

Vol. LI No. 4

Yuba City, California

October 2009



## Hock Farm Monument Dedication February 12, 1930

*(Photograph courtesy of Community Memorial Museum)*



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\*The year the director joined the Board.

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The 2009 dues are payable as of January 1, 2010. 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 .....	\$ 20
Individual .....	\$ 25
Organizations/Clubs .....	\$ 35
Family .....	\$ 40
Business/Sponsor .....	\$ 100
Corporate/Benefactor .....	\$1000

## President's Message

I appreciate all of you who are members. Some of you are lifetime members, others are new to our society, but all of you help preserve our local history. And as you obviously find this important, please consider giving a 2010 membership to your friends and family. I know the delight of receiving a gift that gives all year 'round - each time a bulletin arrives in your mailbox, your loved one will remember you with a smile.

I want to thank everyone who attended our event showcasing *Thompson and West's History of Sutter County*. What a rousing success! Nearly 60 people came to hear Professor Emeritus David Rubiales describe what Sutter County was like at the time of the book's original publishing, 1879, and what had come before. The changes to our county were dramatic - in thirty years we went from being a pioneer community to a mature agrarian society.

Several Board members added to our enjoyment of the evening by preparing special desserts - for those of you who like to know what you're eating, that cake with a cream puff on top was a Saint Honore Cake. The recipe was first published in 1882, although it is believed that Paris pastry chef Chiboust created the first Gateau Saint Honore in 1846. So that was a real historic dessert!

Our thanks to Magdalene Reveles and the Appeal-Democrat for the wonderful article in the newspaper. The *Thompson and West* coverage increased sales tremendously. Let's continue to get the word out as we enter the holiday season, and be sure to get your copies for holiday gifting!

It's about time to make your reservations for our annual membership meeting at Ruthy's. Our speaker will be Frank Coats, who will give a presentation on historic ownership of land in the Buttes called *General Land Office Records and Maps of the Sutter Buttes*. There's an insert in this issue of the Bulletin with a reservation form, so be sure to fill it out right away and send in your check for lunch. After such a great turnout at our program in August, let's see if we can keep the streak going!

And last but nowhere near least, we have three vacancies on our Board of Directors. We'd love to have you join us in furthering our foremost purpose:  
*to discover, collect, preserve and disseminate knowledge of  
the history of Sutter County, California.*

Thanks, and I can't wait to see you in October!

Audrey Breeding  
President

## Director's Report

Autumn brings even busier than usual times to the Museum. Our staff of two is always blessed with an overflowing cornucopia of tasks. But, as we see the holiday season and all of its activities on the horizon, the pace picks up speed. Be sure to include a visit to the Museum to see the *Lewis and Clark Revisited* exhibit before it travels on after Sunday, October 25.

We would like to extend a special invitation to each one of you members and friends of the Museum. Once again, the Museum is fortunate enough to partner with Sutter North and the Yuba-Sutter Regional Arts Council for a Planned Giving Seminar on the Charitable Gift Annuity. The workshop on Saturday, October 10 is informational only and will help us learn about ways to give a gift to the museum that also gives back to the donor. The seminar will be held at Kaffe T Latta, 725 Plumas Street in Yuba City. A complimentary dinner will be served. Guest speaker, Matt Laufman, Vice President of Planned Giving for Sutter Health, will share the numerous benefits of giving a charitable gift that include higher payments than your current CDs are paying, tax-favored payments, a substantial charitable income tax deduction, payments you can never outlive, and stable amounts you can count on. We would love to have your help in learning about this important process, for yourself and so that you might share the information with others. There is absolutely no obligation. The purpose is simply to take away a very practical idea to share. Call the Museum at 822-7141 to let us know you would like to attend, and bring a friend if you like.

You are invited to join in the holiday activities at the Museum. Two ornament workshops, at 10:00 a.m. on October 29 and November 18, kick off the festivities. Everyone is invited to help craft the handmade ornaments for the big tree. Each year it is decorated to a different theme, and dedicated volunteers and friends create the original ornaments. No special skills are needed.

Another day when all available hands are needed is Decoration Day on Thursday, December 3, beginning at 9:00 a.m. To prepare the Museum for *Trees & Traditions*, the big annual fundraising gala, we make all the garlands and wreaths from fresh evergreens. Be sure to bring some by the Museum in the week prior to Decoration Day if you have prunings to spare. Then we decorate the 16-foot tree that serves as the centerpiece for the party.

*Trees & Traditions* itself is scheduled for Saturday, December 5 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets are available at the Museum or from any Museum Commissioner. Don't miss the premiere party of the season!

A delightful family affair is the Children's Program and Open House on Sunday, December 20, featuring Christmas stories and the holiday music of John Carter.

You may appreciate the new look of the Museum Store for ease of shopping and a ready supply of unique gifts. Be sure to make it a regular stop on your shopping schedule to see the new items. A recent amenity is the ability to use your credit card when shopping in the Museum Store. The store is a great way to solve your shopping dilemmas and support your Museum. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Julie Stark  
Director

## Memorials

In Memory of **Neal Arnoldy**  
Wally & Dealla Crother

In Memory of **Kathy Burky Heier**  
Mike & Helene Andrews

In Memory of **Rose Benatar**  
Ray Anderson  
Dick & Betty Arnoldy  
Ashley's Plumbing & Heating  
Joe Benatar  
Michael J. Baldwin  
Willis & Elaine Chase  
Michael & Ann Chesini  
Joel T. Guthrie  
Eric & Teresa Hellberg  
Tom & Jean Pfeiffer  
Merlyn Rudge  
Bobbie Sandgren  
Albert A. & Mary M. Ulmer  
Jerry & Patricia Whitten

In Memory of **Eleanor B. Holmes**  
Mike & Helene Andrews  
Kathleen Holmes  
Danita Shelton  
Jim & Marge Schroeder

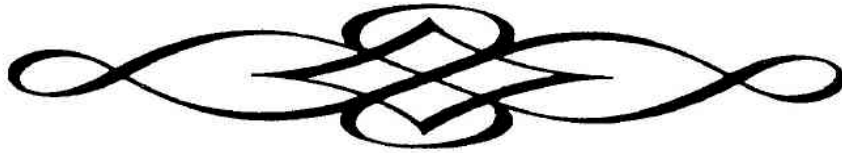
In Memory of **Jim Huff**  
Marnee Crowhurst

In Memory of **Ansel Omar Miller**  
Donna Ferguson

In Memory of **Garry Morris**  
Jim Staas

In Memory of **Donna Dekens**  
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Dorothy Sutfin**  
Howard & Ruth Anthony  
Merlyn Rudge



## 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 have come from this fund. 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.

# The Fort at Hock Farm

## A History of the Iron Building at Hock Farm

by  
Don Burtis

Sutter County has two properties of historical importance that are so designated by roadside markers in the county. One of them is California State Historical Landmark #346 and it is located south of Yuba City on the east side of State Highway 99 a short distance south of Messick Road. This marker gives direction to the site located at 5320 Garden Highway where it intersects with Messick Road. At this site you can see a memorial in the form of the reconstructed front wall of an iron building that was once located near the west bank of the Feather River a short distance south of this location. The plaque on the wall proclaims this site to be the location of John A. Sutter's Hock Farm, which was the first white settlement established in Sutter County.

This story is not intended to be a history of Hock Farm, but rather a history of the iron building that was sometimes referred to as the Fort at Hock Farm. The wall at this landmark was constructed from iron panels that were once a part of the original iron building. It is a very special memorial for the Hock Farm since the iron panels in this building front, located on the original Sutter's Hock Farm property, make up the only remaining evidence of the early construction at Hock Farm. Fire, flood and time have caused all of the early structures on this farm to disappear.

I am providing a very short biography about this very important California Pioneer. I hope it will enhance the reader's understanding of this history.

John A. Sutter was born in Baden, Germany of Swiss parents. He must have had a plan as a young man because he learned to speak English and Spanish before he immigrated to the United States in 1834. He ultimately made his way to California in 1839 and settled in the Sacramento Valley, which was then part of Mexico. He met with and made a favorable impression upon the provincial Mexican governor in Monterey and received a grant of about fifty thousand acres. He was authorized to represent in the establishment of New Helvetia (his land grant) the laws of the country (Mexico) and to function as the political authority in this area. He chose a site on the American River and built Sutter's Fort to protect the settlement. Within a short time, his dream became a reality. He was raising wheat, had a small orchard, and a herd of 13,000 cattle.

During this time period, in 1841, Sutter established the Hock Farm along the Feather River to raise and provide food for the settlement around his Fort which was located near the Sacramento and American Rivers. His ultimate dream was to develop an agricultural empire, raising wheat and herds of cattle and horses.

In 1844 his son came from Germany to share his father's good fortune. During this period an increasing number of Americans came to California and some were hired by Sutter. On January 24, 1848, a carpenter named James Marshall, who was building a sawmill for Sutter, near Coloma, checked the mill's tailrace for silt and debris and saw some nuggets of gold. Within a few months the word had been

spread and the gold rush commenced. Sutter's employees left to seek gold. Squatters covered his land, destroying crops and stealing his cattle. It is recorded that by 1852, Sutter was bankrupt. Life became more difficult for him and he moved from Sutter's Fort to his large home at Hock Farm. In 1850 his wife and his children joined him at Hock Farm where he enjoyed life in this area for several years. Then, life again became difficult. Rustlers stole his cattle and squatters overran his land. In 1857, squatters took Sutter to court over the legality of his land titles, but the U.S. Land Commission decided in his favor. A year later the Supreme Court declared portions of his title invalid.

A real disaster occurred in June, 1865 when his beautiful home at Hock Farm was set afire and the structure was completely destroyed. In December of 1865, he and his wife left Hock Farm and went to Washington D.C. to try to get restitution from Congress, but were unsuccessful. They settled in the Moravian town of Lititz, Pennsylvania, around 1871, but never gave up the fight. On June 16 of 1880, Congress adjourned before passing a bill, which would have given him \$50,000. Two days later, John Augustus Sutter died. His wife died the following January. They are buried in the Moravian Brotherhood's Cemetery in Lititz.

John Sutter arranged for the sale of the 640 acre Hock Farm after he and his wife had arrived in Washington D.C.

There were several different owners of Hock Farm before Christian Schmidt purchased this property from C. A. Low in July 1870 for \$11,500. In July 1864, Christian Schmidt announced in the Marysville Appeal that he had leased the Hock Farm and would cater to picnics. He worked for John Sutter at the Hock Farm prior to this time.

Between 1875 and 1879 Christian Schmidt had a fine new home constructed at Hock Farm. The new home was located on the same site as the original home of John Sutter. He continued to keep the grounds open for sponsored picnics that were attended by very large crowds that enjoyed this beautiful location on the river.

On May 9, 1879, an item in the Weekly Sutter Banner stated the following: "The old iron house, built by Capt. Sutter at Hock Farm, at an early day, to protect himself from Indians, still remains in an excellent state of preservation. It should be preserved as a relic of pioneer days."

On May 24, 1889, another article in the same paper commented that the iron house at Hock Farm was used as a grain warehouse. It goes on to say, "this location where Sutter's old home was located and the grounds later became a picnic area and many people came to Hock Farm over a number of years to enjoy this wonderful picnic site. Narrators or story tellers were many times part of the entertainment at these picnics and in giving his interpretation of pioneer life in the Sacramento Valley would wind up telling about the iron fort and mention the bullet holes and indentations on the iron. Some then go to the building near the river to inspect it. The idea of the iron building actually being a fort was repeated so long and so often that many of the younger generation accepted it as fact." The author of this article concludes that "they likely wouldn't make the trip to the iron house, if they first found out that it was shipped around the Horn to the town of Eliza, a little above and opposite the Hock Farm, and used as a store room. When Eliza was abandoned, Sutter secured the iron building, moved it near his premises and used it as an

outhouse and general storage room. It is a pity to spoil the interesting story, but such is history."

There could still be some controversy as to what purpose this iron building served at the Hock Farm. It has been referred to in the papers as a fort at Hock Farm. A fort implies that it would be a fortified place with armaments, occupied by a force of armed people or troops who would provide protection. A rectangular iron building with swinging doors at one end makes it hard to accept as a fort, much less as a building to be in while fighting Indians who might be attacking the building. No real evidence has been found indicating that the building was ever used as a sanctuary or for protection against any raid by the local Indians or any other group. In reality, it is recorded that the iron building was used to store items such as sacks of grain, food items, perhaps some tools, etc. that that may have needed protection from being stolen by Indians who lived near the farm. It was primarily used as a storage building.

I have found no real evidence that should cause anyone to believe that the building was ever, in fact, actually used as a fort. The evidence indicates to me that the iron building at Hock Farm was indeed just that, an iron building, but I also accept that it can have another name.

Christian Schmidt died in 1880. It was about this time that the picnics and public use of the farm were discontinued. Mary Schmidt, his widow, became the owner of Hock Farm and for six years she managed the Farm. In 1886, she married Thomas Holmes.

The Sutter Independent newspaper printed the following report on December 4, 1902. There had been a fire at the Holmes place (the Hock Farm)

which started in a barn near the river which destroyed the building and its contents. Also destroyed with it was the historic fort of John Sutter.<sup>1</sup>

Five years later on March 22, 1907 this same building that was reported burned in 1902 was again destroyed, only this time the cause was water. During the early part of the week it was reported that severe storms in the mountains caused unusually high water and the force of this water centered where the Feather and the Yuba rivers joined. Three breaks occurred on the Sutter County side of the Feather. One of the breaks was about seven miles south of Yuba City. When the flood was at its highest, a break occurred on Wednesday, March 20, 1907 in the levee at the Hock Farm just north of where General Sutter's old home had been located. T. E. Holmes and his family who had resided there left the place in boats as the water became deeper.

When the levee broke the water came with such force that when it hit the iron building, the structure broke apart into many panels. They were carried by the force of the water out onto the plains area to the southwest. A number of panels were covered with debris and sand and were never found. There was some speculation that some panels may have been kept on nearby ranches where they were later found.

Another description of the demise of the iron building was in the paper the next day. It reported that "the levee broke at the old Indian mound a short

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<sup>1</sup> *The fort had sides made of the iron panels which would not burn but since the report indicated it had burned it seems most likely that the wooden structure that held the iron panels in place must have burned causing the structure to collapse at the time. I found no follow-up articles or newspaper items that gave any report describing the damage to the iron building.*



distance north of the T. E. Holmes residence and carried away into a field the old Indian house, one of the most ancient landmarks in the valley and a part of the defenses erected by General John A. Sutter before the days of '49, when he was practically monarch of all he surveyed and there was no one his right to dispute. This old Indian house is one of the oldest landmarks in the valley and it is up to the Native Sons and Daughters to rescue it and provide for its preservation, as has been done in the case of Sutter's Fort in Sacramento."

It is recorded that the Native Daughters of the Golden West, starting with the Marysville Chapter No. 162, in September, 1908, shortly after they were organized, made the decision to take an active part in the preservation of the local landmarks and of the primary history of this portion of the State. The Native Daughters' purpose became to restore this old iron outpost if possible.

On May 20, 1910, the Sutter County Farmer reported "The Native Daughters of the Marysville Chapter in the matter of restoring the old fort at Hock Farm and the president appointed a committee to take up the question. It was reported that Thomas Holmes, owner of the Hock Farm, stood ready to donate the old Fort to the Native Daughters, also an acre of land surrounding the knoll on which the iron house formerly stood. It was proposed to replace the old time rock foundation made with rocks hauled from the Buttes, the same as General Sutter did, and to plant the fig tree and rose bushes as Sutter had done."

Many years passed. The Sutter County Farmer reported on June 6, 1922 that a number of hardware men and others were much interested in the old iron used by General Sutter in the

building of a warehouse and fort at Hock Farm. Experts declared that "the iron is just as good now as when first rolled out and shows no signs of corroding."

The 1907 flood had scattered the iron building. However, there were enough iron plates found and stored at the Hock Farm after the flood to restore one wall.

The job of making a replica of the old iron fort or warehouse was turned over to engineer Edward Von Geldern, who assembled sheets of iron from the old building into the form of a front wall, including the iron doors, to be placed near the site of the old homestead on the county road. (The county road is now called Garden Highway and the front wall is at its intersection with Messick Road.)

Restoration of this old landmark was taken up by the Women's Clubs of the two counties (Sutter & Yuba) and those taking the most interest in the same were Miss Ada Ohleyer of Sutter County and Miss Esther Sullivan of Marysville, both daughters of pioneers of this area. Through the Bi-County Federation of Women's Clubs of the two counties it was proposed to have the old landmark properly dedicated and later a bronze tablet placed on the structure.

The dedication of this replica of the old iron fort and warehouse building took place on Sunday, May 8, 1927 under the auspices of the Bi-County Federation of Women's Clubs of Sutter and Yuba counties.

The dedication ceremony of the bronze marker was conducted on Saturday, February 12, 1930 at the replica of the old iron fort three years after the façade of the fort had been constructed. There were over 12,000 people in attendance.

There was an interesting guest of honor in attendance in the person of

Mrs. Annie Stuart Walters, 86, friend of General Sutter and schoolmate of his grandchildren.

W. A. Finney, Oroville, chairman of the landmarks committee, presented the marker on behalf of the Sacramento Region Citizens Council. He said it was particularly fitting that this first marker should be placed at the home of the first pioneer of the Sacramento region.

Mrs. Authalena McPherrin of Sutter City, daughter of a pioneer family and the woman who named the World's Peach Bowl, accepted the marker with words of thanks.

So, what might history, as recorded in early newspapers and history books, and the recorded commentary of early residents who lived in this area, provide to us so we can better understand the story of this iron building located at Hock Farm?

In 1849, John Sutter owned the Memal ranch, which extended for a mile along the east side of the Feather River and three miles back. He sold this land to the Kennebec Company and in January 1850, a town named Eliza (named after John Sutter's daughter) was laid out upstream and on the opposite side of the river from Hock Farm. By April, ten houses, three stores, three saloons, and several tents had been erected at Eliza City. By June of 1850 it became apparent that this new town was not going to achieve success. The Thompson and West History of Yuba County states "the place collapsed and sank out of existence, the people removed to other parts."

The Sutter County Farmer stated that the iron sheets or plates from which the fort was built were shipped to this county from Germany. They came around the Horn and freight boats transported them up the Sacramento and Feather rivers to the town of Eliza

where it was first built. On arrival of the iron plates all that was necessary was to rivet the plates together.

It appears that the iron building was used as a store room in Eliza. "When the town was abandoned, Captain Sutter moved the building to Hock Farm and used it as an outhouse and general storage room." (I'm quite certain the writer of the news item meant an out building and not any other meaning those of an older generation might think.)

The evidence from the newspaper reports makes it possible to accept that since Sutter owned the property in 1849, it's plausible he could have first had the iron building constructed at Eliza and later had it moved to Hock Farm.

In researching information to write this article, I came upon some information that was totally new to me. There were many people who knew about it when it happened, but only a couple of people recalled it in print, which allowed me to discover and share with those who read about it now. I knew that Sutter's daughter Eliza was married at Hock Farm but discovery of the details of the wedding make this a very significant historical affair.

Information regarding the wedding of Eliza Sutter was obtained from two newspaper articles. One came from an article written in 1875 reflecting the reminiscences of a gentleman who lived in Marysville in 1852 who was invited and attended the wedding. The second was printed in the Sacramento Union which reflected the observations made at the wedding. They were enough alike, that I have interwoven their information into a single story.

On March 21, 1852, Eliza Sutter, the daughter of Captain John Sutter, was married to Mr. George Engler, at

Hock Farm, in Sutter County. One of the most interesting things about this wedding was not only that the wedding took place at Hock Farm, but also where it took place at Hock Farm.

"John Sutter was undoubtedly happy and delighted that his daughter was getting married and undoubtedly took charge himself in making all the arrangements for this event including invitations sent to his friends throughout the State. Invitations were sent out to the many invitees reading thus:

'Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ you are respectfully invited to be present at the wedding ceremony of my daughter Eliza, and Mr. George Engler at Hock Farm, on Sunday, March 21, 1852.'

"Those invited traveled from Marysville, Yuba City, Sutter & Yuba Counties, and the Sacramento Area. A number traveled in carriages, but many more traveled by steamers, which were chartered for the occasion. Captain Sutter and his sons welcomed the guests and ushered them into the fine mansion at the farm to partake of refreshments provided for the occasion. In 1852 there were fine large steamers that made daily trips to and from Marysville and San Francisco, so the Sacramento guests on this occasion came partly on the steamer "Bragdos," and others came on Captain Grant's steamer "Comanche." As each ship came around the bend of the river, which concealed the farm, repeated rapidly fired volleys saluted it, as it came into sight. This welcome salute came from an old cannon the Captain had with him at his fort in Sacramento and was accompanied by the ringing of bells."

"The Comanche was delayed in its arrival making it over two hours late which resulted in starting the ceremony before it arrived. The wedding ceremony took place about 5 o'clock in

the afternoon, in a spacious iron building tastefully and elaborately decorated for the occasion. Everything about the entire premises had been put into the finest order. The buildings were ornamented and festooned with flowers and evergreens, and every prominent point surmounted with flags and streamers. The chapel was decorated with special taste and surrounded with about fifty Indians dressed in an array of colors not more brilliant than anomalously blended. As the procession entered the chapel, a large band filled the iron walls of the building with the richest echoes of music melody. The bridal train walked from the mansion to this hall to the sound of delightful music. Judge Cushing, who at the time was a Justice of the Peace and also the owner of the St. Charles Hotel, in Marysville, performed the ceremony. The ceremony was simple and brief, and after its performance the party returned to the mansion. Soon afterwards the Comanche arrived with a fresh delegation and instead of a repeat performance of the nuptial ceremony, the company went into the wedding hall where a fine supper was prepared. The table was overwhelmed with viands and wines. Many toasts and speeches were made and dancing was begun which continued 'til the gray dawn of Monday morning appeared and the steamer's whistle announced 'it's time to get onboard for the return trip home.'"

There has never been any evidence found indicating there was more than one iron building located at Hock Farm, so it is understandably certain that Eliza Sutter was married in the Iron Building that was located at Hock Farm. She was not only married in the building, but a wedding feast and dancing to the music of a band was also enjoyed there.

OK! So what should this building, made of iron, constructed by John A. Sutter at Hock Farm, be called? Possible names include the iron fort, the old iron fort, the fort at Hock Farm, an iron storage building, a granary, an iron Wedding Chapel, an old Indian House, the Indian Chapel and possibly a few more names.

I have to conclude that it wasn't a fort. There is no evidence that John Sutter ever called it a fort or that it was built as a fort or used as a fort. It didn't look like any other known fort. A fort would never have been built as a building with two iron doors that when closed had no windows that allowed for a view of the area around it from the inside.

However, there were articles written about this iron building by a number of the early pioneer newsmen

referring to it as a fort and many other important early residents called it a fort, even though they likely knew it really wasn't one, and even some of the earlier historians in this area referred to it as a fort, as did later owners of the Hock Farm. The Native Daughters of the Golden West and the Bi-County Federation of Women's Clubs of Sutter and Yuba counties, which undertook the task of preserving this very important and only remaining vestige of a building that once stood proudly at Hock Farm, called it a fort. I have no desire to disagree with those people from the past about what to call it. The task of preserving the memory of Hock Farm and the remnants of the fort took the women's organizations some 22 years to accomplish. They are to be commended for their hard work and successful accomplishment.

The memorial plaque that is attached to the wall on Garden Highway reads:

THIS MEMORIAL IS CONSTRUCTED OF THE  
ORIGINAL IRON FROM  
THE FORT OF  
HOCK FARM  
ESTABLISHED IN 1841  
BY  
JOHN AUGUSTUS SUTTER  
BEING THE FIRST WHITE SETTLEMENT  
IN SUTTER COUNTY. THE FORT AND  
FARM BUILDINGS WERE LOCATED ON THE  
BANKS OF THE FEATHER RIVER OPPOSITE THIS POINT.  
ERECTED BY  
SUTTER AND YUBA BI-COUNTY FEDERATION OF  
WOMEN'S CLUBS  
1927

I've concluded in my own mind that any attempt to eliminate "fort" as one of the names used to identify this most important visual (at least one end of it) and historical sights that we have in Sutter County should never happen.

I'm very grateful that some pieces of the iron fort have been saved for posterity to enjoy.

The plaque calls it right: "The Fort of Hock Farm."

# An Exciting Day in Sutter – Shootin’, Too

by  
Stephen G. Hust

*From the Independent Herald and Bi-County Farmer, Thursday, April 26, 1956*

*“Twas brillig and the slithy toves,  
Did gyre and gimble in the wave!”*

Ah! but the peace and quiet of that tiny country town was heavenly after the bang and bang of the big city, made with the excitement of the First World war. And there was I, just loafing along, luxuriating in the heavenly tranquility when bang, bang, BANG! and the quietude was shattered like a pane of glass.

Shocked to a twitter, I whirled about to see what vandal was disturbing the peace of quiet Sutter City. I saw what it was all right. Just visible in a cloud of dust was an old gentleman, his white whiskers trailing in the breeze, pedaling wildly on his bicycle, with a mad man running close behind, hosing shot after shot at him from a revolver. Bullets were flying all about and how he escaped was incomprehensible unless he was out-running the bullets, which was highly possible.

## *Business Elsewhere*

Rightly assuming that this affair was none of my business I absented myself from that vicinity with praiseworthy alacrity and found I had business at the town grocery store close at hand which had walls about two feet thick. Those old boys sure built right.

When I arrived, as usual, there was a crowd there, only this one was more so. Harry Thomas and the late beloved Stanley McLean ran the place and there was always a crowd there

settling world problems and domestic scandal, but this time there was an extra large crowd, watching the battle in the safety of those two-foot walls! And, as I expected, from members of the gathering I got an ear-full about the fracas I encountered. In fact, I got so many ear-fulls, news from the front was running out of both ears.

It seems that only some 10 or 20 minutes before a woman, her skirts a-flying and her person a-jumping, sprinted up the road ahollering Help! Help! Help! The woman turned out to be the wife of a working man by the name of Turner, who was employed on the Long Bridge, which was then under construction. That morning, she reported when she got her breath, her husband, a husky, belligerent gent, exasperated by a domestic spat and energized by many drinks of Old Crow, had exploded in a mad rage and was shooting at anything in sight, including her and the cat. In fact she had a couple of near misses. What she wanted was for a couple of his FRIENDS (Ha, Ha!) to go to the love next in which they lived, and persuade the mad gunster to lay that pistol down.

## *Plenty of Targets*

Believe it or not, two FRIENDS – Ansel Lamme and George Poole – stuck their necks out and departed for her home. Evidently the trigger happy Mr. Turner was not in a coaxing mood, for he was the man behind the fun, pouring shots at George Poole, the aged gentleman on the bicycle, while Ansel

Lamme, a celebrated runner, was not to be seen. Presumably he was in the next county.

By the time I had absorbed this information the gunman arrived in the area. A rapidly moving dust tornado passed just before and we assumed that that was the respectable Mr. Poole. But the gunman did not lack targets, he started taking pot shots and the second story windows of Mrs. Huffmaster's hotel. He was surprised and delighted when a couple of his shots pierced a large water tank up there and aqua pura was squirting all over.

Satisfied with his bold exploit, our hero reloaded, then turned his attention to a new and most attractive target. Coming down California Street was Gregory Lang, perched high on a load of hay. How relaxed was Gregory, how much at peace with all the world; then his dream went to pieces with a bang. A bullet whistled past his ear, and he stopped the team with a jerk.

#### *He Should Have Zagged*

As he looked down the mad man was pointing a pistol right at him with more of the same. Gregory leaped to the far side of the load and the gunman did the same. Gregory leaped to the nigh side, so did his foe, blazing away. Finally Gregory zigged when he should have zagged and the gunman had him covered. He made Gregory get down, then made him dance to the accompaniment of a salvo of shots into the ground.

About this time Ed Noyes, who lived on California Street, just a few houses below Nelson, aroused by the noise emerged from his house, followed by his son. His son had a 30-30 in his hand and was all for shooting the prankster.

"Oh No! You can't do that, he's a FRIEND". Such Friends! Son obeyed, but with great reluctance. Then Scotty McLean entered into the fray.

Understand, nothing could really go on without Scotty. He was the beloved boss, he was Mr. Sutter City. He took his stand behind a small building, maybe the butcher shop and got the pistoleer's attention by shouting loud enough to wake the dead. In that instant Mr. Lang and equipment just vanished – yes sir, just vanished.

#### *Everybody's Friend*

Stanley poked his head out and reasoned with Mr. Turner to drop his fire arm. Mr. Turner's answer was to take a pot-shot at Scotty's head – but the alert Scotty's head wasn't there. He anticipated – but the dialogue went on, Scotty pleading for peace and reason, but the hopped-up gunner answered his pleas with salvos of gun fire. All of this time Scotty had a big hunting rifle in his hand. The audience kept shouting, "Shoot him, Scotty! Shoot him, Scotty!"

Scotty was shocked. "Why I can't, he's my FRIEND!" Well, maybe so. Scotty was everybody's friend. Now again the gunner was diverted by a new arrival, the constable. The constable was Handy Epperson who arrived with his brother Cash per a horse and buggy. The gunman cut loose plugging the top and the seat of the buggy with near misses but the Eppersons just drove on, the calmest guys I ever did see. If it had been me, I'd a leaped out of that buggy and showed that horse how to run!

#### *Situation Static*

In the middle of this fusillade who should drive up by Harry Thomas. Now the Thomases were hell for action and Harry was snorting like a war horse, but

he would pick this particular time to have his wife and baby along. By a detour he got to the back of the store and parked his domestic liabilities there safely. But by this time the action had moved up the street and Harry, panting for action, was all pepped up and no place to go. As the military experts would say, the situation was static.

When Handy clambered out of the rig the gunman was fresh out of loads – when he saw Handy approaching (Handy was as big as a Percheron and about as powerful) he fled up California Street and took refuge behind a tree – a large locust, if you please. It was an excellent stand. He could and did reload and also fired at all and sundry who got within range. Scotty and Handy had a strategy meeting.

The strategy was not quite self evident. Handy just disappeared while Scotty took his stand behind another large locust. Whenever gun-slinger Turner would shoot, try to advance, or retreat, or make any other darn move Scotty would blaze away with his big rifle and plenty of bark from Mr. Turner's locust would shower on his head.

### *So the Battle Ends*

Scott did some mighty close shooting and the tree was just about shot clean of bark. The gunner was kept so all-fired busy so that all he could do was to shoot some wild ones at Scotty. Finally it seemed that he had fired his last and was reloading. Just at that moment a huge bird seemed to fly through the air at him. The bird's name was Handy, who had encircled the bad man. When his enormous bulk hit Mr. Turner it knocked him flat, knocking all the wind and all the fight out of him. The pistol flew wide and was recovered

by the constable. The battle of Sutter City was over and the town was saved.

When Handy and Scotty turned him over to the jailer at the county jail he assailed said jailer like a wild cat. When that worthy recovered his balance, he massaged Mr. Turner with a billy club till he was a real good boy and darn near a dead one.

Pretty soon there was a trial –for assault with a deadly weapon or some such. I suppose you think he was convicted and got life! Well, guess again. His FRIENDS got him the best lawyer what was, the great mouthpiece, W. H. Carlin, who pulled out all the stops – the lonesome and forgiving wife, the white-haired, broken-hearted mother, the orphaned cat – Mister! – he got that shootin' fool off with a slap on the wrist and when the prisoner was discharged and about to leave, Carlin returned his revolver to him.

Said Carlin earnestly, "Young man, when you get in the middle of the Feather River bridge, just toss this into the river."

Back in Sutter Everybody's Friend packed up his wife, his duds and the cat and left town. Then the town of Sutter resumed breathing. Now-a-days when I visit Sutter I always put on my bullet-proof vest!

*"And hast thou slain the  
Jabberwock?*

*Come to my arms, my beamish  
boy!*

*O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!  
He chortled in his joy."*

# Magic Grapevine Helped Miners Against Marshals

by  
Jessica Bird

*From The Appeal-Democrat, Sunday, January 8, 1967, Page 10*

One early morning in the summer of 1901 a tall man on a powerful roan horse road at a steady pace up a dusty road in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada east of Marysville.

He wore the badge of a deputy United States marshal and carried with him a legal writ he expected to deliver to gold miners accused of breaking injunctions against uncontrolled hydraulic mining.

The day was very still and the clop-clop-clop-clop of the horse's hoofs could be heard far in the mountain air.

As they approached a cabin set near where a creek trickled across the road, the rider saw that the door was wide open. He stopped the horse and loosened the reins so it could drink from the stream.

As he did so, a young woman who was hanging cloths on a line stared at him a long minute and then darted into the cabin. He heard the sound of a telephone being "cranked" and the shrill voice of the woman:

"Tom Smith the spy has just gone by!"

That was all she said - but he knew it was a prearranged warning being relayed, by the new-fangled telephone, to the miners who operated the hydraulicking higher up in the hills. The heavy streams of water they directed to tear down hillsides to recover gold sent gravel and silt downstream. It added to debris which for many years had been filling and

choking the Yuba and other valley riverbeds due to these mining methods.

## *The Lawman*

Thomas Louis Smith, the lawman, smiled grimly to himself. "Giddup, Tomki," he said to the horse. "We'll go on even if her message stops all the monitors in these hills."

Smith, who had been sheriff of Sutter County for six years in the 1890s and had a sheep ranch at Harkey Corners, was appointed a deputy marshal at the request of other farmers who made up the Anti-Debris Association of Sacramento Valley. They were a powerful force in fighting hydraulic mining - a devastating practice that later was abolished by law.

Smith was fearless and acquainted with law enforcement, as well as being personally interested in stopping the ruination of agricultural land by "slickens" that come down to fill the rivers as mountainsides literally were washed away. He certainly was not a man to be frightened by a woman's message relayed over the slender wire of that first long-distance telephone. The line had been built to connect the miners with the outer world, long before the years when such communications were customarily used.

## *Tall and Straight*

The marshal was a towering, straight-backed man, over six feet tall



and weighing more than 200 pounds. He always wore a long beard and drooping mustache, but his stern appearance was belied by the twinkle in his eyes.

Smith was armed, of course, but he didn't wear his six-shooter hanging in a holster. Instead it was a thrust into a pocket. The weapon had been given to him by a friend, when he first became a sheriff in 1891. Although it had been used by a previous owner to kill a man, Smith never had been forced to fire a fatal bullet.

Having heard the woman's rhymed message, Smith was sure that he would find no law infractions going on when he finally rode the roan into the hydraulickers' camp. Maybe everything would still be dripping wet - with every evidence of brisk operations only recently stopped - but there probably wouldn't be a bit of action underway, and the monitors' streams would be completely shut off when he arrived.

He realized that he was intensely disliked by the miners because of his official position. But he had no intention of turning back toward Marysville, which he had left hours before.

### *Adventure Stories*

History does not relate exactly what he found when he attained his goal that long-ago day. But stories of his adventures told to his family of his visits into the hydraulic mining areas of Yuba and other counties are remembered by his daughter, Mrs. Ruth Smith Grant of Yuba City. Mrs. Grant, now a retired school teacher of Sutter County, has made her home both at the Harkey Corners ranch and in Yuba City, where she lives at 902 Cooper Ave.

North San Juan was one center of the hydraulic mining which began in the late 1850's, and was quite a populous community. Once, when Marshal Smith had gone there to serve papers on an alleged lawbreaker, he registered at the San Juan Hotel to stay overnight. He found a big crowd at the hotel to celebrate a wedding. Smith, knowing that his presence would be a sour note in the festivities, retired early to his upstairs room.

As Mrs. Grant remembers the story, her father was wakened by the hotel proprietor about midnight. "Smith," he whispered, "there's a bunch of men downstairs all drinking pretty heavy and they've decided to come up and get you." He offered to go to the barn, saddle the marshal's horse and bring it to the back stairway of the building, if he wanted to ride out at once.

### *To Nevada City*

Smith thanked the man for his offer, but told him he wouldn't go until daylight. "Tell them to come along," Smith said quietly. "I have my fun right here with me, and I'm ready for 'em!"

In the morning when he went downstairs to leave, Smith had to step over his would-be assailants, "sleeping it off" on the barroom floor.

Smith's business also took him on occasion to Nevada City, where he would stop at the National Hotel, a pioneer building still in use.

The lawman's duties in those days of slow transportation often took him away from home for days at a time. He never was hurt, although many times threatened. Once as he crossed a bridge in the mountains a hidden assailant fired a shot at him.

The bullet wounded the horse he was riding but missed Smith.

"My father came to California from Virginia by way of the Panama Isthmus route, when he was not quite 18 years old," she said. "He was born Jan. 12, 1850 on a plantation in the 'Kingdom of Accomac,' an east-shore county of that name, the son of John B. and Mary Smith. The family is of English descent."

#### *Powell St. Pasture*

Young Thomas accompanied his brother-in-law, Dr. Edwin Parramore and his wife, Emory Smith Parramore, from Virginia, on the journey to California. His sister at the time had one young son, but bore two other children after reaching the West.

A violent storm on the Pacific almost ended their journey, but the ship finally was able to reach port in 1868 at San Francisco. At that time the "city" was small. Cows were tethered where Powell Street now is located.

When the travelers set foot ashore, Smith had only 75 cents in his pockets and the Parramores also were hard pressed for funds.

The Parramores made their way to Knights Landing and afterwards moved to Woodland, where the young doctor became well established in his profession.

Smith stayed on in San Francisco, working at whatever he could find to do, including washing dishes in restaurants. Later, he left the city and went on foot to Stockton. There he was fortunate to meet A. J. Patterson, a well-established rancher. Patterson operated a large sheep ranch, which now is the site of the town of Oakdale. He moved the sheep to summer ranges in the Sierra, and

there young Smith was sent to take care of the grazing flocks. The youth found such farming to his liking and did so well that he became a ranch superintendent for Patterson.

#### *Hostile Indians*

In 1872 he left the Stockton area for Modoc County, where in spite of brushes with hostile Indians, he raised sheep successfully on his own. In 1876 he sold out his Modoc holdings and went to Woodland. There he bought a livery stable which he operated until 1881. At that time he disposed of the Woodland business, and bought the ranch in Harkey Corners, near Township and Oswald Roads.

In 1878 Thomas Louis Smith married, in Woodland, Elizabeth Ann Kirk, who had been born in Kirksville, March 6, 1858. Her father was Thomas Downward Kirk, born in Giles County, Virginia, who had come west with his father. They settled first in Missouri and during which time Kirk was a major in the U.S. Army, serving in the Mexican War.

The Kirk family finally reached California in 1853, bringing with them herds of horses and cattle. They settled first in Yolo County. In 1864 they located in Sutter County, near the river, and the place became known as Kirksville. Major Kirk afterwards bought 1,000 acres of land from W. P. Harkey, a pioneer Sutter County rancher, and moved to Harkey Corners.

When his daughter, Elizabeth Ann, was ready to attend college, she was sent to Woodland to enter Hesperian College. The young student made her home with Dr. and Mrs. Parramore. It was there that Smith met her and the romance began that led to their marriage.

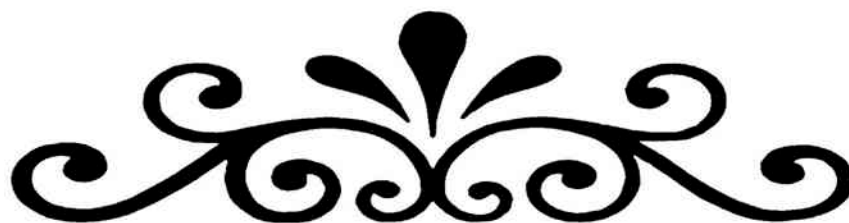
### *Two Children*

The Thomas L. Smiths had two children - William T. and Ruth. After Smith retired from the sheriff's office in 1894, the family which had moved to Yuba City returned to Harkey Corners. The father and son continued sheep-raising, their flocks sometimes numbering between 7,000 and 8,000.

In 1927 William T. Smith was killed in an automobile accident. The tragedy was a heavy blow to the aging

Smith and clouded the remainder of his life. He died Jan. 11, 1930, after having lived in California for 62 years.

William T. Smith in 1910 had married Birdie Baldwin of Stockton and had three children, Thomas Truston, William Walter and Lillian Elizabeth. The sons live in the Yuba City area. William had one son, while Thomas had six children. Their sister, now Lillian Smith Varnna of Chico, has two children.



## **Hock Farm Tidbits**

In the 1880s and 90s, picnics were big affairs. All day picnics might include a riverboat ride to the destination, brass bands and fireworks. John Sutter's Hock Farm was one popular picnic spot.

The first peach orchard was planted by Capt. John Sutter on his Hock Farm, which is where Sierra Gold Nursery is today south of Yuba City on Garden Highway. The first cannery in Sutter County was started by B.F. Walton in 1883.

The first ferry in Sutter County was established in 1843 by Capt. John Sutter and Nicholas Allgeier across the Feather River near Nicolaus. This enabled Sutter to travel from Sutter's Fort to his Hock Farm south of the future site of Yuba City.

In 1843, John Sutter hired John Bidwell, who later founded Chico, to take charge of Hock Farm. He built a house, so that Sutter would have a place for his family to live when he brought them from Switzerland. Adobe bricks were made and the men sawed boards from the cottonwood trees. At this time Sutter had about 5000 head of cattle and 1200 horses with 25 Indian cowboys to herd and break the animals.

# A CLAMPER EPIC

by  
Roscoe L. Clark

*Printed in the Pony Express Courier, September 1936, Volume III, No. 4, page 6  
(Re-printed from the Mariposa Gaz.)*

Over in Downieville, Wolff hung out his shingle and told the town that he was a jeweler. This was a mining town, but men had come here and gone into business, other than working in the diggins, and some of them were finding plenty of pay-dirt crossing their thresholds. Wolff, too, would make a strike. For where money was made it was spent, and he envisioned a profitable future when a shadow fell across his door.

"Fix clocks here? Got to have this right away. How much? Well that doesn't matter. Be back in a couple of days." He left as another man entered.

"New jewelry place, eh? Say my watch don't go, fix her for me," and he was out on the street before his name could be taken.

Two more stepped in during the next fifteen minutes and left watches to be repaired. By ten o'clock here was a pile of business on his work table that would keep him busy well into the next week.

Then came a miner of huge frame but with an esthetic appreciation of the finer things.

"Morning podner. Wot ye got in a necklace? Something for a real queen. I want sparklers and colored stone. How much? Only two thousand? Ain't ye got nothing better? Money ain't no object. Well I'll take it. Ye take my gold dust? But say hold on jest a minute. Ye're a Clamper? Ye ain't? Then that makes it different. Guess I

wunt get that bunch of sparklers after all." And out the door went two thousand dollars in gold dust.

Wolff dropped. Why that two thousand had practically been on his scales. And "Are ye a Clamper?" What did the man mean? What the devil was a Clamper? What had that to do with the sale of jewelry? Everything, with the sale of this necklace. That much he could understand.

Now came the man who had left the clock the first thing that morning. "Say I jest heerd ye wasn't a Clamper. That so? 'Tis, eh? Then I want my clock back. Can't nobody but a Clamper do my work." And he was gone.

As this man went out another passed him entering. "See that watch there under our hand, guess I'll take it. I don't need it much anyway, so don't need it fixed. Besides of course, ye ain't a Clamper." He, too, walked out of the store. Then in came another and another, till the pile of business that had grown so through the morning, dwindled to a lone gold chain with a broken link.

Wolff was muddled, befuddled, defeated. He picked up the chain twisting the broken part to the top where he grasped it with his pincers. A shadow fell across his work, the shadow of the chain's owner.

Dejection clouded Wolff's welcoming smile when he saw who it was. "Suppose you've come for yours

too. Take it. You don't need to ask for it. This is a hell of a place. I'm going to pack my stock and--."

"Why ponder! This is a dam good town. Business to burn here.

"Tain't such a place. What the hell's a Clamper? How does a man be a Clamper? Where does he go to be one? Is it a political party or a religion or a\_\_?"

"Land no. It's a organization. A powerful one too. All the big men are Clampers, that is all the big ones In California are. Never get any place here, less you're a Clamper. Means a lot, I'll tell ye."

"What can I do to be one? Do I pay? What do I sign? I'll do anything to join if it's as important as all that."

Wolff had seen the light. He now had the inspiration to be a member of that famous state wide organization known as E Clampus Vitus. Its merits, its lofty purposes lured his soul, appealed to his judgment. Ambition was rife in his spirit. He felt himself a failure in Downieville without the attendant glory of a membership in E Clampus Vitus.

Before night a committee called on him to investigate his qualifications. They shook his family tree back to the third generation. They accepted his petition and a fee. The fee sufficient to take care of the liquid desires of the Clampers well into the following morning.

Promptly at six the horrendous blast of the hewgag shook the canyons of the Yuba. The blind candidate appeared, and the committee set about liquidating the fee.

Far down the stream miners shook the tobacco from their unfinished pipes and solemnly put them in their pockets. On they came to town.

Across Durgan's foot bridge down the sides of the mountains, from their work at the Long Toms, miles down the stream, from Goodyear's Bar, and Sierra City. Small groups became a street-wide parade that moved toward the doors of the Methodist church. Here they found the one building large enough for a third of the members to get in far enough for a glimpse of the fun.

Initiation then proceeded in all its sublimity, etc. The candidate was uplifted. High in the rafters he was uplifted. By a rope run through a pulley in the steeple and attached to a wide leather band encircling his nakedness. Just a few lines remained to be delivered, then a pause before he should have been let gently down to the cooling Yuba water in a vat placed exactly beneath his present elevation. When suddenly the fire bell rang.

These were valiant men. Twice Downieville had burned and twice they had fought. Canvas and wooden buildings made a sudden bonfire, and quick action alone could save their homes and possessions. The Clampers went forth without a moment's hesitation, leaving the poor blind candidate hitched high in the rafters. There he worried somewhat; he squirmed, he became frantic, he writhed, and the hook on his belt gave way.

Down the street the fire was put out. The men had to pass a saloon on the way back, and the owner of the shack they had just saved volunteered to set up the drinks for the crowd. Being increasingly grateful, he set up round after round. Over the melee of the saloon a voice was raised. "Did I hear there's a Clamper initiation tonight?" A muffler fell on the hubbub

and the crowd fell over itself and out into the street. Back to the Methodist church they surged and looked up to find their evening's entertainment not there. One man went farther into the darkening church to see for himself. "Where's Wolff? He's not here."

"Yep, he's down in the water."  
"Is he dead?"  
"His head's over the edge of the vat - how is he anyway?"  
The noise of these voices recalled Wolff, he lifted up his head, and the mob seeing it, bellowed "Satisfactory."

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## Coming Events

### September

26 *Lewis and Clark Revisited* program, 2:00 pm, at the Museum

### October

10 Planned Giving Seminar, Kaffe T Latta

17 **Annual Membership Luncheon**

11:30 am social, 12 noon lunch

Program: Frank Coats: *General Land Office Records and Maps of the Sutter Buttes*  
Ruthy's, 229 Clark Avenue, Yuba City

\$15 per person - see enclosed flyers to make reservations

25 *Lewis and Clark Revisited: A Trail in Modern Day* exhibit closes

29 Ornament Workshop at the Museum

### November

18 Ornament Workshop at the Museum

### December

3 Decoration Day, 9:00 am at the Museum

5 *Trees and Traditions* Holiday Gala

20 Children's Program and Open House at the Museum

### January

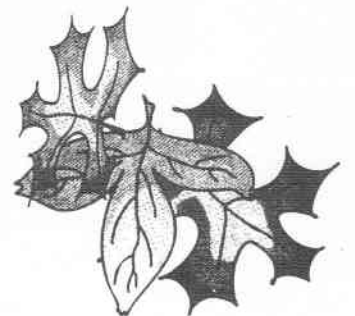
3 Undecoration Day. 9:00 am at the Museum

# Puzzle Page

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



Authalena	Ceremony
Clampers	Downieville
Eliza	Emeritus
Friends	Grapevine
Hockfarm	Honore
Hydraulic	Landmark
Lawman	Marshals
Moravian	Parramore
Pioneer	Renewal
Rivers	Scotty



# **Membership Meeting**

**Saturday, October 17  
at Ruthy's**

**11:30 am social time**

**12:00 noon lunch**

**Program:**

**Frank Coats:**

**General Land Office Records and  
Maps of the Sutter Buttes**

**\$15 per person**

**See the insert to make reservations**