorden a brother-in-law of Sadorus. Sadorus and Jorden brot their families and came with ox teams through Arizona down the Gila and Colorado Crost the desert to San Diego then up the coast. It was a long and tedious journey. I took Noah in partnership and he remained with me as long as he stayed in the country. James Bryden came to the ranch in February. In March I took Matsler and Noah and Bryden to Nevada City. After a week there we went to mining near Grass Valley. I discovered a very rich quartz mine but there was no mills in the country. We abandoned it. That mine was worth a million if we had known it. Millions have been taken out and it is worked to this day and known as the Alison Mine. This was in March 1851.

I left the boys in Grass Valley and returned to the Honcut. I had previously bought a squatter claim to the bottom land oposit the cabin with the intention of making my home there. I paid \$800 for the claim and went to making improvements. I built a temporary fense around 200 acre. None of my partners would take an interes with me. Uncle Bill had gone back to the Old Claim at Downyville. Sadorus had also gone there. Noah, Bryden and Matsler went up from Grassvalley. They all went to work and put in a floom to dog the mine. Matsler and Noah returned in April and the first of May we started with our cattle to the American Valley. We were a week on the road, the last three days over a rough mountain trail, but we found a fine meadow of 600 acres which we took possession of and fensed with poles. I worked at that a month.

Noah, Matsler and Spangler took charge of the cattle and I returned to the Honcut in time to make a good crop of hay. I also built a house on the east side of the valley. The boys started a shop at Onion Valley and bucered and disposed of some cattle at retail, but when I went up in July I found Matsler sick and we closed out the shop and I brought Matsler home with me. In crossing Nelson Creek on a high foot bridge my horse took fright and ran against Matsler and nocked him off into the stream. He fell on his back in the middle of the stream but likely was not hurt much. I helped him up to a store near by and bought him dry clothes and put him to bed and the next morning he was able to travel and continued to improve from that on. I have always thot that ducking done him good. After a week or two was able to return to his work. Alas in Nov they left the mountain ranch and brought down some 20 head of cattle which had not been able to dispose of and I bought them of the company and closed out the partnership. There was ten cows in the herd which gave me a start in Cattel. In Dec Bryden come from Downieville and spent the winter then went in partnership in the ranch. This was in 51 I think it was in July. I bought the Goyer place adjoining mine on the south. I paid \$2000 for that. The Cattle and horses and mules I had at that time were worth \$3000 and I had about 6000 in gold and about 50 tons of hay 1,500. I had improved the ranch to the value of \$3000. I had been in Cal two years and 6 months and made about \$15000 altho I had been sick and unable to work a good part of the time. I had done pretty well. I might have done better. In the spring

of 51 there was an Indian family made there home in the hills above the ranch. I used to sell them flour sugar and they most always paid in gold dust but if they didn't have the gold I let them have the flour on trust and they were prompt to pay. They never begged for anything. Old Bob, their chief was a good man. I think too good to be an Indian. He gave me his only son Tom and requested me to bring him up the same as a while child and of course Bob would come to see his son very often and made himself useful in cutting wood and doing chores and I always gave plenty to eat. He had a nephew ten years old. Jim was his name. Came to the ranch sick and I doctored up. He got well and was a good boy. One day I went to work out a way for a road to haul hay to the mountains and I followed an Indian trail in to the hills about five miles and met a band of Indians. I didn't notice that they were strangers until they had me surrounded. I was off of my horse at the time and their captain stepped up and extended his hand. It took it to shake and he held my hand and demanded my money and slapt my pocket. At the same time an Indian took my horse. I had \$200 in my pocket and I knew if I gave them the money they would kill me. I had no arms of any kinde. I took in the situation at a glance and jacked my hand loose and stuck it in my busum and pretended to have a pistol. At that one of the Indians said don't shoot good Indian. I made them stand back and give me my horse. I got on my horse with my face toward them and talking [to?] them all the time til I was out of Bow shot. I could see that the Captain was scolding because they had let me go. When I found I was safe out

of their reach I was badly frightened for I knew that they would have killed me if I had not made them believe I had a pistol. I learned later in the day that the same Indians had murdered a miner that morning a few miles above and were then on their way to the valley to sell the gold dust. They had killed a man by the name of Day, a preacher who had turned miner and had several thousand dollars in his cabin. They killed him, got his gold and burnt his cabin and took to [the woods?] and met me accidentally. But the miners raised in arms and caught them and hung them all that were caught. A good many Indians were killed on the roads that were inocent of that murder.

I have already made mention of Old Bob and the two Indian boys. I will now relate what I can of their history. Jim, Bob's nephew, lived with us 8 years and grew to be a tall good looking young man, was neat and tidy with his clothing and he was fair for an Indian and truthful and honest. He said there was a tradition among the oldest Indians that a great many years ago there was two two white women came among the Indians. They were very white with red hair, that his great-grandfather who was a big chief took one of the women for a wife and she had several children and that his father and Bob were descended from her and there was a trace of white blood oparent in all Bob's tribe and some of them were very kind and humane in disposition. They believe in a supream being whom Bob called the good Capitan. I asked him where he would go when he died. He said Good Capitan would take all good Indians to a place where the deer and elk were plenty,

plenty salmon, plenty acorn, plenty grasshopper, plenty clover, plenty everything Indian want. No cold no night, all the time good day. I asked him where bad I[ndians] go. He said Good Capitan no take him, he would turn into a snake, a coyote or some other bad thing and he always bad.

I asked him where white men go after death. The old fellow hung his head for a moment and said no saba no saba. He then went on to tell what a good country Cal was before the whites came. He said deer and elk were plenty and time [??] Indian had plenty meet, plenty buckskin clothes, plenty fish, plenty acorn. Indian never hungry. White man come. Deer and elk all gone, he muddy the rivers so the fish won't come up and shoots off his gun and the oak trees no more have acorns. This was my ranch from liberties Buttes to feather river. White man take it all.

The year of 1852 was a busy year in the ranch. Noah and Bryden worked with hired men. We had a large crop of hay and barley and sometimes we had as many as 20 men mowing with syhes [scythes] and no mowing machine in those days in Cal. Hay was worth \$50 a ton, barley 11 ct lb. but wages were high and so were groceries. Our store bill went up into the thousands. We paid \$150 per month to a man and his wife during harvest. I was on the go constantly bought and sold cattle, mules and horses and teams hauling hay to market[?]. Had a train of pack mules packing supplies to the mines. Took on in a mining claim. We undertook to floom 2000 ft of the Yuba River, built a saw mill to saw lumber for the floom at great cost and the business as badly managed. It was late

in the season when they got the dam in and the water in to the floom. I went to the claim and spent a day after they had the water turned in to floom, was dissatisfied with the way they were working but couldn't help matters and went home. Was taken sick on the road. In a few days the rain came. I was down with a fever. One of the company came and told me the floom was gone. I asked him if the superentented was drowned. He [said] no. I said I am sorry. I had been delerous for some time and floom was a weight on my minde all the time. Well the company scattered. The superentendant took what gold had been taken out and I had the debts to pay. The enterprise cost me \$2,000. That claim was worked years later and was rich.

About this time Bro. James came across the plains with his wife and daughter Allice, a child 2 years old, and made their home with me. James and me went above Bidwell's bar and bough several ox teams and wagons on the way home. I had a chill, had slight chills every third day for a week or two, but kept going. One day I worked hard in loading wagons with goods from a store in Marysville to send to the mountains and it was midnight when I got home. Next morning I woke up sick but thought I would give up hoping I would be better. The boys were all at work when I got up and a man by the name of Evans who had crossed the plains with cattle came and wanted me to go up to his camp and buy his stock. It was only a mile + 1/2 and I road up with him and bought his cattle and horses. There was 32 head in all. He helped drive them down to the corall. I settled for the cattle and laid down. I

woke with a fever in the afternoon and seeing the cattle still in the corral I went out and built a fire to heat the iron. Then I caught and branded all those cattle and horses without help from any one and it was a hot afternoon and I had a fever and was beside myself. I sat down on a rock. Allen Sadorus came and said how are you Dick. I answered I am sick. Then for weeks I new but little. For ten days was out of [my] head then came to senses and grew worse until I was so low I couldn't turn in bed or raise my head and the Dr gave me up to die and told my brothers if he thought best to tell me the truth it would make no difference with me. They could not tell me. Then Sister Kate came and sat by me and began to talk about the uncertainties of life. Then I knew what she was coming to and I felt serious about the matter although I told her it didn't matter. The sun would rise and set as usual and I had no wife or children to morn my loss and I will very well be spared[?]. Then she bursted out crying and said they couldn't spare me. Then I told her I would not die and said this is not the way I am to die. Some will kill me yet. Then she told me what the doctor had said. I thought I new better than the doctor and I did. But it was a long time before I could stand on my feet.

Brother James brot cattle from Illinois large oxen. We started a cattle ranch on the Sacramento above Chico. Took James & cattle & some horse stock and Noah took charge of them. A. M. Sadorus built a cabin in the river bottom. Noah boarded with him. The river overflowed the bottom and came up in the cabin. They converted a wagon bed into a boat and got the

family on to an island. Sadorus returned to the cabin to get a sick man and while he was gone a Grizely bar came on to the island. Noah got the children & Mrs. Sadorus up in a tree top quick for safety but the bear left the island and swam to the mainland and as soon as the water receded they moved on to a Rock Creek and built a house. This was in Dec and they had to live in a tent long time. We lost 14 cattle in the flood. The winter of 52 I bought three yoke of oxen of a young man who had stolen them that morning. It was after sundown when he came with the cattle and offered at a low price. Told me who he bought them of and I knew the man & told me where he had been hauling some logs. I knew the mill and thought he told the truth. I wrote a bill of sale of the oxen and he signed it Geo. Milbern. Just then as I was about to pay for the oxen Bob Rodgers who had fast come in reconized the man as Geo. Farrow whom he had met at Mrs. Farrow's Hotel in Marysville and gave me a hint not to pay. Then I discovered that James had carried off the key to the safe and I told the fellow how it was. I couldn't pay him until the morrow. He said all right. I could meet him in Marysville. His easy maner removd all suspision and I paid him \$30 which I had in my pocket. He said he had to be in town that night on business. As soon as he was gone Rodger told me he knew the fellow to be Mrs. Farrow's son and as he had said his name was Milbern he must have stolen the cattle. I went to Marysville the next morning and Jack Farrow met me with an order from Milbern for the money and said Milburn had gone down the river to see a man who owed him money and was going to the States. I

declined to pay any one but the man I bought the cattle from. Later in the day Farrow came to me and asked who claimed the cattle. I told him no one. Then he said your title is good. I said they are too cheap and you and George had better come and take them. He said well we will if you are afraid of the title. We will come tomorrow. All right then I must go home. I knew that the thief was in hiding and when he heard I had gone home would come out. So I got out a warrant for Geo & Jack C. Farrow and had them both in jail before night. Their mother plead hard and offered me \$3000 not to open against them. She said she would take them to Oregon where they could do no harm. I told her it was better for her that they should suffer and I must do my duty. They got a light sentence one year and came out full fledged robbers and thieves. I had trouble with them years after. They had stolen some mules from me before I had them arrested which I recovered and ascertained they had sold in Marysville. After their release from prison they stole horses at Stockton and brought to Marysville. Jack concealed himself in an out house and shot at me 5 times. I was standing in front of a livery stable acrossed the street. A few days after that he was prowling about the ranch watching [watching?] an opportunity to kill me. Brother James and I arrested him after an exciting chase. His horse fell with him. He shot at James and snapped at me but when I was about to shoot he threw away his pistol and threw up his hands. He escaped prison a year later was caught and sent to state prison for ten years. His brother George resisted arrest and was killed by an officer. I saw Jack in San

Francisco a few years ago. He looked old and walked lame. Later on we had a good deal of stock stolen and sent several thieves to state prison but the story is too long.

In the season of 53 we raised a large crop of hay and barley and hauled most of it to the mountains and sold at a good price. Noah started a store at Forest city, soft hay & barley, kept a team and sawed lumber to the mines, started a dairy and in the spring wrote me for more cows. I bought some and took up. Took little Tom with Jim was there to help Noah. When I got to Forest City I found Noah sick, overworked and had a sick man in his cabin. I sent Noah to the hotel and took care of the sick man. The man had pneumonia and died that night. Next day I found I couldn't run the dairy and sold it for \$1,000, took the gold to Noah and handed to him saying there's your dairy take care of it. He was surprised for he hadn't thought of selling out. The snow was about 2 feet deep and I found there was no fun in packing two big cans of milk to the cabins and when I got there the miners wouldn't take it, said they took milk from the other fellow. They thought I was starting a new dairy so most of Noah's customers done without milk that day. But I remember I took one can to Evens's store and we made a big bowl of milk punch. Well in a few days Noah got able to attend business and little Tom and I started for home. I had \$2,000 in gold in a sack which I lashed on to Tom's saddle and covered it with a blanket. There was danger of being robbed. We stopped early at a wayside house and Tom wouldn't sleep in doors. I made him a bed in a wagon body. He got the blankets off of him

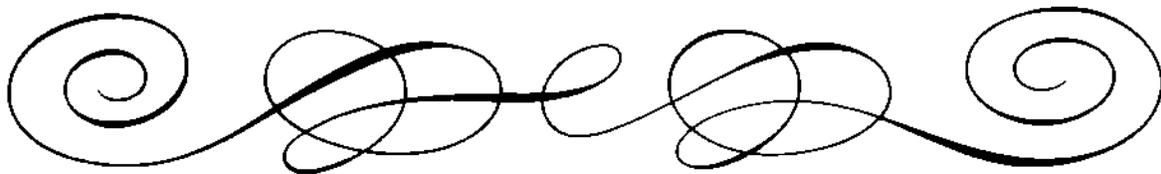
and caught cold which resulted in pneumonia. The day after I got home I went over Feather river on business. Tommy was coughing some when I left home but I thought it was only a cold but that night he woke Bro. James up and told him he was dying but James didn't think him very sick but gave him some medicine and he died that night. We all felt sorry. His Father, Old Bob was with him and took his loss very hard.

In season of 54 Bob Williams sent out a band of cattle. H. T. Sadorus was interested in them and had charge of the business. I went out on the road as far as Humbolt river to meet them. Took out ten mules loaded with supplies. I had two Mexican packers. I also took along \$3,000 with which to buy cattle. Some times when camped alone with the Mexicans I was afraid they would kill me when I was asleep. They were greasers whom I hired for the trip and strangers to me and new that I had money. I remember two nights I watched nearly all night. I failed to meet Sadorus with the cattle for the reason that he turned off on the Lassen road and didn't come down the Humbolt. I remained out on the desert several week, discharged the Mexicans and hired white men. I bought a few cattle and a few sheep and brought home a good many. Went out as far as the Truckee desert to trade with the Emigrants and there was quite a

town. Three or four stores and as many whisky shops where the town of Wordworth now stands and several water stations on the desert where they sold water at 50 cts a gallon and whisky at 50c a drink. The water was good but I don't know about the whisky.

Epilogue

Later in life, James Bryden married Mary Jane Sadorus. James is buried on Cemetery Hill above the site of the old Piatt home on Fruitland Road. His great-grandson, Bob Bryden, was the last Bryden to live on the ranch, into the early 1940s. Oglesby of Prather & Oglesby of Nevada City returned to Illinois. and later became Governor of that state. Over the years, Richard Piatt, besides being a cattle rancher, managed mines for others. Some of the mines he managed included the Goldbank at Forbestown, the Lee in Nevada, the mining camps of Manhattan and Goldfields, and the Burke Mine. As he said in later life "while a natural prospector, I was no financier." In old age, Richard settled in Sonoma where he lived to be 90. There he was remembered for his stories of the days of '49, his boyhood days on the western frontier of Illinois and his tales of the Piatt's boyhood friend Abraham Lincoln, whose acquaintance furnished many of his treasured recollections.

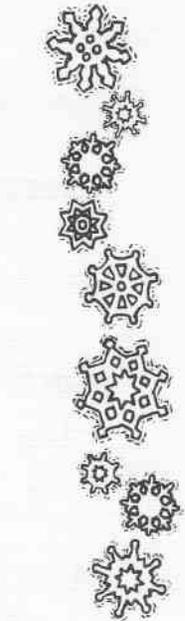


PUZZLER

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BRYDEN
 DICKIE
 HONCUT
 NOAH
 OXEN
 ROSS
 SADORUS
 SEASON
 SPANGLER
 WINTER

CHARITY
 GLOSSER
 JAMES
 OLIVE
 PIATT
 SACRAMENTO
 SALMON
 SHANGHAI
 VALENTINE
 YEAR



Coming Events

January

- 3 Undecoration Day at the Museum, 9:00 a.m.
- 4-9 Museum closed for painting
- 14 *River, City and Sky* (photo exhibit about Shanghai Bend) opens at the Museum
- 11 Historical Society dessert meeting at the Museum, 7:00 p.m.
Program: Bok Kai Temple

February

- 14 *Love's Messenger* gift bag delivery
- 27 *River, City and Sky* exhibit closes

March

- 4-13 *Yuba City High School Student Art Show* at the Museum
- 18 *Naturalist Walt Anderson* program on the Sutter Buttes at the Museum
- 24 *California Indians and the Gold Rush* exhibit opens at the Museum