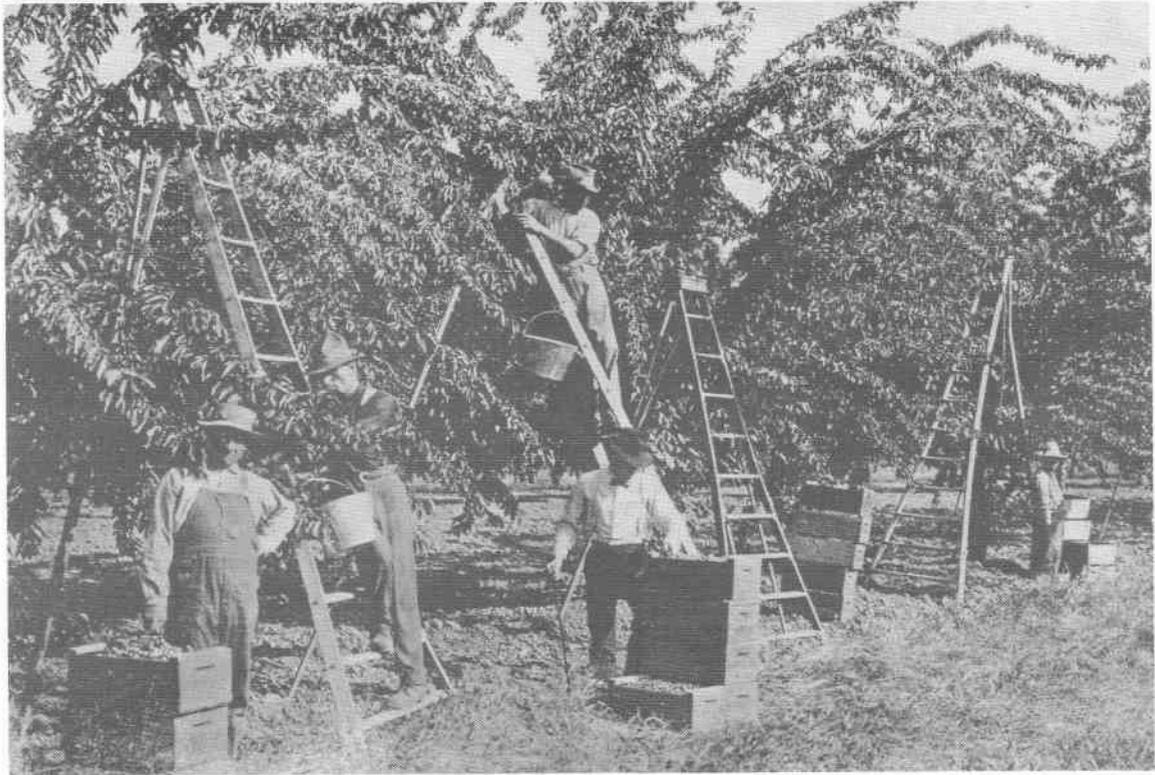


Vol. XLIX No. 4

Yuba City, California

October 2007



Sutter County Cherry Pickers

(photo courtesy of Community Memorial Museum)



OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Audrey Breeding, President

Bob Mackensen, Vice President

Phyllis Smith, Secretary/Treasurer

DIRECTORS

Bonnie Ayers-2001*

Cynthia Pfiester-2004

Audrey Breeding-1997

Margaret Pursch-2002

Constance Cary-1987

John Reische-2000

Bruce Harter-1991

Jennifer Scrogin-2007

Helen Heenan-1996

Miles Shafer-2004

Bob Mackensen-2002

Phyllis Smith-2000

Leona Pennington-2006

Janet Spilman-2007

Steve Perry-1994

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 2008 dues are payable as of January 1, 2008. 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

It's hard to believe that another year is coming to a close. The Society has had some very good programs this year and great opportunities to get together at our quarterly meetings. The October meeting will be at Ruthy's in Yuba City this year. Clay Castleberry will be talking about covered bridges - something we don't often see these days. I hope to see many of you at the luncheon and would love feedback about our choice of a meeting place.

As I mentioned above, we are fast coming up on the end the year -- when your membership needs renewing. Please be on the lookout for the membership envelope that will be mailed with the December Muse News. By renewing promptly, you guarantee that you won't miss out on any of the activities of the Society or the Museum.

The holidays are coming up and this is a good year to introduce friends or family to the Historical Society with a gift membership. A membership in the Historical Society/Museum is a gift that the recipient can enjoy all year long and you have the pleasure of giving a swell gift as well as helping promote our history.

Also, remember your membership in the Historical Society allows you to get a ten percent discount on items in the Museum store. You can do all your Christmas shopping in one place and get a deal besides!

Audrey Breeding
President

October Luncheon

Please join us on **Saturday, October 20, 2007** as we try out a new meeting venue! Our annual October luncheon will be at **Ruthy's, 229 Clark Avenue, Yuba City**. Lunch will be Ruthy's excellent buffet.

We will meet for **social time at 11:30**, then eat **lunch at noon**. Our program will be **Clay Castleberry** talking about **covered bridges**. He has many excellent photos to share.

Because we must tell Ruthy's how many people to expect, it's essential that you mail the enclosed **reservation form**, with your check for **\$15 per person**, by **October 11**.

We can't wait to see you there!

Director's Report

A number of great things are on tap at the Museum this fall. We hope you will attend the opening reception and program for the new traveling exhibit *What's Going On? California in the Vietnam Era*, scheduled for Friday, October 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Beginning at 7:00 p.m., Vietnam veteran Ray Bull will speak about his own experiences and set the stage for what visitors will see in the exhibit.

If you have small memorabilia from the Vietnam War era or any small item that sheds light on what life was like at that time in Sutter County or California in relation to the war, the Museum would like to borrow them for the duration of the exhibit. The exhibit is large, but we have room for a few small items to add a local component.

The exhibit is not comprehensive regarding the entire war, but focuses instead on California's role in the war and the great impact the war had on our state. The exhibit remains through November 25.

We look forward to your participation in all the holiday activities at the Museum. We need your support for *Trees & Traditions*, the Museum's largest annual fundraiser. Please plan to attend the ornament workshops on October 17 and November 1 at 10:00 a.m., Decoration Day on Thursday, November 29 at 9:00 a.m., and the Hors d'oeuvres Workshop on Friday, November 30 in the Veterans' Hall kitchen. Please note our need for evergreen prunings for Decoration Day. After all that work, relax and enjoy the *Trees & Traditions* party on Saturday, December 1 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets are available at the Museum or from any Museum Commissioner. Bring the family to the free annual Children's Program and Open House on Sunday, December 16 to enjoy Christmas stories and the engaging music of John Carter.

The Museum is looking forward to the next goal in our plan for growth. The most pressing need currently is for a meeting room for programs and events. This room would be built behind the Museum as a separate building, perhaps connected by a patio area. It will include a kitchen and be able to accommodate a variety of events.

A generous and thoughtful bequest has been made to the Museum for the purpose of helping to build the meeting room. This gift will pay for about one half the cost of construction. Consequently, the Museum will be undertaking a campaign to raise the remaining half of the needed funds. Please give some thought to how you might help the Museum achieve this important fundraising goal. Donations are welcome beginning at this time. What a great time to be part of our growing institution!

Julie Stark
Director

Memorials

In Memory of **Elizabeth "Peg" Andrews**
Phyllis Smith

In Memory of **Milton E. Otto**
Marie E. Fuller

In Memory of **Anna Mae Berry**
Arlene Chesnut
Sharyl Simmons

In Memory of **Marian Regli**
Dewey & Barbara Gruening

In Memory of **Zelma Corbin**
Ruth & Howard Anthony

In Memory of **Zoe Reische**
Doris Mitchell
Carol Ray Trexler

In Memory of **Vadna Epley**
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Johanna Schuler**
Chipman & Renfrow Acctcy Corp
Pete & Margit Sands

In Memory of **Dorothy Ettl**
Dewey & Barbara Gruening

In Memory of **Orlin & Johanna Schuler**
Tom & Jan Amarel

In Memory of **Etta Frink**
Leo & Marilyn Speth
Ruth & Howard Anthony

In Memory of **Doris Smith**
Arlene Chesnut
Helen Heenan

In Memory of **Lou Gaschke**
Jerry & Patricia Whitten

In Memory of **Kenneth Sorenson**
Jim Staas

In Memory of **Aherne Henson**
Helen Heenan

In Memory of **Don Weber**
Jim Staas

Where Does Your Contribution Go?

The above list of contributions contains gifts to both the Community Memorial Museum and the Sutter County Historical Society.

Currently, all donations to the historical society are going into the General Fund. The expenses for the Hock Farm Door renovation will come from this fund. In the next few months, with some guidance from the Museum as to what will best suit their expansion needs, we hope to announce a new building project for the Museum. Monies from the General Fund are used to pay the Society's insurance premium, post office box rental, Bulletin printing and mailing expenses and other operating expenses.

All donations are greatly appreciated and help keep the Historical Society a viable entity in the community.

Abraham Van Arsdale

by
Carol Withington

In 1877, the businessmen and property holders of Yuba City began to discuss the question of incorporation. Protection against fire and other public improvements were thought desirable, but the only way to secure these properly was to incorporate and have a legal government that could pass and enforce the necessary ordinance.

A bill to incorporate the city was presented and approved by the legislature and governor the following year, and Yuba City was incorporated on March 30, 1878.

Two months later, a board of trustees was elected, but after considerable discussion it was decided that the rate of tax allowed by the charter would not raise sufficient money to conduct the city government and also defray expenses of a fire department and other desired improvements. A later attempt by a committee of interested citizens to raise by subscription enough revenue to purchase the necessary fire apparatus for the protection of the city was also a failure, and it was not until the fire of 1907 that re-incorporation became a necessity.

According to the October 4, 1907 Sutter County Farmer, practically all the business portion of Yuba City, embracing the business block west of Second Street and the two blocks on the east side of Second Street, was swept by a fire which originated in the kitchen of the Windsor Hotel.

At that time the first floor of the hotel was occupied by the Valley Meat Co., the Sutter County Chamber of Commerce and a barbershop.

The paper further stated that, "For a time it looked as though the brick block facing Bridge Street was doomed, but the timely assistance of the Marysville fire department saved this portion of the town."

The two-story brick Odd Fellows' Hall, which was occupied on the first floor by a grocery store, was probably the largest single loss. The building, the hall furniture and grocery stock were valued at \$20,000. And, according to the newspaper, the grocery stock and hall were insured for a total of \$9,000 by the owner, Edward G. Van Arsdale, the son of A. B. Van Arsdale, a former Sutter County supervisor and treasurer.

Abraham Brewer Van Arsdale was born on July 3, 1830 in the state of Kentucky. His father, a cabinetmaker, and his mother, the former Narcissa Blackwood, were both natives of Kentucky.

At the age of three, young Van Arsdale and his family moved to Missouri, where they took up farming. When he was 16 years old, Van Arsdale went to Quincy, Ill. where he learned the trade of wheelwright, the making or repairing of wheels. He served as an apprentice for three years.

Upon his return to Missouri, Van Arsdale continued at this new trade until 1850, when he came overland to California, reaching the community of Hangtown, now known as Placerville, on August 3, 1850. In a short time he journeyed to Nevada City where he engaged in mining for two years. The next seven years he returned to his former trade as a wheelwright and worked in Sacramento. During this time, he married Mattie Ray, a native of Missouri.

Among his other pursuits were teaming to the mountains for five years and farming in Yolo County until the floods of 1861 and 1862 carried away all of his property.

Upon his arrival in Sutter County in 1862, Van Arsdale settled in Pleasant Grove where he conducted a blacksmithing business for several years. Five years later, after gaining the respect and esteem of his neighbors, Van Arsdale was elected to serve as supervisor.

Listed among the early day growers of grain in Sutter County, Van Arsdale was also the proprietor of Yuba City's only hotel, the Windsor, for a brief period of time.

During the ensuing years, the family established a home in Yuba City. In 1877, A. B. Van Arsdale was elected to serve as county treasurer, an office he held for eleven years.

Among his many interests, Van Arsdale was an active member of Enterprise Lodge No. 70, F. and A. M., Yuba City Lodge No. 185, IOOF and Yuba City Lodge AOUW.

He was also a member of the M. E. Church, South.

During an evening in April 1890, the Yuba City library and Reading Room Association was organized. Among the officers elected was Van Arsdale for the office of treasurer. According to a newspaper account of the association, "ladies and gentlemen members of the association will be allowed to take books from the room to read." It was also added that "the association will supply something that was badly needed in Yuba City."

One year later, Van Arsdale died at his home at the age of 61. According to a Sutter County newspaper, Van Arsdale was regarded as a man of integrity - "honorable and conscientious to the highest degree." It further added that even after retiring from public service, Van Arsdale continued to take a deep interest in Yuba City and was "always ready with counsel and means to forward its material enterprises." In addition to his widow, he left a son, Edward, a well-known proprietor of Yuba City.

Edward G. Van Arsdale

Edward G. Van Arsdale was born in Petaluma on June 10, 1859 and was a Sutter County resident from childhood. After completing his education in local schools, he entered the grocery business in 1882. Six years later, he married Maggie T. Shur, a native of Illinois.

For 38 years, Van Arsdale maintained his grocery business and, in partnership at one time with W. A. Walton, the firm carried a complete line of merchandise

comprising of dry goods, clothing, groceries and hardware.

Shortly after Yuba City was re-incorporated in 1908, Van Arsdale was one of the first men to serve as city trustee. Although it was his only public office, Van Arsdale devoted many years to various movements for the advancement of the community. And upon his retirement in 1919, his remaining days were spent tending his orchard and vineyard interests.

E. G. Van Arsdale died at his home in July of 1930 at the age of 71. Along with his widow, he left four children, including Blanche V. Bevon of San Anselmo and Gordon B. and Burch Van Arsdale and Elizabeth V. Wilson, all of Yuba City.

Another chapter was closed on this prominent family, but the influence of both father and son have left an imprint in the history of Sutter County.

N e w s

Greens for the Museum

If you have evergreen pruning to do later this fall, consider donating the clippings to the Museum for their Christmas decorations. Volunteers use these beautiful cuttings to make fresh garland and wreaths to decorate for Trees & Traditions -- and all through the month of December. Decoration Day is November 29th and any fresh evergreen cuttings you'd like to donate can be dropped off behind the museum on or before that date.

Yuba City Centennial

Next year marks the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of Yuba City. Events will be taking place throughout the year, but pay close attention in late summer when the Museum's book about Yuba City is published. The Museum is still soliciting stories and photographs for the book and if you have something you'd like to share, please contact Julie or Sharyl at (530) 822-7141.

Historic Properties Survey

It's been a long time in coming, but Historical Society's survey of Sutter County Historic Properties is nearly finished! The Society expects to have a completed survey this fall, which will allow us to provide it to Sutter County as it prepares to amend its General Plan. Our intent is to ensure the General Plan considers the preservation of historic properties as it lays out the future of our county. Many, many thanks to those volunteers who provided so much of their effort and expertise to survey the properties!

Early History of the Canning Industry in Sutter and Yuba Counties

by
Randolph Schnabel

(Speech given by Randolph Schnabel before the Sutter County Historical Society and previously published in the Sutter County Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin in January 1966. The text has been slightly edited as it was originally meant to be spoken, not read.)

In the year 1883 local farmers and businessmen posed a question, "Why not a fruit cannery in the community of Marysville or Yuba City?" Sutter and Yuba Counties are the best fruit growing area in California, with perhaps the exception of the Santa Clara Valley and that is questionable. In the 1880s when the fruit industry was in its infancy, good land could be had in the Yuba-Sutter area for \$50 to \$100 per acre. It was difficult to convince the people that much greater profits in fruit culture could be made in this area rather than going to the Bay Area and paying \$500 to \$1000 for land which was not any better for fruit culture. At that time the canned fruit industry in California amounted to about eight million dollars in assets to California. This represented about forty per cent of the wheat income and fifty per cent of the value of the gold mined in those years.

In May 1883, a group of local growers organized the Sutter Canning and Packing Company. They felt the need for a local processing plant in order to process the few fruits that were grown in this area. The organizational meeting was called to order by B. F. Walton in the absence of Fred Cooper. Dr. S. R. Chandler became chairman pro tem. They went through the pangs of organizing and

writing the articles of incorporation. The Sutter Canning and Packing Company came into being with the issuance of 500 shares of stock. The Board of Directors included many names that are familiar to most residents of this area: J. B. Wilkie, S. C. Deaner, B. F. Walton, J. C. Gray (president of the corporation), H. Luther, J. B. Onstott and G. S. Cooley.

The Sutter Canning and Packing Company purchased a block of land (5¼ acres) across Gilsizer Slough next to the railroad tracks. The property belonged to A. Wilbur. It fronted on B Street and was said to be on high ground. In a very short time they started to erect the buildings. Some of those buildings still can be identified inside the Associated Transportation Company building. It is a solid brick building with a sheet iron roof and is being used at the present time by Bremer's Hardware for a warehouse.

The Sutter Canning and Packing Company Corporation papers were filed with the Secretary of State which made it a legal organization. The land was purchased and work was started on construction. A Mr. W. H. Barker was awarded the contract which stipulated a completed plant in forty days. The Wheeler process was to be used in the canning of the fruit. The processing

machinery was moved in immediately upon the completion of the building.

In March 1884, the first assessment of ten dollars for each share of stock was called for and was to be paid in gold coin. The assessment was to be paid at the office of the Farmers Cooperative Union of Sutter County Bank, located on Second Street. Payments were to be made by April 5, 1884 or stock would be sold at public auction. They had about \$10,000 capital stock at the time. It was known as a joint stock company. In April 1884, about a year after its organization, J. Littlejohn replaced Mr. Cooley on the Board of Directors. Mr. Ashley was appointed superintendent of the plant and his immediate job was to get the plant ready to operate in the 1884 season. The newspapers were very encouraging by publicizing the fact that "a good profit is expected by these enterprising men." By May 23, 1884, they had 66,000 cans made by hand labor. They expected to have 240,000 cans ready by July 1st when the season was to start. That would hardly be a start today in the canning run. This was at the height of anti-Chinese sentiment in California and the local paper wrote, "It is the intention of the management not to hire Chinese in the canning department, but to give hundreds of boys and girls and women employment." Somewhat to the chagrin of the management, the Chinese were the only people who were able to make the cans the first season so they were employed the first season, but the papers carefully explained that energetic young men were going to be trained in this branch of the business. It would seem from the foregoing statements that the management was forced to hire the Chinese that first

season to make cans.

June 20, 1884 the Yuba City Cannery started operating. It would be a wild guess on your part if you could guess what was canned first: CURRANTS.

Labor seemed to be quite a problem that first year, but the encouraging newspaper was always behind the enterprise. To quote from the Sutter County Farmer; "to work and earn the bread by the sweat of the brow is honorable and none should feel that they were too good to labor. Honest toil is better than pauperism and this enterprise (the cannery) offers an opportunity for quite a number to make their fair wages. Girls and women and steady boys will be hired in the Canning Department." The ages of the "steady boys" ranged from eleven to fifteen years. As one of these boys remembered, "They put us out on the porch without even a shade over us, stemming plums with a short, notched stick."

A few years passed by with each year bringing a repetition of the trials and tribulations of the canning industry. The Superintendent had his troubles getting machinery and he had to enlarge the plant because of the increase in green fruit and case goods demand. On July 1, 1887, they started to run apricots with 135 operative employees, chiefly ladies both young and old. The newspaper noted, "Boys and girls of tender ages are all busy as bees earning from \$1.00 to \$1.65 per day." There was a need to enlarge the cannery due to the increase of plantings of new orchards in the area.

They finished the apricots in about two weeks, packing over 5,000 cases. Another interesting point to be mentioned is that several lots of

blackberries came down from Browns Valley to be packed. The superintendent's job had gone to Mr. J. J. Pratt in 1887. In 1887 we find about 150 tons of apricots were packed, and approximately 225 tons of peaches, 30 tons of pears, with tomatoes trailing with 15 tons. The prices paid for the green produce were about one and one half cents to two cents a pound. To quote the newspaper: "The fruit was well graded and sold on its merit." In that same year, 1887, there were rumors of another cannery in Marysville. The papers came out again with some good Chamber of Commerce material.

In 1888, the directors of Sutter Canning and Packing Company (J. C. Gray, R. C. Kells, B. F. Walton and others) agreed to enlarge the cannery to three times its original capacity. The problem with hired help was a drawback in spite of newspaper propaganda. There were not enough people locally who wanted to work so they began to import help. The people way out yonder in West Sutter and Meridian were interested in working if living quarters could be provided. In order to avail themselves of this labor the company built a "Tent City" and they furnished the "Tent City" with grocery service. Different grocery stores in town came around with their wagons, took the orders, to be filled and delivered later in the day. The "Tent Cities" were a great success in spite of primitive sanitation conditions to be lived with in our hot July and August weather.

A new form of power came into being about that time. The coal miners were on strike and freight rates for shipping coal from the East were prohibitive. Gas replaced coal and was

used in the tin shops and cooking tables. Gas produced less heat for the hot summers in the plant.

Wages in 1888 were from \$6.00 to \$12.00 per week. Boarding houses were established where one could get board for 50 cents per day, sometimes the price would go up to \$1.00 per day for board and room. The cannery housing was operated as a non-profit venture. The cottages were furnished to employees rent free. A deposit was required and if anything was broken during the employee's stay, he forfeited his deposit. We might say this was labor's "fringe benefits."

A 90,000 canned shipment exhausted all the supplies on hand in 1888. They put up nothing but first-class fruit and sold it all. Nothing but the best fruit, fresh from the trees was canned. With good newspaper propaganda that equaled a sellout.

In March 1888 we find a new cannery being born in Marysville. Some people say it was on 14th Street and others say it was on 11th Street, but the writer is inclined to believe it was on 14th Street since his grandfather, Mr. R. W. Skinner, was the biggest promoter. Many local people will remember Mr. R. W. Skinner in Yuba City and Marysville especially the Boy Scouts who attended the annual cherry feed in the Skinner cherry orchards. Granddad Skinner was usually seen about town dressed in a corduroy vest, a black hat that was completely round, a white stiff front shirt and bow tie, usually black pants, suspenders (with the old wide straps), and a pipe in his mouth. Probably a safety pin over one pocket because he kept a few folded bills in there. The silver with which he bought the kids ice cream was loose in his pocket.

R. W. Skinner was Superintendent of the new cannery. The newspapers stated he expected to employ about 200 hands for the season. The cannery was established on the railroad spur, the old California Northern Railroad. They put in a spur line to the tin shops and started working with two men, both Chinese. To quote Mr. Skinner, "Of course, in a few years I expect to see peas, asparagus, cherries and other early products produced in this vicinity to a larger extent, and then our season will begin much earlier." Mr. Skinner was a man of great vision and faith in the future of this area. There is not too much to be found in the Sutter County Farmer about the Marysville Cannery, but the Sutter Canning Company received its share in print.

April 1886 the Board of Directors of the Sutter Canning Company published an annual report which is always interesting reading to a co-op member. During the last four years of their operation the commercial rate of interest had been paid to the stockholders, which was between six and seven per cent in those days. S. J. Stabler, H. Luther, J. F. Wilkie, Mr. J. Gray, B. F. Walton, P. C. Kells, and Mrs. Jenny Starr were on the Board of Directors at the time the above report was published.

The pack for the first day's run at the Marysville Cannery was 20,000 cans of apricots. They were packed in extras, standards and seconds. The extras and standards were similar to corresponding packs of the present time, but the seconds were what we would class as pie food.

In 1889, there was a short crop. About seventy-five per cent of the quality fruit was very good. New

machinery was put in including the very latest in a syrumping machine. It metered the syrup into the cans which equalized the syrup in all the cans.

Many funny episodes take place in a cannery during the season. The writer recalls a funny thing happening in his grandfather's cannery which no doubt was the incentive for much kidding: One day during the season they had to shut down the whole plant and open every one of the cans which they had run that day. One of the girls had inadvertently placed her false teeth into one of the cans while empty. The can was processed with the rest. They had to search all those cans until they found the teeth.

The Yuba City Cannery started in 1883 had grown to such proportions by 1890 that a new warehouse had to be added. It was to be 40 by 100 feet and fireproof. They built it at a cost of \$4,500 which also included some tin supplies. The building was started in February and by April 6 of the same year the \$4,500 had to be paid back to those who made the loan, presumably the Board of Directors.

The Skinner Cannery in Marysville was known as the Marysville Canning Company. Later another fruit packing company was formed in Marysville, known as the Marysville Packing Company.

In 1890, the superintendent of the Marysville Canning Company made the following statement: "The fruit is likely to be of superior quality this season and the total yield of the orchards in this district will show no falling off as compared with last season. The increased age of bearing orchards and the number of young orchards which have just come into bearing will more than make up for any

loss or injury to the trees because of too much water." One can see that high water problems, sour sap, brown rot, etc. were prevalent in those days as well as at present.

In 1891, the Sutter Canning Company held a stockholders meeting and found that a favorable year had just been concluded. Good crops, good markets, excellent quality pack, and many new buyers caused things to be really looking up for the canning industry in California. Many enterprising people began to plant orchards and go into the fruit production business. The canneries were packing cherries of the Royal Anne, Governor Wood and Tartarian varieties. Some of the orchards producing the cherries were the Jones orchard, Bunce orchard, Teagarden Track, and J. B. Wilkie orchard. Apricots of the Royal, Peach and Early Golden varieties were packed the same year. Growers sold their fruit to the cannery for about one-and-a-half cents a pound. The cling peach price was two cents a pound or \$40 a ton in June 1891.

The local newspaper was instrumental in putting the business before the public and was very encouraging. A quote, "Canneries are neat and clean, a good place to work. We will need many workers during the coming season." The cannery operated at about 14,000 cans per day with about 400 employees. They were running peaches and pears at the same time. They were also cutting and drying at the Sutter Canning and Packing Company. They continued to operate into September of that year. The first indication of fruit being shipped into Yuba City by railroad cars was in 1891. The paper stated that a

carload of pears from Southwest Sutter arrived in Yuba City from P. V. Veeder's place on the Sacramento River. A carload of sugar was also received over the Knights Landing railroad.

Wages paid to the workers were increasing a little. The girls and boys cutting fruit were earning eight to nine dollars per week. Some of them earned as much as twelve dollars per week. The payroll of the cannery was about \$3,000 per week.

Year by year, the pack was steadily increasing. In 1892, the Sutter Canning Company canned about 32,000 cases of peaches, 4,000 cases of apricots, 1,600 cases of pears, 3,000 cases of plums, and about 800 cases of grapes. Besides canning, they dried about 213 green tons of produce.

Quality pack was very much in demand in the East and every year new markets were opening. Over \$75,000 was distributed between labor and the farmers in this community from this one little cannery in one year. (1892)

Peaches and plums were being packed in 1893. Approximately 1,500 cases of green-gage plums were packed. After plums they started on peaches which were primarily of the Tuscan variety. There were also some early Crawfords and Fosters. The price in 1893 seemed to stabilize at one-and-a-half cents per pound, and only first-class and extra quality in size were used. Some pears were delivered at the same prices.

Most of the employees of the Sutter Canning and Packing Company lived in the cottages furnished by the company. They were given preference of work when needed.

The season of 1893 found market conditions a little chaotic and quiet.

There was considerable carryover for several canneries. The Sutter Canning Company disposed of most of their stock, and that year over \$13,000 was paid to the farmers, and about \$15,000 to local labor.

In 1893, only about half a pack was processed due to economic conditions; however, by the beginning of the 1894 season the fruit canners were rejoicing over the unprecedented demand for California canned fruit. The demand came from the eastern market; however, in another record we are told that we were exporting overseas, and London and Liverpool seemed to be the outstanding market for case goods. From 2,000 to 5,000 cases were shipped daily. Of course, climatic conditions caused much of the demand for western fruit that particular season. The eastern fruit belt had a killing frost and production was very low.

Automation began to take its place in the canneries. A mechanical can carrier was installed in the Sutter Cannery. A chain in a tin trough, about five inches wide, carried the cans along continuously. The conveyer carried the fruit all the way from the cutting tables, through to the canning department, and on to the vats where they were cooked. The retort was not a line retort as is used today, but big vat retorts. At the same time a gasoline engine was installed to pump water.

January 17, 1896, the headlines in the Sutter County Farmer broadcast the news that a new cannery was to be built in Marysville to replace the one which had recently burned down. Subscriptions were being collected. Some of the contributors were: Frank House, Jenny Starr, Mrs. Parks, W. P.

Harkey, the Giblin Brothers, and others.

A month later R. W. Skinner announced plans to erect a new cannery on the site of the one recently burned. Mr. W. H. Wright of San Jose Packing Company planned to establish his plant in the old Marysville Pavilion located between Fifth and Sixth Streets on B Street. The State Fair was held in this building at one time which gave it the name "Pavilion." This cannery had a capacity of producing about 100,000 cases of fruit per season. The manager was Mr. A. C. Baumgarden. Nothing more was said about a cannery which R. W. Skinner was to build. He changed his plans and never did build another cannery in Marysville.

The Marysville Cannery canned 18,000 more cases than their guarantee with the stockholders required. The can sizes were a little different than they are today. They used a gallon size which corresponded to the number 10 tin of today. The number 10 tins were packed twelve to a case instead of six. Quart cans compared to number 2½ tins of the present day, and were packed two dozen to a case. There were also small size cans which were experimental. Four dozen small cans were packed to a case. The cases were made of wood in those days instead of cardboard which added much to the weight in handling.

The best export sales for peaches were London and Liverpool. The Marysville Cannery helped the San Jose Cannery and the Oakland Canneries fill their orders. The annual payroll was approximately \$25,000.

About 1896 the Yuba City Cannery began processing olive oil, and they also pickled olives which were sold in barrels.

In 1898 a rumor began to circulate stating that R. W. Skinner was about to start a new cannery in Woodland. He did open a cannery in Woodland at the same time he was manager of the Lincoln Fruit Packing Company. He was also trying to make a cannery go in Marysville. A quote from the newspaper about Mr. Skinner at the time states, "He is an energetic man and a thorough fruit man, it is hoped that his efforts will prove successful." They did prove successful in establishing a new cannery on the Yuba City side of the river.

In 1898, there must have been some adverse growing conditions as far as the weather was concerned. There was a very short crop, and only the Sutter Canning Company did any packing that year. There was about one-fifth of a crop of peaches.

Rosenberg Brothers gave notice in 1899 that a cannery was to be established in Yuba City just across the tracks from the Sutter Canning Company on B Street. They already had a dried fruit concern going there in 1899, but they were to establish a cannery which would pack a million cans. A million cans were ordered. Mr. C. A. Rand was superintendent. The newspaper, always promoting business for Yuba City, stated, "The new cannery was good for the community as it competes with the Canners Association."

Articles of Incorporation for a new fruit canners association, better known as the C. F. C. A., appeared in July 1898. The C. F. C. A. eventually became the California Packing Corporation or C. P. C. of the present day. The C. F. C. A. was originally started by ten different members: Cutting Fruit, Fontana Fruit, King

Morris, San Jose Packing, Sacramento Packing, Rose City, Southern Packing Company, and A. F. Tenny & Company. The capital stock was \$3½ million at \$100 per share. Sutter Canning Company held their stock at too high a price for the Corporation.

In 1899, two canneries were operating in Sutter County: the Sutter Canning Company and Rosenberg's. In addition to the cottages for employees, tents were being rented for fifty cents a week; however, they needed more help.

It was announced in January 1900 that R. W. Skinner, part owner of the Lincoln Canning Company, would be superintendent of the Marysville C. F. C. A. Plant, and R. C. Kells was recommended as assistant. A good season was anticipated.

In 1900, a new name appeared upon the horizon, Hunt Bros. of Hayward combined with Sutter Canning Company. At that time prices for green fruit ranged from \$25 on clingstones to \$17.50 for freestones. Size of fruit began to be mentioned as a criteria for sales. Peaches had to be between 2¼ and 2½ inches or better. Smaller fruit was of less price. Several thousand tons were contracted for the above prices in 1900. That same year Rosenberg's sold out to Hunt Bros. leaving only one cannery in Yuba City. The Sutter Canning Company, Hunt Bros., and Rosenberg's were all three combined into one plant. Working conditions were improved by installing electric fans which were to run constantly during warm weather. Wages were good, and it is interesting to note that the health of the workers was considered. "Drinking water will be boiled during the evenings and allowed to cool overnight. The

employees are assured of fair treatment, and fair wages for their work."

In 1900, Hunt Bros. elected R. W. Skinner to manage their Yuba City Plant, Marysville Can Company, and the Lincoln Cannery. This placed all canning in this part of the State under C. F. C. A. control. Mr. J. J. Pratt retired to go to the Hayward plant, claiming poor health. He had been manager in Yuba City since the beginning in 1884. The growers' contracts were not affected.

In 1901, frost claimed about one half the crop of peaches. Cherries were about average. In 1902, Charles E. Littlejohn and R. W. Skinner were elected as managers of the canneries in Yuba City, Marysville, and Lincoln. M. C. Costs was head of the clerical work.

With the 1902 season bringing in a large crop, causing prices to drop, the growers became very disgruntled, and wished to see a competitive cannery in the field. The acreage was increasing, and the C. F. C. A. appeared to be in control of the canning industry.

The Sutter Preserving Company was the result of the unrest and came into being with a capital stock of \$50,000, five hundred shares at \$100 each. One hundred were sold to R. W. Skinner, one hundred to San Francisco capital, and local growers bought up the other three hundred shares. The site of the new cannery was on B Street where the C. P. C. cannery is now located. It was located beside a spur railroad track. A building 40 feet by 300 feet was erected. A tank tower was built, and a boiler room was installed. The latest improved machinery and conveniences for

handling fruit were installed. The general management was under a Board of Directors with R. W. Skinner as manager and Charles E. Littlejohn as superintendent. Skinner was to manage the Woodland Cannery also. The two plants would mutually aid each other in the purchasing of supplies and distribution of fruit, although they were separate and distinct corporations. A wagon road was opened into the location, and the lumber was put on the site. A two hundred by four hundred foot canning room was built, a twenty by twenty engine room, and a tank tower was added. They built fifty feet of open platform between the two buildings at the south end of the main canning room. A forty by one hundred foot warehouse for storage was constructed. All the buildings were built five feet above the ground. All the shaftings, beltings, steam pipes, and water lines were under the floor. City water and electric lights were used by this modern plant. They also installed a 5,000 gallon tank for crude oil. The waste water was piped along the railroad tracks to the slough (Gilsizer Slough). A local lumber yard had the contract to build, and C. J. White was to superintend the construction. Frank Crane was appointed superintendent of the new plant in Yuba City, and George W. Pratt was in charge of green fruit, receiving, and shipping. This is the first time we find the canning and green fruit separated into two distinct departments.

In 1903, it is noted that the new buildings of the Sutter Preserving Company were coming along rapidly. Mrs. Della Morris was appointed bookkeeper. A seventy-five horsepower boiler had been installed,

and a good well had been sunk. In spite of all the modern installations and extensive preparations, business was not good that season, and competition was keen. The Sutter Preserving Company went broke and was forced financially to lease the well-equipped new plant. J. K. Armsby & Company leased it and started anew. Later a fire forced the lessee out of business. The Sutter Preserving Company stockholders were held responsible for \$17,000 or \$59.71 a share for the failing company. In spite of all this, R. W. Skinner must have had a way with the newspapers because they appeared to be on his side. The local paper states, "Circumstances caused the situation; however, the company did help the growers and the community, but not the stockholders." The plant burned in 1906, which ended the lease

with J. K. Armsby & Company; however, he in turn purchased the business.

The year, 1910, found Armsby's plant rebuilt and working. Later the Central California Cannery purchased the Armsby plant. The Central California Cannery has been in operation continuously to the present time, but a number of years ago became the California Packing Company or C. P. C.

The writer stopped this historic growth of the canning industry before the Harter Packing Company entered the field. That is a story within itself of the growth of a modern home-owned packing company.

Another book could be written on the development of the packing industry in Sutter and Yuba Counties in modern times.

Teasers For You Old Timers

by

Anonymous

Yuba City High School Class of 1934

Can you remember the U. S. Air Corps flying over Sutter County in 1930? They flew from Crissy Field near the Presidio in San Francisco over the valley. You would have seen fighters and bombers in formation with open cockpits and in-line piston engines and spruce, canvas and wire construction - the latest thing!

The Air Show at Cheim Field east of Marysville. Two memorable planes you saw were a Ford Tri-Motor usually called a Tin Goose with three all metal radial engines. You'd also remember a hybrid - the Kellet Autogyro which probably fathered the helicopter.

Did you remember to stop at the vegetable gardens on your way back into town?

Do you remember watching the crop dusters flying off the field where Sam's Club is now located - just west of Walton Avenue in Yuba City?

Long gone are the old Canonball Expresses that ran on the old Southern Pacific line from Marysville across the river to Yuba City on south to Robbins, Knights Landing, Woodland and beyond.

Where's the old Toonerville Trolley that ran from Marysville to Yuba City?

How about "Scotto" and his horse drawn ice cream wagon selling goodies from Star Ice Cream and Butter Co? Their plant was on B Street near 9th or 10th Streets.

Did you go to vaudeville at the State Theater in Marysville? There was lots of local talent plus imported - good times had by all!

Many late evenings were spent dip netting for shad on the west bank of the Feather River between the 5th Street Bridge and the old Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge, upstream.

How often did you stop at the Toot & Tell 'Em on Bridge Street in Yuba City? A hamburger and coke was living high!

Did you dance at the Moon Dance Hall at Hwy 20 and Acacia Avenue? How about Robinson's Corners at the Hwy 70 and Gridley turn off? "Haywire Mack," among others, were big time for those days.

Do you remember listening to the Marysville Band at the park on 5th Street between B & C Streets? Good music - big crowds - no troubles.

I got a lot of exercise at the roller rink in Sutter, did you?

Do you remember motorcycle hill climbing mid-way through the Buttes on Pass Road (the north side) and the good crowds that showed up?

Speaking of the Buttes, do you remember the hoped for oil boom when they spudded in the first well in the Buttes? No oil, but look at all the gas wells in the area.

Last, but not least, do you remember 8¢ gasoline? But don't forget you worked 10 hours a day for \$1.75.



Let's go way back - do you remember the tin slide fire escape from the second floor of the Grammar School at Plumas & Bridge Streets at the southwest corner? Wheeee!

A Clamper's Tale

told by

Dr. J. H. Barr, 1915

The "Taking In" of Lord Sholto Douglas first appeared in the 2nd Clamper book, *The Esoteric Book of E* published in 1935. According to the editor, the author of the original story was Dr. J. H. Barr, N. G. H. Included in Dr. Barr's papers given to the Museum is his written account of the event. It is this version of the story that we are sharing with you.

In the fall of 1896, a traveling theatrical troop made its appearance in this locality (the northern part of the State of California).

The troop was under the management of a man by the name of Lord Sholto Douglas and was to play for one week.

The first night's receipts were so meager that it hardly paid for the lighting of the theatre. The prospect was discouraging and as the manager and the rest of the troop were already in such straitened circumstances it would be impossible for them to continue their performances. His Lordship wringing his hands and pacing the stage behind the curtains muttering to himself, "What shall I do? What shall I do? I am ruined. I am ruined." One of the stagehands, seeing the manager in trouble, said to him, "What is the matter?" "Matter, matter? Can't you see what is the matter? Look at this house. The people will not come to our show. I am disgusted. I am ruined. What can I do?"

The stagehand spoke kindly to his Lordship and said to him, "I see you do not understand the people and conditions of this locality which extends about a hundred miles through these mining regions. These people are a very clannish set and have their own peculiar ways. Unless you fall in with

them and join their society, no outsider can come in and do much business. If you join their organization and receive the password, you can go anywhere and transact your business without any trouble."

"What is the organization you speak of? How do you join and what does it cost? I have no money, but, if they will trust me, I am willing to become a member."

"This organization is called the Clampers. I do not know the proper name, as I am not a member, but I know some of them who are members, and I will introduce you and you will see what can be done."

Lord Sholto Douglas made application in due form and the date was set for initiation. At the appointed time, Lord Douglas presented himself in due form for initiation, properly instructed, properly clad and properly introduced. Conducted by the guard, they entered the hall. From this point on, Lord Douglas will inform you what took place: "With hand and feet shackled with heavy shackles and chain, I entered a dark room, so dark that nothing could be seen. With the guard leading me, I was told to advance with care as I was walking on dangerous ground which was exceedingly cold on the bare feet. After advancing for some distance, the guard ordered me

to halt. The guard then left me, and a voice from some distance far above demanded of me my name, age, occupation and what were my desires for having to dare enter this desolated region alone. I informed that my desire was that I should learn the mysteries of this mysterious order."

" 'It being your request to advance in this order, I will free you from the chains with which you are bound.' At his command, the heavy chains fell with a tremendous crash. "You are now free from any obstruction of your person. At the proper time you will advance alone through many obstructions, through thorn and brambles in the first stage of your way. You will then enter a cave of silence through which you may encounter very severe storm accompanied with terrific thunder. On leaving the cave of silence, you will advance to the east emerging from darkness. You will now see the light of the rising sun. At the foot of the cliff to the left, you will find a small jewel case which you will take with you and defend with your life. You will bow to the rising sun, acknowledging that you have the box of jewels."

"Upon bowing to the East, I received such a severe bump in the posterior region that I thought my spinal column had been driven up through my cranium. At this place, I learned the password of the Order was O.M.A. which I often repeated as I placed my hand on my posterior region.

"The region which I was now passing through was one of the most desolate, nothing but blistering rocks and drifting sands. In this desolate region, I was accosted by about a dozen disreputable characters who asked me if I'd seen a box of jewels they had

lost. I informed them that I had a box of jewels and had received instruction from the Noble Grand Humbug only to turn it over to the person giving me the proper sign and password for the receipt of the box. They again demanded the box, and, on my refusing to give it up, tried to take it by force. In the scuffle, I received a blow on the top of the head and was knocked unconscious. From now until consciousness returned is but conjecture.

"Thinking they had killed me, they found some old slabs and made a rough casket in which they placed my body so they could carry it more easily, as there was no place they could dig a grave, the ground being so rocky and hard. And the river being but a distance of about a mile, they carried me to the river bank and tossed the box containing the body into the water, where, if found, it would tell no tales.

"But the box, being so poorly constructed, when thrown, the bottom fell out and I landed in the water. From the refreshing effect, I regained consciousness. I took in the situation at a glance. I remained quiet until the ruffians departed. I then crawled from the reeds of my oozy bed. I then found that I had now E Clampus Vitus, a Grip on Life."

E Clampus Vitus, Now & Then by Seth Slopes, copyright by Old Timers Museum, Murphys, California, 2000.

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

P
C
N
N
—
D
P
D
D
D

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| Autogyro | Cannery |
| Castleberry | Clamper |
| Cottages | Currants |
| Fletcher | Fruit |
| Harter | Humbug |
| Motorcycle | Orchards |
| Packing | Schnabel |
| Sholto | Skinner |
| Starr | Tartarian |
| Toonerville | VanArsdale |



Coming Events

October

- 11 Volunteer Appreciation Tea at the Museum, 10:00 am
- 12 *What's Going On – California and the Vietnam Era Exhibit*
Opening & Program at the Museum -- 6:30 - 8:30 pm
- 17 Museum Ornament Workshop, 10:00 am
- 20 SCHS October Luncheon
Ruthy's, 229 Clark Avenue, Yuba City
11:30 social time, 12:00 luncheon
Program: Clay Castleberry on Covered Bridges

November

- 1 Museum Ornament Workshop, 10:00 am
- 25 *What's Going On* exhibit ends
- 29 Decoration Day at the Museum, 9:00 am – finished
Come for all or part of the day – remember your gloves & clippers

December

- 1 Trees and Traditions Gala, 5:00 – 8:00 pm
Tickets available at the Museum or from Commissioners
- 16 Children's Program and Open House, 1:00 – 3:00 pm