

Proposed Layout of the Town of Marcuse
(Courtesy of Terald A. Zall)



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*The year the director joined the Board.

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

The 2013 dues are payable as of January 1, 2013. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City, 95993-2301 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

2013! We are starting the 13th year of this century. We still need directors for our Sutter County Historical Society. This year the county supervisors decided to cut funding to the museum and they took one day of work a week from our director, Julie and her assistant, Sharyl. With the cuts to the museum and work hours taken away, we as a organization need to step up and help our museum and our Historical Society remain viable entities in the community.

Whenever I have been in the museum and a new person comes to visit, I only hear great words about our museum. What a jewel it is in Sutter County. We also need to get our Century Farms some recognition.

In January our meeting will be Saturday, January 19 at 2 pm in Ettl Hall. Our speaker will be Diane Elizabeth Butler, who will talk about growing up next to the Sacramento River and how she became a poet. She has published a book of poetry, *On a Wire*. This meeting promises to be very interesting. I hope to have a time of sharing from our members of what that would like to hear about concerning Sutter County History.

If you are reading this letter, that means you are a member. Thank you for helping us keep Sutter County History alive.

Sarah Pryor
President

Would you like to receive special notices via email?
Just send your address to SutterCoHistory@aol.com
and we'll add you to our distribution list.

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Director's Report

Looking back on 2012, the Museum has had some challenges and some successes too. We have just completed a very successful *Trees & Traditions* fundraiser, and we sincerely thank all who contributed so much to it. It is all of you who make it such a success. Together we earned over \$12,000 to go toward the Museum's operating expenses for 2013.

We were able to award the beautiful quilt that (the formerly anonymous) Rose Wood created to a very happy winner, Donna Milliken of Loma Rica. We sold over \$1,800 worth of tickets, in no small part thanks to Butte Community Bank and to Rose herself. Thank you, Rose, for your wonderful support and superb quilting.

We have opened three new permanent exhibits in the Multi-Cultural Wing this year. Each one is unique and very informative about the diverse cultures in our area. The Punjabi, Chinese, and Hmong exhibits joined the Japanese exhibit, and we thank all those who made them possible. We look forward to more new exhibits in 2013.

This has also been the year of harsh county budget cuts, causing the Museum to close two days a week and cutting staff hours and salaries by 20%. We hope for reinstatement of the hours as soon as possible. We are looking for the rental of Ettl Hall to become a reality, as it blossoms into a premier location for special events. Rental proceeds may help ease budget woes. The Sutter Buttes Garden Club is working steadily toward a dedication of the new Schnabel and Dean Patio on March 15, 2013. The lovely new patio is a gift from the Schnabel family in memory of Randy and Shirley Dean Schnabel. When the patio is finished and landscaped, it will be an ideal location for weddings and other events.

The Museum Commission is seeking new members, with several openings available at this time. The only requirement is that you be a resident of Sutter County. The Commission meets the second Wednesday evening of every month except July, and the Commissioners are an advisory group that supports the activities of the Museum. You are invited to attend any meeting of the Commission at the Museum at 7:00 p.m. on second Wednesdays to observe the meeting. If you are interested in becoming a member of this great group of Museum supporters, please pick up an application at the Museum or at the Sutter County Administration office at 1160 Civic Center Blvd. in Yuba City.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Museum,

Julie Stark
Director

Memorials

In memory of **Leonard Berry**
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor

In memory of **Greg Bihlman**
Helen Heenan

In memory of **Vivian Burrows**
Ann Burrows
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Walter Lewis Carter**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Jane Dobson**
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor
Sharyl Simmons

In memory of **Esther Fortna**
Elaine Tarke

In memory of **Lonnie Patrick Graham**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Marie S. Joaquin**
Joan Joaquin Wood

In memory of **Clyde “Brud” Perry**
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor
Sharyl Simmons
Phyllis Smith
Julie Stark

In memory of **Henry “Snapper”
Phillips**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

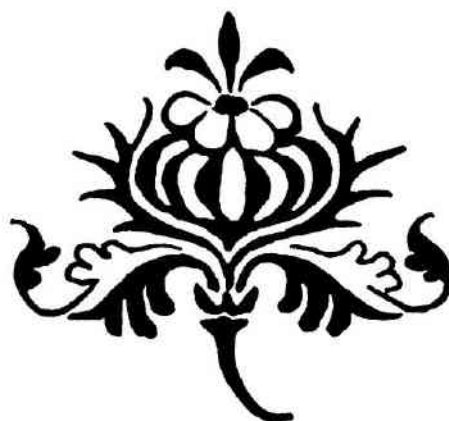
In memory of **Dorothy Ross**
Audrey Breeding
Leona & Leroy Pennington
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor
Sharyl Simmons
Julie Stark

In memory of **Tosh Sano**
Howard & Ruth Anthony

In memory of **Melvin Schuler**
Bryan & Marjorie Fairlee

Outright Gifts

Katie & Bob Bryant
Arlene Chesnut
Bob & Lillie Inman
Rosalie Palmer
Patricia Wong
Rose & Robert Wood



IN THE TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING

A Story About Marcuse and Its Founder
with Information on the Sutter Basin,
Yuba City and Sutter County

by
Terald A. Zall
with assistance of
Michael Andrews, DPM
and Janet Alonso

Marcuse! Marcuse? It was a settlement on Sutter Basin Reclamation Land, located where a one-time railroad station town glimmered in the twilight. Present-day Marcuse Road is all that can still be seen.

This metropolitan area has been on the casualty list of the missing for many decades. Intrepid travelers to that spot would only find seasonal rice fields to “testify” to what was once, by 1913, a sophisticated set of buildings. In the twilight’s last gleaming the long shadows of Marcuse boasted a post office, hotel, stores, water works, warehouses and residential homes.

“Marcuse” as an enterprise was started by Virginia resident Jonas Marcuse [1832-1914] in the tules of Sutter Basin. He first purchased property from the then-financially troubled Samuel Brannan, one of the early California pioneers who became commercially wealthy, only to lose it later. The Brannan ranch in the basin was sold by increments.¹ Marcuse, along with six others such as P.E. Drescher, acquired the basin site known as “lot eight” in 1857.

On November 10, 1873 Marcuse, having moved to Sutter County resident in 1869, made another purchase from Brannan’s New Helvetia Ranch.

Marcuse, along with two others, paid \$10,285 for the property.² Marcuse may have visited Brannan at his residence, the “White House,” located in Nicolaus.

Jonas Marcuse, a merchant of Jewish heritage, was born in Germany. He, “emigrated to the United States, landing in Philadelphia..., moved to Richmond Virginia, where he lived until 1869...” In 1863, during his stay in Virginia, he married Mrs. Mittledorfer, a native of Virginia, with whom he had four sons and one daughter. He moved to California and was one of “the prime movers in reclaiming land” in the Sutter Basin. Marcuse was elected Sutter County Treasurer in 1872 and held that office for two terms.³

In 1873 Sutter County produced an official map, “compiled and drawn from official surveys by J. T. Pennington.⁴” The statistics included parcel owners of the Sutter Basin as well as the rest of the county. The map indicated an 1870 Sutter County population of 5,269.

The 1873 Sutter Basin parcels appeared to be fully claimed with one or more names on each parcel. Among the names were J. Wilcoxon, G. D. Roberts, C. B. Kimball, T. Kimball, and J. Tisdale, all of Sutter County. But

J.W Snowball was listed, too. He was a Knights Landing resident with a palatial Victorian home, near Railroad Street, in Knights Landing. Historian Don Burtis of Yuba City commented that several Yolo County residents were invested in the basin.

Land speculators and developers were continually active in the Sutter Basin. Activity increased in 1868 with the creation of the California State Green Act. This particular legislation consolidated reclamation acts and permitted the sale of swampland.⁵

Along with land speculation, political office and attempting to establish a town, Marcuse also ran a grocery business with a store in Yuba City and one in the Basin. *The Sutter County Farmer* of April 22, 1881 printed an advertisement for the Yuba City store stating it sold “groceries, provisions, flour, hardware, glassware, tinware, woodenware, chinaware ... cigars, cigarettes, fish, ham, clothing, shoes ... etc, etc.”⁶ The popular general store was located in the commercial section of Yuba City around Second and Bridge Streets.⁷

Marcuse abruptly left Yuba City in the early 1880s to return to Virginia. The *Marysville Daily Appeal* reported the Marcuse Merchandise Business was bought by P. L. Bunce of Yuba City, a “best known and most popular” Sutter County citizen.⁸

Jonas Marcuse’s sons continued to develop their holdings in the Sutter Basin. In 1892, the community of Marcuse is described as having a “post [office], express and telegraph station fourteen miles south of Yuba City, on the California and Northern Railroad [sic]... centrally located ... to agricultural horticultural, viticultural and stock raising pursuits.” The edition

referred to M & M A Marcuse, with gen. mdse, fruit growers and gen. farmers as their occupations.⁹

Eleanor Knox, the volunteer researcher at the Community Memorial Museum, found that “Postal authorities established Marcuse Post Office in 1891, discontinued it in 1902, re-established it in 1910, and discontinued it in 1913...”¹⁰

It is likely that sometime between 1894 and 1900, the Marcuse sons sold Marcuse Ranch to an investment company.

Marcuse was connected to the rest of the county via the California Pacific and also the California Northern, once owned by Norman D. Rideout, and also known as the Rideout Extension. The latter track traversed through Marcuse from 1888 to the 1940s. Both railroads exited into Knights Landing. The “Extension,” however, went through Yuba City, Tudor, Abbott, Oswald, Wilson, Marcuse, then near the Feather River at Chandler and at a 45 degree angle south to the Sacramento River, finally crossing it by bridge to Knights Landing. These railroads kept the station sites on the map by providing farmers a way to get their produce to market.

Because of local interest, local newspapers had many reports or news items about the Marcuse settlement and the Rideout Southern Pacific Railroad line. In 1904 the *Marysville Daily Appeal* ran a story about “The Old Marcuse Ranch,” formerly owned by Humboldt Savings and Loan Society of San Francisco. It was sold to Central Canneries of Sacramento. “Since acquiring the property the new owners have planted an additional acreage to orchard and vineyard which, if the [levee] break be not closed will

seriously damage if not render entirely valueless.” Flooding and land sales or turnovers seemed to be a tempo beat of the 1904 Sutter Basin.¹¹

The Sutter County Farmer reported about Dutch immigrants to be sent to Marcuse Station, according to a July 8, 1910 story, “Colonists to settle at Marcuse.” They will “...settle up a portion of 10,000 acre holdings of J. P. Snook, the Union Pacific Colonizing bureau... at least one hundred families [will come] to this county.”¹²

The *Farmer* reported in 1910 that “Work on the hotel at Marcuse Station, south of this city on the line of the Southern Pacific, will be commenced soon, lumber for the structure having already arrived on the ground.”¹³

The *Daily Appeal* also took notice of Marcuse activity in October of 1910. “Marcuse Is Improving,” stated the paper in “Sutter County Happenings.” “Marcuse is to have a new general merchandise store. A building 50 by 160 feet for that purpose is now in process of construction and will soon be ready for business. It will be in charge of Samuel Poole.” The *Appeal* supplemented that store news with “a new water works building is also being erected.”¹⁴

In January 1911, *The Sutter County Farmer* confirmed on page one that “The [U.S.] Postal Department has ordered that a new postoffice [the second one] be established at Marcuse... and E.J. Corkin is named as the Postmaster.” The story explained, “The subdivision and colonization of the Wilson, Marcuse and other large tracts there has brought many new settlers ... {The postoffice} will be opened for business some time next month.”¹⁵

More customers justified the resumption of service. By 1913, however, probably due to many disgruntled colonists, less postal volume, and more flooding, the United States Postal Service permanently discontinued the postal plans. As a result, Marcuse had a major problem.

The California Legislature in 1913 formed Reclamation District 1500. In the effort, the law provided for private companies to reclaim tule lands. Thus, the Sutter Basin Project started. A syndicate headed by Valentine S. McClatchy of Sacramento, with a family fortune that included owning the Sacramento Bee plus two other major newspapers, sold some tens of thousands of acres to another syndicate led by W. E. Gerber, a Sacramento banker, for about \$25 per acre. The new syndicate became known as the *Sutter Basin Company*. They proposed to reclaim the basin.¹⁶

Real estate deals regarding the old Marcuse Ranch continued when the ranch was “sold to capitalists.” Again, V. S. McClatchy was involved as one of the sellers, which included J. C. Boyd, F. Scott and E. S. Brown, all of Sacramento. They traded the 3,000 acre ranch, with other minor covenants, for a Wells Fargo building in San Francisco that was valued at \$1,250,000 [probably a 1922 assessment], reported the *Farmer*.¹⁷

The Southern Pacific, too, was disappointed when passenger and produce revenue proved not to be what the company expected by the 1920s. Again, problems of water and a decrease in railroad traffic seriously affected Marcuse.

In Peter Delay’s acclaimed *History of Yuba and Sutter Counties*, the author wrote, “Four prosperous

growing towns are at present time to be found along the Southern Pacific Railroad, south of Yuba City. These are Bogue, Oswald, Tudor, and Chandler.” Marcuse was reduced to just a shipping point!¹⁸

As for the Marcuse settlement, it was never incorporated into a city. But in the attempt, an official map of Marcuse and Plats of Marcuse Colony Subdivisions was surveyed by J .C. Boyd, Civil Engineer, in August, October and November, 1910 for the Sutter Investment Company. The surveys were soon filed at the Sutter County Recorder’s Office. Boyd was also the Sutter Investment Company’s president.

The following information was provided by Janet Alonso, a resident of Robbins, California who has researched the history of the Sutter Basin Company:

The old SBC headquarters building had moved from Chicago, Illinois to California’s San Francisco and then to Sacramento. It ultimately was located in Robbins in 1926.

It is important to note that the area encircled by the levees of the Tisdale Bypass, the Sutter Bypass and the Sacramento River were called the “Sutter Basin” by the newly formed California State Reclamation Board in 1913.

The Sutter Basin Company was established for the purpose of developing 67,000 new acres of agricultural lands to be sold to eager farmers anxious to capitalize on the fertile alluvial soil, the ample water supply, and the agricultural boom created by World War I. Its grassroots inception came from Sutter County resident Peter

Snook and Captain Peter Jacobson who, working the pilot house of the Dredger “THOR” in 1910, conceived of the idea of a system of weirs and bypasses that led 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 creation of Reclamation District #1500 contained within a political subdivision called Sutter Basin now encompassing 77,000 acres, which represents 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 Chicago meat packer Ogden Armour to finance the development work.

Through the mutual efforts of the SBC and Reclamation District #1500, an elaborate irrigation/drainage system was constructed. The work took eight years starting in 1912 and another 27 years for all the land to be sold off, mostly to private individuals. Perhaps its most enduring asset, however, is the mosaic of human resources who knew well the value of perseverance.

One of the biggest changes in the area is the size of the farms. In the early days there were hundreds of farmers cultivating the 77,000 acres. Now there are far fewer farmers cultivating those same 77,000 acres. Crops include rice,

beans, wheat, safflower, sunflowers, tomatoes, walnuts, corn, and other crops. The remarkable reclamation work, the construction of the Sutter Bypass, and the design and construction of the irrigation/drainage system that started in 1912 and was completed in 1920 has made all of this possible.

Returning attention to Marcuse, I believe the buildings were destroyed bit by bit; evidence of the town was still on site as late as the mid-20th century. We know that in 1914 the man for whom it was named, Jonas Marcuse, “died in Richmond, Virginia with family living in this vicinity, too. The Yuba City grocery man and Sutter County financial officer has been residing in Virginia for thirty years, leaving here in the early eighties.”¹⁹

Marcuse may be found in recorded data from newspapers, books,

journals and county archives. But these traditional resources are joined by another venue: the Internet! In the realm of “truth is stranger than fiction,” Marcuse is alive in the digital world. On the website Travelmath is “...a list of smaller local towns that surround Marcuse, CA.” The list includes Wilson, Oswald and Abbott, all one-time thriving basin communities.²⁰

I contend that if a website can point out Marcuse and nearby travel deals using a 2012 Google Map, then a Marcuse monument may be placed on Highway 99, aka Garden Highway, by Sutter County.

The 21st century may offer a strange way to remember Marcuse.

Still forever now, the stage is cast and the Marcuse of the past can be seen

IN THE TWILIGHT’S LAST GLEAMING!

Further Reading

Beyond the Argonauts, by Terald A. Zall

¹ Robert L. Ryan, “Sam Brannan in Sutter County,” Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin, XIII, no. 1 (January 1974): 3-23.

² Sutter County Recorder’s Office.

³ *History of Sutter County California*, Thompson & West, 1879 (reprint 1974), 119.

⁴ Official Map of Sutter County, California, adopted by Sutter County Board of Supervisors, May 1983.

⁵ Larry Harris, “From Tule to Tilling,” Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin, LIII, no. 3 (July 2011): 10.

⁶ Advertisement, *Sutter County Farmer*, April 22, 1881, 1.

⁷ Julie Stark and others, *Yuba City, Our Home Town* (Virginia Beach, VA, The Donning Company, 2008), 53.

⁸ Advertisement, *Marysville Daily Appeal*, January 1, 1882, section A; “New Departure,” *Marysville Daily Appeal*, January 1, 1882, 3.

⁹ J. W. Rentschler, compiler, *A Directory of Yuba, Sutter, Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama, and Shasta Counties* (place: J. W. Grant & Co. Publishers), 95

¹⁰ David L. Durham, *Durham’s Place-Names of California’s South Sacramento Valley* (Clovis, CA, Word Dancer Press, 2000), 49.

¹¹ “Ranchers Are Much Concerned,” *Marysville Daily Appeal*, May 31, 1904, 7.

¹² “Colonists to Settle At Marcuse,” *Sutter County Farmer*, July 8, 1910, 7.

¹³ “Hotel At Marcuse,” *Sutter County Farmer*, October 7, 1910, 7.

¹⁴ “Sutter County Happenings: Marcuse Is Improving,” *Marysville Daily Appeal*, October 22, 1910, 5.

¹⁵ “Postoffice To Be Established At Marcuse,” *Sutter County Farmer*, January 27, 1911, page 1.

¹⁶ Clement Guise, “The Sutter Basin Controversy,” Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin, 4, no. 5 (January 1965): 1-28.

¹⁷ “Marcuse Ranch Is Sold To Capitalists,” *Sutter County Farmer*, January 26, 1923, 1.

¹⁸ Peter Delay, *History of Yuba and Sutter Counties*, (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1924), 282

¹⁹ “Sutter County Happenings, Former County Official Passes Away in Virginia,” *Marysville Appeal*, November 17, 1914, 5.

²⁰ <http://www.travelmath.com/cities-near/Marcuse,+CA>.

DEAR WIFE

Letters from Thomas Dean to his wife, Hannah,
during his service in the 1st California Cavalry

Edited by
Sharyl Simmons

[Ed. Note: The letters have been slightly edited for spelling and paragraphs have been added to aid in readability.]

Although born in Virginia, Dean was an admirer of Lincoln, a strong abolitionist and a staunch supporter of the Emancipation Proclamation. During the Civil War he served in the Butte Mountain Rangers and as a Captain in the Home Guard of Sutter County. Thereafter he was referred to as Captain Dean locally.

In March 1865, Thomas Dean mustered into the 1st Cavalry, Company A, California Volunteers as a 1st Lieutenant and mustered out with his company on May 22, 1866 at the Presidio in San Francisco. The following are the few surviving letters he sent home to his wife during his service in California and the Arizona Territory. While many of us are familiar with the Dean family in Sutter County, these letters offer a better picture of Thomas Dean - soldier, rancher, devoted husband, family man, and Sutter County pioneer.

Sacramento, March 3rd 1865

Dear Wife,

We arrived here yesterday all safe and sound. We rec'd a dispatch to report here without delay Tuesday night. Which was rather sooner than we expected. And on arriving here were informed by the Governor that the reasons were that some of the Officers of the old company had recruited a company in New Mexico and had sent on for Commissions for Co. A. and it was necessary for us to get our Commissions first or they would out rank us and get the ranking Ca. But we have beat them and have been commissioned this morning and are going to San Francisco to day to be mustered in there being no mustering officer here. There is no quarters for us at camp Union (I mean the officers) so we are boarding at Tolls Hotel for

the present. And of course have to pay our board as Hotel Keepers will not trust Uncle Sam. We will be under pay from to day. Money is mighty scarce with us. We had to pay our way down and we'll have to pay our own expenses to San Francisco. After we have been mustered in we get our transportation. I paid that bill and what owed to the Rangers, my board bill at the U. S. for self and Sargt and had but little left. I tried to get some from Buck but could not do it. And had no time to look around as we were hurried to get off.

And I would like if you would tell David how I am situated and he can pay what he owes and have him to see Buck and get what he can from him and that order on the treasurer which will be in a letter at Yuba City directed to me. And send it to me by Wells Fargo & Co. Express. For I will be strapped before I get back from the bay. As soon as we

begin to get our pay we will be all right.

Have Jim to haul in that hay as soon as possible. He can hire another to help before he commences to haul. I will not borrow much money from you but will have to have a little until we get fairly started. Jim had better try and engage some boys before he commences hauling. If possible send me some little money by the 1st of next week. I will write when we go back.

Yours as ever,
Thos. Dean

**Russ House,
Hardenbergh & Dyer, Proprietors
San Francisco, March 8, 1865**

Dear Wife,

Once again I raise my pen to write you a few lines. Would have written sooner but was uncertain where we would remain for any length of time. We were ordered here last Friday to be mustered in and calculated to go up on the boat on Saturday. We were all on the boat and she was about starting when here comes an order for Capt. Ledyard to go by after the company and for [2nd Lt. Jabe D.] Givens and I to remain. Since then there has been some correspondence between Gov. Low & Gen'l Mason. The Gov wants the company to stay at camp Union. Gen'l Mason wants us here and he informed me to day that he had dispatched an order for the company to come here. So they will be down to night and we'll stay here some time no doubt. Still we may not remain more than 10 or 12 days until we are sent to Camp Drum.

If I can possibly get up to see you I will do so before we start for Camp Drum. I think our being sent to New Mexico is about knocked in the head as from what I can learn it is quite likely we will do escort duty in Gen'l Mason's Department. I want Jim to put my saddle, bridle, saddle cloth and blanket, spurs in fact the whole rig except the Holsters also my fatigue coat which I left at Eilerman's Shop in a sack packed in as little space as possible. And leave them with Brown on the Levee and direct them to Lt. Thos. Dean, Co. A, Cavalry C. V. San Francisco. The Holsters Col. Hubbard will take and will forward the money to me when Jim delivers the holsters to him which I wish him to do.

I have been over to the Presidio to see Co. B and found them all right. I had quite a talk with Jacob. He don't look much like a starved man. He said he liked it very well now but would like to go with us in the Cavalry. They have fine quarters over there, a great deal better than us Roving Cavalrymen ever expect. However I think it quite likely their Reg't will go down when we go.

I have to pack for Alcatraz this evening. I suppose you rec'd my last (and first) letter at least I hope you have and have made some arrangements to send me some money. We are getting mighty hard up now and a remittance would be very acceptable. Direct your letters and everything to San Francisco until written orders. Kiss baby for me. Write soon.

Yours as ever,
Thos. Dean 1st Cav C. V.

Camp Union was near the present day intersection of Sutterville and Del Rio Roads. Camp Drum, or the Drum

Barracks, was established in Wilmington, California to quell anti-Union activities in southern California. The camp was built between 1862 and 1863 and by March 1864 it was called Drum Barracks in official letters and papers. After the Civil War, Camp Drum remained active for several years in the Indian Wars. By 1870, it had been deactivated and fallen into disrepair. In October 1871, the Los Angeles Star reported that all remaining troops at Drum Barracks had been ordered to Fort Yuma.

Drum Barracks March 26/65

Dear Wife,

I write you a few lines to inform you that we arrived here safe yesterday. We had a very pleasant trip considering the number of passengers on our small vessel. There were four companies of us. I will start for Fort Yuma tomorrow or next day or next day. We will remain here about a month. This is a very nice place at this season of the year. The grass all around camp is nearly waist high. Col. Curtis is in command of this district and appears to be a very fine man. We are boarding with him as do all the officers of the post. He has quite a lively little wife and lives well. We have fine quarters here although they are not furnished yet. I suppose we will board with the Col. while we stop here. The American citizens here are very sociable. We were all invited to the Colonel's last night and there met the ladies living around here and had quite a lively little time. I will give you more particulars in a few days.

Yours in haste, Thos Dean

Direct your letters to Lt. Thos Dean, Co. A Cav, C.V., Drum Barracks

Colonel James Freeman Curtis, Jr. arrived in San Francisco from Boston in 1849 after sailing around Cape Horn. He was San Francisco's Chief of Police from 1856-1858. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was in Washington Territory and was then called to southern California for the duration of the war. He was in charge of Camp Drum and the Military District of Southern California from June 1863 until his discharge in 1865. His "lively little wife" was Maria Louisa (Westfall) Curtis.

Drum Barracks April 30th/65

Dear Wife

Having a few leisure moments I devote to writing to you. We did not get off yesterday as we were all mounted for a march when we rec'd orders to remain until further ordered and now we march positively tomorrow for so says Gen'l Mason. And his word is our law. I like the Gen'l very well so far and hope I will not have to change my opinion. This is Sunday and we always have an inspection on Sunday morning and to day being the last of April we also mustered to day and we made quite a long line as there are two full companies of the Native Cavalry here now.

There is quite a number of our men sick and I hate to see them start on a march but they are all anxious to go and persuaded the Doctor to report them fit for duty. The majority of

them are worn down with the diarrhea. The water does not agree with them as most of them have been used to good water in the mountains and they all think that if they get away from here they will get better. And it may be they will, but I am afraid some of them are not able to pack their arms.

We are all armed with a saber, one colts pistol and a Sharps carbine and each man will carry 40 rounds of ammunition, his haversack and canteen and all that is quite a load for a weak man to mount or ride with. The mounting bothers a good many of the boys as there is some of them that has not rode a great deal and to get up and put their legs over 2 blankets strapped on to the hind part of the saddle. Our horses are Spanish and don't stand very steady and now and then buck a little and we generally have a man or two bucked off every day we drill mounted drill, but have had none seriously hurt yet.

I believe in my last I forgot to tell you that I was well so I will tell you now I have had very good health ever since I left home and at this present time feel in fine condition for a march. I am anxious to get to Prescott to see what kind of a place it is or rather the country around there as there is not much of a place there now although it is the Capital of Arizona Territory. It is a new place and is in the center of the mining region there. The officers here that have been there say it is a healthy place with good water and grass and there is good mines there and that it will eventually be a good mining region when the Apaches are wiped out which Gen'l Mason says he is bound to do.

As it is now there is no protection there for any one and men won't venture so far and over such

barren plains as is between here and there to be murdered by the Apaches. They run off all the government stock from there and whipped what soldiers that was stationed there about a month ago and we got the news last week. The Gen'l says he'll give fits when we get out there and I rather think he will. If you do not get any letters regular you must not think I do not write as the mail facilities from here on are none of the best although they will be some improved as it is the intention to develop the country and from all accts it will develop itself so good as the necessary military protection is afforded. No more but remain as ever

Your
Thos Dean, C.V.

By the date of this previous letter, President Lincoln has died and the final southern surrender has taken place. Neither of these items is mentioned in the letter, but the desire to see new territory comes through loud and clear.

**Fort Yuma,
May 17th, 1865**

I write you a few more lines and send in a letter which I should of sent from Drum Barracks but started off in such a hurry that I forgot to post them. We arrived here yesterday after a march of 15 days, 4 of which was on the desert. This is truly a god forsaken country and yet it is not so bad as represented. The water across the desert is bad it being thoroughly impregnated with alkali. Our horses and men stood the trip pretty well on the desert. We'd done the most of our

marching at night it being so very hot during the day.

Fort Yuma is quite a place now as all the goods for Arizona come up this way on steamers on the Colorado. The river is high and is quite muddie although it is good drinking water by letting it stand and settle. We start from here on the 20th for some other post, probably Tubac.

I don't know when we will get to Prescott, but hardly before July as the general wants to visit all the forts on this side as we go down. If things in our company do not work better than they have been doing when we get there, Lieut Givens and I intend to resign and that will spite our wives I know. But if we do we will have to go to work and make money enough to pay off what we have borrowed from the boys. I do not expect to hear from you until I get to Prescott and that is a long time. Direct your letters to Ft. Yuma until further orders.

Yours,
Lieut Thos Dean

During the American Civil War, the Union retained control of Fort Yuma when the First California Infantry replaced Regular Army soldiers sent East in December 1861. The southern half of New Mexico Territory seceded, becoming the Confederate Territory of Arizona until 1862 when the California Column marching from Fort Yuma expelled the Confederacy, reaching as far as western Texas. In 1863 the Union established control of the region as the Arizona Territory. Fort Yuma served as the supply point for the Union garrisons there. A six-month supply of clothing, food, ammunition, and other goods was stored at the

depot, located on the Arizona side of the river, at all times. Supplies were brought from California by ocean vessels traveling around the Baja Peninsula to Port Isabel near the mouth of the Colorado River. There, cargos were transferred to river steamers and brought upstream to Yuma. The Southern Pacific Railroad reached Yuma in 1877. There was little need for the Quartermaster Depot and Fort Yuma, and they were abandoned on May 16, 1883.

Tubac Arizona, June 19th, 1865

Dear Wife,

After a long silence I once more take the opportunity of writing you a few lines. We arrived here on the 9th all safe and sound but very dirty and ragged for it is a miserable dusty road. We made this place in 38 days from Camp Drum but stopped at all the posts by the way which would take about 10 days after which would make tolerable marching considering the country we have passed through. It is not necessary for me to describe the route as Rafe (?) Browne has done that better than I could possibly do with the exception that he had a better opinion of the country than I have. From Yuma to the Pima villages it is pretty much of a desert with the exception of some little tillable land on the Gila and there is not enough of it in a body for settlers enough to live on to protect themselves against the Apaches. The Pimas have some fine land and raise good wheat but have to irrigate which they do from the Gila through a ditch. There is also some good land between the Pimas and Tucson but not much. There is fine

land around Tucson, but not much of it. All the good land in this section is on the streams and they are few. It has all been settled once but the Apaches have driven them all off except around the government posts. This is a nice valley and has some fine farms on it and a beautiful little stream running through it which is sufficient for irrigation purposes and they have good corn, wheat, etc.

This is the nearest post to the Mexican line there is down this way and will be quite a place as the Gen'l intends to establish a post on this stream for several companies. Since we came here he has been running around over the mountains and up the valleys to find a suitable place to build a fort and has finally concluded to build it about 11 miles above here.

In looking for the most suitable place for the location I had the honor to escort the Gen'l with 35 men. We went over to the Old Fort Buchanan which has been abandoned since February last when the Apaches drove the soldiers away. It is built at the head of one of the prettiest vallies I have seen in the territory. There is a fine little stream running through it with plenty of Black Walnut trees and at the foot of the valley where the stream runs through a gorge in the mountains I saw some of the finest currants I ever have and plenty of them but not quite ripe. There is also plenty of timber on the stream.

We traveled up the valley 18 miles. It had all been settled and some of the adobe walls of the buildings were still good but all the woodwork has been burned. I've found the frame work of a saw mill still standing with a log on the carriage, but no human being from one end of the valley to the

other all having been driven out by the Apaches. We expected to have a little brush with them, but lucky for them they kept out of our way or we would of smote them hip and thigh. As it was the Gen'l nearly wore my men out doing guard duty.

Some nights we had as high as 27 men and 2 non-coms on guard and 29 out of 35 is pretty heavy guard duty, but the gen'l has no notion of being taken by the Apaches. We got into camp day before yesterday tired, sleepy and worn out with run down horses. We had leave here for Fort Goodwin tomorrow as next day we go by the Apache [*unreadable*]. There is a station there now and we have to go some out of our way to visit it. From Fort Goodwin we will take the back track and come back as far as the Pimos when we will turn up north and visit all of the posts in the northern portion of the territory when we will go into headquarters at Prescott and in my opinion that will be about Sept. although I may be mistaken.

The Gen'l says he will give us an Indian fight at Ft. Goodwin but I don't believe he will as it takes two parties to make a fight and this story of Apaches fighting man for man is played out. But the Gen'l has never been among the Indians much and he believes too many of the stories told him about them. He is a first rate man and so is the Governor. The Gov is making the rounds with us and will keep with us until we get to Prescott. I have not rec'd any letters from you since I left Drum Barracks, but expect to get some when I get back to the Pimos. Write when you can. I will write as often as I have a chance to send the letters back. Direct to Fort

Yuma. Nothing more at present but remain yours,
Thos. Dean.

Lt. Dean is traveling with General Mason and John Noble Goodwin, the first governor of the Arizona Territory established in 1863 by the Arizona Organic Act. The circuitous route was devised to give General Mason and Governor Goodwin an overview of all the military sites in the territory so that he could see them first hand.

**Fort Whipple, Arizona Territory,
Jan. 7th 1866**

Dear Wife,

I rec'd yours of the 21st Dec tonight and was glad to hear that you were all well. I still enjoy good health. And am always ready for a meal or a pipe of tobacco.

I suppose you would like to know why I left off my last letter to you so abruptly. Well it was a military necessity. The troops here had just been paid off and it was New Years eve and quite a number of them was up in town and as a natural consequence got on a big drunk and then kicked up a big row with some citizens as there is no good feeling existing between them and things were getting pretty bilious for the citizens when word came to the Post. I was Acting Officer of the Day in place of Capt. Ledyard who had been detailed but was taken sick in the evening. So I had to leave your letter and take a squad of men and quell the disturbance and bring the blue jackets home. I soon settled matters, but had quite a time getting all the boys from town and by the time every thing was

quiet at the Post it was pretty well towards morning. So I came in, was tired and sleepy, threw myself on the bed thinking I would finish your letter in the morning before the mail left which is very early now, but I had ordered the Sgt. of the Guard to wake me at reveille and I wanted to visit the guard at that time but he knew I had been up nearly all night and did not wake me but put in his guard report that I had visited the guard at that time. And let me sleep. So when the Q. M. Sgt. came for the mail he had to wake me up and I had not time to write any and our ink was froze to the bottom so I just closed and backed my letter with a pencil and now, my little Dear, you know why your letter was out short last mail. And this one might be served the same way for aught I know but I hardly think it will.

I am as Officer of the Day now but the men are all in Garrison and it is between 11 & 12 o'clock and every thing is so still that I can plainly hear the sentinel on Post No. 1 as he walks his lonely and now icy beat. I have written two long letters since Tattoo which is at half past 8 - 1 to Lieut Givens and 1 to Lyman besides. I have been writing all the afternoon and my hand is somewhat tired and I now am writing tolerable fast so if I should make bad writing and mistakes you can look over them and not be like Head Quarters return them for correction as they sometimes do for us subordinates when we neglect to dot our I s.

But I think I hear you say what is all this to me why don't you write something and you would be half right. Yet I like to let down and scribble away just as if I was talking with you and could fill four or five sheets such as this

without any trouble or effort of just such stuff as I am writing now.

Let me see where was I in my last letter. I believe I had struck the trail in the head of Tonto creek and the trail looked to be about 2 days old. So I followed it as fast as possible thinking I might pick up another man or perhaps overtake the whole party as they were changing their course every now and then but always getting away from home and towards Ft. McDowell until they struck a plain trail which ran directly to McDowell and they followed it and arrived at McDowell a little a head of me. They had been 11 days on mule meat without salt and some of them were pretty well run down. They had 12 days at the Fort to shoe up our stock and let the men rest. The Capt. then picked 10 of the best horses from my detachment and started for this post. And if I did not have a sorry looking outfit you never saw one. I would of laid a while at the Fort but they had no grain and the Giella [?] Hay that they had was rotting. It is a coarse, strong, rough grass and without grain or grass a horse will not digest it. And it rained all night the night before.

I left the Fort and I had 5 head of animals dead on the picket line. So I see that if I stopped I would lose my animals and so I rolled out taking lick and all as they begged so to not be left there. The first night out it rained all night then turned to snow next morning and snowed all day. I had several horses die, 4 mules give out that day and only made 10 miles. And my own horse very sick that night it turned in cold and 2 more horses died in their tracks. The next day we came down in the valley where we could grass where I laid by all day to let my stock rest the next day.

We traveled in the valley. No snow but muddy and bad the next. We came to Black Canyon and was one man short that had went out hunting and did not get in. Kindled signal fires for him at night. Laid up the next day and looked for him but without success and only started out with 8 days rations and owing to the storm it would take me 10 days to make the trip and knowing he knew the country and might be ahead I started on Christmas morning on my weary march and soon got into the snow again and had snow from 6 to 18 inches deep all the way to Prescott which place I reached on the night of the 27th of Dec, St. John's night but was too tired to go to the Masons supper up town but they heard of my getting in all safe and sound and sent me a bottle of fine wine so I drank many a good toasts to the fraternity sitting by a good fire in my quarters.

Some of the men got their feet frozen as it is very cold around here. The thermometer or rather the mercury getting from 6 to 14 degrees below zero and that is cold enough to sleep out in the storm with 2 blankets. I got my horse in and is all right now. I walked all the way from McDowell and always brought up the rear and had quite a time I assure you. The man that I lost came in to Wickenburg was 6 days without grub but is all right now. Our horses and beef cattle are starving here and I expect the men will get on short rations if we do not soon get supplies. There is some awful mistake somewhere about supplies for this Territory. The Gen'l lays it to San Francisco. The troops at this post and all those who get their supplies from here will have to remain idle until they arrive as many of them are nearly barefoot. Don't you be alarmed about

me as there is no danger of starving. If the commissary fails I have money to buy but we'll be all right after while. Some time ago I gave you one side of an officers life in the garrison. Now you have a little of it in the field. All questions have two sides you know and we take whichever side turns and growls about both. Such is life in the service. I may lie around the Fort a month before I am ordered out again and I might be ordered out tomorrow. What a glorious thing is the uncertainties of military life.

Now to answer some points of your letters for I rec'd one today dated Nov 27 which went on to Ft. Wingate and came back here today. I am sorry you and William have fallen out about a little piece of land. Why you just ought to see the vacant land in this territory. Let him have the land of course and visit often. Don't bear malice my little dear. You know the good book says love your enemies & I am glad to hear that the Judge has got him a grain ranch and become a working man. I think he will have better health than formerly as exercise is said to be good for a persons health. Although I must confess that it never did agree with me as I always have better health when I am bumming round as I am now doing.

I am sure your dreams are false when they make me out as looking at or treating you coolly. I have the name here of taking every thing coolly. But my little wife I don't think I have ever treated you coolly or that I ever will. And I'll show you when I come back that there is nothing in dreams. The Paymaster has been here and paid us off until the 1st of Nov so I am in funds. I got the money on that order and will send you some as soon as I think the mails are safe on acct of the Indians.

And if you know Mrs. Dean's address I wish you would write to her and see if she would be willing for us to send her money through the mails in registered letters say 50 dollars at a time. It would save to her the bankers percentage and I think would be safe. I'll answer Bells and Toms by next mail. I hope you had a merrier Christmas than I had. Give my love to all enquiring friends and keep a good portion for yourself. No more at present. It is late and I must visit the guard.

As ever your devoted husband,
Thos Dean, 1st Cala. Cav.

**Fort Whipple A. T., February 11,
1866**

Dear Wife,

This makes the third letter I have written since I have rec'd a line from you. I may however receive a letter tonight or when the mail arrives. Our mails are somewhat irregular now and do not always come up to schedule time. I think you might write me every two weeks even if you should not have any letters of mine to answer as you must be aware that when I am out scouting I cannot possibly write you. Our life here at the Post is rather dull now since the departure of our comrades in arms. They did not get off until yesterday evening due to the want of provisions and transportation. They had a sorry lot of mules to start with and did not get a great way yesterday and today. They sent back for more mules. The government mules here are pretty well starved out and cannot haul much the way the roads are now. They

took plenty of rope along so as to put the men on when they get in a tight place and boys will pull with a will for they are very anxious to get home. We had quite a time cheering when they left yesterday. Co "A" (i.e. what is here) cheered the Officers and men of Co.'s "D" and "E." And they in turn cheered the Officers and men remaining at the Post. Then all hands gave three groans for Fort Whipple and the Territory in general.

Lieu't Barr and I are now running Fort Whipple. Barr is the Comdg Officer and I am the Staff. We have decided that where there is only two Officers at a Post the old foggy idea of having an "Officer of the Day" is superbly ridiculous and not to be thought of and therefore published the following order:

Fort Whipple A. T.
Special Order

February 9th 1866
No. 57

Until further orders there will be no details for "Officer of the Day" made. The Sgt. Major will mount the guard and have the Sgt. of the Guard report to the Comdg Officer and Post Adjutant alternate days.

By Order of
Lieut Saml L. Barr

Thos Dean
1st Lieut Co "A" 1st Cala. Cav.
Post Adjutant

So you see that instead of fixing up and taking an active part in the Guard Mount, wearing a sash and saber all day, sitting up until after midnight, we are merely spectators. And if the

Sgt. Major or Sgt. of the guard makes a mistake we observe it and correct them thereby causing them in time to be proficient in their duties. I am rather lonesome in my mess now as I am entirely alone. Our mess formerly consisted of Cpts. Kendall and Ledyard and myself so to be detailed a man for cook from the Co. paying him some extra and have an American citizen of African descent for waiter who also acts in the capacity of [unreadable] and has been mentioned previously in this correspondence. The Cpts. both being absent I am entirely alone and if I could procure the necessary provisions would live high I tell you. As it is I am quite Stylist you must admit, having at the present time a cook, waiter and a man to take care of my horse. I will remark however that they are all enlisted men and are paid by the Govmt, the Capt and I paying them a little extra. They would rather do it than do duty in the Co. and they had just as well wait on us as escort and protect Copperheads at any rate that is the light in which we believe the matter.

The one that takes care of our horses is not able to do duty having been thrown from his horse and ruptured and is waiting for his discharge. The Negro was enlisted as a cook for the Co. but the men abuse him and don't want him to cook for them. So we take him off their hands. Our cook is an able bodied man and a good Soldier. He is also an "A" No. 1 Hotel Cook and needing his services in that line we detail him as cook because we have the power at present to do so.

Now this is all very fine is it not? Yet I am not satisfied and would much rather be at home with my little wife and children around me even if I have

to work a little sometimes and have a person come in to my quarters without saluting etc. If I had no wife and family I think I would content myself in the service for you must know my little dear that day what we would will be all like to have power and authority over others it appears to be human nature and we cannot help longing for power it is once obtained no matter how. We give it up with reluctance. I do not think I have ever abused those under me or persecuted a man I did not like or had some little spite against just because I had the power or authority to do so. But I have seen officers do it and have my opinion of them. Such men are not fit to command men.

I am positive that if Co. "A" was mustered out here tomorrow that I could take the most of them to Mexico and be their Capt. without any commission. No I have never been familiar with those men, have always gave them to understand that I was their Superior Officer and must be treated as such. And I always have been so treated by them. But I have always treated them as men always have been kind to them yet firm and have never abused them because I had the power to do so and have always tried to do them justice. And most of them will tell you that if the "Lieu't

leads to battle" they'll follow and ask no questions.

But you see my little dear, I am married and have a little wife I would not take all the world for and often find myself thinking of her when my thoughts should be on business connected with military matters. If you could only read my thoughts you would plainly see that they often wander from the subject in hand to a little woman in Sutter Co. and all the pride and pomp of glorious war is forgotten for a peaceful life surrounded by those we love. Just as soon as I can get out of the service you will see me coming back to you accompanied by my good sword, not that I loved my sword the less but that I loved my little wife the more.

As ever, your devoted husband.
Thos. Dean 1st Cala Cav.

This final letter allows Dean's character to shine. While making light of his current duties, he also makes clear his disregard for men who would shun a black soldier doing his duty, and voices his contempt of bad officers. He also expresses his homesickness and his desire to go home to his beloved "little wife" and family.

Sources

History of Yuba and Sutter Counties by Peter Delay.

Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion 1861 to 1867 revised and compiled by Brig.-Gen. Richard H. Orton, Adjutant-General of California
California State Military Museum (www.militarymuseum.org)

Calendar of Events

January

- 9 *Then & Now* exhibit reopens at the Museum

- 18 Fables from India - Aondreaa the Storytailor and Marilyn the Muse present give ancient fables from India at the Museum

- 19 **Historical Society Membership Meeting**
2:00 p.m. in Ettl Hall at the Museum
Dessert provided
Program: Dianne Elizabeth Butler, Sutter County native, about her book *On a Wire*

February

- 16 *Then & Now* exhibit closes at the Museum

March

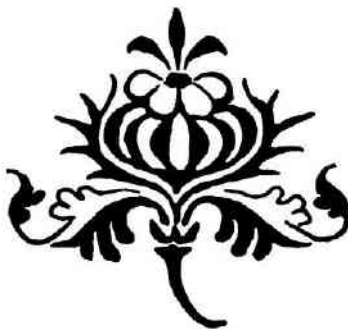
- 1 Yuba City High School Art Exhibit opens at the Museum

- 15 Schnabel and Dean Patio dedication - Ettl Hall

April

- 12 River Valley High School art exhibit opens at the Museum

- 13 **Historical Society Membership Meeting**
2:00 p.m. in Ettl Hall at the Museum
Dessert provided



Puzzle

ALBERTA	W U A K C R M R M C M A N W F F F U X O
ARIZONA	N E R X O X E H S M A R O E R M A U A R
BARBADOS	U X N F D F O O R M O H F S F S M M X O
BASIN	O H M N F F N U U H R X C A H U A F D A
BUNDO	K C W U A O W C W M A O N N W F U N S O
BUENOS AIRES	R M E F N F H N D E M N H U R U W H O O
CAVANAUGH	X E O U A R U A R A O X S A N M H N M U H W
CHANDLER	U O E M R W F A F F C E N A C E U M U W
CHINA	M U E R O O F X W H S A E X H U X W R N
CHANNING	K U M A O W U X X O X H U O U N A O U U
CRUM	W U S U M U E S R M H C M H U A U R H O
DANNAN	W R M H D F E F H A E O N U U E U O E O
MONAS	X M N U O U U F F S X M M U X U U U X R
MARCOSSA	A U U W U U X U D F H H N O R N U E U X F
NOONAN	U U U N X A O F U F F F N A R U F O O A
NOONAN	E S U O R A M F U R X H U U H A N N E C E
NOONAN	F M W O O M W O W U S M F F W O O U W X
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NOONAN	

General Membership Meeting

Saturday, January 19 at 2:00 p.m.

at Ettl Hall

(behind the Museum)

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City

Free dessert!

Program: Local author

Dianne Elizabeth Butler

talks about her book,

On a Wire