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Samuel Brannan, ca 1860
Courtesy California Historical Society



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*The year the director joined the Board.

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The 2014 dues are payable as of January 1, 2014. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City, 95993-2301 530-822-7141

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Organizations/Clubs	\$ 35
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President's Message

Another summer comes to a close. We need your help to make sure that this isn't the last summer with Historical Society activities. While the membership has held steady for the last few years, participation in meetings and on the Board of Directors has suffered.

Both the Museum Commission and the Historical Society Board of Directors need members. While the Commission members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and work a great deal on fundraising for the Museum, the Historical Society Board of Directors comes from the members of the Society. We need good people on our Board who want to promote the history of Sutter County. We need people who are willing to come to our meetings and get involved in outreach in the community. Every day people walk into the Museum and announce that they've lived in the community their entire lives and didn't know we had a Museum. If they don't know about the Museum – which has been in the same location since 1975 – then we can't expect them to know about the Historical Society and all the important things we've done (including the push to create a local museum in the first place). We need a Board who will get the word out, come up with ideas for our quarterly programs, urge friends to attend the programs and come up with long term projects that we can build local enthusiasm around.

Currently, there are no representatives on the Board from the Nicolaus area, Robbins area or Meridian. It would be terrific to have every corner of the county represented on the Board.

We need ideas for projects – and people to complete them. I've been working on the Century Farms project for Sutter County. We are making a list of farms that have been worked by the same families for 100 years or more. While we know of some of them, we know we have missed some. I would appreciate your help with this project and if you know of any historic family farms, please contact me at (530) 755-0702. We want to honor these families and the first step is to identify them.

I am also asking you to consider coming onto the Board and help revitalize the Society. If you have an idea for a program for one of our meetings or just have a good story to tell, please contact me. I would be happy to invite you to one of our Board meetings and I'd be delighted to direct any article ideas you have for the Bulletin to the editors. They are ALWAYS looking for articles.

At the very least, I'm asking you to be an ambassador for the Historical Society and the Museum. Come to the meeting in October – and bring a friend with you. The holiday season is coming up – consider a membership as a gift. It's a gift that they'll receive all year long and a gift to your community and its history.

Sarah Pryor, President

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Director's Report

As we welcome autumn, our Museum schedule speeds up to even busier than normal. Our exhibit of Victorian dresses is in full bloom, and we hope you will visit it before it ends on November 16th. The dresses are a precious part of our museum collection, but, due to their fragile nature, we aren't able to exhibit them very often. So now is your opportunity to see them this time around.

The West Butte School committee is desperately seeking any photos of the school that might show the original windows and their configuration. Please share this request with anyone you know who might have had family who attended West Butte School. The committee members, made up of Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust (formerly Middle Mountain Foundation) members, Museum staff, and Historical Society members, are working together to find a solution to preserving the school, one of only two, possibly three, historic schools existing in Sutter County. We are looking for any stories, photos, or information about the school. Anyone who is interested is invited to join the committee – just inquire at the Museum.

The Museum is in need of volunteers to help staff the front counter and assist visitors. Volunteers work four-hour shifts as little as once a month. Without our wonderful volunteers we could not sustain our Museum. Please join us!

If you have never enjoyed the wonderful *Trees & Traditions* gala, you will want to put it on your calendar for December 7th. Tickets are available for \$45 at the Museum or from any Museum Commissioner. It is a very special, lavish, sparkly party that benefits the ongoing work of the Museum.

The Museum Store continues to add great gift possibilities that are interesting and unique. Be sure to let the store help in your holiday shopping this year. You are sure to be delighted at the selection of new things. It's a great way to help the Museum, too. (Just a hint: the Director has been shopping far and wide for new items, so this may be the best selection ever!) Members receive a 10% discount on most items.

The annual Children's Program and Open House is scheduled for Sunday, December 15th, with a full program to be enjoyed by children of all ages, from one to 100. Of course, that includes our favorite children's musician, John Carter. Along with hot mulled cider, punch and holiday cookies and carols on the player piano, it's a great family afternoon. It begins at 1:00 p.m.

Please enjoy your museum to the fullest, and take time to tell your friends and neighbors about it. See you soon at your museum.

Julie Stark
Director

Memorials

In memory of **Mary Amarel**
Sandra & Bob Fremd
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Mauri & Rose Benatar**
Agatha Fierro

In memory of **Rebecca Benatar**
Willis & Elaine Chase
Barbara Chellis
Ted W. Dress
Agatha Fierro
Joel T. Guthrie
Key & Associates
Barbara LeVake
Tom Pfeffer
Frank Rehermann family
Joe & Julie Reusser
Bob & Veena Singh
Wayne Staas
Jerry & Patricia Whitten
Thomas & Tina Williams, Jr.
Tom & Jolyne Williams

In memory of **James M. Bremmer**
Jerry & Patricia Whitten

In memory of **Dr. R. Earl Burky**
Judith Boyd
Julie Stark

In memory of **Kathy Burky-Heier**
Robert & Billie Burky

In memory of **Jackie S. DeGroodt**
Carol Ray & Gregg Trexler

In memory of **Edna DeWitt**
Joe & Joan Becker
Sandra & Bob Fremd
Bob & Lee Jones
Grace Meyers
Mary S. O'Neal

In memory of **Ray Frye**
Bob & Sandra Fremd
Janet Gomes
Sharyl Simmons
Cynthia Struckmeyer

In memory of **Rob Goodnight**
Sharyl Simmons

In memory of **Doris McCleery**
Bob & Lillie Inman

In memory of **Justin Micheli**
Judith Boyd
Earl & Billie Burky
Francisco & Rosey Damboriena
Virginia Filter & Family
Frank & Mich Hatamiya
Helen Heenan
Susanne & Dina Lekos
Edward & Mimi Mathews
Sanders Pump & Irrigation
Ronald Schuler
Mary, Jim & Janet Spilman
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Mary Rai**
Julie Stark
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Robert Rutledge**
Everett & Liz Berry

In memory of **Ernest Speckert, Sr.**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Judy Stout**
Sharyl Simmons
Julie Stark
Carol Withington

Outright Gift to the Museum
Bob & Lillie Inman
Japanese-American Citizens League
Mary & James Uno

Crowhurst Memorial Scholarship Winner 2013

by
**Bianca Almeida,
Sutter High School**

*The Crowhurst Memorial Scholarship Award was established in 1979 in memory of Estelle Peirano Crowhurst, who was known for her column *The Diary of a Housewife*, which was published weekly in the *Independent Herald*, a Yuba City newspaper. The award is also a memorial to Estelle's son, Thomas J. Crowhurst, who excelled in journalistic writing, especially about sports. He wrote *The Sutter Notes*, a column for the *Appeal Democrat*, and contributed information for the sports pages. He was also President of the Sutter County Historical Society.*

The scholarship is awarded to a talented high school student. Written in journalistic style, winning entries are based on fact and manage to include a bit of humor. The award continues now in conjunction with the Community Memorial Museum as a means of involving more people in the appreciation of Sutter County history. Students interested in a career in journalism who feel they have creative literary talent are encouraged to participate in this scholarship opportunity.

We are proud to present the winning entry for 2013.

The popular saying "Home is Where the Heart is" exemplifies the typical person's portrayal of home, somewhere their family is or where they have grown up. Home is a place that you can always go to and find what you may have been missing or maybe just forgotten. However, this saying truly goes to heart for the few that are lucky to call a place full of history, culture and tradition their home - the Sutter Buttes.

For many residents who live in the Buttes, life has stayed unchanged for many years. Their parents and their parents' parents have all called the smallest mountain range in the world their home. It is simply tradition. From the Deans to the Lemenagers, families have established a true sense of the word 'home' in the Sutter Buttes. One of these few is Mrs. Gayle Lemenager, a longtime resident of the Sutter Buttes whose family has owned property there for four

generations and counting. "Our family's desire is to preserve the Buttes as they are and to keep passing the ranch down for generations to come," said Mrs. Lemenager, "we love living in the Buttes because they are truly a part of who we are."

Talking with Mrs. Lemenager, I came to find out just how much I *didn't* know about the Buttes, a landmark that I look at every day as a student at Sutter High School. For instance, I was surprised to learn that except for one part, the land in the Buttes is all privately owned. The one part that is government owned, Peace Valley, was, in 2005, commissioned as a State Park. However Peace Valley is only accessible by a privately-owned road. This is of concern to some of the families that have lived there for generations and generations. They wish to keep the Buttes as they have been for years before. Preserving the Buttes was a priority for many, but for one group it

was top. The Middle Mountain Foundation was established to protect the vital resources of the Buttes and to help keep them alive for the many that enjoy the wondrous landmark of our community, something they still do today.

The Sutter Buttes, unbeknownst to many, is the center of a vivid history full of natives, travelers, and many other interesting figures. Researching the Buttes, I was astonished to find that they were a central part of life in the Maidu and Wintun tribes. Artifacts of these inhabitants, from grinding stones to possible burial grounds, further develop the allure and diversity of the Buttes. The Maidu tribe referred to the Buttes as “Histam Yani” which translates to “Spirit Mountain” as they believed that after death, the spirits of their people stop to rest in the Buttes before going on to the afterlife.

Residents of the Buttes have to keep this vivid history in mind in their daily life. Trespassers may be in search of some of these renowned artifacts and evidence of Maidu and Wintun life. Though fences have been damaged and property destroyed, the rich culture of the Sutter Buttes and the people that live there make the preservation of their dear home absolutely worth it.

Before writing this essay, I had no idea as to how little I knew and my generation knows about the Sutter Buttes. Going to school at the foot of such a beautiful landmark is amazing, but finding out such great stories about the history of the Buttes, the people that live there, and our community in general made such an impact on me. Never again will I look up and have to wonder because now I know the history and culture behind the remarkable sight we call the Sutter Buttes.

Our October Speaker, Dave Freeman

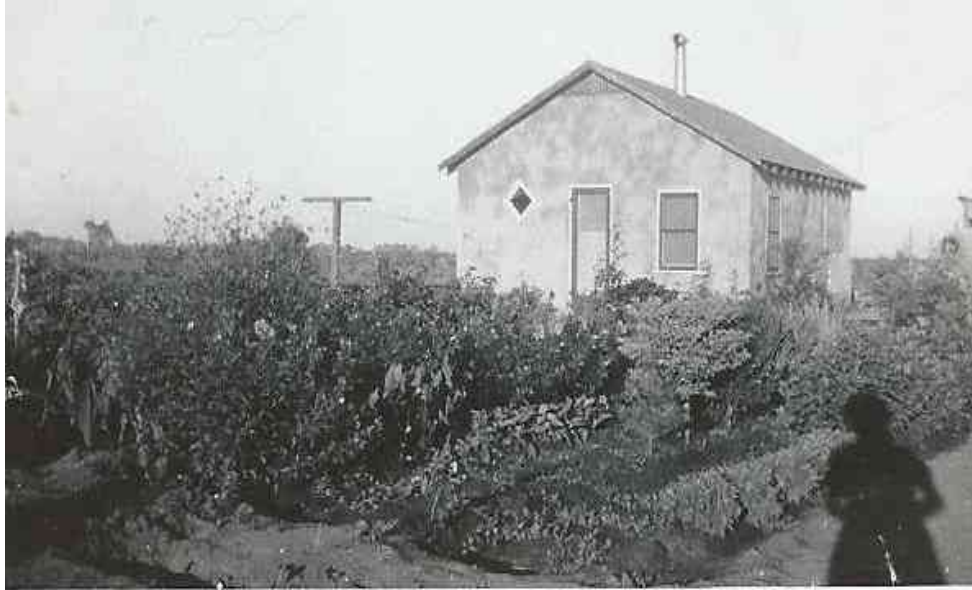
Dave Freeman is an historian, researcher and amateur archaeologist. He takes maps from the 1840 - 1860 period, then overlays them onto satellite imagery. With this he can produce a usable GPS value of the historical location in question. To date he has found numerous pioneer cabins, notably the 1846 cabin of William B. Ide; the Sacramento River 1850 ferry locations of Bidwell and Ide; the riverboats “California,” which sank in 1850 and the “Plumas,” which sank in 1858; the 1850 sawmill of Ide south of Red Bluff; the 1847 flour mill of Peter Lassen, near Corning; the 1847 Sutter flour mill near Howe Ave in Sacramento; the 1849 town of Placer City; and the 1850 town of Monroeville.

His topic for our luncheon is early explorations of the Sutter Buttes by the U.S. forces of Fremont (1846) and Wilkes (1841). Dave thinks he may have found the location of these camps, but he has not searched on the ground as of yet. There is a tremendous amount of conflicting “evidence” on the locations of the early camps making an exact determination difficult. The Buttes hold their secrets very well.

Little House on Butte Avenue

by

Robert Fletcher



This is a picture of the little house that was built in 1946 and later turned into a garage. My parents, Alfred and Pearl Fletcher, bought the ten acres of bare ground in November 1945 for \$2,100. My father, with the assistance of my mother's relatives, built this little house for us to live in. We moved in at Christmas in 1946. In 1954 my parents bought the nine acres to the north of the parcel for \$9,000. Their land was bordered by George Washington Boulevard on the west, Franklin Road on the north and Butte Avenue on the east. My parents later subdivided their 19-acre property into one-acre parcels, the Fletcher Estates subdivision, and sold all of them with the exception of the parcel that the little house was on. I inherited that parcel.

My mother took this picture of their vegetable garden and that is her

shadow. Until we built the new house, the garden was in front next to the road. The diamond-shaped window is the bathroom window.

My father, mother and I moved from Nebraska to Sutter County in 1937 when I was two years old. We came in a group with my maternal grandparents, E.C. and Manda Keech, my aunts Dorothy, Wilma and Bernice Keech, my uncles Bennie and Joe Keech and his wife Gwennie.

My grandmother's brother, Leonard "Doc" Henson, had come to Sutter County in the early 1900s. During one winter when it flooded he rowed a boat along the railroad track from Yuba City to Colusa. Joe Keech came to California the summer of 1936 to work for his Uncle Leonard. Leonard told Joe to go back to Nebraska, get married and bring his wife back. He not only brought a wife, but he brought

his parents and four sisters, a brother, a brother-in-law and a nephew with him.

We first lived in Meridian and then moved to the Buttes. Soon after we moved from Meridian in 1940 it flooded from a break in the Bypass. The front steps were all that was left of the house. The rosebushes and everything else had been washed away.

While we lived in the Buttes my mother and I got on a train at Plumas and Bridge Streets in Yuba City that took us out to Sutter, where Close Lumber is now. Living in the Buttes didn't last long. My mother went out to milk a cow and there was a rattlesnake. We moved to Ohleyer Road. We next moved to Lincoln Road and then here to Butte Avenue.



This is me with my aunts Dorothy and Bernice Keech at the Rosenberg fruit drying yard on Ohleyer Road. We are sitting on a little railroad cart that was used to push a load of trays of fruit from and to the cutting shed. The trays of fruit were put through a sulfur house before they were taken out to dry. They sun-dried apricots, peaches, pears and prunes. The Rosenbergs owned property north of Lincoln Road and from Sanborn Road to George Washington Boulevard. They had a

large apricot orchard. The Rosenbergs' cutting shed was on the west side of Ohleyer Road.

When we lived on Ohleyer Road we were living on the Rosenberg ranch. My mother worked at the cutting shed cutting fruit in half to be placed on trays to dry in the sun. I would go with her while she worked. I had to cut in half the fruit in one lug box and then I could play. There were hundreds of empty lug boxes in stacks on the Rosenberg ranch. I would make tunnels in the stack of boxes and turn some over so I could walk on them. I made stairs so I could go to the top. They were on the back side so that no one could see what I had done. Sometimes there were friends who helped me.

My mother also worked at the Henson almond huller on Colusa Highway near George Washington Boulevard. While she worked my cousin Harriett Henson and I would arrange lug boxes in secret rooms. We would put boxes over the tops of the rooms so we could be shaded from the sun. We used rollers to open and shut the doors. One day her grandfather, who was my great-uncle, got mad at us because we had un-stacked and rearranged the boxes. They put us to work taking almond meats out of the screening trash from the almond huller.



Before we moved here they hand-dug a 100 foot water well that was 12 inches in diameter. My uncles Art Hankins, Bennie Keech and Joe Keech helped dig it. They used a big auger bucket with a cable. The previous picture showing how a well was dug in Olivehurst is similar to the way our well was dug.

The only houses on our road were the Sasaki house on the southwest corner of Franklin Road and Butte Avenue, our house, my grandparents' (E.C. and Manda Keech) down the road on the left, and the road ended at the Doug and Flo Sherwen house on the right. Now there are rows of houses on both sides of Butte Avenue.



My Dad told me I had to hand dig this ditch from the irrigation pump to the irrigation valve. Even though this picture shows him shoveling in the ditch, I did most of the digging by myself. My dog and constant companion, Blinky, is with me.

There was no air conditioning or water cooler in the little house. A screened-in breezeway was built in front of the front door. This area is now the laundry room for the new house and connects between the new

house and the garage. I would sit in the breezeway in the evening, listen to the radio and eat peaches from our tree. My favorite radio programs were "Tom Mix," "The Lone Ranger" and "Sky King."

I had a pig feeder I made my freshman year in high school. When I was 12 years old I was given a baby pig that had to be bottle-fed. I got it to drink from a dish and I didn't have to bottle-feed it. I remember when we slaughtered it. It was the worst kill shot that my Dad ever made. It ran all over and squealed with a bullet in his head. They chased the pig all over the pen, grabbed it and cut its throat. It was a 250 pound hog. We dipped it in scalding water in a 55 gallon barrel that was tipped on its side. We scraped all the hair off with knives, cleaned the guts out and took it to a butcher who cut it up, packaged it and we put it in a rented freezer locker. For several years we raised pigs.

We raised chickens for the eggs and the meat. We had a brooder heater to keep them warm. We had to use medicated water to keep them from getting coccidiosis.

We had a hook on a long stick, grabbed the chickens by the feet, pulled them up to us, grabbed them by the neck and wrung their necks. If we chopped their heads off they would run around awhile with their heads off. We put them in hot water, removed the feathers, gutted them and cut them up for the freezer. My mother made pillows with some of the feathers.

I had a pet rooster. When I went in the pen he would jump up on my shoulder and walk around with me.



This is an early version of my sail cart. I made a better one that I used on the road in front of our house. A hedge is now planted along the fence line. I was an only child and I was a lonely child. I had to make up things to do to entertain myself. I built this sail cart and when the north wind blew I could sail all the way down the road past the Sherwen house. After I “sailed” down the road I would bring it back up and do it again. Sometimes the wind was so strong that it would blow my sail cart over. The wind would pick up one wheel, toss up the sail cart and the sail cart and I would end up in the orchard.



This is the final version of my sail cart. My aunt Bernice Keech Blake and her daughter Karen are on the left

and my aunt Dorothy Keech Burgin and her son Wayne are on the right.



This is Blinky and me on my new bicycle on the west side of the little house. The door went into the kitchen and the window is to my parents’ bedroom. Blinky rode almost everywhere with me on my bicycle but he would not ride on my sail cart.

I had been attending Lincoln Grammar School since the first grade, but transferred to Franklin Grammar School when I was in the sixth grade. Both of the school buildings, Lincoln and Franklin, were demolished. They should have kept the old Franklin school because it was an historical building. Franklin School had no school bus so I walked or rode my bicycle to school. When it was raining we rode our bikes to school and stood around the stove in the old school building to dry off. When it wasn’t raining we would get to school early so we could play before school started.

I rode this bicycle from our place on Butte Avenue to the Yuba City swimming pool under the Tenth Street Bridge. I also rode it up and down the sides of the irrigation ditch on the west side of George Washington Boulevard between Colusa Highway and Franklin

Road. One time I took a big spill and landed in a wild blackberry patch with barbed wire and couldn't get out.

The first day of pheasant hunting season that I had my new 410 shotgun I came home from school and shot a pheasant with one shot. I thought I was a good shot but after that I missed three or four birds.

One time when I pulled the hammer back and then tried to put it in a safety position a shot fired over my Dad's head. His mouth was wide open when he turned around but he didn't say anything. I was scared. I never let my own children have guns with a hammer because of the safety issues.

It was OK for a kid to have and carry a gun back then. When I was attending Sutter High School I would take my shotgun in my car and shoot ducks before school. We left the guns in our cars on the school grounds.



This John Deere tractor belonged to Frank Hatanaka. I drove it to cultivate tomatoes on the property next door to the north. I earned 65 cents an hour. My parents later bought the property.

After school my friends and I would drive my Dad's tractor in the orchard. We would lay boards down in front of the tractor wheels, drive on them, pick them up and replace them until we got out in the middle of the orchard. We repeated the process when we drove the tractor back where my Dad had left it. That way there were no tracks and my Dad didn't know what we had done. It was dark when my Dad got home from work and we never got caught.

It was a good thing we had done it because my Dad had ridged and irrigated the orchard just before the rainy season began. When we drove the tractor in the middle of the orchard we knocked the ridges down and the water could drain away from the trees. Where the ridges were still up there was standing water and the trees died.

Mother and I planted the re-plants. After we had them planted Dad came and showed us how to do it. Our trees all lived, but the one he planted died.



The Yuba City swimming pool was an old boat dock. The river channel changed and the boat dock was just a pond turned into a swimming pool. I

rode my bicycle there for swimming lessons and just to swim. It was during the time that the Tenth Street Bridge was being built. We called it the new bridge. Boys used to get up on the girders and dive into the pool. The Yuba City officials stopped that practice. The old/Fifth Street Bridge went out in the 1955 flood and we could no longer call the Tenth Street Bridge the new bridge.



This is my new car which I bought when I was 17 years old. My father is in the background. An almond huller was put in the back of this shed to hull our almonds. A 300 gallon gas tank was behind my car. Owning a car started a whole new “chapter” of my life.

I worked for my Dad knocking almonds. We hand-knocked almonds off the tree with a mall and used a long pole to knock the remaining ones onto sheets which we drug on the ground. When the sheet was full we would empty the almonds into a cart. My Dad said instead of paying me that I could get gas from the tank. He would unlock it and fill my car. I found a key in with a bunch of bolts that said “gas”

so I used it. My Dad tried to fuel up his tractor and there was no fuel. He wasn’t very happy about it.

In 1952 my Uncle Morris (Morris Penterman was married to my mother’s older sister Golden), my father and I helped build the new house. This was along Butte Avenue in front of the little house. I slept in the bedroom of the new house my senior year in high school and we moved completely into the house in 1953. The little house was turned into a garage. The living room was partitioned to become a storage room. My bedroom, my parents’ bedroom, the kitchen and part of the living room were turned into a garage. The bathroom remains as it was when it was part of the little house.

In the summer after I graduated from Sutter Union High School I was driving home from work on O’Banion Road and I looked up and saw a house. I was wishing I had a girl friend who lived there so I could stop by and talk to her. A few months later my second cousin Harriett Henson (Foster) asked me if I wanted to go on a “blind” date. We went to that very house and that is when I met Roberta Pearce who became my wife. I inherited from my parents the one acre property with the “Little House on Butte Avenue.” Roberta inherited from her parents the “Little House on the Pearce Ranch” property on O’Banion Road. Her story can be found in the Sutter County Historical Society *News Bulletin* published in April 2009.

Sam Brannan

by

Larry Harris

Local Presence

The one word that can NOT be used to describe Sam Brannan is “uninteresting.” And the imprint he left locally is minuscule compared to the empire he created.

Sam Brannan Way is a street one block long in the Royo Ranchero subdivision in Yuba City.

On Gray Avenue in Yuba City there is the fine Sam Brannan City Park. The plaque at the entrance to the park contains a minor error. It states that Sam Brannan surveyed and laid out the City of Yuba City. He didn't. Four individuals were involved, John Sutter, retaining one-quarter interest from this, his New Helvetia grant; Henry Cheever, one-quarter interest; Pierson Reading, one-quarter interest; and the rest to Sam Brannan. Collectively they hired Joseph Ruth to survey and lay out the City of Yuba City, named from the tribe of Indians there, the Yubus.¹

It was Sam, however, who donated lots one and two in Block 18 to the County of Sutter to build a courthouse.

Sam bought 2,000 acres from John Sutter eight miles south of the Hock Farm. He built an eight-room house, with a fireplace in each room.

¹ The plaque was installed by Clampatriots, members of the fun-loving historical society E. Clampus Vitus, who considered Sam a patron saint. The Clampers were known to imbibe a little and Sam joined them. His favorite juice of the grape was champagne.

The lumber came around Cape Horn. He stocked his ranch with cattle, sheep, horses, and planted a fine garden with many grape cuttings and trees. The ranch hosted many politicians, businessmen and friends he would boat up the Feather River. He called it his “Western White House.” It was also called his Marysville Ranch, even though it was in Sutter County.

Sam bought 2,000 acres in Yuba County. It was laid out as Brannan City. He wanted Marysville and Yuba County to buy stock in a railroad to come to Marysville. They didn't, so Sam bought this property thinking that Marysville would believe that the railroad would go to Brannan City if they didn't support the stock issue. He dropped the plan and Brannan City never appeared. Had he known that Brannan City was on the land that later became the Yuba Goldfields from which a large pot of gold was dredged he might have held on to the property.

He also bought 10,000 acres that was the Keseberg Ranch. It extended from Roseville almost to the Sacramento River. On this ranch was Leet's Grove where Sam had excellent picnics.

Beginnings

Sam Brannan was born in Saco, Maine in 1819. His father Thomas Brannan came to America in 1775. Thomas was a farmer. After his first wife died, he married Sarah Emery. Sam was the youngest child of that marriage. His father was 64 years old

when Sam was born. Thomas drank and would come home and wield his cane on the children with very little provocation. Sam's oldest brother, John, couldn't take the caning and ran away from home. He became a cabin boy on a sailing ship and remained at sea until he was a captain. When he came ashore it was to be the business manager for Sam, who needed help to control his businesses. John contracted tuberculosis. He took a trip to the Orient for his health, but it was too late. He died on the return trip. The captain put him in a hogshead barrel and filled it with an oriental liquor called samshu. It was said that at the funeral several weeks later he looked very natural.

Sam's mother was very frail and his older sister Mary Ann raised him. When Mary Ann was 27 she married Alex Badlam. Mary Ann and Sarah decided that Sam should leave and live with Mary Ann and her husband. They feared that Sam, a strong youngster, would inflict serious harm on his father if he was caned. The Badlams moved to Ohio where 14-year-old Sam began a four year apprenticeship to become a printer. After three years he received an inheritance and bought out his last year of apprenticeship to become a journeyman printer. With the rest of the money he invested in the local real estate boom. The bubble burst and all Sam had left was a new suit of clothes. He worked his way down to New Orleans to join his brother Tom. He liked the ambience there and Tom and Sam started a printing business. Yellow fever was endemic in New Orleans. Tom caught it and died three days later.

Leaving New Orleans, Sam worked his way north. Witnessing the

reality of slavery left Sam with a lifelong aversion to the institution of slavery.

After working in Indianapolis a few years Sam reunited with his sister's family, the Badlams. He found that they had joined a new religion, the Mormons. He met Will Smith, brother of Joseph Smith, the sole founder of the religion. Will wanted to go in business with Sam printing a newspaper. Sam was "sealed" into the Mormons and became one of the editors of "The Prophet," a Mormon newspaper published in New York City.

The book *No Man Knows My History: Joseph Smith* by Fawn Brodie is a biography of Joseph Smith and his amazing creation of the religion later called The Church of Jesus Christ, Latter Day Saints. From its beginning in 1830 with six members it has grown to fourteen million. The church was persecuted and harassed from its very beginning. When the church was forced out of Missouri by the issuance of Order #44, Joseph established the town of Nauvoo, Illinois which grew to a population of 12,000. He was in complete charge of the town. In 1844 Joseph and his brother Hyrum were murdered by a mob in the Carthage, Illinois jail where they were being held on charges of treason. During the power struggle that followed to gain leadership of the Mormons Sam Brannan and Will Smith were excommunicated. Sam went to the twelve apostles and was reinstated. Brigham Young became the President and new leader of the Mormons.

Brigham Young prepared to lead the Mormons westward by wagon train. At the same time Sam Brannan was given the task of outfitting a ship to take Mormons to the west coast of

America, the Mexican state of Alta California.

Sam leased the sailing ship *Brooklyn*, retrofitted it as a passenger ship, and signed up 236 Mormons to sail with him to the west coast of America.

The *Brooklyn* sailed the same day that Brigham Young started the westward exodus with the wagon train.

Heading West

The voyage was not uneventful. A nor'easter threatened the ship. The captain said they might not make it. Next, the ship was becalmed for several days. Passengers died. One was born, named Atlantic. Around the Horn and up the western coastline another child was born, named Pacific. Another storm blew the ship off course to Valparaiso, Chile. They made landfall at Juan Fernandez Island, a fortuitous landing. The island had been a penal colony now abandoned with two families living there. Wild pigs abounded, tropical fruit alleviated the scurvy on board and there was a goodly supply of fresh water. On to the Sandwich Islands, now Hawaii, to discharge cargo there. Brannan bought 140 stands of rifles and drilled the men for military action.

On to California. When the *Brooklyn* entered the Yerba Buena Cove Brannan said, "There's that damn flag." He had expected that California was a Mexican state. Instead Yerba Buena (present day San Francisco) had been secured for the United States a few days previously and the U.S. flag was flying. President Polk had declared war on Mexico over a boundary dispute, whether the Nueces River or the Rio Grande was the boundary of Texas that had been annexed to the U.S.

Brannan unloaded the *Brooklyn* at Yerba Buena.² The Mormons were an assembly of multi-talented individuals with many professions represented. Sam sent a group to establish a colony at the confluence of the Stanislaus and San Joaquin rivers. It was called New Hope and was to furnish food for the Mormons. It was not successful as the men quarreled over the shares of the crops.

Sam became enthused over the potential of California believing it to be a land of milk and honey, a Garden of Eden unsurpassed by any other location for a Zion for the Mormons. With C. C. Smith and a guide Brannan headed out to intercept Brigham Young and the wagon train. He overcame the snow of Donner Pass and observed the horrific scene of the Donner Party. He met the wagon train at the Green River. He tried to persuade Brigham Young to come to California. Young was adamant and proceeded to the Salt Valley. Here he rose from his sick bed in the wagon and said, "This is the place." He either had a revelation or he had a Fremont report that stated the soil was good and water was available from the hills. As hard as Brannan tried he could not persuade Young to come to California. He became disillusioned and disenchanted with Young and the religion Young controlled. He returned to California to attend a different cathedral — a money house.

Sam with his partner C. C. Smith established a store at Sutter's Fort. It was called C. C. Smith and Company. Sam was the company. The store

² Yerba Buena - *macromeria Douglasii*, was a minty plant growing wild on the hills. It was used as a tea, a seasoning and believed to have medicinal properties, hence "good herb."

furnished Sutter with all of his needs including supplies to build a sawmill on the American River. The sawmill was being built by several Mormons. James Marshall was in charge of building the mill. When he discovered gold in the mill race he told Sutter. Sutter then told Brannan to keep the secret until he could control the gold mining. Sutter bought the land above the mill from the Indians with some trinkets. When he tried to claim the land he was told the Indians didn't own it so he had no claim.

Brannan didn't keep the secret. After he bought all the merchandise he could find in San Francisco, including that which was on the ships in the harbor, he obtained a quinine bottle of gold and ran up the streets of San Francisco shouting, "Gold, gold, on the American River!" There had been rumors of gold but when Brannan made the announcement it was believed. The Gold Rush began!

Brannan began mining the miners. The prices on his goods were exorbitant but he had the only game in town. He soon bought out C. C. Smith for \$50,000, started a store at Coloma and another one at Mormon Island. He somehow gained control of Mormon Island.³ Sam "leased" portions of the island to the Mormons for a share of the take. His barrel of gold was filling.

Brigham Young sent a messenger to Brannan asking for \$25,000 for him and \$25,000 for an apostle. He stated that it was the Lord's money from tithes given Brannan for the church. Brannan's reply was, "If the Lord will sign a receipt I will give him the

³ It was a peninsula but the miners had cut a ditch across at its neck, making it an island. It is now under the water of Folsom Lake.

money." Brannan obviously did not think that Young was the Lord. Brannan was excommunicated later.

When the governor came to the island the miners asked him if they had to pay Brannan. His reply was, "This is government land and if you are foolish enough to pay Brannan, he will take it." They quit paying.

Brannan meanwhile was building San Francisco. He became involved in San Francisco politics. In addition to being elected to the city council he was elected a state senator. He declined as his businesses kept him too busy. He was one of the six presidential electors from California. He cast his vote for Lincoln and campaigned for him.

In 1851 he was elected as head of the Vigilante Committee. The city had been overtaken by the Hounds and Sydney Ducks, outlaw groups that were devastating the city. The Vigilantes hanged four men, whipped one, deported 14, ordered one to leave the state, handed 15 over to authorities, and discharged 41 others. The city became lawful.

Brannan established trade with China. He imported metal buildings from China. His election to the city council gave him insider knowledge and he bought many city lots, including many on Market Street. He bought lots that were under water at high tide. He knew the city was moving hills in the city to fill in the waterfront. The labor to move the hills was largely done by Irish workers. When the city bought a steam shovel to move the soil it was called a steam "paddy" as it replaced the Irish workers. Brannan joined a group to build the "long wharf" so several ships could load and unload at the same time. He was the Donald Trump of his time.

A synopsis of the entrepreneurial efforts of Sam's include: invested with the Big Four in the transcontinental railroad, speculated in land, owned a bank, issued his own paper money, bought Abel Stearns' 170,000 acre estate, joined a group to colonize Northern Baja California (it failed), and tried to take over the Hawaiian Islands by giving King Kamehameha a pension and becoming Governor General of the islands (didn't work). He owned one-fifth of San Francisco and one-quarter of Sacramento.

His last two vast projects along with women problems created his Waterloo.

Brannan's personal life was not a happy story. He was headstrong, energetic, ambitious, visionary, speculative and an alcoholic.

While he was a young man he married Hattie Hatch, she got pregnant, they quarreled, she said, "Leave and don't come back," he did. Sam thought she would get a divorce, she didn't.⁴ Sam then married Ann Eliza Corwin. She and her mother were on the good ship *Brooklyn*. Lisa, as she liked to be called, was somewhat of a snob. She detested the crude life in early San Francisco. When Sam became the first millionaire in California she took their children and rented a chateau in Geneva, Switzerland. She lived there until Sam Jr. got his degree in mineralogy, perhaps a total of 13 years.

While his wife was away Sam did play. He was, in fact, a womanizer.

⁴ Sam was never a polygamist - he was a bigamist, however. He railed against polygamy during the last stage of his life. Polygamy was officially discontinued by President Woodruff of the church a year after Brannan died, 1890.

His most outrageous affair was with Lola Montez, the famous "what Lola wants Lola gets" courtesan.⁵ She was the mistress of King Ludwig of Bavaria, who gave her the title of Countess of Landsfield and paid her \$100,000 a year to be chargé de boudoir for him. The Bavarians kicked him out of office and Lola left. She went to Paris where she enticed Franz Liszt and Alexander Dumas. From Paris she came to New York and then to San Francisco. On the boat to San Francisco she met Sam Brannan. She was a very attractive temptress and Sam was taken by her charms. Sam spent a small fortune on Lola. She lived in Grass Valley for two years in a cottage she bought. At the cottage she divorced her husband of two months, Patrick Hull. She maintained a small menagerie, including a grizzly bear cub. The cub grew and bit the hand that fed him. No more bear. Lola befriended a young girl, Lotta Crabtree, who was entertaining the miners with song and dance. Lola taught her some new dances and went on horseback rides with Lotta. Lola liked children as she had none of her own.

Lola's "spider dance" where she revealed more than her ankles was a success but its novelty wore off. She quit the stage, went to New York and at the age of 41 died of pneumonia virtually penniless. Lotta on the other hand had a very successful stage career, closely monitored by her mother, and when she died she left an estate of \$4 million to charity.

When Sam's wife returned to San Francisco she was not happy with the reputation Sam had acquired. She

⁵ Lola's real name was Eliza Rosanna Gilbert, born in Sligo County, Ireland, not Limerick as she claimed.

slept in her own bedroom and disliked Sam's friends. They quarreled and she divorced him in 1872. She was granted a \$500,000 cash settlement.⁶ This reduced Sam's net worth very much as he had to sell property at very low prices. Lisa invested her money unwisely (silver stocks) and died a pauper at age 92.

Sam's dalliance with Lola and Lisa's cash settlement were two blows to Sam's wealth. Another was his project in the Napa Valley.

Sam was as enthused with the Napa Valley as he had been with the potential of California. He discovered an area called "Little Geysers," owned by Captain Ritchie. Sam bought a square mile from the Captain. He then bought three more square miles of valley land and 800 acres of hill land. When asked what he was going to call his new investment, Sam, having imbibed a bit, wanted to say California's Saratoga, after the famous resort in New York. He came out with Calistoga Sarafornia. The Calistoga stuck. Sam built a very impressive resort at Calistoga. It had a luxury hotel, identical cottages (no one got a better one), a race track for his thoroughbred horses, a bath house for the mineral water, beautiful gardens and the hot springs. He even got a railroad built to Calistoga from Napa County.

Sam had leased a steam pumping plant and a sawmill to Warren Buck, who then rented it to Andy Snyder. The rent money stopped coming and Sam got a court order to repossess the property. One evening, with some of

⁶ After the divorce Ann Eliza wore mourning clothes to lament her lost husband. She was probably lamenting that she didn't get more than a half-million dollars.

his friends, after drinking a lot, Sam decided to take back the property. They marched toward the mill; as they got closer there was a warning "Don't come closer." The others backed off but Sam kept on. A volley of shots rang out and Sam's body was penetrated by eight bullets. He was dragged off the street. A doctor from San Francisco came up and when asked if Sam would die he replied, "If it was anyone but Sam Brannan, yes, but he'll make it."

His body was badly damaged by the fusillade from the mill but his mind wasn't affected. The resort paid off for a while, then the remnants of Calistoga were turned over to the Sacramento Savings Bank in 1864. Sam left Calistoga to begin what was his final chapter of entrepreneuring - his Mexico foray. The Clampers have placed a plaque in Calistoga - "Sam Brannan, Prince of the Californians" in his memory.

In addition to supporting a company of soldiers, at great expense, to fight with Benita Juarez against Maximilian, a French invader in Mexico, Sam had purchased \$1,500,000, face value, of Mexican bonds. He hoped to turn these bonds into a great colony in Mexico and regain his fame and fortune.

Unfortunately Sam did not then have the capital or backing for such a grand plan. He was given opportunities to colonize over 1.5 million acres. The Mexican government didn't tell him that the Yaqui Indians had not allowed white settlers in the Sonora area for 300 years. There were other obstacles, like Geronimo and the Apache Indians and John C. Fremont's attempt to put a railroad through the northern half of Sonora.

Sam's last years were of disillusion, pain and poverty. He sold pencils on the streets of Nogales. He gave up on Mexico. His Mexican wife Carmenita divorced him. He bought a fig ranch in Escondido, near San Diego, where he had a real estate office. An obstruction in his bowels required medical intervention but he had no money. He died in 1889 in the arms of his landlady thinking she was Carmenita. His body was unclaimed

until his nephew paid the fees and buried him in the Mont Hope cemetery. The wood stake on his grave was later replaced by a headstone by a person who hadn't even known him.

The saga of Sam has been overshadowed by other colorful Californians probably because of his drinking, being a Mormon apostate, his rowdy behavior, womanizing and ruthless business transactions. But, he was INTERESTING!

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Calendar of Events

October

Remembrance of Gowns Past exhibit continues at the Museum

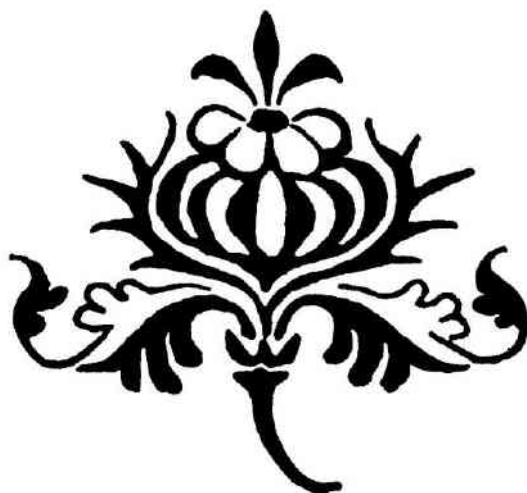
- 8 Volunteer Appreciation Event, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum
- 12 **October Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.**
Ruthy's, 229 Clark Avenue, Yuba City
Program: Dave Freeman, Early Explorations of the Sutter Buttes
\$16, reservations required (see insert in Bulletin)
- 30 Ornament Workshop, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum

November

- 14 Ornament Workshop, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum
- 16 *Remembrance of Gowns Past* exhibit closes at the Museum

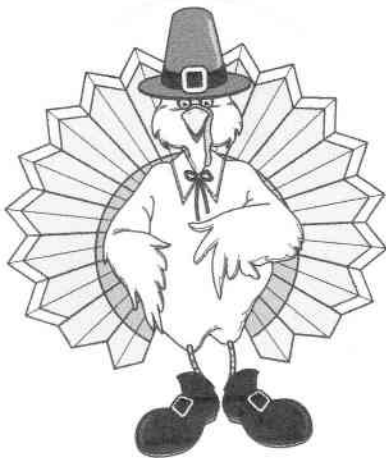
December

- 5 Decoration Day, 9:00 a.m. at the Museum
- 7 Trees and Traditions Gala Event, 5:00 p.m. at the Museum
- 15 Children's Program and Open House, 1:00 p.m. at the Museum



Puzzling

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 BROOKLYN
 BUTTE
 CALIFORNIA
 CARMENITA
 CROWHURST
 DEERE
 FLETCHER
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LEMENAGER
 MONTEZ
 MORMON
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 PALMYRA
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 SMITH
 SYDNEY
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Are you interested in history
and preserving our past?

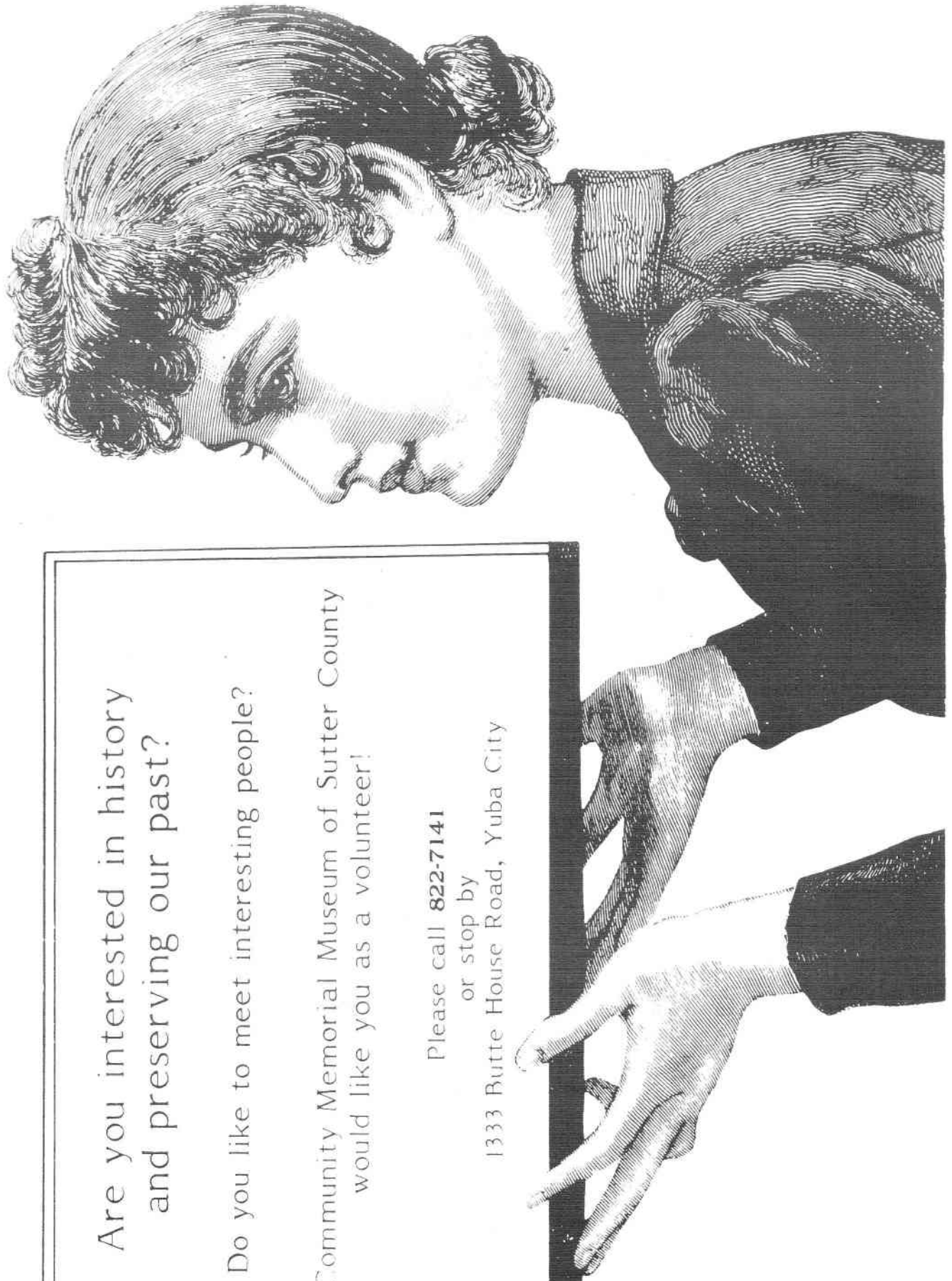
Do you like to meet interesting people?

The Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County
would like you as a volunteer!

Please call **822-7141**

or stop by

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City



October Luncheon

Saturday, October 12 at 11:30 a.m.

at Ruthy's

229 Clark Ave., Yuba City

**Program: Dave Freeman,
Early Explorations of the Sutter Buttes**

Lunch is \$16, reservations required

See insert in Bulletin

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