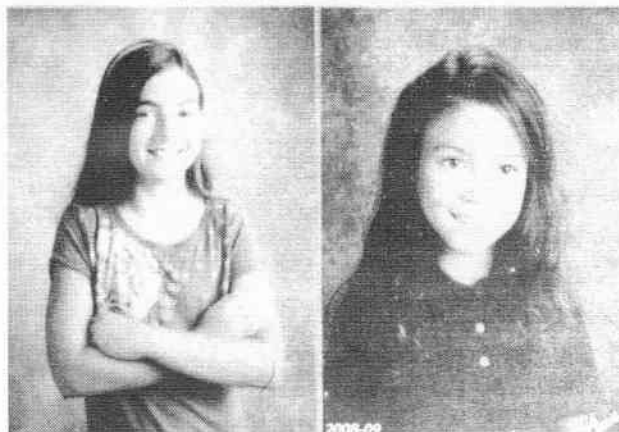


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Vol. LI No. 3

Yuba City, California

July 2009





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Audrey Breeding, President                      Sarah Pryor, Vice President  
 Phyllis Smith, Secretary/Treasurer

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Ruth Mikkelsen - 2009	Margit Sands - 2007
Leona Pennington - 2006	Phyllis Smith - 2000
Steve Perry - 1994	Janet Spilman - 2007
Bill Stenquist - 2004	

\*The year the director joined the Board.

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The 2009 dues are payable as of January 1, 2009. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at P. O. Box 1555, Yuba City, 95992-1555. 530-822-7141

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## President's Message

With gratitude and a touch of sadness our Board of Directors is saying goodbye to several members. John Reische served as president of the Society from 2001-2003, and so much good happened during his tenure that I was surprised to see it was just a single term. Helen Heenan, a Board member since 1996, has also chosen not to serve again. And Jennifer Scrogin, a relative newcomer to our Board but someone we were happy to have join us, has also moved on to other pursuits. While we will miss these hard-working members, I'm sure we will continue to see them at our membership events.

We also welcome a new Board member, Ruth Mikkelsen.

Obviously we now have some big shoes to fill on our Board, and we are eager to have you, our members, step in to them. We also welcome non-members to apply, so if you have friends with an interest in local history please pass along the word. We have recently drafted a statement of Board Member Responsibilities, which is printed in this issue of the Bulletin on pages 17-18. We will be discussing this draft document at our Board meeting on September 22. But in the meantime you can consider it a reasonable guideline of what's expected of Board members. And while there is certainly work involved, there are ample rewards for your participation, including being an active contributor to preservation of our local history and meeting others in the community.

At our March Board of Directors meeting we elected officers for the 2009-2011 term: I will once again serve as president; Sarah Pryor is vice president; and Phyllis Smith repeats her role as secretary/treasurer.

By now you're probably all aware that we had to cancel our April meeting due to a dearth of reservations. I have to say I was very disappointed and also perplexed by the lack of interest, especially considering the great turnout we had at our (very hot) Picnic in the Park. Perhaps it was just a bad time for everyone; perhaps there were other activities that conflicted with our luncheon. If any of you have thoughts or suggestions about improving our membership meetings, I would love to hear from you. You can call me at 695-2965.

You have a chance to make up for April by attending our next couple of functions. On Thursday, August 20, we will have a program showcasing Thompson and West's *History of Sutter County*. As we go to press the program is not settled, but watch your mail for details of the event. But don't think you have to wait until then to get your copy of the book - it's available at the Museum for \$45 plus tax, or you can get a copy mailed for \$60, which includes tax, shipping and handling.

And on October 17 we'll hold our membership meeting at Ruthy's, a venue that has proven to be popular with our members. Our program will be Frank Coats talking about *General Land Office Records and Early Maps of the Sutter Buttes*. This is a very timely topic, considering the ongoing discussion of access to the Buttes.

Have a great summer and I'll see you on August 20!

Audrey Breeding  
President

## Director's Report

The Museum is hosting two great CERA (California Exhibition Resources Alliance) exhibitions this summer and fall. Right now through August 16, we are pleased to feature *Bear in Mind: The California Grizzly Bear*. It is a Sutter County "blockbuster" and very popular with both adults and children. Filled with colorful images, historical and natural history information, interactive and children's activities, it is a must-see attraction at the Museum this summer. *Bear in Mind* addresses the extinction of the grizzly bear in California, its natural history, and the many ways the California grizzly is represented in advertising, entertainment and imagination as a popular and lovable icon.

The children's corner features a tent, bear story books, bear costumes to try on, and lots of fuzzy bear and other endangered animals toys. A local component relates some intriguing information about the bears that inhabited our community. A cast of a grizzly's footprint and a measuring stick marking the nine foot height of a standing grizzly are real eye-openers revealing their awe-inspiring dimensions. Exquisitely beautiful are the grizzly bones carved out of ancient oak by artist Joyce Clements. There is no entire skeleton of a California grizzly bear in existence, so Clements studied individual bones at U.C. Berkeley and carefully sculpted their likenesses in the richly textured oak. They are unique objects of art, an homage to a revered lost species. Come into the Museum to learn all about California grizzlies and their importance in our state's history. The book *Bear in Mind*, on which the exhibit is based, is available in the Museum Store for \$49.50.

September and October will bring us *Lewis and Clark Revisited: A Trail in Modern Day*. Noted photographer Greg MacGregor traced the entire route of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's historic journey that opened up the West. The exhibit juxtaposes his photographs of the landscape as it exists today with passages from their journals. Not only does the exhibit provide a rich visual commentary on contemporary American life, but on the pioneering exploration of the unknown vast lands of our continent. Watch for opening and program dates in the next *Muse News*.

Museum staff continue working on content for the various ethnic exhibits in the new wing. We are looking forward to the opening of the wing in the not-too-distant future, but working closely with so many community groups has been more labor intensive and time consuming than anticipated. The Punjabi American committee reports that they are nearing the completion of the final review of labels and photographs, so we look forward to the completion of that section before long.

An important project this fall will be a membership drive to build the strength of our joint membership. Both the Historical Society and the Museum will work toward recruiting more members to include more people from our community who may be interested in local history. If you can think of someone you would like to invite to become a member, you can pick up a brochure at the Museum or we will be glad to send one by mail. Bear this in mind!

Julie Stark  
Director

## Memorials

In Memory of **Florence Arritt**  
Dewey & Barbara Gruening  
Shirley Schnabel  
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Judith Baber**  
John & Susan Micheli

In Memory of **Floyd Baker**  
John & Susan Micheli

In Memory of **Margaret Baker**  
Vern & Marilyn Ornbaun

In Memory of **June Bryson**  
Sharyl Simmons  
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Leo Chesini**  
Joe Benatar  
Hardy & Ardis McFarland  
Marnee Crowhurst

In Memory of **Henry Everett**  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bryant  
Ida Philpott

In Memory of **Sherri Guthrie**  
Bob & Lee Jones

In Memory of **Kathy Burky Heier**  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bryant  
Earl, Billie & John Burky  
Babs Cotter  
George & Nina Lott  
Keith & Stephanie Marine  
Robert & Eleanor Mackensen  
Ida J. Philpott  
Norm & Loadel Piner  
Steven Richardson  
Louie & Betty Schmidl  
Sharyl Simmons  
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Eunice Hollingsworth**  
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Eleanor Holmes**  
Sharyl Simmons

In Memory of **Wilbur Morris**  
Shirley Schnabel

In Memory of **Shirley Perozzi**  
Joni Adams  
California Camel Clompers

In Memory of **Scott Putman**  
Joe & Rebecca Benatar

In Memory of **Betty Kimerer Pursell**  
Mary Butler  
Ida Philpott

In Memory of **Marge Saunders**  
Mike & Helene Andrews

In Memory of **Trudy Speckert**  
Everett & Elizabeth Berry  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bryant  
Ken & Vivian Calhoun

In Memory of **Larry Staas**  
Jim Staas

In Memory of **Bobbie Stiles**  
Steven Richardson

In Memory of **Louis F. Tarke**  
Joe Benatar  
Dealla & Wally Crother  
Marnee Crowhurst  
Bud & Joan Doty  
Dewey & Barbara Gruening  
Lois Licari  
Shirley Schnabel  
Sharyl Simmons

Outright Gift  
Steven & Ann McCoy

## Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest Winners – 2009

*The Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest honors Museum Commissioner Judith Fairbanks, a fourth grade teacher who loved history. The Essay Contest is sponsored jointly by the Museum and the Historical Society. The contest is open to fourth and fifth graders who are studying California history and the westward movement in the United States.*

*The title of the essay contest is "Letters Home." Contestants study California and Sutter County in the 1840s, '50s and '60s, then put themselves in the place of a migrant or immigrant new to the Sutter County area and write a letter to the folks back home telling them about how they traveled to the area, what they found and their experiences in this new land.*

**Jessica Flores, First Place**

Teacher: Paula McBride, Faith Christian Elementary

Dear beloved granddaughter,

It was many years ago when I lived in Boston, Massachusetts. I was about fifteen years old when my family decided to move to California, so I definitely had to go. We went to California because my father was going to work on John Sutter's stock ranch called the "Hock Farm."

We went to California by sea leaving from Boston. It took us twelve months to get to California. One danger I experienced was when a really bad storm hit. A great big wave embraced the ship and many fell overboard. I was one of them, but my father grabbed me as I was drifting away from the ship and almost drowning. He and a few of the other men on the ship helped several back to safety, at that point I wanted to go back home.

Finally, we arrived in San Francisco on February 13, 1856, and took a stagecoach to Sacramento. We took the steamer "Linda" to Marysville, looked around the busy town, then ferried across the Feather River to quiet little Yuba City. While visiting with people on the boat, I learned that the river was named by explorer Luis Arguello when he saw many feathers of wild birds floating on the water. I also learned that the mountain range was left over from an active volcano and was called Los Picachos or Marysville Buttes. After falling into the sea on our way to California, I was rather scared to hear that sometimes when it rains, it floods and everyone has to flee to the mountains. When we started getting off the boat, I noticed the beautiful wild grapes growing along the banks of the river. I had never seen grapes growing like this in Boston. I learned that grapes in Spanish were called "ubas" and was told that was how Yuba City got its name.

After we settled in a room in Yuba City, my father went to meet Mr. Sam Brannan at his store to buy one of his parcels of land. When my father started to build, many of the families who had arrived before us helped our family to build our house. It took a while for my dad to finish our house because many of the men were in the mines looking for gold. My father decided to take a job on the Hock Farm.

There he worked cleaning the pens, the stables, and feeding the animals. He also helped Mr. Sutter sell his animals to other people. My father enjoyed working there because he earned a good living and Mr. Sutter was kind to him and his family. Our family continued to lead a full life there in Yuba City and that is how you ended up here.

Love,  
Your grandmother, Macy

**Riley Gruenthal, Second Place**  
Teacher: Connie Robinson, Nuestro Elementary School

March 19, 1853

Dear Julian,

Hello! How are the folks back in Virginia? I hope that they have been doing as well as myself. How has Great Aunt Sarah been doing? I was really worried when we left her. She is so old if you know what I mean.

I am writing you from my new home in Sutter County. The journey here was long and hard. We met up with a wagon train in Roanoke, a short while from Richmond. My parents said that we would be safer traveling with many people, luckily it was true.

Our wagon train was attacked at midnight about a month after we left. There was a group of Indians hiding in the brush around our camp. One of the Indians made the mistake of shooting an arrow at one of the canvas tents. Everyone on the train woke up. When the Indians saw the men with their rifles they ran away. Thank the good Lord that we were with others.

Our ride was extraordinary. The wildflowers were so lovely. There were buttercups, baby blue eyes, morning glories, lupines, and California poppies. Most of the girls in our train made chains of flowers for their hair. I have to admit some of them were really pretty. You would have loved all of the wonderful flowers.

When we arrived we found a large building called Sutter's Fort. John Sutter was kind enough to let us stay in a room there. He also let us have plenty of food and water. Since we were so tired we gulped down a pitcher of water each and then hit the hay.

My father cut down a few oak trees and cut them into boards. He built our house out of the boards. It is a beautiful home. Mother says he shouldn't be working that hard, but he insists.

Jason and I found a fishing hole a short while from our house. We made fishing poles from sticks and some twine we found. Mostly we catch crawfish, but sometimes we catch fish that are real good to eat. They are hard to catch but so far I've got a salmon, some shad, a carp, and a catfish. Jason got a huge striped bass. Toby (a dog we found on the way to California) likes to try and catch fish, but he can't catch big fish and minnows are too small and fast.

There is a tribe of Indians that live here called the Maidu. They're really nice and make beautiful baskets. One time when I was looking around for acorns and

putting them in my pockets, I ran into the Indians. They said they would trade me all the acorns for a basket. When I brought it home, Mama filled the tule basket with fruit. The peaches looked so beautiful with the basket designs.

Sutter County is amazing! We have fruit trees like berries, pears and peaches. Father farms with Jason and me, while Mama is a seamstress with the help of Mary.

Have you heard that your parents might be coming here with your family? It would be good to have someone I know good live here. You're a good friend you know even if you are a girl.

Sincerely,  
Charles

**Sara Cabigas, Third Place**

Teacher: Mrs. Varricchio, Grace Christian Academy

### A New Home and Country

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

The family has had a very fun and rough time on the journey. Baby Carrie is doing fine, mother and I have been taking care of the family such as collecting eggs from the chickens, milking the cattle or cows, and cleaning the covered wagon. Of course father herds up the cattle and sets them out to graze a while, but still we do most of the stuff.

Jonathan is being his normal self, but he suddenly got tired and quiet. I think it's because we left all our friends and family behind. Carrie thinks it's because he misses your famous homemade cookies.

Well the family is enjoying nature and life especially in the West! I forgot to tell you about what happened last night. Carrie and I heard a terrible howling sound. Remembering that father was due to return from the hunt that night, but he hadn't returned for quite a while and mother was terribly worried, the howling only made worries and matters worse.

The next morning we found father laying on his bed panting and gasping for air, we all waited for an explanation, when he stopped panting and gasping out the story came. You see while father was hunting a wolf a bear caught sight of him and sensed a juicy and tasty meal. Father spotted them and ran, a wild chase had taken place, eventually, he reached the wagon, but the bear started wrestling with him and he couldn't get in, but eventually he managed to shoot the bear for breakfast, but the lucky wolf got away.

The good thing is, God protected father from harm, and brought him home safe and sound. Just to let you know, we've been reading our Bible daily, we've been getting a good education, and mother has been cooking the most excellent meals! We miss you folks in North Carolina. Ever since the chase mother has given father the lecture of, always being careful of what he does and where he goes.

We all wish you a happy day or month if possible and please wish us luck on our journey West!



# The East Indians in Sutter County

by  
Balwant Singh Brar

*This article was originally printed in the Bulletin in April, 1978. This year the Community Memorial Museum will open a new permanent exhibit honoring the history of Indians in Sutter County.*

Before I start writing about my countrymen who came to Canada and to the west coast of the United States I want to clear one point. Had Columbus known where he was on that October day in 1492, it might have been possible to use the unmodified term "Indian" without confusion or objection; but here in the western hemisphere that word has long since been preempted for our native Americans. Searching for a substitute word, an older generation here on the west coast, and possibly elsewhere, applied the term "Hindu" to all of the people from India; but this is not a particularly felicitous improvement.

Properly "Hindu" refers only to those who adhere to the religion of that name. And while it is true that the great majority of the population of India are Hindus, it happens that they are a small fraction of those who have migrated from India to Canada and the United States. In the literature of the people from India by writers from Indian background the term East Indians is the one most frequently encountered.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century India was ruled by the British with the exception of the Punjab province which was ruled by Maha Raja Ranjit Singh. He was Sikh by faith, but his ministers were from all faiths -- Sikhs, Hindus and Mohammedans. His army was very well

trained and disciplined. The British respected him and had friendly relations with him, but they wanted to bring the Punjab under British rule.

Maha Raja Ranjit Singh died in 1839, and after his death his generals and chieftains fought amongst themselves in a contest to take his place. The British took part in these internal fights, taking advantage of the turmoil, and were able to conquer the Punjab with little resistance. The chieftains and radical leaders were eliminated and the Punjab province became a part of British India.

The people of the Punjab were hard-working peasants and well-to-do compared with the residents of other parts of India. Most of them were bearded and be-turbaned Sikhs. A freedom movement developed in the province causing the British-Indian government to consider the Punjab to be an ulcer.

As a means of stopping the unrest, the government gave minor government jobs to the educated and allowed others to go to Canada and the United States. This explains why many of these first immigrants were overwhelmingly of the Sikh faith and from the Punjab where they had been acquainted or related.

In Canada these East Indians found work in the lumber industry and in California they worked around Stockton as farm laborers. During the

years 1906 to 1910 the Western Pacific and the Northern Electric railroads were being constructed and a large number of these immigrants came down from Canada to Sutter and Yuba counties to work on these roadbeds. After the railroads were completed they turned to orchard and farm work.

East Indians were attracted to California from Canada and directly from the Punjab by several conditions. The climate was agreeable, the wages were good and friends and relatives were already here.

California East Indians built the first Sikh Temple in Stockton and named it the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society Sikh Temple. It was registered in 1912. These workers had built a small temple with their meager earnings. But most of them had to sit outside and listen to the readings of their Holy Scripture called Guru Granth Sahib. After the temple was built they wanted to hoist a religious flag which signifies purity, unity and love; but Stockton residents would not allow them to fly any flag because India was under the British and therefore had no flag. In 1912 a young man named Teja Singh, who had a Master's degree from Harvard, came to Stockton. The directors of the temple told him the story of the flag. He went to City Jail and explained the significance of the flag and secured permission to fly it.

These East Indians of the Stockton district built a larger temple on the same location but they had begun to move to other parts of the State. Some went to the El Centro area and others came to Sutter County where they purchased vineyards or worked in orchards and on farms. The common meeting place was the Sikh Temple at Stockton, where they

gathered five or six times a year on holy occasions or birthdays of their Gurus.

The directors of the temple called a special meeting to organize a political party to help India to gain freedom from British rule. This party was called Hindustan Gadar Party. Translated into English it was the East Indian Revolutionary Organization. The members used to write revolutionary songs in the Punjabi language.

The party established a headquarters at 5 Wood Street in San Francisco where with a printing press and Punjabi type they published the "Gadar Ki Goon" (Voice of Revolution). They sent this monthly paper all over the world by mail until 1914. But copies had to be smuggled into India where they were distributed to the armed forces.

When World War I began in 1914, the Hindustan Gadar Party decided that the time had come to strike. Party leaders traveled in the Pacific coast states and Canada explaining the revolutionary plan to their fellow countrymen. East Indians started returning to India in small groups trying not to make the government officials suspicious of the movement. On reaching India they began their underground work, but the officials became aware of the movement. Many of the American and Canadian immigrants were arrested. Some were hanged and others given life imprisonment.

The Hindustan Gadar Party did not succeed in freeing India from British rule, but it did not fail either. It lit a fire which the British could not control. One East Indian wrote: "Gusa say jal utha jo kanhi nau Jawan Ka Delshola ye fer kisi say Bhojia na jai ga."

The English translation reads, "When a young man's heart catches fire for freedom, this fire shall never be controlled."

After the war the British-Indian government allowed students to come to America for higher education. A large fraction of these first students were of the Sikh faith from the Punjab. Nearly all had received some formal education, some with high school diplomas and some with even university degrees. A large number of these students chose to come to California. Most of them came intending to return home when their education had been completed, but many of them began devising ways that would enable them to stay on indefinitely. They were going to school with a deliberate slowness with the objective to remain in the good graces of the Immigration Service. Fortunately for most of these young men, the enforcement of the immigration laws was not too stringent, and they became a part of the East Indian population in the United States - - mostly on the Pacific coast.

These students had witnessed the freedom movement at home under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi; so they were eligible members of the Hindustan Gadar Party. Some of the old-timers were hesitant to give leadership to these young men fearing that they might betray the cause of freedom; but the fear was not justified.

In 1923 a number of these students took advantage of a trade school opened at Detroit by the Ford Motor Company. After overcoming objections to their beards, turbans, and iron bracelets, they learned a useful trade and made good wages with which to pay their school expenses.

It is estimated that during the 1920s as many as 5,000 East Indians, both Sikhs and Hindus, entered the United States without benefit of the usual formalities. They came in across the Mexican border after following a variety of pathways to reach northern Mexico and into California where nearly all had friends or relatives.

Both Sikh and Hindu students were assisted by the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, which society purchased a large rooming house in Berkeley where these students could reside free of rent while attending the University of California.

Many of the early immigrants had sought United States citizenship, and by 1923 about one hundred had secured their papers. Bhagat Singh Thind was rejected in one State but was granted citizenship in another State. The government officials of the State where he had been rejected contested the action of the second State and took the case to the Supreme Court of the United States. The case hinged on the question of Thind's race. As he had been taught in India, he claimed to be of the Aryan race and therefore eligible for citizenship. But Justice Sutherland decided this delicate problem of ethnology when he ruled, "That when an East Indian is walking on the street he does not look like a white man." This ruling stopped further granting of citizenship and even caused some papers already granted to be canceled. The ruling also stopped East Indian immigrants from coming to the U.S.A., the "melting pot of the world," and delighted the British government of India.

In 1923 there were only six or seven East Indian families in the United States. One was in Utah, two in San

Francisco and one each at Fair Oaks, Stockton and Loomis. These families came before the passage of the Alien Land Law and the Thind decision.

Puna Singh, who was farming in Utah, sold his property and moved his family to Sutter County. On November 1, 1924, they settled on Township Road where they operated a dairy farm. This

was the first East Indian family to come to Sutter County. Of the "old-timers" only one now (1977) remains in Sutter County. He is Thakar Singh Johl, affectionately known as Tuly Singh Johl. He came down from Canada in 1906 to work on the railroads. He lives on Onstott Road, is 99 years of age, and still drives an automobile.



Sikh Temple in Stockton  
*Photo credit: Community Memorial Museum*

Mr. Johl went back to India in 1914 as a member of the group who were to distribute revolutionary songs to the armed forces. He missed his ship in San Francisco and had to wait to go on the next ship. When these East Indian patriots reached home they went about their duties. The Secret Service of the British-Indian government seized some of the songs and the members of the group were arrested. Some of them were hanged and others imprisoned for life. Mr. Johl was placed under house arrest and obliged to report to the police three times a day. After World War I he made his way back to California by way of Mexico in 1923.

Today Mr. Johl's immediate family members exceed 100. He has given Sutter County its first East Indian medical doctor. This is his son Gulzar Singh Johl, M.D., who finished his medical education at Los Angeles in 1957 and served his internship at Oakland. He did further graduate study at the Dupont Eye Clinic in Los Angeles, specializing in ophthalmology. Then he went to India for further training and experience at the Gandhi Eye Hospital, where he performed around 100 eye operations. In 1961 he received his certificate in ophthalmology and opened his office for practice in July, 1961 at 2042 Live Oak Blvd.

On February 11, 1913 Kartar Singh purchased property in Sutter County and he was probably the first East Indian to do so. During the next ten years the records show several other purchases: Santa Singh, 1917; Fatah Singh and Nagina, 1918; Pal Singh, 1918; Battan Singh, 1918; Amer Singh and Nunshi Singh, 1920.

The Alien Land Law prevented further purchase unless the alien had

married a citizen in whose name some purchases were made.

When the second World War began nearly all of the East Indian students, including those who had finished their education, were of military age and were required to register for the draft; and most of them were placed in class I-A subject to be called first.

In February, 1941, an East Indian college graduate named Balwant Singh Sidhu was residing and working in Sutter County; but he had registered with the draft board in Berkeley where he was inducted. He was the first alien East Indian in the entire United States to be drafted into the armed forces. Later in 1942 and 1943 many others were drafted. No East Indian refused to serve in the armed forces of the United States even though every one of us was against the British rule in India.

A very few of those who were drafted became citizens of the United States by reason of their military service during the second World War. It was not until the passage of the Luce-Celler bill of 1946, under the administration of President Harry S. Truman, that the privilege of naturalization became available without any conditions. By that time many of the "old-timers" had reached such an age that they found it difficult to undertake the studies necessary to gain citizenship. Nevertheless, a surprisingly large number of these men qualified. The naturalization service allowed these old-timers over 65 to take the examination through an interpreter in their own language, and the questions were made pertinent but simple. As a result of this generous consideration the late President Harry S. Truman is held in very high esteem

by the East Indians.

After World War II several changes or reforms were brought about among the East Indian community on the Pacific coast. Balwant Singh Sidhu, a resident of Sutter County, was the first clean-shaven Sikh elected to the office of secretary of the Khalsa Diwan Society.

On April 13, 1946, permission was received from the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee of Amrit Sar, Punjab, India, the religious center of all the Sikhs, to install chairs in the Divine (congregation) hall where men and women could come with or without shoes, with hat or turban or bareheaded. Those who did not wish to sit in chairs were allowed to sit on the floor. This was the first time that chairs were installed in a temple. These changes were accomplished with the help of progressive students of whom I shall name only a few: Balwant Singh Sidhu; Dr. Harkisham Singh Dhesi, deceased; Bishan Singh Rai, deceased; Bhagat Singh Thiara; and Nika Singh Gill who is at present serving as secretary of the El Centro Sikh Temple.

The Sikhs of Imperial Valley collected donations of money throughout the Pacific states and Canada and purchased a former Buddhist center which they converted into the second Sikh temple in California. This temple was called officially the Imperial Valley Khalsa Diwan Society Sikh Temple El Centro. Chairs were installed in this temple also.

In 1947 Swarn Singh Takir became an American citizen. He was foreman over a farm of 6000 acres near Stockton. With the help of his employer, the H. P. Gavin Company, he went to India and brought back his

family. Then in 1949 Balwant Singh Sidhu, the veteran of World War II, brought his family to Sutter County. Slowly but steadily more families came to America. By 1969 Sutter County had the largest number of East Indian families of the comparable districts of the United States.

These families had to travel to Stockton to celebrate the birthdays of the Gurus. The travel was very difficult for the mothers and children. The East Indians of Sutter County held meetings to discuss the possibility of erecting a Sikh temple in the district around Yuba City. The main problems were land and money. Many Sikhs had purchased peach and prune orchards, and their future financial position was uncertain; but these investments paid off well. In 1967 it was definitely decided to erect a Sikh Temple.

Two brothers, Bakhtawar Singh and Udam Singh Purewal donated three acres of land on Tierra Buena Road for the temple and a sum of money. Many other East Indians who were well-to-do financially contributed large sums of money. As a matter of fact every person from India irrespective of his religion contributed to this temple.

In 1969 on the day of celebration of the birthday of Guru Nanak the building was started and was completed in 1970. The first "Akhand Path" continuous reading of the Holy Scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) was completed on December 20, 1970. That was the happiest occasion for all of the East Indians of Sutter County as well as for all of the Sikhs all over the world.

Hari Singh Everret, who received his master's degree from Stanford University, was the first East Indian to be appointed to the position of teacher

by the Sutter County School District in 1961. He also received a certificate to teach at Yuba College where he now teaches three days a week.

In March, 1972, Malkit Singh Johl, son of Dr. Gulzar Singh Johl, was the first East Indian accepted by Sutter County Sheriff's Department as a deputy. And on July 18, 1972, Rupindrapaul Singh Brar was the first East Indian throughout the United States to receive the highest Boy Scout award (Eagle Scout) which award he received from Troop 17 at the Methodist Church in Yuba City. His older brother Rajrishipaul Singh Brar was the first East Indian accepted at the Sacramento Police Academy on September 29, 1975, and graduated December 12, 1975. He also earned the B.S.C. degree in criminal justice at the State University, Sacramento, and is now a member of the Sacramento Police Force.

The member readers would, no doubt, be interested in the history and nature of the Sikh religion, but there is not space here to give an appropriate account. The Sikh credo has many items common to or similar to those of other religions. Some of these items are creation of man, prayer, spiritual leaders, one God and continuous vicarious authority descending through the succession of Gurus.

Certain items of other religions which are repudiated by Sikhs include divinity of the Gurus and prophecy. The Gurus are credited only with vicarious wisdom.

In view of the present interest in the equal rights amendment, it will be of further interest to note the position and status of women in the Sikh religion and culture. This status is defined in the credo and dogma:

"Woman was created simultaneously with man and has from the beginning been considered equal to man.

Woman is pure, good and beautiful. She is the temple of God. She is the wisdom that moderates.

The tears of a woman call down the fire of hell on those who make the tears flow.

Evil to him who laughs at a woman's suffering."

#### THE AUTHOR

The author was born on December 24, 1908, in Paddi Jagir, Punjab, India. After attending Sikh schools for 10 years, including High School, he came to San Francisco as a student in 1922. In 1923 he enrolled in the Ford Motor Trade School in Michigan. After two years there he returned to California to further his education at the University of California, Berkeley. For a few years he worked on ranches and later graduated from the University of Michigan in 1932 in Electrical Engineering. It being "Depression" time he could not find a job so returned to Sutter County where he worked on farms.

In 1941 Mr. Brar was drafted as the first East Indian draftee in the United States Army, early in World War II. He served in the Coast Artillery in Alaska until discharged in 1944. He returned to Sutter County where he purchased a ranch. In 1948 he married Parmjit Kaur Gill Brar, the first East Indian woman to come to California directly from India after World War II.

Mr. Brar, to some known as "Sid," has another "first" to his credit since he was the first East Indian to serve on jury duty in Sutter County.

# HISTORY OF THE LIVE OAK WOMEN'S CLUB

Compiled and written by  
Mrs. George (Nettie) Griffin in 1962  
and updated by Mrs. Jack (Helen) Heenan in 1980

To appreciate what a club meant to the Live Oak ladies seventy-eight years ago we must take into consideration that the State Highway was not constructed to the Butte County line until 1915, and no streets were paved in Live Oak until 1922. The mode of travel, of course, was by horse and buggy.

On May 28, 1912 a group of ladies met in the Live Oak Fraternity Hall for the purpose of organizing a Women's Club. Many ladies attended when Mrs. B. F. Walton of Yuba City called the meeting to order. She was elected chairman of the group and Mrs. W. T. Francis was secretary.

Mrs. A. F. Jones, President of the Monday Club of Oroville, was asked to address the meeting. She gave many valuable suggestions in regard to club work, as well as benefits to be derived from such an organization in the community.

Mrs. E. B. Stanwood of Marysville also gave an interesting talk, Mrs. Longbotham entertained with several vocal selections.

Mrs. Francis moved that a club be formed and she was elected president; Mrs. Evelyn Brill, vice-president; Mrs. Annie Hampton, treasurer (mother of James Hampton, Jr.); Mrs. W. H. (Addie) Stafford, secretary (grandmother of Mary Spilman)\*; Mrs. Charles Shell, sentinel (daughter of Mrs. Evelyn Brill); Mrs. Joe (Ada) Bender (mother of Mrs. W. (Eunice)

Menth)\*; Mrs. J. L. Ames, Sr., moved that the club be called "Live Oak Women's Club." Annual dues were \$1.00 to be paid semi-annually.

The work of the club was to be divided into three parts -- Music, Art, Literature and Civic Improvement. Josie (Mrs. Ed) Krull and Ada (Mrs. Joe) Bender were appointed to act on the Civic work.

The Hall Association donated the hall for the first three meetings.

Seventeen members responded to roll call in October of 1912. Bylaws were read and approved. Mrs. Bender reported that the Civic Committee favored a public park for Live Oak.

In November the club was admitted to the California Federation of Women's Clubs and 10 cents per capita was due. At this time the question of lighting the town was submitted to the Civic Committee.

Mrs. Woodbridge of Roseville suggested the club choose a motto and club flower and since Mrs. S. E. White was the eldest club member, they accorded her the honor. She chose as the motto, "Onward to Best Work, Upward to the Highest Culture." Club flower, "A spring of the Live Oak Tree."

February 3, 1914 a motion to purchase a lot from Mrs. Bennet to build a clubhouse was passed -- purchase price, \$150.00.

Mrs. Ames offered to donate sycamore and popular trees and plant same on the clubhouse lot.

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\* Present Members of the club



In owning the clubhouse property it was necessary for some provisions to be made in the deed for disposal of same, should the club cease to exist, and it was decided the property revert to the town of Live Oak to be used as a library or social center.

A piano won in a piano contest was placed in the home of Mrs. Wesley Hauck until other arrangements could be made. Mr. Bill Channon moved the piano for the club. Two ice cream freezers were purchased for \$13.60 and Mrs. Krull was custodian of them. They rented these out for 25 cents a time. Ice cream socials were one of the money-making projects of the time.

In 1914 the club moved to the Odd Fellow's Hall in Live Oak.

The club had many ways of earning money, among them being -- ice cream socials, teas, cafeteria suppers, card parties, plant sales and bazaars. Bed quilts were tied for 50 cents a quilt. By October 1916 there was \$685 in the clubhouse fund, and \$150 to purchase furniture.

February 1917, Mrs. Junwill was paid \$50 for plans for the clubhouse and Mr. Berry presented the low bid and built the first part of the building. Money was borrowed from the bank. After the last \$150 toward this indebtedness was to be paid, the club members were asked to donate.

Mrs. E. Allen announced the dedication of the clubhouse to be Friday evening on May 25, 1923. Mrs. Miller from Sacramento would be the speaker and Mrs. Longbotham would sing. This was eleven years from the date of the organization and Mrs. Longbotham from Roseville had sung on that first day also.

In May of 1921 a new sidewalk was installed at the cost of \$20. The

club ladies served lemonade at the laying of the cornerstone of the new Live Oak Union High School building that same year.

By May of 1922 the club membership had grown to 134 members, eighty new members during this year with only one resigning!

Even with a place to put each dollar, they never lost sight of other's needs. One project was the Easter Egg Hunt for the Live Oak children and for many years they conducted it alone. A cemetery project was decided upon and the ladies raised money to beautify and maintain the cemetery. They planted trees and shrubs on the school grounds. They bought poppy seeds and planted them along the railroad tracks. The section foreman on the railroad gladly helped plant the seeds along the tracks. Even today we see people in cars stop in the spring to enjoy and admire the poppies that were planted so long ago.

From 1917 to 1938 the club was responsible for establishing the first public library in Live Oak. The library was housed in the clubhouse, and Mrs. Addie Stafford and Mrs. Annie Biglow gave of their time to help operate the library. The club members also served at the library.

April 10, 1924 the executive board met with the trustees and other officers at the home of Mrs. Faser (wife of the high school principal) for the financial report. The report stated that \$544.31 was in the treasury to start building the second part of the clubhouse. Money was borrowed to cover the additional cost. Mr. Cole was the architect and Mr. Pond was given the contract to build the addition. Upon completion of the addition, \$4,963.80 was paid for the entire

clubhouse. A great feat for the members of the Live Oak Women's Club!

President, Mrs. Bessie Vantress, burned the mortgage papers amid hearty applause of the club members present on December 18, 1928. That must have been a real Christmas present for the ladies who worked so hard and accomplished so much in sixteen years.

Mrs. Addie Stafford reported trees had been planted on the west side of the highway from the Butte County line to Lomo. Owing to Mr. Stanton's objection trees were not planted along his premises.

The Boy Scouts were sponsored by the club for a few years. Girl Scouts were sponsored, as were Camp Fire groups.

In 1942 members made 500 finished articles and 306 knitted articles for the Red Cross -- and in 1943 they made 493 knitted articles for the soldiers.

As the years have passed, the members have worked hard to keep the clubhouse in good repair. A number of new roofs have been added -- the one in 1928 cost \$251, while the one in 1958 cost \$720 and the one in 1977 cost \$2900! The interior has been redecorated several times during the years.

Throughout the years many organizations have rented the clubhouse for their meetings and parties. Many private functions have been held at the clubhouse as well as donating the facilities for worthwhile community projects.

On the Golden Anniversary in 1962 the members honored the Charter Members. Three were still members of the club, Mrs. Leona Berry, Mrs. Josie Krull and Mrs. Ada Bender. Others honored and living in the area were: Mrs. Ivy Childs (mother of Mrs. Wilber (Georgia) Green\*), Mrs. Cecil Ford (mother of Mrs. Joe (Kathleen) Ruzich\*) and Mrs. Visa Young O'Connor.

Mrs. E. A. Boynton, a charter member who was president in 1916, had two daughters to serve as president -- Mrs. Leona Berry in 1946 and Mrs. J. (Neva) Stillwell in 1935.

Mrs. Frank H. Graves, Sr. joined the club May 6, 1919 and served as president in 1924. Her daughter, Mrs. Owen (Jessie) Powell\* served in 1929 and her granddaughter, Mrs. Jack (Helen) Heenan\* was president in 1950 and again in 1954.

Mrs. Addie Stafford, a charter member was president in 1915 and her daughter-in-law, Mrs. William (Ethel) Stafford\* served in 1931, while her granddaughter, Mrs. James (Mary) Spilman\* served in 1972.

Throughout the years the members have continued with unselfish community service and have maintained programs both cultural and intellectual.

## Join the Board of Directors of the Sutter County Historical Society!

*According to our by-laws, the Board of Directors of our Society has 17 members, which includes officers. Right now only thirteen member positions are filled, and obviously we are on the hunt for four more talented, energetic and interested people to help guide the society. We welcome people from all walks of life, of all ages, from any county, newly-arrived in the area or eighth-generation descendant. If you know of someone who is not a member but would make a good director, we'll sign 'em up (and then get their dues). If you want to join with a friend, come along, but know also that it won't be long before you make a whole group of new friends.*

*A reasonable question for any interested person to ask is, "what does it mean to me to be on the Board of Directors?" To answer that question, we have drafted the following, to be discussed at our next board meeting in September. In the meantime, it's a way for you to get an idea of what we expect of a director, and of what a director can expect in return.*

*We would love to hear from you, even if you have questions and aren't sure if you want to join. Please call Audrey Breeding at 695-2965.*

### **What is the Sutter County Historical Society?**

The Sutter County Historical Society is an organization dedicated to preserving the unique history of Sutter County. The Society has its foremost purpose  
*to discover, collect, preserve and disseminate knowledge of  
the history of Sutter County, California*

### **In addition, the Society established the Community Memorial Museum and continues to routinely provide financial support to improve the Museum facility.**

The Society was instrumental in funding the Agriculture Wing, which opened in 2003. The Society also has its own projects, such as a survey of historical properties in Sutter County in 2006, reprinting Thompson and West's History of Sutter County in 2008, and preservation of the Hock Farm Doors, remnants of John Sutter's farm on Garden Highway, slated for completion in 2009. The Society publishes a quarterly News Bulletin with articles about the history of Sutter County.

### **What does the Board of Directors do?**

The Board of Directors has 17 members who provide policy and direction for the Society. The Directors develop projects to preserve history, share information with the public, and raise funds. The Directors work on committees and oversee Society activities, and develop and implement ways to raise funds and encourage membership.

### **Why be a member of the Board of Directors?**

Serving as a Director allows you to be an active contributor to the preservation of local history. Participation in Society projects gives you the opportunity to have a direct effect on important local policies and programs, and provides satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. Involvement in our activities allows you to meet others who enjoy community events.

### **What are the qualifications of a member of the Board of Directors?**

Members must have an interest in local history, be willing and able to participate in Board activities, and maintain membership in the Society.

### **What is the time commitment required of a Director?**

The Board has four regular meetings each year, and occasionally has emergency meetings as well. Each Director is expected to attend every meeting, which generally last two hours. The Society has general membership meetings every quarter and each Director is also expected to attend those meetings.

Each Director is expected to be responsible for at least two projects, events or activities each year, and to work on others as needed. A list of current projects is attached.

Each Director is expected to promote our book, Thompson and West's History of Sutter County, to members of the community.

Those Directors elected Officers of the Society have additional duties associated with their positions as stated in the By-Laws.

### **What is the financial obligation of a Director?**

The Board's regular meetings are held at lunch at a local restaurant, and Directors purchase their own meals. Two membership meetings a year are luncheons, and Directors purchase their own meals. One meeting is a potluck picnic, and attending members, including Directors, provide a dish. At three meetings dessert is provided by the Society, and Directors who volunteer to provide dessert cover the cost.

Directors provide raffle prizes at each membership meeting. The raffle prize is expected to be something nice or useful, but need not be expensive.

# The State Park in the Sutter Buttes

by  
Phyllis Smith

It's certainly understandable if you didn't attend our Picnic in the Park on Saturday, June 27; after all, it was 105 that day. But you missed a great program!

Denise Reichenberg, Sector Ranger with the California State Parks, spoke on the state park in Peace Valley in the Sutter Buttes. Denise is responsible for seven parks in Sutter, Colusa, Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties. Her office is in Chico's historic Bidwell Mansion.

As early as 1920 the state identified the Sutter Buttes as valuable to California's citizens and knew that it should be preserved. Seventeen hundred acres became available in 2003 and the state purchased it. Most of the land is in Peace Valley.

The park is blessed with prehistoric Native American sites, pioneer sites, and loads of natural resources. There are three barns within the park, although the largest suffered critical damage during the January 2004 windstorm. There is also the Pugh Family Cemetery, a quarter acre which is actually an in-holding in the park and still privately owned.

State Parks creates a general plan for each of its parks. This a long-term planning document that is established through a series of meetings with the public and State Parks Commission. Budget permitting, it is usually updated every 20 years or so. The plan for this park is in process. Among the issues it will address are the name and classification of the park; what kinds of activities will take place;

guidelines on enforcement; and wildfire management.

While the current official name is The State Park in the Sutter Buttes, it is commonly referred to locally as Peace Valley. But Native Americans in the region have other names for the Buttes and it is important to take those into account. In addition, the valley is a highly spiritual place to some Native Americans, so they are also being consulted with regard to appropriate uses for the park.

While there are a number of classifications available (for example, preserve or recreation area) this park has been designated a State Park. The decision has been made to exclude a campground, motorcycles and off-highway vehicles. Activities that will likely be allowed include hiking, biking, horseback riding, picnicking, stargazing, birding, and botanizing (studying plants).

Of course the current state budget is having a detrimental effect on most or all state parks. However, in the case of Peace Valley, not much will change if parks are closed, since there is no routine access anyway. Staff will still clear the roads and trails and keep a 100 foot firebreak around structures. Rangers will still patrol the park and plant studies will continue.

When the budget situation improves, the damaged barn will be rebuilt. Right now State Parks is removing rafters and the roof as they have ceased to provide structural integrity to the building and instead are likely to bring it completely down.

While the barn was originally built about 1927, there have been numerous additions every decade or so. This means that the barn does not have to be rebuilt with the same materials that would have been available in 1927, but instead can be renovated with modern materials and techniques and made to appear to be a 1927 barn. For example, the roof will likely be made of a metal that quickly patinas to appear old.

One of the biggest problems facing the state in managing the park is access. To enter the park you must use an easement that crosses five private properties. To help facilitate communication between State Parks and the landowners, and among the landowners themselves, Stewards of

the Sutter Buttes was formed. It is also a clearinghouse for information about the Buttes.

Right now public access to the park is very limited. The State Parks Department offers six guided tours each year. Usually these tours are taken by large groups that make reservations a year in advance. In addition, master's and doctoral students conduct studies inside the park, and of course the Parks Department does routine patrols. In addition, any property owner with land contiguous with the park can allow access if they desire. The Parks Department also gave a special tour to members of the boards of supervisors of nearby rural counties, and have held events for Parks staff and volunteers.

## Coming Events

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| August 6    | <i>Bear in Mind</i> exhibit at the Museum ends  |
| August 20   | Showcase of Thompson and West's <i>History of Sutter County</i> at the Museum   |
| September 4 | <i>Lewis &amp; Clark Revisited</i> Exhibit opens at the Museum  |
| October 17  | Membership meeting<br>Ruthy's, 11:30 a.m.<br>Program: Frank Coats<br><i>General Land Office Records and Early Maps of the Sutter Buttes</i> |
| October 25  | <i>Lewis &amp; Clark Revisited</i> closes   |

# Puzzler



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



Board	Canada
Clark	EastIndian
Fairbanks	Grizzly
Gurdwara	Guru
Hindustan	Jessica
Lewis	LiveOak
Pacific	PeaceValley



# **Save the Date!**

**Thursday, August 20  
at the Museum**

**A program showcasing  
Thompson and West's  
*History of Sutter County***

Originally published in 1879, reprinted in 1974,  
and out of print since

Available at the Museum - \$45 plus tax (\$49.73 total)

Tell your friends! Give them as gifts!

**See our Coming Events on page 20**