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Yuba City, California

July 2010



Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Award Winners

Haley Hawkins, Emilie Bushnell and Macy Hill

(photo by Sharyl Simmons)



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*The year the director joined the Board.

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President's Message

Even those of us interested in history must accept and welcome change. The biggest adjustment to our Board of Directors is the resignation of Bruce Harter, who started on the board in 1991 and has been a faithful member even since. Bruce and his wife Ginny are moving to Montana to live near their son. We will miss them both and wish them happiness in their new home.

We also welcome two new members, Janet Alonso and Greg Wellman. Janet hosted the April meeting in Robbins and presented the program on the History of the Sutter Basin. For those of you who were unable to attend, Janet wrote an article in this issue on the same topic.

Greg is a local native who currently lives in Sacramento. He was our presenter at the Picnic in the Park, talking about his book *A History of Alcatraz Island*. We are very excited to have this infusion of energy from our new members.

And speaking of the picnic, what a success! It certainly didn't hurt that the weather was so cooperative, but the program and the food deserve equal praise. Approximately 50 people attended and it was a delight to see everyone there. Let's see if we can beat that number at our luncheon in October, where we will have a presentation on the peach industry in Sutter County. Mark your calendar for October 16 - details will be mailed to you in plenty of time for you to make your reservation.

On a disappointing note, the annual Historical Faire will not be held this year. We're hopeful that this will be an aberration and the Faire will be back in the mall next July.

In this issue we have the winning essays in the annual Judith Barr Fairbanks essay contest. It's always encouraging to see young minds engaged in history and writing and we hope this event will spur a lifelong interest in our favorite subject. We also have the third installment of *Far From Home*, the story of the Huntington brothers' experiences in World War II. In conjunction with our series of articles, the Museum has assembled a small exhibit of letters, photographs and other artifacts that will be on display until mid-November.

Thanks for everyone's support this spring and I look forward to seeing you in October!

Audrey Breeding
President

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Director's Report

Summer is a great time to visit the Museum. First off, you know it will be cool inside. Fortunately for all of us, the artifacts need to be kept at a constant temperature between 68 and 72 degrees year round. Second, there is always something new to see. If you haven't viewed the traveling exhibit, *Multiply by Six Million: Portraits and Stories of Holocaust Survivors*, it is a "must see." This would be a suitable exhibit to bring a young person to see, so don't hesitate to share it with young family members or friends. The photos are confined to portraits of the survivors as they appear now in their everyday lives in California. The photos are accompanied by brief stories of their widely varying experiences during the Holocaust. There is a 24-minute DVD that visitors may view, which contains the still photo portraits with the voices of survivors relating their memories of that time. The purpose of this 15-year project was to serve as an important reminder so that this tragedy might be avoided in future generations. There are also education materials available, so please pass that along to any home schoolers you may know. The last day to see *Multiply by Six Million* is August 1st.

Another good reason to visit the Museum is the Museum Store. New items arrive regularly. You can always pick up an interesting local or California history book. The frosting on the cake is that almost anything else you need for a gift is here. The unique and charming greeting cards meet any occasion, and a new supply is just in. Small, nicely priced gift items in a wide variety are great to tuck in as little extra presents. Our friendly volunteer staff will even put your purchase in a tote with pretty tissue for instant gift wrap! Remember that this is a wonderful way to support the Museum while enjoying shopping for meaningful gifts and other good stuff. And Historical Society and Museum members receive a 10% discount on most items.

This summer, our attention is focused on two projects: beginning construction on the new meeting room and bringing to fruition the permanent exhibits for the multi-cultural room. And in any spare moments, we are working with our volunteer photographer and photo conservation expert, Allan Lamb, to create an exhibit from the many local glass plate negatives in the Museum collection. This is the first time that we have been able to see these wonderful studio portraits of those who lived in our community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Allan has scanned literally hundreds and hundreds of these valuable images, and this exhibit represents a sample of the best ones for you to view. We have an additional exhibit planned for 2011, so that you will have an opportunity to see even more of these great photos. You may even see a family member that you recognize. We are hoping you will, so that some of these anonymous forebears may be identified. The exhibit will begin in late August and continue through November. We hope to see you in the Museum soon

Julie Stark
Director

Memorials

In Memory of **Betty Arnoldy**
Joe & Rebecca Benatar

In Memory of **Betty Brown Arnett**
Marge & Bryan Fairlee
Shirley Schnabel
Sharyl Simmons
Lauralu Wemple

In Memory of **Nora Barkhouse**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In Memory of **William Bravos**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In Memory of **Mary Ann Brown**
Jerry & Patricia Whitten

In Memory of **Frieda Brugmann**
Ray & Shirley Anderson
Marnee Crowhurst
Joe & Darlene Davis
Sandra & Bob Fremd
Mel & Liz Granskog
Myron & Jaylene Prychun
Shirley Schnabel
Sharyl Simmons

In Memory of **Delores "Lovey" Clark**
Richard Bowder & Susan Bodnyk
Arlene Chesnut
Bob & Katie Bryant

In Memory of **Frances Gentry**
Kenneth & Sheri Stutzman

In Memory of **Sajjan Singh Hayre**
Steven Richardson

In Memory of **Marianne Pierce Horton**
Steven Richardson

In Memory of **Helen McGovern**
Marie E. Fuller

In Memory of **Cecil Moore**
W. C. McFarland

In Memory of **Rev. Edgar Nelson**
Suellen & Tom Teesdale

In Memory of **Hobart G. Onstott, Jr.**
Ken & Vivian Calhoun
Dorothy Coats & Family
Norman & Loadel Piner
Suellen & Tom Teesdale

In Memory of **Viola Spencer**
Shirley Schnabel

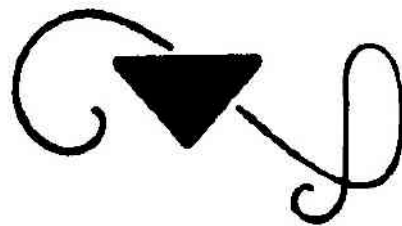
In Memory of **Irene Stevenson**
Suellen & Tom Teesdale

In Memory of **Betty Taylor**
Suellen & Tom Teesdale

In Memory of **Jane Ullrey**
Suellen & Tom Teesdale

In Memory of **Jim Brandstatt Uren**
Suellen & Tom Teesdale

In Memory of **Irma Brandstatt Uren**
Suellen & Tom Teesdale



Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest Winners – 2010

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.

Emilie Bushnell, First Place
Teacher: Mr. Irvine, Butte Vista Elementary School

May 1, 1851

Dearest Grandmother,

Life here in Yuba City is different from my old life in Missouri. Our family moved west because our homestead kept flooding. Pa was tired of all the work and troubles the Missouri River can give a farmer. Rumors of opportunities free for the taking in California made us hopeful that a move would better for our family. I am sorry that we had to leave behind such a great home, but our new life is full of new wonders.

You would be amazed at what California looks like. My favorite part of the scenery is the beautiful wildflowers that blossom in the spring. I can sit for hours and watch their colors pop out of the soil. Purple, pink, yellow and white are the common flower colors, but the one that stands out the most is the orange poppy that smells like juicy berries.

One of my first adventures was when I went to fetch some berries for Ma's famous pie. I ended up seeing something sticking half-way up from the dirt. I grabbed a stick and dug it up. It turned out to be a hand woven basket made by an Indian woman. Now when I go out collecting berries or when I go fishing for salmon with Pa, I always look for items left by the Maidu. I have quite an arrowhead collection.

Pa hunts with my brother like he did in Missouri. Here in Yuba City we have deer, elk, bears antelope running wild in the valley just waiting for us to shoot them with our large tough muskets. We also eat the fish that we all catch in the river that flows near our town. I help Ma fry up the fish in corn meal. We cook it in a cast iron frying pan.

Pa and Ma opened up the first hotel. Ma makes the meals and Pa runs the establishment when he is not farming our land from the Land Grant or panning for gold. I like to help by going out and pumping water for the boarders. A big miner

with a bushy beard came to stay at our hotel because he was searching for his own claim and did not have a home yet. Everyone is calling this town a boom town. I think they are right. We are up to a population of a whole one hundred and fifty people. We have a store and a post office. That is where I sent this letter from.

Coming to a new land was a risk that paid off in the long run. Leaving our family and our old life in Missouri made me sad at first, but I am so glad that we decided to venture to this land of opportunity.

Your Loving Granddaughter,

Haley Hawkins, Second Place

Teacher: Kathy Kunde, Camptonville Charter Academy

Dear Papa,

How are you? We have been traveling for many months now. I have asked daddy so many times are we there yet? Then daddy said, "Darling if you say that one more time you will clean up all the dishes every day for a year and clean up after all the animals until you move out." I can finally say we are here in California in a place called Sutter County. During the months of the wagon train travel, I saw pretty flowers and drew them in my sketch book.

You know how I love animals. I saw deer, raccoons, birds and prairie dogs. As we passed, they poked their little heads out of their holes to look at us. I didn't enjoy the mosquitoes that tried to bite us. My sis and I came up with an idea to start hitting them with our books and rocks. I wore a bonnet all the time to cover my face. Mama said it would keep me from getting freckles on my beautiful face. I wish you were here in Sutter County with us to see all the pretty sights with me. When I look out I can see a small mountain range that was left over from a volcano. I've heard that the Maidu Indians lived near these mountains. They called them the spirit mountain and believed that their spirits went there after they died. An explorer named Luis Arguello called the mountains Los Picachos, or The Peaks. He also named the Feather River, El Rio de las Plumas, because he saw feathers from wild birds floating on the water.

We got to take a fun trip on the river, on a steamer called Linda. Wild grapes grow along the banks of the river. I had not seen plants like this before. I've been told that the grapes in Spanish are called "uvas" and that is how Yuba City got its name.

After the boat trip my daddy went to Sam Brannan's to check on buying a parcel of land that he has for sale. I got to go with him. The store has supplies for gold miners, fabric for making pretty dresses and goodies for good girls like me. The town is full of busy people. There is also a hotel, a grocery store, a blacksmith, a post office, and lots of places called saloons. I guess there are a lot of thirsty gold miners here.

A man named John Sutter has a hock farm here and daddy got a job there. He takes care of crops for Mr. Sutter and gets paid for it.

I've learned so much about Sutter County and my new home. I wish you were here to see it. I miss you.

Love, Clair

Macy Hill, Third Place
Teacher: Ms. Stephens, Nuestro Elementary School

April 12, 1859

Dear Loretta,

I told you I would write you once I got to Sutter County so here is my letter! Our journey was long and cold all the way from Tennessee, but it wasn't all that bad. We lost an ox because there were wild coyotes real near the state of Wyoming. We saw a real pretty herd of mustangs that were being rounded up by some rustlers.

Sutter County is a great place! It's beautiful and warm and to get land, all you have to do is get to it and claim it and it belongs to you! They have lots of real pretty wild flowers too! I think my new friend, Nancy, said these real pretty orange ones are called California poppies.

We built this real pretty house. Well actually, me and pa had a big ole fight and he went to this place called Marysville. Nancy is my neighbor so she let me stay at her house for a while 'til ours was finished. Her husband Charley helped Willy build our house.

When I was staying at Nancy's house Charley told lots of stories. Charley said that one day at the gold mine, the men were hoisting a mule down to the mines for the carts and the mule was squirming and it slipped out of the sling and fell! He also said that once when they were hunting he saw a huge, six point buck. Willie was in awe. He said that while they were watching it, a big ole bobcat came over and snatched it up before Charley could.

Nancy introduced me to a friend of hers. Her name was Annete O'bled. She was John Sutter's wife. I invited her over for tea along with Nancy. Annete offered Nancy and I a job at Hock Farm to help here with all the things that needed to get done by a woman at such a large farm. We both agreed immediately. She said we would get a salary of \$5 a week. She also said she would send a wagon for us at 8:30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

On my way to Hock Farm with our driver Russel, and Nancy, we drove by a pasture and saw some oak trees. I saw all these people. They barely wore any clothes. I asked Russel who they were and he said Maidu Indians. I asked if he would stop the wagon so I could go talk to them. He agreed. I started talking to one that looked like a woman, but she just looked at me like she was confused. Russel said that they didn't speak English. She pointed at my turquoise necklace. I took it off thinking she wanted to see it. She snatched it from my hands. She replaced with a beautiful, hand made, bracelet made out of shells. She mumbled out "trade?" I nodded my head. I have matching earrings at home.

I'm sorry Loretta, but I have to go. Please write me back soon.

Love, Suzie Little

The History of the Sutter Basin

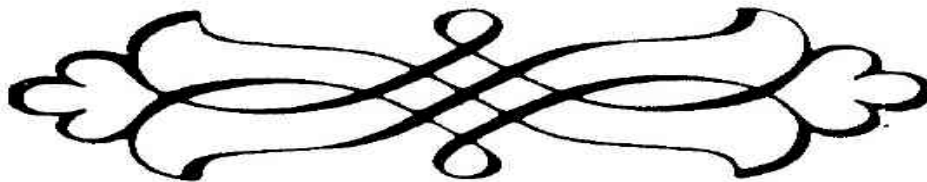
by
Janet Alonso

"The Sutter Basin is a thing apart." William J Duffy, 1972

The Sutter Basin Company was established for the purpose of developing 67,000 acres of agricultural lands to be sold to eager farmers anxious to capitalize on the fertile alluvial soil, an ample water supply, and the agricultural boom created by World War I. Its grass roots inception came from Sutter County resident Peter Snook and Captain Petter Jacobsen who, working the pilot house of the dredger "Thor" in 1910, conceived of the idea of a system of weirs and bypasses that would lead the way for both flood protection and agricultural development. Their dreams were greatly enhanced when in 1911 the California Debris Commission finally succeeded in convincing the State and Federal governments of the need for flood control in the Central Valley. Subsequently on April 30, 1913 the State Legislature passed an act that led to the creation of Reclamation District #1500 contained within a political subdivision called the Sutter Basin that comprises approximately one sixth of Sutter County. Snook and his brother Frank, lacking the cash to implement their ideas, approached a group of wealthy Sacramento businessmen, who in turn entreated J.Ogden Armour, the Chicago meat

packer, to finance the development work.

Through the mutual efforts of the SBC and Reclamation District #1500 the East Levee of the Sutter Bypass was constructed. It took eight years, starting in 1912, for the irrigation/ drainage project to reach completion, and another 27 years for all the land to be sold off mostly to private individuals. They encountered many setbacks along the way. There were those who feared encroachment and heavy tax assessments. The early pioneers endured floods, court injunctions, and the Great Depression. Their ambitious farming ventures suffered the usual weather and pest related disasters, and the selling of such vast acreage proved a daunting task. Despite these obstacles, the Sutter Basin Company survived. To date the infrastructure has changed very little and agriculture remains the mainstay of its economy. Perhaps its most enduring asset, however, is the mosaic of human resources who knew well the value of perseverance. They came from across the United States to this new frontier representing a melting pot of culture, each contributing their own special gifts and talents.



Far from Home: The Letters of Bill and Harry Huntington Part III

edited by Phyllis Smith

This is the third part in a series of articles based on the letters of Bill and Harry Huntington, local boys who served in World War II. Once again we learned of a connection to someone who read the last article. Harry mentions receiving some gifts at Christmas, 1942: "Bernice - picture, cookies, and candy." Bernice is likely Bernice Burtis Wilson, of Meridian, who was the aunt of Museum assistant curator Sharyl Simmons and Museum Commissioner Steve Perry. Hardy McFarland of Sutter mentioned to Sharyl that Harry had briefly dated Bernice.

A reminder - Harry was quite a creative speller.

In August, 1943 Harry flew from the US Mainland to Hawaii. He felt lucky to have avoided the sea voyage, because "Darn ole ocean is bigger than I thought cause I sure couldn't see land either way I looked." His first impression was, "I feel like I'm taking a vacation instead of heading into trouble..."

Aug. 9, 1943 [postmark; date was censored]

Dear Maw, Dad, Sis, and Fritz and etc.

This makes our [censored] day here. I got to see my first banana and coconut trees along with some screwy looking fish, even fish have those bright looking clothes on instead of being camouflaged like most things.

But then paradise grew boring...

August 12, 1943

Still here and anxious to put those wings to use. It gets tiresome doing almost nothing. Went to the show tonight and they showed a newsreel that I had seen last December. I didn't mind that so much but when I seen the comic books that

was the last straw, had the right month but somehow the years were a little mixed up.

August 15, 1943

Everything I want to write about the censor says "no." Results are probably a very short letter without much sense.¹

The guys got this place named the "rock." I'm beginning to feel the same way about it. Lots of time, plenty of passes, all a person could wish for except something to do after he leaves the post. This place has beat anything I've ever seen and that includes Sutter, Meridian and even West Butte.

More darn coconut around that you know what to do with - so we just eat them. What a job they are to peel. No, I'm still O.K., you do have to peel them

Finally he was sent to Australia, but still was spending his time on the ground.

August 26, 1943 Australia

Finally made it to this place with no mishaps. They say this is winter here but right now I'm doing a lot of sweating and no stoves are burning. Nights are darn cold though. One guy put 8 blankets on and still was cold.

Who wiped under the cows tails this year. That was my job most of the time.

Sept. 2, 1943

Hope we move from this place fast cause the ants have set up their headquarters in the mess kits and carry on a lot of raids in everyone's pants and bed covers. Getting used to them at night but those in my pants are still bothersome. Sure glad the Doc didn't get my tonsils cause that gas sure is handy now - getting the pants problem licked very slowly.

Sept. 4, 1943

Been to a couple of towns and what towns. Resemble these old time western pictures. Nothing to see buggy, wagons and horseback rider going down the street. Yesterday seen a woman who look close to 80 years old pedd[ling] a bycle down the street.

The bread is all home bake and it sure tastes good, like to wore my mouth out trying to chew the crust though. Kids run down the street with a couple loaves under their arms, drop one and it just bounds back up again.

Sept. 11, 1943

We climbed up a darn hill that an Alp climber would have thought twice about climbing. Got a milk-shake on the way back, which they stirred with a spoon, talk about doing things the hard way. Had the first bottle Coke since we left the US. A line about

½ mile long was worth sweating out to get the one bottle that a person could get.

Seen Eleanor Roosevelt going by yesterday. Looked like she had all the MPs of the US army guarding her car.

Been really putting the bananas away, cost three shilling a dozen so don't worry much about it. That is close to \$.45.

*Although Harry was not allowed to say exactly where he was, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote that on September 10, 1943, she was in Sydney. "We visited the Red Cross Officers' Club, which was crowded with young fliers down on leave from New Guinea for a few days rest."*²

Sept. 13, 1943

Turned into a bathing beauty. Took a nice cool dip in the ocean and was it salty. Some guys had a net trying to catch something. They brought in couple small shovel-bill sharks plus crabs and other stuff. After that I thought twice about diving into the waves.

Still have a sore tail light, been bouncing around on the horses again. They can take these English saddles and put them someplace not to be mentioned.

Sept. 14, 1943

Been riding around on the back of a harse in a English saddle. What a ride it turned out to be. My stern took an extra beating due to the fact I never had any horn to hold on to. Started to go down town but the traffic was pretty thick to be in without the horn.

Poor Aussie sure have a hard time, most of them have false teeth when they hit around 20 years. Found

out why, what are [not] knocked out by a fight, they bite into the steaks they eat and that just yanks what's left right out. Our jaws have plenty of exercise when we go to town trying to chew their blasted steaks.

Sept. 16, 1943

We are just waiting. I'm beginning to see why help never arrives when it's most needed but there isn't much that can change it.

Sept. 20, 1942

Dear J.B. [*Jim Briggs of Sutter*]

Don't know for sure just what will become of me. If I'm physical fit I will become a gunner, otherwise I will get latrine detail.

Sept. 21, 1943

We have finally done something for a change, just moved to a new place the army calls home. Had to pitch our first tent and what a job it turned out to be. We moved the darn thing once already to a new locality, made a nice level spot which took all day to dig. No more am I going to wish for something to do.

Sept. 29, 1943

Had some visitors just now from another camp. One is a brother of one of our crew. First time he seen him for about 1½ years. Sure have some gab fest or maybe I should [say] arguments.

Oct. 1 & 2, 1943

Sure takes me one heck of a long time to get started on a letter, mostly because of lack of material on which to write about.

Instead of raining cats and dogs, of which we have enough, it just rains by the buckets full, more like a tub

being dumped over. Kind of mad cause it stopped us from having some fun. I won't say I'll take the sunshine cause that's a little too blasted hot, not much use of wishing for changes in weather cause it's never for the better.

Had our second detail and that was a job, pouring cement, for a floor and some foundation of some sort. Hope I get to use it after all that work.

Really getting to be a chow hound. If I'm not first in line, no one goes to eat cause they don't think it's meal time.

Had a very embarrassing moment a few days ago. Was out enjoying my second helmet full of water (just washing the soap off) outside the Palace hotel in the naked form when who went dashing by about 2 miles P.H. but a couple red cross women. I think they slowed down even slower when they had full [view] of all those curves.

Oct. 6, 1943

It's raining again so I'm indoors (if there were doors on these tents). Time out, got to fix a big leak in the tent now.

You are or I should say were wondering what to send, now I know. Remember those worthless books I used to buy. Yes, I mean those funny books. Those sure would look nice sitting here on the lower shelf on my writing desk. Of course it's just a bomb fin packing case, but right now it's called modern furniture around here. Don't rush about it though, a "Colliers" could be substituted once in awhile.³

Was rather disgusted today, took a bath and before I could dry off it rained and I used my quota of 2 helmets full of water. Oh, well, guess it won't hurt to go after water a few days early. Combed my hair today for

the first time since I left the states. Got a good GI haircut in Herington so I really didn't have any hair to comb.

The J--s put on a good radio program every couple of nights. They play the latest songs and jive, then say "Wouldn't you like to be home strolling down some street with your wife," etc. Sure is nice music so everyone listens to the darn thing. Nice of those buggers to help us out on getting up to date.

Did some work around the Grand Palace Hotel spreading some of the dirt that was piled up when we excavated. Now all we need is a lawn mower and a pair of clippers. A few watermelon vines growing close by. See where we are going to eat pretty good in the watermelon line. Seen some cucumbers too.

Over the hump a couple California men are really doing some truck farming. The vines never die and a person can harvest 3 or 4 times a year.

Oh, we made a time change on daylight saving time now. Guess they are hurrying up the war in time only.

Oct. 9, 1943

Fitz is trying to learn me native talk he learned out of a book. We tried to do some bartering with some natives but they are wise to us around here. I think we were gypped the hard way. Some day we will learn perhaps.

Also went swimming with the crocodiles. Only I didn't stay around to see any of them.

Oct. 12, 1943

I want you to mark this day on the calendar in big red letters. Not only Columbus can make history. Went over to an Aussie camp and got some

more lumber to enlarge our home. I think we will build a special room for all arguments that take place. Of course we will have to get some sound proofing material to hold the noise down to a roar.

Hurt my big toe a few days ago, set a 50 gallon barrel of water on the darn thing. Going to apply for the purple heart cause I was in action (of moving it so we would have bath water when we decide to remove the tan).

Oct. 13, 1943

Here goes for a letter between the times I swat a few bug around. They have just blacked the light out with some formation flying.

Right now I trying to figure out where I'm going to get a pumpkin for Halloween, I believe it's this month, isn't it? We have water melons & cucumbers, bananas and paw-paw or some thing like it but no pumpkins as yet.

Oct. 14, 1943

I get tired of having dried eggs, dried milk, dried carrots, dried this and dried that but for gosh sake when I get a dried letter that's going just a little too far. That is what we call these V-mail letters. So if OK by you the good ole air mail is bestest. After waiting a couple weeks for letters we don't mind waiting another day.

Sure was mad today some guy put the H mail in the N box and I just happened to see a ington sticking out so investigation followed revealing a couple letters for this person now pushing ink spots across the paper.

Oct. 17, 1943

Tonight seems to be letter writing night, everyone is dashing off a

line or two instead of the usual dashing around on the tent floor so no one could write a straight line. The bread is not wrapped at all but the crust seems to be protection enough. It took a big chunk out of a hack saw blade while they were cutting it for a meal.

The coffee we have here would make a wild man wind up and go backwards. Yes it's pretty strong stuff. The bottom of my mess cup was eaten right out by the stuff. Seem to have quite a lot of tea. That I don't mind (too much) it is better than chlorinated water. The water in the By-pass taste much better so I think it must be the best after all.

To pass some time away we race to the chow house. See who will be first in line. Today our (Tail gunner) took out so fast he lost his pants due to speed. I still can't quite figure out whether he started so fast that the pants forgot to follow or the hot air burned them off during flight.

You know I'll bet you think I'm kidding you with all these wild tales. Well really I'm *not* just making a good stories out of facts. The heat on the head sometimes is to blame though.

Throughout October Harry's squadron was sending a few planes at a time to bomb Japanese targets, including Cape Gloucester airfield, Umboi Island, Makassar on Celebes Island, Manokwari, Bira and Fak Fak. Then on October 12, 1943 the Allied Air Force (AAF) began a major offensive against Rabaul on New Britain Island.

This attack was part of Cartwheel, an operation to capture Rabaul, which became the main base of Japanese military and naval activity in the South Pacific after it was captured

in 1942.

Although almost 350 B-24s, B-25s, P-38s and RAAF planes participated in the attack, Harry's letters around October 12 do not mention it, but we do know he had flown one mission before October 18, 1943.

On that day, nearly 80 B-24s and fighters ran into bad weather and had to abort their mission.⁴ Most made it back to base, but after bombing Cape Hoskins on New Britain's north coast, Harry's plane made a crash landing on New Guinea.⁵ His family received the following telegram:

The Secretary of War desires me to express his regret that your son Sergeant Harry Frank Huntington has been reported missing in action since eighteen October between Cape Ward Hunt and Port Moresby New Guinea If further details or other information are received you will be promptly notified Ulio the Adjustant [sic] General⁶

And then:

Reference my telegram three November further report received states your son Sergeant Harry F Hungtington was on eighteen October slightly injured in action near Port Moresby New Guinea You will be advised as reports of condition are received. Ulio the Adjutant General

And finally:

Pleased to inform you that the commanding general Southwest Pacific Area reports your son Sergeant Harry F Huntington who was previously reported missing in action returned to duty twenty six October. Ulio the Adjutant General

Harry managed to keep a diary during the nine days he and his crewmates spent in the jungle before being rescued.

October 18 - Time for another raid one cup of coffee was breakfast. Took off about 0730 and did some chasing each other again. Headed for Rebaul again. Bad weather so Cape Ho?kis caught hell from our xxxx bombs.

Homeward bound no zeros.

"Chute on" and "hurry" it's bail out or die so we bailed everyone left the ship Landed in a tree 150 foot up in the air which took an hour to reach ground left gun and canteen in the tree. Then we sweated Townsend from a tree.

October 19 - No sleep all night got rained on a plenty soaking wet and damn cold. Built a fire and dried off. That is the six of us. Keen, Steff, Bialy, Brown & Townsend me included too. Spent about 2 hours hunting for the plane, give up and head south but to follow the ridges we set southwest. Easier going in which wasn't saying much.

About 13:30 we went swimming in a stream ate supper - 1 square of choc. Pushed on until 1700. Built camp and beat the rain. Slept fairly dry that night.

October 20 - 0700 morning again with a night of little sleep. Too many noises that sound weird. Breakfast - 1 square of choc - nothing like a square meal. Walking, crawling & hopping with quite a few rest periods was our morning movement. Ran upon a sort of trail but it soon tuckered out. Back in the bush again. Couldn't see 10 foot in front, back or to the sides. Found water and were we thirsty. Drank a

canteen full. Made camp and beat the rain again. Shelter leak but we had a fire going rather damp.

October 21 - 0700 Ah, sunlight much better than the dark can't sleep anyway.

Another square meal. Getting darn hungry. Decided to follow a stream. Thirsty as hell. Found some bamboo and drank the water from them. Was good but not enough. Found a small trickle enough to fill a canteen so we followed that all day. Got to a size we couldn't jump in places. Made good time but getting tired.

1600 made camp. Funny thing no rain tonight. Pretty nice sleeping. Got a few hours of sack time.

October 21 - Feel good this morning. Had little more sleep. Our square meal again. Follow the river is the discussion of all six. Brownie has shoe trouble they are giving out and in bad shape.

Now walking waist deep in places. Stream is getting bigger. Maybe we get to the coast yet. Rest periods are getting more frequent. Now getting pooped or weaker now. Built camp. Darn rain beat us tonight and really soaked again no sleep.

October 23 - Morning and last ration no more square meals. Walked the ridges this morning too hard going back to the river for us. Built a small raft. Shoved off about 1330. Darn thing was surmerge but we ride it anyway. Caught in whirlpools and still waters. Made a good 15 miles. The mountains are far behind now. Raft is breaking up so we beached the remains. Keen caught a fish that night. What a feast. Shelter leaked so we slept wet again.

October 24 - Boy what a night.

No sleep at all. Too many mosquitoes. Built our second raft. Really tired after hauling each log. Got vines for ropes again. After 3 hours raft was complete. Shoved off but still didn't hold us above the water. Full speed ahead. Log to the right, log to the left, log in front and we hit each and every one. Each turn the raft over. Lost everything now.

Walked some more. Spied some coconuts. We eat & we did. Found natives and two white men, Mason & Scotty tried to free their jeep. No soap.

October 25 - 0615 awake from a hazy sleep had coffee and fruit Mason & Scotty left for the 65 Squad We ate and took it easy. Steff & Keen fished and Brownie bitched.

Ate cheese & fruit at noon and gave the native kids some.

Fried the fish that were caught and took a bath in the stream.

Had supper as the natives came back from work.

Rained hard but we had a small shack no leak at all. Finally dropped off to sleep after a lot of blabbing.

October 26 - 0400 Doc woke me up with steak sandwiches and a couple of shots. Talk a little and decided to remove ourselves from the native village.

Natives paddled us across stream in their outrigger and then we hit the trail. Got to the truck and park ourselves in back. 5 hours of banging down trees and plowing through mud brought us to camp. Got our mail boarded an ambulance and went to the hospital. Had chow in bed and slept all day plus night.

October 27 - 0615 Nurse woke us up or is it a dream no it's real. Had breakfast and helped the ward boy a

little. Had fruit juice about 1000. Dern good stuff.

Slept half the afternoon. Went over to see Steff's brother. Who wasn't home. Seen Mason & had a conflag. Went back to hospital and had evening chow. Played cards & read the paper. Hit the sack rather early.

October 28 - 0630 Now morning & I've eaten chow. Took a gander at the nurse and help clean up the ward. Played cards for a while and laid around. Had dinner - both mess hall caught heck again getting filled up again.

Read the paper in the afternoon and talk to the paratroops who just moved in. Some wild tales were exchanged. A war correspondent came in and got stories from the 6 of us. Hit the sack after that.

October 29 - 0630 Wide awake this morning. Going to be discharged (from hospital). Ate chow and helped clean up the ward. Waited until Doc. came then we took off. Hitchhiked back to camp. Drew new clothes and other stuff needed which wasn't very much. Had dinner and then visited tech supply.

Fixed a little on the tent. Had supper and brewed some coffee. Later wrote to Maw & Bernice.

Hit the sack.

October 30 - 0630 Bialy woke me this morning. Had chow and then cleaned up the barracks. Fixed up some doodad for writing desk and mostquitos bar.

Ate early chow and got away with it.

Had a visit with a couple crews. Some wild tales were spun.

At early chow again tonight. Went and seen Doc - Got a shot from him.

Also got a pass to see Townsend.
Had quite a visit. Seen a show
Buckskin Frontier. Had coffee &
peaches and then hit the sack.

October 31 - 0630 Nice morning
for a murder the way I feel. Chow hall
was visited. Tried to get a barrel of
water but no luck. Brought some of our
clothes over that had been shipped
from the states. Look them over good
but still missing some.

Cleaned the tent up a little.
Heard rest of crew had been found.
Mail time. Mason came over and
visited. See Ball, Fitz, Freeman &
Taylor. Still able to move. Mason &
Scotty return. We had a great visit &
then hit the sack.

*Harry filled in the gaps in
various letters to family and friends
describing his ordeal and the
aftermath. Following is a composite.*

Oct. 30 through Nov. 26, 1943

Feels good to be back scribbling
away again. In fact feels good to be
back in this thing called a army camp.
Have to excuse the writing, cause
someone has done off with my pen and
other stuff that would help in writing.

Guess you were pretty well
shocked to get that dread telegram.
Guess it was quite a blow but at the
time I wasn't so keen about the idea
myself. Well that ordeal is over
anyway. Guys were always asking how
or did I ever make a parachute jump.
Now I can say "yes" and no practice is
needed. I found out what it feels like
to bail out. The actually falling isn't so
bad and the jerk of the opening chute
feels swell at that moment (later it
does hurt a little). A ride down &
bailing out aren't bad but it sure is one
heck of a way back only took us nine

days of walking, crawling & floating on
a raft that didn't want to float. We
made a truck into a boat. We made
the road right down the stream.

Those pictures with the ? marks
are the same as we run into except the
head-hunter hadn't found us. One pilot
was nearly eaten on his way back to his
base. I'd sure like to have seen some
native where we landed, would have
been more like a picnic than what it
turned out to be.

I must have found the rip cord
cause I'm writing to you of course
someone might have pulled it as I went
hurdling pass them. I didn't pull so
hard for nothing though and the little
red handle in my hand wasn't a toy to
play with.

Our ships name was "The
Upstairs Maid" but you had just better
call it the Sad Sack cause she is now
resting on some mountain side where
we almost left her if those things called
parachutes weren't handy. Anyway we
parted company just before the hill
come up and met the plane.⁷

The graduation watch sure has
passed the tests. After being banged
around until the other day it hadn't
much rough treatment but after 5 or 6
days of being in and under water it still
runs. The rest of the crew's watches
have stopped so I figure mine is tops.
Guess you know a good watch when you
see one.

Found out about the jungles the
hard way and they are as bad as all
books say and then some. Sure glad I
was never a pioneer in the ole days
cause a road is most welcome sight I
ever seen. Had a good time visiting
natives, now I can say I lived with
them.

You know these jungle mov[i]es
aren't up to par. When some beautiful

babe reaches up and grabs a handful of fruit. I'd sure like to know where she found it cause we didn't find any and boy how we could have gone for just a little nut. Easier to talk about now but then it was a different story.

Sure did a lot of thinking about those chicken dinner I use[d] to always find myself just in time for. Fact is I still think of them but not as much as out in the bloody jungle.

I could sure go for a bottle of Pepsi right now but I guess chlorinated water is the best there is. It tastes much better than iodined water which was our main diet for 9 days, our two fish weren't bad for a couple days, regular feast I dare say,

Someone ask if we had a gun - which we didn't & if we saw any wild animals, we only saw some crocodile which followed us down the river and a wild boar. Some thing came pretty close during the night once. Tell Earl he [could] really do some hunting in the jungles. The head of a fish we had caught for supper, dinner and breakfast was laying about 3 feet away, before we went to sleep. Next morning no fish head, and none of us had a chance to eat it either, cause it was going to be our breakfast.

We traded for bananas and stuff to eat. A pack of smokes will buy almost anything they have. One or two of the weeds will be enough so they help you. We made friends with those we run into in the jungle. What kinds of birds do we have. Well you can have all you name and still leave plenty over here, one bird sounds just like a human whistling, sure fooled us another sound[s] like a siren what a chill it gave us. Some noise you couldn't even imagine came forth from birds. Boy am I glad to be back where there are only

a hundred different type.

Our crew kind of fooled these guys around here. The first one ever to return after going down in those damn jungles. They had divided up our belonging and passed them around camp. So that is one reason I'm having a hard go of writing, borrowed pen, paper & ink. Got brand new summer outfit complete, even got two new pair of shoes which I figure is pretty good even for me.

Had the guys hold my wallet while we were on the last mission cause we aren't supposed to carry all papers. So when we relieve ourselves of the ship and put in jungle time someone had a nice party for himself. Only spent 15 pounds - \$45, he was decent though he left me \$18 or 6 pounds, nice guys we have.

Done some scouting around and have spotted some more of my clothes, tonight I shall strike. Like to see what they do when they find out two can play their game.

Sure catching up on my sleep now. Slept 2 days straight and still doing O.K. Sleep & eat, never was a better life although no one wants this one including me.

The four of us have gotten our tent pretty well straightened up again. The other two are still in the hospital.

Feet pretty good, some of our clothes came in from the US most of it was heavy flying equipment. Nothing like having everything you don't need. They make pretty good mattress though so they aren't entirely useless.

From the sounds of things our days of leasure are nearly up. I knew it was to good to be true. Have gained back a few pounds (I don't mean money) although I've still quite a few to go. I guess I only lost 15 pounds,

Ball (tail gunner) lost close to 25 so I didn't do so bad, course he could afford to lose a little more.

Yes, our nav. really does a swell job, I & the rest of the crew know he the best. He had some trouble during the long hike and is now in the hospital, guess he'll be out pretty soon.

Ball has gotten out of the hospital, guess he is over his malaria for a few days, weeks, months or years. He says it isn't a good thing to have.

I guess you know by now that I wasn't over that town you mentioned in the Oct. 23 letter. I can't mention towns and such stuff so I guess you'll have to remember some of the things you write. Must be hard to figure out some of these meanings.

Sure takes the cake, here we can't say where we are and they send a telegram telling the exact spot. Wonder what the secrets are for - to break I guess.

Some guy was telling us how to keep from getting lost in the jungle. Had quite a speech on how to do it, and we said he was all wet. Then the argument started. Come to find out he was only a couple miles out of camp. We really told him off then. Guess we feel rugged since coming back.

Well about all for now. All OK mentally and physically so pass the word around to those who are worried, which isn't very many. Keep those letters flying (air mail).

Nov. 22, 1943

Still puttering around doing nothing, which now is beginning to be tiresome. Something must be wrong with me wanting to do something besides eat and sleep and what else we like to do.

Been raining bloody blue murder

for the last few days. We salvaged close to 300 gals in about an hour's time. Caught it running off the tent so you can imagine the downpour. It came right through the tent so I arranged a shelter half to stop it the second time, so far it works pretty good. When that gives out I'm right below. What's another night and day of being wet.

Dec. 2, 1943 New Guinea

We haven't got a new ship yet, and from the looks of it the future is very dark.

Do you know where I could get hold of some of those sun glasses. I left mine in the good ship who needed a rest. So far no sun glasses around.

Dec. 5, 1943 New Guinea

You know that furlough I was talking a long long time ago, well I think I can see it very faintly in the future a long long way off. Darn army sure beats me, when it's you it's on time or else, if it's the army, to hell with you.

Started to be a wood carver but that was about as far as I got, four or five strokes then I became a meat cutter. Poor ole thumb got quite a few gashes in it now, maybe they will give me a purple heart. Now that would be something, one poor guy is the above mentioned and it isn't worth it. That is if it could be helped.

Dec. 6, 1943

Really had a time today, went for a nice Sunday ride and done a little visiting. I don't know if the natives appreciate it or not but we enjoyed ourselves. Got our guns out and shot some coconuts out of the trees so now I guess we'll have a little coconut to eat

and drink. Found a new way to make boats. Just use an aux. gas tank of the pursuit plane, cut a hole big enough to place the feet and stern in. We were riding around in the ocean in this type of craft. Was rather exciting. Darn wonder it didn't tip over. We are considering the idea for a way home.

Dec. 12, 1943

The older guys are quite surprised, Christmas package before Christmas and this year's stuff too. Things must be improving quite a bit in the last year.

Was at the hospital the other day visiting our pilot and be darned if I didn't let out a string of crazy language and about 4 nurses were close by. The whole crew in fact nearly everyone has a bad time when they reach some civilized place.

Our tent is now on the ground and it rained bloody blue murder yesterday. We had one of the driest tents in the place and it only had two inches of water over the floor. They say it was just a shower though. When it really starts raining I'm building a boat to sleep, eat and do everything in.

Got some more of the New Guineas crud, put some junk on it so I now look like a newly whitewashed fence. Course I don't know how a fence would feel so I don't know if I feel the same as a fence or not.

We got a swell swimming hole now, a stream goes right by camp and there are GI's aplenty on it all day.

Reminded me of this Cocoa Cola ad where a bunch of guys are taking a bath in a stream, "the pause that refreshes." We do some things just like in the movies. The other day we made a car fly. Couldn't help it if we

couldn't see the bump. We were really cutting up ground and we hit the bump, car plus passengers went flying in the air. I know we were at least three foot off the ground. Had a good pilot cause landed safely and the car still ran, "just like in the movies." We got stuck too but we had to get it out the hard way and it wasn't easy.

Dec. 15, 1943

Like to froze last night down to 100 degree. I had to use a third blanket. P.S. the ole army chow is living up to it name Beans Bean Beans

Dec. 17, 1943

Heard from Randy and Shirk [*Schnabel*] she let me in on the future. Told her not to keep us waiting like the last time. [*This seems to be referring to the fact that she is expecting their second child, Margit Schnabel Sands.*] Probably be the last time I hear from her after that.

Dec. 20, 1943

Well the War Department sure has got some wires crossed, unless skinning my hand is called an injury. But I've done that right in camp and nothing was said. Ball's folks got a telegram saying he was injured too and wasn't. Oh, yeah Ball wasn't mentioned in the news item. He was one of the 4 still missing at that time.

What did you think when the third telegram arrived, "Here he goes again," I suppose. Maybe it's this other H. Huntington who got injured. I got his mail one day. Of course it had been sent all over the country before arriving here and been to places I never even heard of.

Notes

¹ Censors looked for two things - anything that would be of value to the enemy and anything indicating deteriorating morale that would affect performance. Some families did not even know if their son was in the Pacific or the Atlantic.

Fox, Myron, "Censorship!" *War Letters: The Film and More*, date unknown. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/warletters/sfeature/sf_censorship.html> (16 June 2010).

² Roosevelt, Eleanor, "My Day," 1943. <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1943&_f=md056590> (16 June 2010).

³ Collier's Weekly (later shortened to Collier's) was an American magazine published from 1888 to 1957.

"Collier's Rise and Fall Followed by a Rebirth and Demise," *Things and Other Stuff.com*, date unknown. <<http://www.things-and-other-stuff.com/magazines/colliers.html>> (28 June 2010).

"Collier's Weekly," *Wikipedia*, 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collier's_Weekly> (28 June 2010).

"Collier's Magazine Profile," *Hidden Knowledge*, 2007. <<http://www.magazineart.org/magazines/c/colliers.html>> (28 June 2010).

⁴ "Rabaul," *Wikipedia*, 2010. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabaul>> (16 June 2010).

Miller, John Jr. "Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul," *HyperWar Foundation*, <<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Rabaul/USA-P-Rabaul-1.html>> (16 June 2010).

⁵ "Sutter Sergeant Safe After Harrowing Days in Jungle with Mates on Gasless Bomber," *Appeal-Democrat*, date unknown.

⁶ Major General James Alexander Ulio was Adjutant General of the U.S. Army from 1942-1946. The Adjutant General is the chief administrative officer of the Army and is responsible for the procedures affecting personnel procurement and for the administration and preservation of records of all Army personnel.

"James Alexander Ulio," *Wikipedia*, 2009. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Alexander_Ulio> (16 June 2010).

⁷ Combat planes had "nose art" painted on them to match their craft's name. The Upstairs Maid was a scantily clad woman. At least two planes had this name, with different paintings. Many pieces of nose art were much raunchier than the Upstairs Maid.

"Mr. Prophead's Aircraft Picture Site," *Mr. Prophead*, date unknown. <<http://www.mrprophead.com/b29/upstairm.jpg>> (28 June 2010).

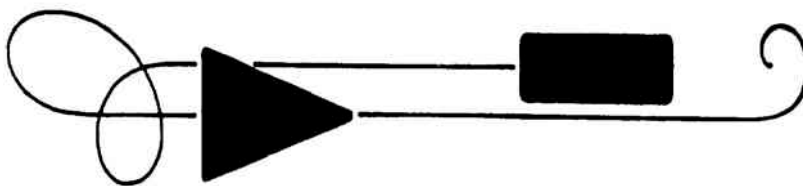
Sheley, Doug, "Consolidated B-24 Liberator," *Flickr*, 2010. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/18532986@N07/4475200271/>> (28 June 2010).

"765th Nose Art," *461st Bombardment Group*,

<http://www.15thaf.org/49th_BW/461st_BG/Aircraft/Nose%20Art/765th%20Nose%20Art.htm> (16 June 2010).

"Nose Art: Luc's Photo Hanger," date unknown, <<http://nose-art.net/>> (28 June 2010).

"Nose Art," *Wikipedia*, 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nose_art> (28 June 2010).



Huntington Exhibit

The Community Memorial Museum has a small exhibit related to Bill and Harry Huntington. Letters, photographs and other artifacts on loan from the family are on display now through mid-November 2010.

Puzzler

S Q A E D C R Y C M A L O N S O
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| Alcatraz | Alonso |
| Beans | Cartwheel |
| Coconut | Fairbanks |
| Harter | Hawaii |
| Huntington | Iodine |
| Letters | Liberator |
| NewGuinea | Parachute |
| Reclamation | Robbins |
| Roosevelt | Squadron |
| Sydney | Wellman |



Coming Events

Through July

Multiply by Six Million exhibit at the Museum

August - November

Local Historic Portraits exhibit at the Museum

October

16 General Membership luncheon

11:30 am Social time, 12:00 lunch

Ruthy's

Program: The Peach Industry in Sutter County

More details in the next issue of the Bulletin