



Vol. XLVIII No. 2

Yuba City, California

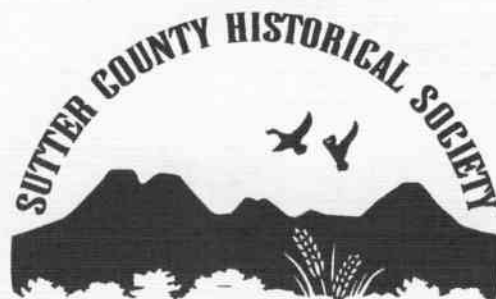
April 2006



Looking west on Pass Road in West Butte, circa 1890. On the left are the West Butte Church, the homes of August Hoke and George Straub, and the West Butte Town Hall. The building on the right is the Straub Store.

photo courtesy of Donna McMasters

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM
OF SUTTER COUNTY
P.O. Box 1555
1333 Butte House Road
Yuba City, CA 95992



OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Audrey Breeding, President

Constance Cary, Secretary

Bob Mackensen, Vice President

Phyllis Smith, Treasurer

DIRECTORS

Bonnie Ayers-2001*

Bob Mackensen-2002

Audrey Breeding-1997

Steve Perry-1994

Constance Cary-1987

Cynthia Pfiester-2004

Tom Crowhurst-1997

Margaret Pursch-2002

Bud Doty-2002

John Reische-2000

Dorothy Ettl-2000

Miles Shafer-2004

Bruce Harter-1991

Phyllis Smith-2000

Helen Heenan-1996

Bill Stenquist-2004

*The year the director joined the Board.

The **Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Historical Society in Yuba City, California. Editors are Sharyl Simmons and Phyllis Smith. Payment of annual membership dues provides you with a subscription to the **Bulletin** and the Museum's **Muse News** and membership in both the Society and the Museum.

The 2006 dues are payable as of January 1, 2006. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at P. O. Box 1555, Yuba City, 95992-1555. 530-822-7141

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

President's Message

Welcome to the spring edition of the Historical Society's News Bulletin. Our annual membership luncheon is April 8 in Meridian. Please see the insert for details - the programs will include the Judith Barr Fairbanks essay award winners, and a history of Meridian presented by Lyle and Debra Callaway. I'd love to see you all there!

We have openings on the Board of Directors for active people who are interested in participating in activities of the Society.

Our survey of local historic properties is underway, but it's not too late to volunteer to assist. Please call Phyllis Smith, 671-3261, for information.

See you at lunch!

Audrey Breeding
President

Director's Report

Happy Spring! Great things are happening here at the Museum. We are very excited about the Museum expansions. The storage addition will solve so many of the space problems we have been experiencing. In addition to the generous donors to the project, Jean Goss, Sutter County Historical Society and Community Memorial Museum Trust, we received great practical assistance from Willard Scrogin and Art Worledge, who donated many hours. Museum Commission President Steve Perry facilitated the entire project. Dean Webb Construction did a great job, and we are ready to start organizing and storing objects. You can only fully appreciate how wonderful that is if you have seen our offices and workrooms, all filled to the brim!

Work will begin in a few weeks on the west wing expansion. Preliminary plans are in the works for wonderful exhibits for the multi-cultural wing. It is truly an exciting time of growth for the Museum.

April will bring the Yuba City High School Art Department exhibit from April 18 through May 7. Enjoy the high-energy art from our budding artists. A reception open to all takes place on Friday, April 28 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Don't forget *Wear & Remembrance* Vintage Apparel Fair on April 22nd and 23rd. Pick up a bright pink coupon at the Museum for \$1.00 off at the door. All proceeds benefit the Museum.

As the construction schedule permits, we will keep you informed about summer activities. Look for the next traveling exhibit, *Labor and Art*, that features New Deal era public art, to come at the end of August.

Julie Stark
Director

Memorials

In Memory of **Celia Ettl**

Maurine Adams
Ray & Shirley Anderson
Howard & Ruth Anthony
Elsie Brown
Connie Cary
Leo & Alice Chesini
Arlene Chesnut
Bud & Joan Doty
Barbara & Dewey Gruening
Bruce & Gini Harter
Eleanor Knox
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Masera
Mary O'Neal
Ida Philpott
Norman & Loadel Piner
Dorothy Ross
Sharyl Simmons
Phyllis Smith
Leonard Southern Family
Julie Stark
David & Gina Tarke
Louis & Betty Tarke
Tom & Suellen Teesdale
Albert & Mary Ulmer

In Memory of **Patricia Powell Harris**

Irwin & Carrie Davis
Anita Neubecker

In Memory of **Cecil Hornbeck**

Marilyn Hornbeck

In Memory of **Bruce Jenkins**

Joyce Ross

In Memory of **Frances Laney**

Norman & Loadel Piner

In Memory of **Clemmie Murphy**

Dennis Heitman

In Memory of **James Taresh**

Ray and Shirley Anderson
Bethel Butler
Joan Campbell
Arlene Chesnut
Barbara & Dewey Gruening
Marian Regli
David & Gina Tarke

In Memory of **Leon West**

Gene & Joan Erfle

To the Community Memorial
Endowment Fund

In Honor of **Julie Stark**

Norman & Loadel Piner

Donation

Yuba City Firefighters
Association



An Early History of the West Butte Area

by
Don Burtis

When the area around the Sutter Buttes was being settled, folks on the west side might answer the question with, "west of the Buttes." This reply was shortened to West Butte, which meant the same. The same example can be used for North Butte, South Butte and East Butte. As a matter of fact, there is a road on each side of the Buttes named after each side, North, South, East and West Butte Roads. There is no actual peak named East Butte, but there are peaks with each of the other names.

All of these roads were in existence early on and were used by both the locals as well as by others who were traveling through the area. A great many of the roads in Sutter County were on the surveyed section lines, which bordered most of the land, and thus were very straight. These roads were on property taken from owners on both sides of the lines. This, however, was not the case of the roads around the Buttes. Many of these routes followed the contour of the base of the Buttes and in some cases went through an owner's property. An example of this happened in 1876 when a number of West Butte landowners wanted the county to assume ownership of the road that went by and/or through their property. They also wanted the county to assume the responsibility of keeping up the road. A deed was recorded on September 19, 1876, by which A. S. Noyes, Jesse Hicks, Francis Hamlin, J. C. Porter, B. C. Gray, G. W. Santee, E. F. Gray and R. D. Brown agreed to transfer

ownership of the necessary land to Sutter County to lay out a public highway to be known as the "West Butte County Road."

A Squatter's Right

Most all the land in the West Butte area had been claimed in the early 1850s by squatters. Most of them were men who had come west during the gold rush and then realized that the land provided a better opportunity for them to achieve success and make their fortune. A squatter's right simply meant that this person was living on a parcel of land and because of this had a right to claim it as his own. As long as he was living on an unclaimed parcel of land he could exercise his squatter's right.

It was mostly men who claimed the land as a squatter's right. They in turn could stay on it or sell their claim to another if they found someone willing to buy it. Legal ownership of land was obtained when someone obtained a legal title to the land by filing for and receiving a government patent.

In some cases a squatter might have filed what was called a pre-emption claim, which was available before the Homestead Act allowed him to file for a patent.

The first party who receives land title from the government receives a document known as a patent. It gives him legal title to the property, which he can sell or leave to his heirs. The next party to become owner of the land receives a deed to the property, which

also proves legal ownership to the described land. Land transactions are recorded in the county recorders office and document this history of land ownership and prove who legally owns a piece of property.

A squatter's right is just a land claim based on occupancy, whereas a patent gives legal title to sell property or leave it to your heirs.

By 1860, most of the land along the western boundary of the Sutter Buttes had been settled. The very earliest settlers there were mostly men, but women and children soon followed. Ranchers and farmers who had acquired land soon established their homesteads. Others came into the area to work for the farmers and ranchers or to provide a service to the community. As more children became part of the population, it soon became apparent that a school needed to be established in this area west of the Buttes. The West Butte School District was created in 1860.

A location just west of the intersection of Pass Road and West Butte Road became an important location for the West Butte Area. A small village evolved that was given the name "West Butte."

A store was in operation in the village in 1867. A U.S. Post Office was established about 1870. By 1875 there was a blacksmith shop. In 1881 a telegraph office was in business. It is believed that the Town Hall (owned by George Straub) was there in the 1880s. It was used for community theater, school plays, meetings, etc. The West Butte Church was built in 1884. Most of the things that identified a small town were there.

West Butte Store

The West Butte store has had an interesting history of owners.

It is recorded that in 1867, a store was in operation at the corner of the Marysville and Colusa roads leading through the "Pass" and along the western side of the Buttes. A. L. Mayze was the proprietor. A post office was established about 1870, and was located in the store, and Mr. Mayze was appointed postmaster. The post office was given the name "West Butte" which gave legal recognition to the name of the village.

In 1874, store owner T. J. Compton sold the store and farm to G. W. Santee.

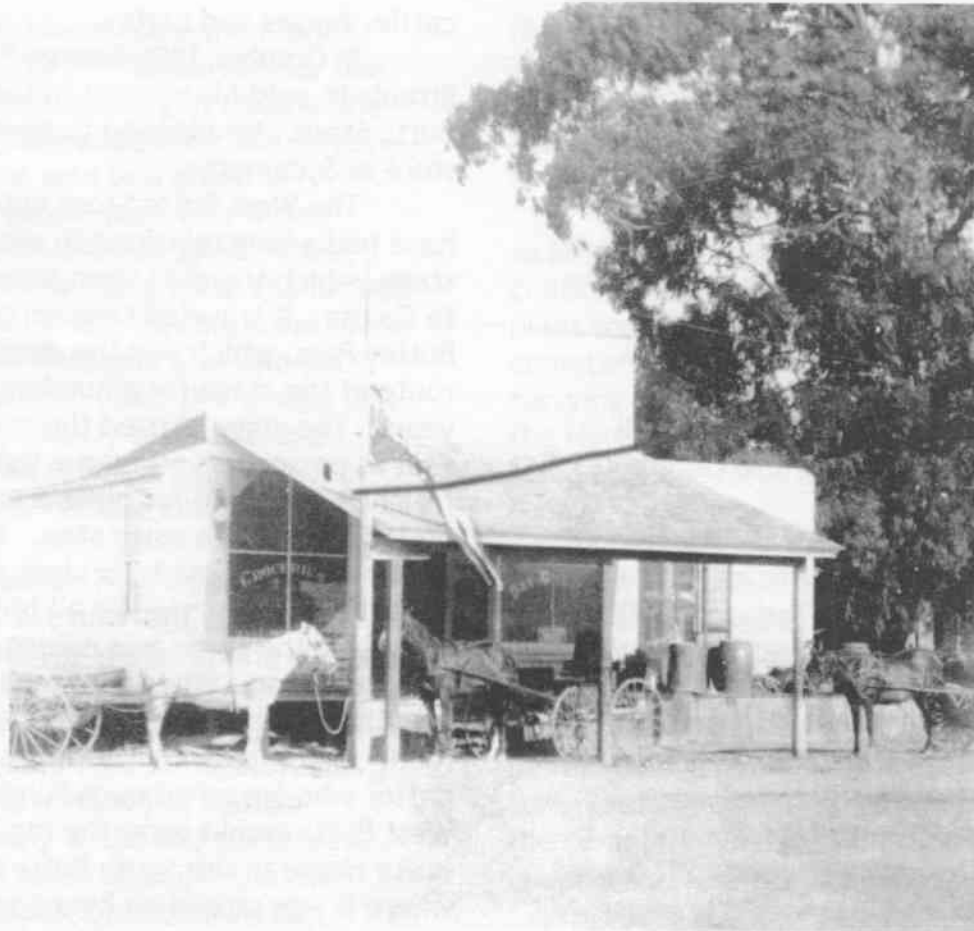
In 1875, J. M. Cope bought the store from G. W. Santee and operated the West Butte General store, which had been re-located about a half-mile east of the earlier location. Mr. Cope was also a working blacksmith.

In 1877, J. M. Cope sold his business to William Toombs, who soon sold it during this same year to George Betty and Thomas W. Jones.

About 1878, a new building was constructed at the corner where West Butte Road begins again going north from Pass Road on the west end of the village. Betty and Jones moved the store to this location.

On November 2, 1878 a news item in the *Sutter County Banner* mentions West Butte as the location of Betty and Jones Grocery Store, J. M. Cope Blacksmith, and that the school is in operation with 30 pupils and G. T. Noe as the teacher.

George J. Betty was the Postmaster in 1878. Mail traveled once each way daily between Marysville and Colusa. It was taken by the stages which traveled that route. This stage



Straub Store, circa 1900
photo courtesy of Donna McMasters

route was later changed and traveled by the way of Meridian instead of coming through West Butte. West Butte received its mail by a post-boy who would meet the stage at the Butte House, which was located at South Butte (later the town of Sutter City). He would then carry it to West Butte.

Geo. Straub and Son came to West Butte in 1880. W. A. Straub clerked in the store and George Straub was a blacksmith. He rented the little blacksmith shop of L. J. Cope and later

bought a lot and built a new shop which lasted for nine years.

In 1881 George Betty, of the firm Betty & Jones, established a telegraph office in the store.

In May 1882, Thomas W. Jones, part owner of the store, married Miss Ella Carroll at West Butte. She was the daughter of James Carroll.

Reported in 1887: "W. A. Straub bought the mercantile establishment so long and favorably known as Jones and Carroll. The blacksmith and wagon-making firm of George Straub and Son

have dissolved their partnership, W. A. Straub, the son, retiring. George Straub will still carry on the business."

In late September 1887: "James Carroll re-bought the business of Straub and became the sole proprietor of the West Butte Mercantile establishment.

"W. A. Straub has purchased the 320 acre farm located about three miles east of West Butte from John Froh for \$8300."

In March 1888, James Carroll sold out the entire store to George G. Betty of West Butte.

In August 1889, J. C. Porter sold his 600 acre farm, consisting of grain and pasture, to Louis Tarke for \$9000. This property was located just north of the West Butte Store.

In July 1890 it was reported that the West Butte store was without a proprietor because George Betty decided to return to his farm and closed out his stock of goods. The good people of West Butte would have to travel to Colusa, Meridian or Sutter City to get their supplies.

Straub and Son came to the rescue: In was in 1890 that the store known as Straub and Son had its beginning. The store at that time was 30x40 feet in size and had warehouses on the side and in the rear. The stock consisted of everything in the line of general merchandise. Goods were delivered free to Sutter City or Colusa. The Post Office was located at the store, which was eight miles from Colusa and eighteen miles from Marysville. It was advertised that Marysville price quotations were met on all articles.

George Straub was appointed West Butte Postmaster in 1891.

In addition to the store, Straub & Son had a farm where they raised

cattle, horses and barley.

In October 1896 George F. Straub Jr. sold his interest in the West Butte Store. He planned to open a store at Sycamore.

The West Butte Store appears to have had a long relationship with the stage, which traveled from Marysville to Colusa. It traveled through the Buttes Pass, which was the designated route of the stage for a number of years. The stage carried the mail as well as passengers and some light freight. The store for quite a long period served as a stage stop. The improvement of roads, bridges and the advent of the automobile all led to the demise of the stage as a means of transportation. When the stage route was changed because of improved roads and bridges, the Methodist circuit pastor who preached each Sunday at West Butte would carry the mail to the Butte House in the South Butte area where it was picked up by a post-boy who took it on to Marysville. The old water trough at Sutter City marks the location of the Butte House.

It is recorded that in January 1903, "the town of West Butte was on the stage line from Yuba City to Colusa and has two daily mails. There is a church, a general merchandising store, a blacksmith shop, a post office and a good school. The only merchandising establishment of the town is that of George Straub and Son."

Straub's Store was the last store in operation at West Butte. Straub did establish a branch store at Sutter City.

West Butte School

This West Butte area, along with the East Butte, South Butte and North Butte areas, were all located in a political division of Sutter County

called Butte Township. School Districts, after 1855, were formed in the various Townships within the county of Sutter with the approval of the Board of Supervisors.

The citizens of this area of Butte Township petitioned the Board, praying for a school district to be established at the West side of the Buttes to be called West Butte No. 3. The reason for the number was that this would be the third school district formed in Butte Township in Sutter County.

On February 28, 1860, the Sutter County Board of Supervisors ordered that their petition be granted and the West Butte School District No. 3 was established on that date.

I have found no documentation as to exactly where or the actual date when the first classes were held, but would guess that a building was quickly constructed or an existing building, perhaps a vacant home, in or nearby West Butte, was used until the school was built. In this early era many of the schoolhouses were put up very quickly, in two to three months or less.

The West Butte schoolhouse was located on property that was owned by Frederick Hoke, who came to the United States from Germany in 1844 and to California in 1850. In 1855 he bought a ranch near West Butte and increased his land holdings to about 1860 acres. Land on which to build the West Butte School was offered by Frederick Hoke, but title to the property remained with the Hoke family. This location was guaranteed by the deed as the land was passed down after the death of Frederick Hoke. After his death, three of his children assigned their undivided shares of this property to their sister, Mrs. Alice Straub and a deed was recorded

confirming this arrangement. The location was described follows: the West half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 5, Township Fifteen North, Range One East.

This property belonged to William Hoke et al. and the parcel where the school was located was not deeded to the school district. The school was located near the northeast corner of the property described above. Every time the property changed owners, the same information regarding the school was included, which was the allowance that the school would have use of the property as long as the West Butte School District existed.

The following deed shows an example of the change of ownership. A deed made on March 1, 1887 records that William F. Hoke, Harmon A. Hoke & Mary Louisa Hoke sold the property to Mrs. Alice Straub (wife of W. A. Straub) Mrs. Straub was the sister of the three grantees. Viz: the West 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 5 TWP 15N R1E save and excepting a piece of land on which the public school house is located said land being described as follows: To Wit: Commencing at a point on the Third Standard Parallel, 56 chains East of the Northwest Corner of Section 5 in Township Fifteen North, Range One East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian and running thence South three chains, thence East 2 chains, thence North 3 chains to the Third Standard Parallel, thence along said Third Standard Parallel West 2 chains to the place of beginning. It is the desire and intention of said parties of the first part and this instrument hereby conveys the title of said school lot above described to the party of the second part her assigns and heirs.

(In case you're interested, early surveyors actually used a chain made of links as a measuring tool when surveying property. This chain was made of links measuring .66 of a foot. 100 links equaled one chain, which equaled 4 rods, and also equaled 66 feet.)

I have located no records giving the information regarding who taught at the school for the beginning years up through 1866. Records located in the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools office begin in 1867. Schools were in session before this time, but no records have been found in the county archives. In 1867 the teacher was Mrs. E. A. Smith. In 1868 and 1869 the teacher was Miss E. Van Fleet.

During the 1871-1872 school year, the *Sutter County Farmer* included the West Butte School's Roll of Honor in the news. Students on the list included the following students with some well-known West Butte names. They were: Elizabeth Stevenson, Delia Wilbur, Maggie Carroll, Anna Tarke, Ella Carroll, Louis Tarke, Leroy Cope, William Hoke, William Black, Edward Noyes, Ida Nall, Anna Tarke, Florence Cope, Mary Cope. A. J. Howe was the teacher. William Hoke, listed above, was the son of Frederick Hoke who came to California in 1850. Louis Tarke was the son of Frederick Tarke who traveled west with Frederick Hoke when they first came to California.

West Butte School Burns

On April 2, 1908 a tragedy struck the town of West Butte. The schoolhouse burned down. The *Sutter County Farmer* reported that the school building had served the community for the last thirty years. A defective flue

was reported as the cause of the fire. The janitor was the first to notice smoke coming from the roof and in a short time a number of residents arrived on the scene. They and the students and teacher were able to save most of the school apparatus so school could continue for the rest of the term. Arrangements were quickly made to conduct school in the West Butte Community Hall and school continued without interruption. There was no insurance and the loss was reported to be about \$1000. Plans got underway for the construction of a new schoolhouse to be available for next fall.

Observation:

If the above information "the school building had served the community for the last thirty years" is correct, then another school building preceded this one that burned. The minutes of the Sutter County Board of Supervisors of November 7, 1864 make mention of the West Butte School house. Logic indicates that soon after the West Butte district was established a schoolhouse was constructed. If the schoolhouse that burned in 1908 lasted for thirty years it would have been constructed in 1878. Any schoolhouse before this could be calculated to have been used for as many as 18 years.

I have found no records of any new school being constructed about 1878 in West Butte. This could lead me to believe the building that burned may have been the original West Butte School.

A school trustee election was held the following week after the fire and the following were elected. W. J. Wilbur, Mrs. Christine Wilbur and Mrs. Ella Hoke with Mr. L. Tarke as high



West Butte School
photo courtesy of Community Memorial Museum

school trustee.

On August 14, 1908, the school Board of Trustees decided not to build a schoolhouse at that time but rather to repair the Community Hall and provide it with furniture for the next term.

The school district rented the Community Hall which was owned by George Straub. The rent was \$100.

Louis Tarke presented a set of encyclopedias for the library. He was followed by others who made book donations.

In May 17, 1909 a special election was held and West Butte voters unanimously voted in favor of bonding the district for the sum of \$1500 for the purpose of building a new school.

On July 29, 1909 the school trustees met to open bids for the new schoolhouse at West Butte. The lowest bid was accepted and the contract was given to Guy McMurtry for \$1325. The highest bid was for \$2400.

The building was designed by Architect Narbett and School Superintendent L. L. Freeman accepted the plans. The plan called for dimensions of 29x30 1/2 feet over all, the main schoolroom being 28x23. Commodious cloak rooms were located at one end and in the corner entrance there was a vestibule with belfry and tower overhead. The lighting of the room was from five big windows on the east and three on the north. Mr. McMurtry was to get the material on the ground at once and begin work as soon as possible.

The new school was completed for the 1909-1910 school year.

There were many occasions where school events took place in the evening at the school; however, most

activities that related to the school where the community was invited to attend took place at the West Butte Community Hall where larger crowds could more easily be accommodated.

The West Butte School received a tremendous upgrading before school started the 1935-1936 school term. During the month of August 1935, E. H. Neiman was given the job of wiring the school for electricity. A record of the first billing for electricity used in the first month was for 78¢ (78¢ in 1935 equates to \$10.75 in 2006). I can't help but wonder how many light bulbs they used. Maybe not many since the school was constructed to make good use of natural light.

The teacher who taught last at West Butte School would still be remembered today by students she taught, but they are obviously getting fewer each year. Miss Verona Hill first taught school in Sutter County at Farmer School in 1911. This was located about 4 miles west of West Butte on the west side of Butte Slough. She also taught at Grant, Hedger and Illinois schools in Sutter County, none of which exist today.

Miss Verona Hill taught the students of West Butte for 24 consecutive years beginning in 1919 and ending in 1943 the last year the school was in session. She continued to teach for one more year for the county and was assigned for most of this time at Meridian where a number of her former students attended. Miss Verona Hill, like her sister Eleta, graduated from a private school located in Marysville conducted by Mrs. Kate M. Wilkins where they were trained to become teachers. The records indicate they were both excellent students and they both became excellent teachers.

They both grew up in the town of West Butte and they continued to live there after they retired in the home their father had built for the family when they were quite young. Eleta Hill taught for 27 years at Brittan School in Sutter. Prior to that she had taught at Noyes School, four miles north of West Butte, and Tierra Buena School during World War I. Prior to that she taught in both Butte County and El Dorado County. When these sisters taught at Farmers and Noyes schools, they transported themselves by horse and buggy. In later assignments at West Butte and Brittan, Verona could walk and Eleta traveled by Model T Ford. On rainy days Eleta could drop Verona off at her school, which was on the way. This Model T was kept in fine running condition during this time by their brother Arthur Hill who also lived in the Hill home in West Butte. Verona, Eleta and Arthur Hill never married.

Eleta Hill is also on record as having worked for West Butte School in 1902. There is a payment for \$10 made to her dated December 17, 1902 when she was serving as the janitor. She was then 12 years old.

The main fuel for heating the school house was wood. Records show the following residents were included among those who sold fuel wood to the school: William Chappell, Louis Tarke, W. F. Hoke, Burwell Ullrey, and T. A. Taylor.

(Since there was only one Burwell Ullrey at that time, I can only conclude that he must have cut, gathered and sold the wood while he was a student there.)

West Butte School was last in session during the 1942-1943 school year. It was officially declared lapsed the following year and the district was

divided among the surrounding districts. These districts included Brittan, Meridian and North Butte.

The land on which the school house was located together with the schoolhouse became the property of the party, which held the deed at that time. The restriction which assigned the school the right to the property ceased to be a constraint on the deed.

Since that time, the school house has been used as a residence. The property on which the schoolhouse was located was sold more than once and became the property of the Mr. Laughlin and Mr. Lanza. It was later deeded to the county and ownership of the school has since passed to the Middle Mountain Foundation.

The West Butte Church

The people of West Butte wanted a church in their community for a long time before it became a reality. The church was constructed in 1884 and cost a total of \$2,327.60, which was practically all donated.

The church measured 26 x 40 and had an entry in front, which ran up into a spire 58 feet above the ground. In the tower was a bell that was used to call the people to worship. The outside appearance of the church was very pleasing and attractive to the eye. The inside finishing and furniture were very neat and in good taste. The whole structure was thought to be beautiful by the community.

Dedication services were held on Sunday, August 17, 1884 with Rev. R. E. Wenk delivering the sermon and conducting the dedication services. He was assisted by William Thompson.

The trustees of the new church were W. W. Wilbur, F. Tarke and W. J. Black.

The West Butte Church was financed by the settlers in that area and was used by all denominations, all worshipping together. It has been referred to as the West Butte Christian Church and also as the West Butte Union Church. Some of the local men who were active in the construction of the church were Bill Wilbur, Frederick Tarke, Frederick Hoke and Samuel Reische. Both Eleta and Verona Hill as well as many of the younger people of the area attended Sunday School there. Mr. Hoke gave the bell to the church. It is remembered that Charlie Stohlman rang the bell when this church was first dedicated in 1884.

The church never had a regular minister assigned; however, it became a part of the Butte Circuit and was served by what might be called circuit rider ministers who for a while came on a regular schedule. A number of weddings took place in the church as well as some funeral services. The church served the community well for a number of years. As transportation methods changed with the advent of the automobile, people became more associated with the churches in Meridian, Sutter and Colusa and the need for the church was greatly decreased.

It is an interesting story about what happened to the West Butte church. The church building was sort of moved to Yuba City where it is presently a part of another church.

A Lutheran Church was organized in Marysville in 1927. A group of German speaking Lutherans and a Norwegian group living in the area joined to form one group. They had no church building of their own to meet in so, in 1932, land on Cooper Avenue in

Yuba City was purchased as a site for building their church.

Some members of the church were aware of the West Butte church that had not been used for years and the lumber, the pews and bell could be used for their new church. In 1933 they purchased the old church. Old West Butte church members including the Carrolls, Tarkes, and Wilburs were first contacted and an agreed upon price of \$1.00 paid to make the transaction legal. The timbers of the West Butte Church were used in the construction of the framework for the new church building and the same bell is now hanging in the belfry. This new church was dedicated in 1935 and the same Charlie Stohlman who rang it at an earlier dedication in 1884 rang the bell again. Charlie was born in Germany in 1863 and came to California in 1880 to the West Butte Area. He was 21 years old at the West Butte dedication and was 72 years old at the Lutheran dedication 51 years later. He died at age 87 and is buried at Noyesburg Cemetery. He was the father of Analene Stohlman Dunbar Sears.

Noyesburg

Noyesburg came into being when Allen S. Noyes acquired land located about four miles north of the village of West Butte and the story of that community should be included in a history of West Butte. Noyes moved there with his wife and their one-year-old son, Edward, in 1857 and lived there until his death in 1904. His land holdings increased and by 1879 he had almost 2000 acres of field, hill, slough and pasture land.

Noyesburg had a blacksmith shop, but never had a store or a post

office. People had to travel to West Butte to get their mail, visit the closest store or catch the stage. Once enough children were living in the Noyesburg area, a new school district was approved and Noyes school was built.

One thing Noyesburg had that West Butte did not have was a cemetery. Many of the residents who lived in this area west of the Buttes are buried in the Noyes Cemetery. It is one of the best preserved pioneer cemeteries in the county. Noyesburg's identity as a village no longer exists, but the site of the cemetery confirms its existence and its location.

A large gravestone located in plot 14 at the cemetery has multiple names on it and gives the information that "Baby" Stevenson, 1st baby of R. K. and Nancy Stevenson, was buried on land that is now the Noyes Cemetery in 1860. It is likely that the location was referred to as a graveyard at that time. It is possible that at the time the child was buried in this location, the land belonged to the Stevenson family. The first adult burial, records indicate, was that of Anna Elizabeth (Cilley) Gilpatric who died December 10, 1868. She was the wife of George Gilpatric and the sister of Philena Noyes, who was the wife of Samuel A. Noyes.

A deed was filed on April 21, 1888 by which A. S. Noyes sold the 1.39 acres of land that was designated as a graveyard to the Noyes School Trustees. At that date the trustees were E. A. Noyes, B. F. Stevenson and H. S. Graves. The selling price was \$1.00, which made it a legal transaction. The deed stated that said lot is to be used as a public burying ground, to be known as the Noyes Cemetery. The cemetery became the property of the Noyes School District

and was under the care of the Noyes School Board of Trustees. Prior to this time the graveyard was located on privately owned land.

Records indicate that 23 burials had taken place in the cemetery prior to the time the above deed was filed, the last one being for Peter Frederick Tarke, who died on Sunday morning April 15, 1888, according to the *Sutter County Farmer*. This cemetery became the last resting place for many of the West Butte residents. Many who moved away from West Butte had their wish to be buried at Noyes Cemetery honored when they passed away.

Noyes School

In 1874 the residents of the area petitioned the Board of Supervisors to create a new school district. It was approved on June 23, 1874. A location was selected and a schoolhouse built on the north side of the road slightly south of the Noyes Cemetery. Prior to the building of the Noyes School, the children of this area mainly attended the West Butte School located four miles west of Noyesburg. The property for the schoolhouse was purchased from R. D. Brown. The deed filed after this transaction identified the first trustees of the new district to be J. C. Porter, Francis Hamlin and R. K. Stevenson.

One story that indicates how close the people were interrelated in this area has to do with Miss E. Van Fleet, the daughter of a local land owner named Martin Van Fleet. She was earlier named as a teacher at West Butte School during 1867-1868 school year. She later married Mr. R. D. Brown, named above, who sold a parcel of land to the Noyes School District.

The first teacher at Noyes School was Jennie Alley in 1874. She was followed by Miss Mary E. Hardy in 1875. The next teacher, Miss Isabelle (Belle) Dean, taught there in 1876 and was destined to remain in Noyesburg area for a long time. She and Edward A. Noyes were married on February 8, 1876. The wedding took place in the Washington Schoolhouse located on Franklin Road (south of Sutter) between what is now Clements Road and Acacia Street, not far from her parents ranch. After Edward Noyes married Belle Dean, the daughter of Capt. Thomas Dean, Mr. & Mrs. A. S. Noyes built a new home while Edward and Belle lived in the old home. The area was coming together as a community and became known as Noyesburg. At its height, Noyesburg had a blacksmith shop, a school, and the cemetery that was utilized by many of the West Butte area residents, but lacked a store, a church, or a post office.

Miss Ella Dean, sister of Isabelle, was the teacher at Noyes school in 1875 and also 1878. I mentioned earlier that Miss Eleta Hill taught four years at Noyes from 1914 to 1918. The last teacher at Noyes was Miss Vera Carroll in 1923. The district did not lapse until 1927 when it was divided up between West Butte and North Butte Districts because of a lack of enrollment at Noyes School. The old school house remained in existence for many years after this and was used as a sheep shed. It had the roof extended out on the sides so it looked more like a barn than a schoolhouse. It burned down a few years ago. The old school location was located on property now owned by the Tarke family.

In 1886, Noyesburg was described as follows in the *Sutter County Farmer*.

Noyesburg is a settlement four miles north of West Butte.

This is the name given to quite a settlement that has sprung up lately in Sutter County and which promises in the near future of developing into quite a village.

Noyesburg is situated about four miles north of West Butte store, and consists of about forty buildings, including a school house, blacksmith shop, and the elegant new house lately built by A. S. Noyes, after whom the burg was named. The population consists of eighteen to twenty persons that live immediately in the burg, and should the railroad, that is in prospect, pass through there we bespeak a flourishing village for Noyesburg and with the same hearty success.

In September of 1925, two years before the Noyes school district was declared lapsed, Henry Counts and Mrs. Charles Stohlman were the only two elected trustees of Noyes that were alive. They deeded the Noyes Cemetery property to Sutter County and it has become a part of and is maintained by the Sutter Cemetery District comprised of the Sutter, Yuba City, Meridian and Noyes Cemeteries.

The names of some of the more prominent people who settled and lived in this area west of the Buttes have already been mentioned in this writing.

The elegant Noyes home mentioned above became a headquarters for one of the most exclusive gun clubs in the area. This happened after the Noyes property was sold to a group of financially secure men who were primarily from the Bay Area. These men recognized this area as the best of the duck and goose hunting areas in the state. Other ranchers also sold out their property to other like groups and there are presently several active hunting clubs in this area. Memberships in these clubs are quite expensive.

Edward A. Noyes inherited his parent's estate and farmed until 1914 when he sold the property and moved to Sutter City.

During the earlier days when A. S. Noyes owned land in the Noyesburg area, he was involved in market hunting. Many ducks and geese were hunted and taken to market in the surrounding cities as far away as Sacramento. They were in great demand by the restaurants in the surrounding towns. This was during an era when there was no game limit. A man known as a great market hunter and outdoorsman at this time was Andy Westervelt, better known as Andy West. He had a beautiful Indian wife and they became the parents of a little girl they named Amanda. Her mother died shortly after she was born and Amanda was taken in by Mr. A. S. Noyes and his wife to raise. At about this same time they also took in another motherless child named Anna Elizabeth Gilpatric, whose mother had died following childbirth. She was Mrs. Noyes' niece. It was Anna's mother that gave reason to create the Noyes Cemetery. The girls grew up calling Mrs. Noyes "Mother." Mr. and Mrs.

Noyes had one son, Edward, mentioned above. In 1872, Andy West had a tragic accident and was killed while hunting when his gun accidentally discharged and he died from the injury.

When the girls, Mandy and Annie as they were called, were young children, they helped their mother plant some of the trees at Noyes cemetery and kept them alive by carrying water to them from the well at the Noyes home. It is believed that some of these trees are still alive today.

Changes have come about and the duck and geese population have greatly diminished in this area, but hunting is still a popular sport for many.

Noyesburg would certainly not be recognized as any kind of a community at this time. Other than the cemetery, there is no other landmark to identify with the old days.

The village of West Butte is also quite changed from the early days. Gone is the store, the church, most of the homes along the main street, the blacksmith shop, and the hall. The school is gone but the schoolhouse remains and still has some features that one could recognize as an old school building that was changed into a residence. There are three homes left along the street; one of them is the Charles Hill home where Mr. Hill raised his family.

Charles Hill was born Aug 2, 1853 in Illinois. He married Louisa Reische in Illinois in 1874. They came to California in 1885 and settled in Meridian where Charles worked for various ranchers.

The answer to when the Hill family came to West Butte can be found in the October 14, 1887 edition



Top: Charles Hill house circa 1910
 Bottom: Arthur and Eleta Hill, circa 1900
photos courtesy of Donna McMasters

of the *Sutter County Farmer* under West Butte. The paper said, "Charles Hill and family of Meridian, will move into the house now occupied by Roy Cope, as soon as it is vacated."

It was about 1896 when the Hill home on Pass Road in West Butte was built. It consisted of three rooms and a porch. The porch was remodeled into a kitchen with a bedroom on the end. The house had no plumbing. A hand pump beside the house provided water and an outhouse provided for other needs. The Hills had seven children. The first was Otis Hill born in 1875. He married Bernice Estella Noyes, daughter of E. A. Noyes and Isabella Dean Noyes. The second child born in 1878 was Stella Hill who married William Henry Brockman. The third child was Lawrence Hill born July 24, 1880. He married Grace Haslett. The fourth child was Elizabeth (Bessie) Hill born April 14, 1884. She died in 1910. The fifth child was Verona who was born in 1887 in Meridian, California. The sixth was Eleta was born in 1890 at West Butte. The seventh was Arthur born in 1893 at West Butte.

Donna Brockman McMasters and her husband Barry purchased this property from the estate after her great aunt, Verona Hill, died. The McMasters presently reside there. Stella Hill married William Henry Brockman, a grandfather of Donna, so that makes Donna a great niece of the two famous Hill girls who taught school.

The home just west of Charles Hill and his wife was owned by Desseau Stewart and his wife Amanda (Westervelt) Stewart. According to Bill Brockman, Donna (Brockman) McMasters' uncle, when Desseau Stewart and Charles Hill were buying

property to locate on Pass Road, they purchased a third lot between their lots and split it in the middle to make their land a bit larger. There was a house already on the Stewart property. In 1887, C. G. Kline, the teacher at West Butte School, purchased the property from W. W. Wilbur and built a home there. An article in the *Sutter County Farmer* described the house as being located on the lot just east of the West Butte Church. It seems unusual for a teacher to want to own his own home at this time since it indicates plans to stay for a long time at a time when teachers tended to move about. He taught school for several years in Michigan prior to coming to West Butte in 1883 and continued his chosen profession once he arrived. After seven years at West Butte he taught at Meridian, Brittan and Clay school in Live Oak. He also served as Sutter County Superintendent of Schools from 1895 to 1903. Desseau Stewart acquired the C. G. Kline home in approximately 1896.

Desseau Stewart was born in 1860 at Brownsville, CA. He attended school in Marysville and in the county. At the age of 14 he left home and made his own way in the world. He was successful in getting farm work and later followed both stock raising and farming on land that he leased. He was married in Yuba City on April 16, 1885, to Miss Amanda Westervelt. They were the parents of five children. There was Gertrude, who married R. M. Charge, James Arthur who was killed by a horse at age 18, Alvin D., Oscar R., and Ernest E. who lived at home in 1924. At this time the Kline/Stewart home has disappeared but the property is still owned by the descendants of Desseau and Amanda Stewart and a grandson is

living on the property. Donna McMasters is a great niece of Eleta and Verona Hill, so that property may be said to have remained in the family.

In trying to determine exactly where the West Butte Church had been located, I found the answer in the newspaper where it stated that the Kline house had been built just east of the church. There was no deed giving ownership to the church of the property where it was built so it appears that the original owner retained the lot on which the church was built. That lot is presently a barnyard.

Landmarks and Families along West Butte Road

West Butte Road follows a path along the west side of the Buttes. A landmark close to the northernmost side of the area west of the Buttes is the Graves home.

This is where Henry Graves settled in 1852, having come to California to mine in 1849. He was born in Connecticut on Feb. 4, 1830. He owned about 3000 acres and was a very successful farmer and a stock raiser. He married in 1862 and he and his wife had three daughters and three sons. Henry Graves died June 3, 1888 at age 58 and is buried in the Noyes Cemetery.

Moving south on West Butte Road, we come to the area of Noyesburg, which was named after A. S. Noyes.

Allen S. Noyes acquired about 2000 acres of land in this area in 1854 and settled in this area in 1857 after returning to the east in 1853 to marry his wife Philena Cilley of Maine. They had one son, Edward A. Noyes. He died April 27, 1903 and was buried in the Noyes Cemetery.

Benjamin F. Stevenson acquired 203 acres in the vicinity of Noyesburg that bordered the ranch of A. E. Noyes. Born in Missouri in 1830, he came to California in 1850. He returned to Missouri in 1853 and married Sarah Ann Compton. They returned across the plains to California where he continued to mine for gold. She died leaving behind three daughters. In 1870, he returned to Missouri and married Louisa Jane Counts, with whom he had three more children. B. F. Stevenson died at West Butte, aged 69, from injuries received while plowing with six horses. When turning a corner he was run over and trampled by the team. He was a member of Enterprise Lodge of Yuba City and received a Masonic burial. His surviving children by his first wife included Mrs. R. A. Moon and Mrs. Charles Burch, of Kent, and Mrs. Thomas Walton of Redding. His surviving children with his second wife were Daniel and Frank Stevenson, and Mrs. Robert Emery of Meridian. A brother R. K. Stevenson also resided in West Butte area. He was buried at Noyes Cemetery.

Robert K. Stevenson was born in 1823 in North Carolina and moved while young to Missouri. In 1850, with his brother, B. F. Stevenson, he crossed the plains to California in four months. He first mined and in 1852 returned to Missouri for his wife, Nancy Hicks Stevenson, and their children. Eventually they had thirteen children. In 1854 he located at West Butte and farmed on his large tract of land. On September 3, 1904, he traveled to the West Butte store to do some trading. On his return, his horse was frightened at some cattle near Mawson Bridge and ran away. He was thrown out of the buggy onto the ground. He was badly

injured about the head and witnesses reported he died in about 15 minutes. He was 80 years of age. The funeral was held at the Christian Church at West Butte and the following choir assisted in the services: Miss Verona Hill, Miss Bessie Hill, Mrs. W. B. Reynolds, Miss Geneva Santee, Miss Lola Straub, Miss Theresa Ullrey, W. F. Hoke and F. Fisher. He was buried at Noyes Cemetery.

Continuing south we come to the village of West Butte. W.W. Wilbur came to California in 1852 and in 1853 he came to this area where he acquired about 410 acres that was located south of Pass Road and west of West Butte Road. It appears that he was the owner of a number of lots on the south side of Pass Road where several homes were built. His home is no longer standing, but there are remnants of the foundation. He farmed 300 acres. He and Henry Graves had something in common. They both had six children, three boys and three girls. W. W. Wilbur died September 12, 1896. The funeral was at West Butte Church and he was buried at Noyes Cemetery. The pallbearers were B. F. Stevenson, J. C. Kingsbury, George Straub, G. W. Santee, R. K. Stevenson, William Doty, John Carroll and J. M. Cope.

Following West Butte Road going south from Pass Road was the home of Frederick Hoke, which served as the headquarters for his ranch operation. A bit farther south on the east side of the road stood the home of Frederick Tarke. Both of these men had large land holdings and were very prominent in the area.

Frederick Hoke was born in Germany in 1815. Frederick Tarke was born in Germany in 1824. Both came to the U.S. in 1844. Both came to

California in 1850, driving across the plains. They traveled together in the wagon train and when they arrived in Sacramento they sold their teams and outfitted for the mines. They were both engaged in mining until 1855. At this time they both traveled east to Iowa where they found brides. Frederick Hoke was married to Miss Louisa Erke and Frederick Tarke was married to Miss Mary Stohlmann. Upon their return by way of the Isthmus of Panama, Mr. & Mrs. Hoke settled on the property that Mr. Hoke had purchased. Mr. and Mrs. Tarke settled on property across the road that Mr. Tarke had acquired. In 1879 it can be noted that Mr. Hoke owned 1860 acres of land of which 800 was cultivated. In the same year it was recorded that Mr. Tarke owned 2500 acres of land of which 800 was under cultivation. These two pioneers were very good friends, were widely known and were held in high esteem by all who knew them.

Frederick Hoke and his wife had four children: William F., H. A., Minnie and Alice. Frederick Hoke died age 70, on February 25, 1885 at his home at West Butte. He was buried at Noyes Cemetery.

Frederick Tarke and his wife had three children: Frederick Louis Tarke, Anna Tarke and Emma Tarke. Frederick Louis married Nancy Santee; Anna Tarke married William Hawn; Emma Tarke married Ralph Graves. Frederick Tarke died May 15, 1888 as the result of an accident when a horse he was working with kicked him in the stomach. He died the following day. The funeral took place at the Union Church in West Butte and he was buried at the Noyes Cemetery. The pallbearers were G. W. Santee, John Carrol, Joseph Hageman, R. K.

Stevenson, O. P. Burgett and A. S. Noyes.

At the south end of West Butte Road is the home and ranch that belonged to Johan Heinrich Stohlmann, better known as "Henry Stohlman."

Henry Stohlman was born in Germany on September 28, 1839. Henry came to the United States in 1858 and settled in Iowa. A little over a year later he came to California and settled four-and-a-half miles west of what is now the town of Sutter. He bought land from time to time and acquired 1580 acres. On January 31, 1871, he was married to Anna Marie Stratmeyer, better known as "Minna," who had been born in the same region of Germany as Henry. He engaged in stock raising and also did some general farming. He worked very hard and while working on his field near his home he had a heart attack and dropped dead. This happened on December 29, 1887 when he was only 48 years old. It had been Henry's wish to be buried at the Noyes Cemetery. His obituary in the January 6, 1888 edition of the *Sutter County Farmer* states his cause and date of his death and concludes with the following statement: "Mr. Stohlman was the brother of Mrs. F. Tarke, and one of

Sutter's most respected citizens. The funeral took place on Sunday, when the remains were interred in Noyes Cemetery." According to this obituary, Henry was buried in Noyes Cemetery, but he is not presently buried in the Noyes Cemetery and the Noyes list of burials does not include his name. However the Sutter Cemetery list of burials does include Henry Stohlman and indicates his being buried there beside his wife Minna. Neither the record of burials for the Noyes Cemetery or the Sutter Cemetery has complete information from the time the cemeteries were first used. What is thought to have happened is the following: When Minna died in 1921 at the age of 71, it was her wish to be buried in Sutter as opposed to the Noyes Cemetery and her wish was carried out. She also wished for her husband to be buried by her side. It is thought that her surviving children had Henry exhumed and removed to the Sutter Cemetery. There is no written record of his being exhumed from Noyes Cemetery or a record of his re-burial at Sutter in the records of either cemetery. There is, however, a record of his obituary stating he was buried in Noyes Cemetery.

Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, April 8, 2006

11:30 social time, 12:00 luncheon

West Sutter Veterans Hall

4th & Bridge Streets, Meridian

Reservations required - see insert

Tri-tip and chicken, \$14 per person

Program:

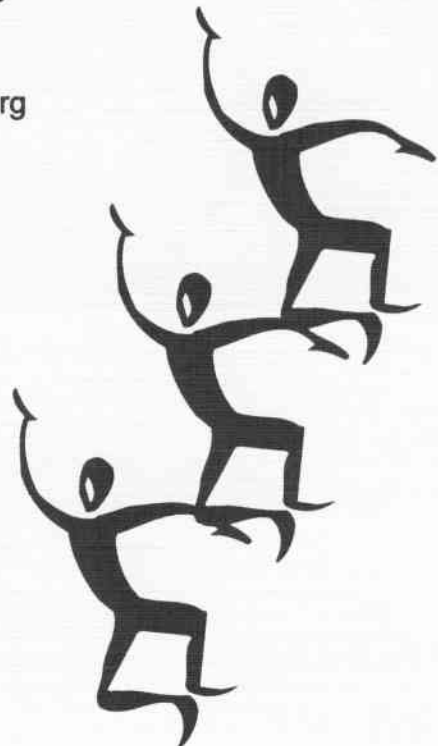
Judith Barr Fairbanks Awards

Lyle & Debra Callaway - A History of Meridian

PUZZLE PAGE

O N A M L H O T S T O R E
 A A N H N C A L L A W A Y
 C I E R O U M E S V C A O
 E D M Y Y K A V K E D T B
 L I A T E R E R M R R S T
 Y R W B S M W E H O A U S
 W E S T B U T T E N Y T O
 A M O T U E A S T A N Y P
 E C N A R B M E M E R E S
 O E D Y G A E W S P A E E
 R T R E T T U S Y S B M N
 T U S K A S E B L O E D E
 E B U E A N E B R E U D Y

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Barnyard | Callaway | Cemetery |
| Dean | Desseau | Hoke |
| Mawson | Meridian | Noyesburg |
| Postboy | Remembrance | Santee |
| Stohlman | Store | Straub |
| Sutter | Tarke | Verona |
| Westbutte | Westervelt | |



Coming Events

April

- 8 Historical Society Annual Membership meeting
11:30 social time, 12:00 luncheon
West Sutter Veterans Hall - 4th & Bridge Streets, Meridian
- 18 *Yuba City High School Art Department* exhibit opens
- 22-23 Wear and Remembrance
Franklin Hall, Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds
Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- 28 YCHS Art Department reception, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

May

- 7 *Yuba City High School Art Department* exhibit closes

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOX 1004
YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA 95992

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Yuba City, CA 95991
Permit No. 380