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Everett and Jean Harris

Photo courtesy of Larry Harris



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President's Message

At our recent Board of Directors meeting we laid out our schedule for the upcoming year. We have tentative programs scheduled, including Larry Green talking about leftover armament near Camp Beale (January 18); the history and status of the West Butte School (April 5); Gray Lodge (June 21); and the Swan Festival (October 11). Please plan to join us for each of these interesting presentations.

Please consider joining our Board of Directors. We have several vacancies and can really use some new members. We would like some new and fresh ideas for the upcoming year. New people bring new ideas. Call me (530-755-0702) or talk to any current (or previous) Board member about the pleasure and satisfaction of participating in a meaningful way.

Be sure to read the article about Admiral Charles Wooster in this issue of the Bulletin. I was very excited to attend the event on November 23 when the Chilean Embassy unveiled a plaque to Admiral Wooster that has been added to the Hock Farm doors on Garden Highway. Chilean visitors, Sutter County and Yuba City officials, and members of the general public were on hand to hear the important history of Admiral Wooster. I worked for two years with Andy Jeremi, a native of Chile who writes of Chileans in the United States and lives in San Francisco, to bring this event about. It was a piece of local history not many here knew of.

I wish you a joyous 2014 and look forward to seeing you at our society events.

Sarah Pryor, President

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Director's Report

Welcome to 2014 at the Museum. We hope that you make the Museum a place where you stop by often and where you really feel a sense of ownership, that it is **your** community museum. At the beginning of the year, it may appear that the Museum's brisk pace may have lessened a little. In reality, a brief lull in temporary exhibits will give staff (all two people of it) an opportunity to turn to some less obvious, but extremely important, tasks. The completion of the Mexican-American permanent exhibit in the multi-cultural wing is a top priority task for staff. With the kind volunteer assistance of retired professor and historian David Rubiales and others, this last major component of the wing will be accomplished. Work on the project has been ongoing for several years but will now be brought to fruition.

The staff will also keep working away at the mountainous backlog of curatorial work. That was a challenge when our two staff positions were full-time, but we are now looking at 2014-2015 being the third budget year of 20% staff and hours cuts. Despite consistent and extreme efforts by staff and our dedicated volunteers, it is not possible to keep up with what must be done if our museum is to continue to be a good example of a professional museum — without restoration of the budget to 100%. In a perfect world, we would require at least one more staff person to be able to accomplish all of the Museum's work.

An exciting and groundbreaking exhibit will open on February 21 and remain through March 8. It is a unique showing of the treasure trove of books and other materials from Marysville's former Chinese School. They date from the late 1800s to the mid-twentieth century. No other such collection may exist in the U.S., and it testifies to the efforts of Marysville's Chinese residents to keep their culture intact as they became Americans. The exhibit opening reception will take place on Friday evening, February 21, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The Museum also looks forward to hosting student art again from both Yuba City High School and River Valley High School, scheduled for this spring. The remarkable work produced by these young artists is exciting indeed.

Our summer exhibit will present a photographic portrayal of the local area by Clyde Taylor, a photographer, jack-of-all-trades, and Marysville community member for the first 45 years of the 20th century. This is the premiere exhibit of his work, which forms a photographic archive of our hometown life in that time period. As a young man, Clyde served as a Marysville fireman, and, consequently, he took pictures of smoke or fire wherever he found them throughout his life — while inadvertently showing us quite a few other things, as well. We are pleased to share with you our admiration of his long and multi-faceted career.

Remember that the Museum needs your support in any way you can help: volunteering, shopping in the Museum Store, attending events, exhibits, and fundraisers and just visiting often. I appreciate all of the amazing and wonderful support you show.

Julie Stark
Director

Memorials

In memory of **Rebecca Benatar**
Al & Mary Ulmer

In memory of **Paul Chesini**
Stanley & Jeanette
Christopherson
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor
Cynthia Struckmeyer
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Jim Cook**
John & Connie Bustos

In memory of **Shane Cooper**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Jackie DeGroodt**
Betty Perry

In memory of **Carol Denny**
Jim Staas

In memory of **Edna DeWitt**
Loadel & Norman Piner

In memory of **Joyce Dukes**
Bonnie Dee Scriven

In memory of **Sandra Fremd**
Bogue Country Club
Alice Boswell
Joe & Darlene Davis
Gerald & Carmen Frye
Thomas Frye
David & Jennifer Giampaoli
Anna Lowery
Phillip Newell
Mary S. O'Neal
Harold Ray
John & Judy Schnabel
Cynthia Struckmeyer
Gennis Zeller

In memory of **Ray Frye**
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **June Kendall**
Betty Perry

In memory of **Ruth Koch**
Sharyl Simmons
Julie Stark

In memory of **Tom Krull, Sr.**
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Robert Masera**
Alice Chesini
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Justin Micheli**
Loadel & Norman Piner

In memory of **Robert Mulcahy**
Bob & Lillie Inman
Janis Stillwell
Robert & Rose Wood

In memory of **Ben Murphy**
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor

In memory of **Jonathan Santos**
Jim Staas

In memory of **Betty Storm**
Marnee Crowhurst
Bud Doty
Janis Stillwell
Tom & Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Judy Stout**
Marie C. La Mar
Sarah & Lee Roy Pryor

Outright Gift
Anna Belle Brown
Schnabel/Dean Family
Rose & Robert Wood

Admiral Charles Wooster

On November 23, 2013, the Embassy of Chile in the United States, the Chilean Naval Mission in Washington, D.C. and the Consulate General in San Francisco unveiled a plaque commemorating the burial place of Charles Wooster, Connecticut-born Admiral of the Chilean Navy.

The ceremony was held at the Hock Farm doors on Garden Highway and was attended by approximately 60 people, including Chileans, Chilean-Americans, Historical Society members, and local dignitaries. Honored guests included Rolando Ortega, Consul General of the Chile in San Francisco; Captain Marcelo Gomez, Chief of the Navy Mission of Chile to the U.S.; and Andy Jeremi, a native Chilean who writes about his countrymen in the United States. Jim Whiteaker, Chair of the Sutter County Board of Supervisors, presented a resolution honoring Admiral Wooster. Following the ceremony all were invited to the Ramirez Castle in Marysville. The original owner, Jose Manuel Ramirez Rosales, was a native of Chile.

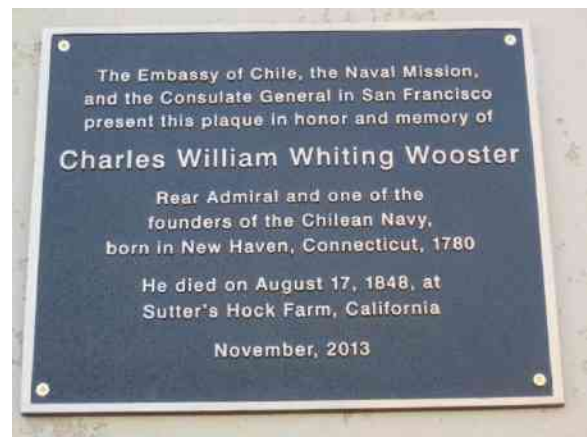
This history was written by Consul General Ortega.

Admiral Charles William Whiting Wooster, was born in Connecticut in 1780 and fought for the U.S. against England between 1812 and 1815. He has a historical significance for Chile as he was one of the founders of the Chilean Navy, participating very actively in different naval campaigns to support and consolidate the independence of Chile and other Latin-American countries. As a result of his brave actions, experience and determination, in 1829 he was

promoted to Rear Admiral and commanded the Chilean Navy. In 1847 Wooster traveled back from Valparaíso to California, engaging in placer mining on the Yuba River.

According to the "Californian," the first newspaper in California, Wooster died on August 17, 1848 at the Hock Farm. The "Californian" informed that "Admiral Wooster was well known as a brave and fearless seaman and a kind friend."

Admiral Charles Wooster is part of the common history that Chile and the United States share. What makes his history so remarkable is the fact that he began his career in the East Coast of the U.S., had an outstanding performance in the Chilean Navy and lived his last years in California, making him an admired figure in Chile and the U.S.



How the Gold Rush Ruined John Sutter

by

Prof. David M. Rubiales

Professor Emeritus, Yuba College History Department

The California Gold Rush was the greatest, most defining event of California history. Everything that happened in the state before this extraordinary event is viewed by many historians as mere prelude. The '49ers considered themselves California's first generation and believed themselves so distinctive – and prestigious – that in order to be admitted to the Society of California Pioneers, one had to have arrived in the state no later than December 31, 1849.

But did the '49ers have an accurate image of themselves and the historical context of the event in which they participated? Were they really “pioneers” and frontiersmen? And does that self-image agree with the perspective of modern historians?

John Sutter, the first non-Native American settler of our local area, who is inextricably associated with the Gold Rush, lost his fortune as a result of this event and was forced to retire to Hock Farm, south of Yuba City. For him the Gold Rush was ruinous. Sutter's misfortune should not surprise us, however, since he was the antithesis of the '49er.

Sutter arrived in California in 1839 after abandoning his wife and children in Switzerland and with a warrant issued for his arrest for embezzling money from his mother-in-law. Perhaps because he had difficulty with rules and ethics, Sutter seemed most comfortable in frontier regions, where rules were more malleable and escape from a former life was more likely to succeed.

On the American frontier he was a chronic alcoholic who reinvented himself as a former soldier and continued to defraud others in financial matters. He also surrounded himself with indigenous peoples, first Native Americans and then Hawaiians (Kanakas), who might easily be controlled and exploited. Sutter also concocted large schemes, such as New Helvetia, in order to gain fame and wealth.

But John Sutter, for all of his failings, also had a unique vision of the future. From his experiences in Missouri he understood the greatest dynamic occurrence at that time was the American Westward Movement. He realized that this vast movement of Americans would become the “historical moment.” With the building of his fort, Sutter had deliberately placed himself at the end of the California branch of the Overland Trail. He believed that Americans arriving at New Helvetia would help him separate California from Mexico and perhaps he would become the new nation's president. It was not a preposterous thought.

But Sutter's dream was interrupted and then destroyed by the discovery of gold, first on the American River and then on other rivers to the north and south, including the Yuba. Within a year and a half the Gold Rush was on, as one hundred thousand Americans – more or less – headed for the gold fields in the spring of 1849.

But the Gold Rush should not be seen as part of the Westward

Movement but rather as an historical anomaly. It was an unforeseen event completely apart from earlier historic patterns. The '49ers were not frontiersmen or pioneers but mostly young men from settled farms, villages, and cities at least a generation removed from the frontier and more familiar with manufactured goods from factories than with Native Americans and wilderness. They sought not land for farms but fortune from gold and perhaps some adventure too. And regardless of their success in the "diggings" most '49ers intended to return to their home in the East.

John Sutter was completely unprepared for this event. Almost overnight the frontier regions over which he held such vast power changed from a primitive frontier of the Mexican Republic, in which Native Americans made up the majority of the population, to an extension of the industrial American nation. Sutter was essentially a frontiersman, albeit a sophisticated one, who had no skills or ethics with which to cope with modern society and all of its demands and so he functioned best in the frontier setting. In the new world of the Gold Rush he was completely lost.

The '49ers, in contrast to those people who had been living in Mexican California, were among the most technologically advanced people in the world. Water wheels, based on factory technology from Massachusetts, were used to mine gold from the Yuba River. Indeed, by 1854 on the North Yuba River, between Goodyears Bar and Downieville, there were 117 water wheels in operation. In Downieville, at the most distant point of Gold Rush Society on the Yuba River, there was an iron works, a stationery store, several

groceries, shoemakers and bootblacks, sign painters, cabinet makers and carpenters. The town also did not lack for physicians, dentists and attorneys. An examination of the 1853 Marysville City Directory reveals that Gold Rush consumers from the mouth of the Yuba River to Downieville had a plethora of modern merchandise and services available to them, including paints, oil and glass from Treadwell & Co., fine wines and tobacco from Garst & Galloway, and crockery and glassware from Flint & Rhodes. Clearly neither Marysville nor any other Gold Rush community on the Yuba River was a frontier society but instead quite representative of the material culture of the eastern United States.

Romanticism on the Yuba River

Historians frequently point out that the Gold Rush was a world event, drawing tens of thousands of gold seekers from not just the United States, but also from China, Chile, Mexico, Australia, and the European continent. Despite the large numbers of non-Americans (the '49ers would have termed them "foreigners"), however, the Gold Rush was essentially an American event. The '49ers not only out-numbered everyone else but dominated the landscape with their culture and philosophy.

Many educated '49ers arrived with the philosophy of Romanticism, which had been gaining sway in the United States since the 1830s. American Romantics, led by Ralph Waldo Emerson, urged their countrymen to look toward nature for self-reliance and a sense of the divine. They championed individualism and the separation of American culture from Europe. Forty-Niners displayed this

new philosophy in their diaries and journals.

One such diarist was Peter Decker, from Columbus, Ohio, who enthusiastically carried Romanticism to the Yuba River region of California. He took delight in the “crystalline water” of a mountain brook and marveled at the “creative power of Nature.” When he came upon a vigorous young pine overlooking the north fork of the Yuba River — “every limb and twig full of life” — Decker compared it to his own American nation, also young and strong and full of promise. It was, of course, promise and optimism that pushed most ’49ers westward and it was their individualism that they relied on most of all. They reveled in the fact that

they were free to come and go as they pleased and not bound to a creditor in China or a “patron” from Chile. They could stay in California or return to the “States” as they saw fit.

The ’49ers were indeed the founders of modern California. They brought American technology and philosophy to the state almost overnight. They were not, however, true pioneers or frontiersmen but rather the antithesis of the frontier and the antithesis of men like John Sutter. No other generation changed so much so quickly.

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Gay ‘90s Boom Town Survives Lean Period

by
Eva N. Paxton

reprinted from the Appeal-Democrat, July 29, 1958

Cassius Clay Epperson I came to California as a boy in 1851. After growing to manhood he bought land adjoining what is now Sutter. His first home, built in 1881, was destroyed by fire. His son, C. C. Epperson II lives now in the home which was rebuilt after the fire.

Epperson was one of the first to plant almonds in his community. A story had been told (and its “authenticity” vouched for by his son) that when the first crop of almonds was ripe, the senior Epperson found woodpeckers were carrying off the nuts and storing them in holes in oak trees.

So, the enterprising rancher, the story goes, studied the situation. He built a long wooden box or chute and placed it up in a tree. At the top of the box he bored holes. Then he sat back to watch the busy woodpeckers gather nuts and drop them through the holes. A sac at the lower end of the box caught the nuts.

Finding some acorns among the almonds thus harvested, the canny pioneer separated them and used the acorns as hog feed! Other chutes were built, and presumably the hard-working birds never got wise.

Mayday! Mayday!

November 11, 1944 at the Bari Airdrome in southeastern Italy, a radio call came through the static. "Mayday, my left engine is on fire, I'm bailing out." This call was made by a P-38 "lightning" fighter plane pilot on a mission over Yugoslavia. The pilot was 2nd Lt. Everett Harris, a native of Sutter County. He was attached to the 154th weather reconnaissance squadron of the 15th Air Force.

This squadron was created by "the mother of necessity" by the Air Force to furnish up-to-the-minute weather information over bomber targets. The bombers had been wasting precious fuel and jettisoning their bombs harmlessly in the ocean when they could not find their targets in inclement weather.

The P-38 was selected to perform this mission as it was faster than the Messerschmitts and could fly at high altitude. These planes were modified by replacing some of their guns with special VHF radio equipment, installing an electric K-24 aerial camera and a radio range receiver. They would fly over targets that were protected by numerous anti-aircraft batteries and relay the weather to the bomber base. They would also assess the damage created by the bombs.

The P-38 pilots, flying solo, were their own observers, navigators, gunners and weathermen. During the period of February 1, 1944 to May 2, 1945, 28 P-38s were lost. General Twinning commended the squadron and stated that their efforts had cut a half year off the war.

An example of their usefulness was the destruction of the huge Ploesti,

Romania oil refinery in August 1944 that caused the Nazis to be seriously short of fuel.

Pilot Harris was a native of Sutter County, California. One of his pioneer maternal great-grandfathers was Andrew Jackson Simpson, who was born November 4, 1834 in Fentress County, Tennessee. In 1856 Simpson, with his wife Canzetta Dennis, crossed the great plains to California in a covered wagon and ox team to Suisun Valley. In 1858 he moved to Sutter County. He came to be called "Col. Jack" Simpson. He acquired 3030 acres of farmland that stretched from Bogue Road to Live Oak. He and his wife also accumulated 13 children, one of whom was a girl named Letitia. When he built his ranch house, six miles west and south of Yuba City, it was built on a section line that later became Lincoln Road. The county obligingly curved Lincoln Road around the two-story house. The "Col. Jack" curve still remains as a reminder of the pioneer who died September 21, 1900 in the U.S. Hotel in Marysville. He had been ill for some time. In 1893 Canzetta had filed for divorce. At that time his property was valued at \$175,000. They reconciled and the charges were dropped.

Portraits of Andrew and Canzetta hang in the Sutter County Community Memorial Museum section of early Sutter County pioneers.

Another ancestor of Everett was Hezakiah Luther, born December 27, 1837. Hezakiah was descended from Captain John Luther, who was killed in 1646 by Indians who concealed tomahawks, and attacked and killed

the captain and crew on a boat in Chesapeake Bay while they were trying to trade with them.

Hezekiah entered California as a 17-year-old sailor on board the sailing vessel the S.S. Governor Morton. He, as many did, jumped ship in 1854. He went to the gold fields but did not find his pot of gold. He started a dairy and timber operation for the miners but in the "Snowy Mountains" — the Sierra Nevada — the cattle perished. He bought land in Live Oak in 1864, married Laura Drew and produced six children. He was active in civic affairs, being on the school board several years. He leased his land, bought and managed the warehouse in town and later became known as "Father of Live Oak." He had built a two-story home on Gum and O Streets in 1885 that survived until 1970 when it burned down. Luther Elementary School and Luther Road bear his name.

One of his children was Everett Wheaton Luther, born December 2, 1868. Everett went to school in Live Oak, worked as a field hand for several years, and, as his father's land was adjacent to a parcel of Col. Jack Simpson's, it seemed inevitable that he would marry a Simpson daughter. On March 6, 1895 he married Letitia Simpson and bought the farm that Letitia had been born on, the homestead of A. J. Simpson on Lincoln Road. They grew grain and produced one daughter and three sons. The girl, Gladys Irene Luther, married Ezra George Harris. Ezra was the son of Jeremiah A. Harris and Rhoda E. Vermillion. The maternal grandmother of Jeremiah was a Fitzhugh of the old and prominent Virginia family.

Jeremiah was born on September 27, 1850. On October 1872 he married

Rhoda. In 1874 Jeremiah brought his wife and little son Edgar to California. They located in Contra Costa County, where he operated on 900 acres of land. In 1906 he purchased 150 acres in the Barry District on Oswald Road. In 1912 he had 26 acres of cling peaches. He also had 17 acres of Thompson seedless grapes.

In addition to raising wheat, peaches and grapes, he and Rhoda had nine children. A middle son was Ezra George Harris, born September 24, 1893 in Danville, California. He died December 12, 1971 in Sutter County. He married Gladys Irene Luther May 22, 1917.

Ezra was a farmer, raising peaches. He was a member of the I.O.O.F. Lodge and active in community affairs including taking care of the country phone line. When one of the ten members on the line would crank the handle on the phone most of the others would listen in. He was also a trustee of the Franklin School District and ran for county supervisor in 1946.

Ezra and Gladys had three children: Everett, June and Lawrence.

Everett was born May 18, 1919. He grew up on the farm doing the chores and helping his father. As a youth he was very active. During the summer he worked at the fruit packing houses in the area, staying there with board and room. He built a boat in the barn. He had a hobby of photography and chemicals were always in the kitchen. When he and the neighbor boys went rabbit hunting they took his young brother to carry the rabbits. One day when he and his brother were at the irrigation canal next to the farm his brother slipped into a swift channel and had not Everett grabbed him he probably would have drowned. He was

active in high school, playing baseball and learning fencing. He was popular with the girls.

In 1940 his father Ezra gathered the family and announced, “We’re going to make or break it — I’ve leased a hard rock gold mine in the hills close to Bidwell Bar where a lot of placer gold had been mined.” John Bidwell took over \$100,000 of gold from that Feather River bar.

The hard rock gold mine that Ezra leased had been abandoned by the owners. Everett, his father and a hired miner jack-hammered holes in the rock face, stuffed dynamite in the holes and blasted into the rock. They worked the mine in 1940 and 1941 when finally they found “float” gold ore on the surface of the ground. They found the ledge and started digging. The ledge went 30 degrees into the ground, the worst possible mining condition, but they kept on. The ore was hauled to the stamp mill on the property, ground up and flowed across copper plates coated with mercury. The mixture was scraped off the plates and the mercury was boiled off. The gold was sent to the mint and a check returned.

The ledge hit a fault where the earth had shifted. They lost it and then they gave up mining.

Everett had found a daughter of a sawmill owner near the mine. He and Jean Kestersen married and they moved to Oroville where Everett worked in a gas station and joined the Army Reserves on October 8, 1942. He reported for active duty February 19, 1943. He became an aviator cadet, became a pilot and received his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant and was a P-38 pilot in the 154th weather reconnaissance squadron at Bari, Italy.

Everett’s father and young brother worked as a carpenter and apprentice carpenter at Camp Beale. The base became a permanent Air Force unit and permanent facilities were built. They searched for a name of one of these new units, a gymnasium. After researching local military personnel, they selected 2nd Lt. Everett Luther Harris as an appropriate name for the facility.

The building, a gymnasium, was dedicated in 1966 at a ceremony attended by the generals, mayors of Yuba City and Marysville, and friends and relatives of Everett Luther Harris. Dinner was served and speeches commemorated the occasion.

The gym is now named the Harris Fitness Center and still serves the Beale personnel.

Everett’s last words ever were on November 11, 1944: “I’m bailing out.”

I fervently hope that Everett and the countless others who sacrificed their lives and futures so that this country could be peaceful and free have not done so in vain.

Everett’s young brother,
Larry Harris

Resources

Delay, Peter *History of Yuba and Sutter Counties*

Thompson and West’s *History of Sutter County*, 1879 (reprinted 2008)

Family lore

Declassified confidential information released 1979

The Green Boys and Bombs

by

Larry Green

Reprinted with permission from the Goldfield Gazette

Somewhere around the 1950s the Korean War began. Camp Beale, home of the 13th Armored Division during World War II, was renamed Beale Air Force Base. The base trained bombardiers for Korean action. At that time Beale was using the piston-driven twin engine, B-25 bombers. These were the type of bombers Major Doolittle used to bomb Tokyo in 1942.

With the start of the Korean War the Green twins, Floyd and I, became interested in ordinance and explosives, etc. We were about 14 or 15 years old then. Also, we wanted to make some muzzle loading guns. Our dad wouldn't let us have any of his black powder; what to do?

Well, being bored sick (no TV or telephone) we would sometimes sit on the south end of Rag Hill and watch the bombing practice. The target was just south of Hammonton Smartsville Road, and a little east of the current Doolittle gate.

The bombers, flying in a miles-long loop, came from the east, going west toward Linda. Each airplane dropped one bomb, turned south, completed the loop and dropped another bomb. This continued for hours!

On some days we could see the bombs fall. We noticed that not all of them exploded! We put two and two together and came up with 4½: "Hey, there's our supply of gun powder from those unexploded bombs"! These were "practice bombs" filled with coarse sand. About a two-quart container of

explosives would make a white puff of smoke so the crew could see their hits. So, on a beautifully clear spring day we sat on Rag Hill for an hour or so waiting for the bombing to start. I believe it was on Sunday; at any rate, no bombing!

So we hiked out to the target. That actual target was a large bulls-eye. As I recall, the outer ring was about 200 feet in diameter, with a large spot at the center. A white powder was used to mark the ring and the center bulls-eye, which was about 25 feet in diameter.

There were two sturdy fences surrounding the target to keep cattle and people out of danger. The fences formed a long rectangular "box within a box." The barbed wire was very close together and extremely tight! Both fences were about ten feet high. There were posted signs stating: "Danger, positively do not enter"! I don't recall how we got through those fences, but we did.

As we approached the fences I noticed some bombs had evidently been dropped too soon, as they struck ground outside the approach-end of the enclosure. Others were released late and fell outside the fence on the west end. Cattle were pastured there in the spring, so "Farmer Brown" could have lost a cow or two! I guess the bombardiers were not too skilled.

After we entered on the target, we studied the detonating devices. We realized you could kick the unexploded

bombs and they wouldn't go off — IF you kicked in the right direction! We found a live bomb and after some effort we retrieved the explosive container. Directly on the target's bulls-eye we found another live bomb. As we were kicking the bent fins trying to free the canister, I heard a bomber approaching! As my brother was frantically trying to free the canister, I saw the bomb-bay doors open. I thought they might be able to see us through the bombsight, so I suggested we run over and stand by a fence post — maybe they wouldn't spot us. As we began to scamper away we heard a bomb coming down! No whistling like in the movies, just a shredding sound like tearing canvas. Well, we ran like rabbits, jumping over the chewed-up ground and bomb craters. I was afraid to run because I could run under the bomb and be killed. Remembering those hits outside the fence, I knew it could fall anywhere. If I got down in a bomb crater it could still get me. PANIC overcame me and I RAN.

Just as I was leaping over the outer circle the bomb exploded right on the bulls-eye! Well, we sat down with nervous laughs and tried to get our breath back. The bomber continued west, turned south and never came back. No military police came either!

We retrieved the two canisters of powder and went home. The powder was very coarse, like black peas. We used an original Indian stone mortar and pestle to grind the chunks into a fine powder. Then we made bombs using small mustard jars, etc. We made fuses using cellophane tape. By pouring a thin "string" of powder on the sticky side, and folding it over, we had a fuse.

Then we bombed the fish in the dredger ponds. Probably killed a few, but we didn't lose a finger, an eye, or incur any other injuries!

On random occasions the Air Force would drop large (500 pound?) bombs. A radio announcement would state that on a certain day, at two o'clock, the Air Force will drop two or three large bombs. Do not call the Sheriff's office! Those bombs would rattle the windows in our house a few miles away.

When returning for more powder, as we often did, we found large aluminum fins from the big bombs. We hauled a lot of them to Marysville and sold them to Sam Zall at his scrap yard. I saved one (see photo).

Growing up in Hammonton provided many wonderful and unusual experiences, the "Bomb Activities" being just one. Thank God we didn't have television. Sometimes I suspect folks just can't believe some of my stories, but they ARE true. Thanks for reading my tale.



Historical Significance of West Butte School

by

Judy Irvin, Architect
MPM/Engineering, Chico, CA

The community of West Butte was established in the 1850s, and in 1860 a one-room schoolhouse was built for the area's children. That school burned in 1908 and was rebuilt in 1909, and the second building still stands at the corner of Pass and West Butte roads in the Sutter Buttes, although it ceased to be a school in 1943. It was used as a residence for a time and is now vacant.

In 2005 the building was given to the Middle Mountain Foundation, now the Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust (SBRLT). Since then SBRLT members have worked to clean up the building while considering how to preserve and use it. This summer SBRLT hired MPM/Engineering to conduct a feasibility study to determine what uses might work for the building and how to renovate it for those uses, and to apply for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places with the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service.

The application for the National Register denotes two important historical aspects of the building – its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, and its representation of the work of a master, architect James T. Narbett.

Judy Irvin did an excellent job researching both the history of the West Butte School and of the architect. The story she discovered is a fascinating piece of local and California history. While this application has not yet been accepted by the California State Historic Preservation Office, both SBRLT and the Historical Society are optimistic that the work done by Ms. Irvin will provide the compelling detail necessary for inclusion on the National Register.

Description of West Butte School

The West Butte Schoolhouse sits slightly back from and faces Pass Road. The schoolhouse consists of one large classroom about 23 feet by 28 feet with 13 foot ceilings. A bell tower on the west side of the building forms an entry vestibule with a ceiling height of about 8 feet. The bell tower cantilevers over the main room slightly. The 10' by 10' tower has large louvered vents on all sides with decorative balconettes below. The front door is a typical 3/5 Craftsman paneled door with canted stiles below and glazing above and a transom over. An "ample cloak room" is located off the entry vestibule.

There is a door with a gable end roof over at the rear that leads to an undefined area that once served as a playground. An historic photograph shows a small tree on the playground that is now mature but in declining health. The main room and tower have moderately pitched hip roofs with extended eaves and exposed simple rafter tails. At the apex of the hip roof on the tower, there is a tall, tapered spire that once served as a flag pole. The entire building was sided with horizontal wood three bead siding painted white. Most of the historic siding is extant; some on the east and

south sides has been replaced by plywood or manufactured board siding.

The original windows have been removed but filled in openings indicate that there were three large 4 foot by 8 foot windows on the east side and two similarly-sized windows on the north side. A small, high hopper window was also located on the north side. From the siding patches, it does not appear that there were any windows on the south side. There are patched openings for two windows on the west side, one in the tower and one in the "cloak room." From historic photographic evidence, the windows in the main room appear to have been double hung with divided lites. A wood burning stove in the classroom provided heat. Electricity and electric lights were added in 1937. Until that time, the large windows provided the only illumination. Water was provided by a hand pump in a lattice well house behind the school. There was no indoor plumbing. Two no longer extant outhouses, one for boys and one for girls, were located on either side of the playground.

The school use ceased in 1943. The West Butte Schoolhouse was then converted to residential use, the ceiling was lowered and partitions installed in the interior. The original windows were replaced by horizontal aluminum slider windows and the siding patched. Indoor plumbing, a septic system, a pressurized water system with water heater were added. After acquisition by the Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust in 2005, the residential interior finishes were removed to expose a sophisticated structural system that resolves lateral forces and carries the offset load of the bell tower. Evidenced by holes drilled

in the ceiling of the classroom in the area where the tower cantilevers over, it appears that the Architect designed the tower to be a component of a passive cooling system designed to draw cool air from the intermittent watercourse up and out of the building through the vented bell tower. The orientation of the windows to the north and east, the extended eaves, the lack of openings on the south side, the high ceilings, the massing of the "cloak room" on the western façade and the white exterior paint to reflect sunlight all help modulate interior temperatures. Narbett's attention to climate control devices and building science sets the West Butte Schoolhouse apart from earlier pioneer one-room schools still found throughout California.

West Butte Historic Development Pattern

West Butte is so named because it is west of the Sutter Buttes, the jagged remnants of the core of an ancient volcano jutting out of the middle of the lush, agricultural Sacramento Valley. The Maidu, who lived in its shadow for thousands of years, called it *Esto Yamani*, which means "the Middle Mountain," and considered it sacred. The area was first settled in the early 1850s as men seeking their fortunes during the Gold Rush decided that more dependable occupations such as farming, ranching or commerce might be easier and more lucrative. Following closely on the heels of Federal surveyors extending the Jeffersonian land grid into California, settlers moved onto lands they deemed undeveloped and claimed them under squatters' rights. These

land claims were later formalized by the Federal government.

Frederick Hoke and Frederick Tarke were typical early settlers in the Sacramento Valley. Born in Germany, they came to America in 1844. In 1850, they traveled together across the plains to California. When they arrived in Sacramento, they sold their teams and outfitted for the gold fields to stake their claims. In 1855, they headed back to Iowa to find brides and returned to settle in the West Butte area. By 1860, most of the lands west of the Sutter Buttes had been claimed. Records show that in 1879, Frederick Hoke owned 1,860 acres of which 800 were cultivated. In that same year, records show that Frederick Tarke owned 2,500 acres with 800 acres under cultivation. These two were good friends building two adjacent homes that served as the headquarters for their agricultural operations.

Frederick Hoke and his wife Louisa had four children, Frederick Tarke and his wife Mary had three children. Other people moved to the area to either work for the early settlers or to provide services. As more children became part of the population, it became apparent that a school was necessary so they could obtain a proper education. On February 28, 1860, the West Butte School District was established by the Sutter County Board of Supervisors. Frederick Hoke offered the use of a parcel of his land for the construction of a school building. Although no date for the construction of the first schoolhouse has been found, the schoolhouse was ready for classes in the fall of 1860. Photographic records show that the first schoolhouse was similar to other one room rural schools across America

... a simple wooden rectangle with a gable-end roof, windows on the long sides and a front entry door at the end.

A stagecoach road running from Marysville to Colusa traveled through a low pass in the center of the Buttes. Another pioneer road encircled the Buttes at the toe of the slope. Where West Butte Road intersected Pass Road, the stagecoach made a stop to deliver the mail. In 1870, a U. S. Post Office was established with the official name of West Butte. Other services grew around this hub. A blacksmith shop, a Town Hall, a large general store, a telegraph office, the schoolhouse, the First Christian Church and several homes completed a small town. George Straub, a blacksmith, arrived in West Butte with his son W. A. Straub in 1880 and the two built a prosperous empire. George built a large blacksmith shop and the Town Hall. In 1890, Straub & Son took over ownership of the General Store which prospered until new roads and better transportation modes shifted commerce to larger, nearby cities such as Yuba City.

A map drawn at the direction of long-time resident Burwell Ullrey shows the ownership pattern of the town of West Butte with the West Butte Schoolhouse anchoring the eastern edge of town. Next to the commercial village center were the homes of George Straub, Frederick Hoke's son August, D. A. Stewart, Charles Hill and W. A. Straub on the south side of Pass Road. On the north side of Pass Road were the homes of J. J. Carroll and the Stewarts. Adjacent to Straub's store on West Butte Road was the Bartee home. Other families lived on their land outside of the town. West Butte families remained close for generations. They went to church together,

they went to school together, they married each other and they served on the School Board together. The 1871-1872 West Butte School's Honor Roll published in the Sutter County Farmer included the names of 14 children from these pioneer families. An 1897 school souvenir lists W. A. Straub, Louis Tarke and W. M. Hoke as School Trustees and a pupil each from those families on the roll. In 1910, a school photograph includes four pupils from the pioneer Hoke and Tarke families among 12 total students.

Among early West Butte School students were Verona and Eleta Hill, two sisters who spent their entire lives in West Butte and became well-known teachers in the Sutter County public school system. Charles and Louisa Hill had moved to West Butte in 1887 where Charles was employed on various ranches. He bought a lot next to the church where he built a three-room house in 1896 for his family of seven children. All of the Hill children attended school at the West Butte Schoolhouse. C. G. Kline, one of the teachers at the West Butte School, built a home next to the Hill's in 1887. It was unusual for a teacher to own his own home since it indicated that he planned to stay at a time when teachers usually moved about. After seven years teaching at West Butte, Kline taught at schools in Meridian and Live Oak before becoming Sutter County's Superintendent of Schools between 1895 and 1903. Verona and Eleta Hill went on to graduate from a private school for teachers conducted by Mrs. Kate M. Wilkins in Marysville. Verona Hill, born in 1887, transferred to teach at West Butte in 1919 and remained there until the school was closed in 1943. Verona's younger

sister, Eleta, taught school in nearby Sutter for 27 years and at other schools in Sutter County.

Association with Important Events

When the original West Butte Schoolhouse burned to the ground on April 2, 1908, circumstances had changed from early pioneer days. Landowners had prospered and the entire North Sacramento Valley had grown increasingly interdependent and connected. A week after the fire, the community pulled together and a special school trustee election was held. The trustees included Ella Hoke and Mr. L. Tarke. Classes were moved temporarily to George Staub's Town Hall while Architect James T. Narbett was retained to draw up plans for the new West Butte Schoolhouse. Narbett's plans were delivered to school superintendent L. L. Freeman along with an Architect's estimate of construction costs. A special election was held on May 17, 1909, and West Butte voters unanimously approved a Bond for the sum of \$1,500 to pay for the new school. Bids were opened on July 29, 1909. A contract for \$1,325 was awarded to Guy McMurtry and the new schoolhouse was ready for classes in the fall of 1909.

Narbett, licensed as an architect in 1907, had the requisite experience. At the time of the West Butte fire, Narbett was involved in the construction of an addition to the State Normal School in Chico. In 1887, Chico had been selected by the State of California as the site of one of the accredited State Colleges dedicated to the training and education of teachers in the art of instructing and governing the public schools of the state. Capable teachers had been scarce on

the frontier. As the State of California grew, a ready supply of teachers meeting uniform standards was deemed essential. The facilities under construction at the Chico Normal School at the time of the West Butte fire included an Experimental Teaching College, a children's playground and a Model Rural School. These facilities were designed to provide a laboratory to test the effectiveness of new teaching methods and pedagogical theories on local children. The growing recognition about the importance of a physical environment conducive to learning is evidenced in the design of the Model Rural School at Chico and furthered at the West Butte Schoolhouse.

Pedagogical theories were not the only social changes. As women gained the right to vote, they became more independent, capable and confident. West Butte residents Verona and Eleta Hill were among those emancipated women who chose teaching as a career. They may have been influenced by their next door neighbor, C. G. Kline, or watching their mother raise seven children. Verona and Eleta Hill never married and lived their entire lives with their bachelor brother Arthur in the tiny family home, commuting to work first by horse and buggy and later by Ford Model T. The two Hill sisters were a far cry from the prim schoolmarm of popular legend. One West Butte School student, Burwell Ullrey, remembered lessons taught outside, schoolyard pranks and rattlesnakes in the well house. A photograph of young Eleta Hill in bloomers standing jauntily on an orchard ladder reveals a thoroughly modern woman capable of handling rattlesnakes and rowdy boys.

The West Butte Schoolhouse fire provided an opportunity to replace an old one-room schoolhouse with a new one that would support the latest trends in education. Although the 1909 West Butte School is only one room, it is distinctly different from pioneer one-room rural schools. The building is illuminated by oversized windows oriented East and West to maintain even day lighting. Design elements for climate control reflect the concern for providing a hospitable environment to facilitate learning.

"If progress in education is observed from the time when it was dispensed within a small box-like building with its poorly lighted and badly ventilated rooms, to its present expanded and still expanding status as carried on within the modern complex structures completely equipped and embracing all facilities for education, health, and safety, it will be seen that architecture has kept abreast with each succeeding step of the educational program, in which the course of studies has become more and more extended to meet the requirements of the industrial, commercial and social life of the nation."

*John J. Donovan, Mar. 1921,
"Architecture, Planning and
Construction of Schools"*

The period of significance ends with the change in use in 1943 when bussing rural students to consolidated schools to allow grade segregation became the norm. After the school use ceased, land ownership reverted to the successors of the original grantee. The building was converted to a residence

and the interior modified significantly. On August 21, 1979, the Sutter County Board of Supervisors declared the West Butte School to be a historical monument in order to invoke the State Historic Building Code for future work. In 2005, Sutter County conditionally accepted the donation of the building and the site with the explicit intent of transferring ownership to the Middle Mountain Foundation to be used for purposes consistent with its mission statement and goals.

The West Butte School is important because it serves as a bridge between early frontier one-room schools and modern pedagogy. The West Butte School is the only remaining one-room schoolhouse in Sutter County and the only schoolhouse designed specifically for its site by an experienced architect incorporating building science such as climate control and daylighting. It is also the only remnant of the pioneer Town of West Butte.

The Work of a Master

Largely forgotten now, James T. Narbett (1874-1936) was in his day one of the busiest architects in Northern California, according to Daniella Thompson in "Berkeley's Two Campus Theaters" published in the Journal of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. Historical information is scanty and reveals little about his career development as an architect. According to a biography published in 1917, Narbett is described as taking up studies with unnamed "eminent architects" passing the architectural licensing exam in 1907 when he was 33 years old. When the West Butte School burned in 1908, Narbett was under contract to build the Experimental

Teaching College at the State Normal School (now Chico State University) which was completed in 1909.

Narbett was born on August 31, 1874 aboard a ship off the coast of Rangoon, British Burma. His parents, William and Eleanor Narbett, were British citizens and his father's profession was listed as "contractor." No information about what types of projects William Narbett would have been involved with or his responsibilities is available but, at that time, Britain was extending its Empire into India and had undertaken a massive effort to create British monuments, civic improvements and infrastructure as a part of the Raj or British reign. Narbett's father was likely one of the many skilled contractors sent to India on behalf of the British Crown to coordinate armies of Indian laborers.

The Narbetts moved to the United States in 1876 where William conducted a summer resort at Fort Canby in the State of Washington. The family then moved to San Francisco, Oakland and Benicia before settling in Crockett in 1880 with William Narbett pursuing opportunities as a building contractor. During that period, Crockett had a deepwater port connected to the Intercontinental Railroad which was an ideal site for grain shipping facilities, flour mills (1886) and a huge sugar refinery (1896). There would have been lots of opportunities for contractors skilled in implementing major projects. James Narbett went to public school in Crockett and then to the Van der Naillen School of Practical Engineering in Oakland. In 1896, Narbett followed his father's profession and took up contracting. He moved to Alaska for a

year and returned to the Van der Naillen School of Practical Engineering, finally graduating in 1900.

The Van der Naillen School of Practical Engineering was a “for profit” trade school, unlike the prestigious universities attended by architects such as Julia Morgan or John Galen Howard practicing in the area at the same time. It focused on practical applications in several engineering fields with the emphasis on gaining the skills necessary for entry into the workforce. An intensive six-month course in structural engineering, mining engineering or civil engineering might cost \$125 for an individualized, pragmatic program and guaranteed employment. Albert Van der Naillen himself graduated from the University of Ghent as a surveying geometrician before coming to the U.S. and serving in the Civil War as a civil engineer. The school’s prospectus offered:

“....a school where practical engineering should be taught and the principles of construction shown in their simplicity, disembarrassed of all the technical bulwarks put around them by old-school fogysm.”

Albert Van der Naillen

By 1904, James Narbett had relocated to Chico with his wife and son where he was responsible for Masonic Temples in Chico and Oroville, as well as buildings in Chico, Orland, Willows, Dunsmuir, and Sacramento, including the Colonial Hotel in Biggs and the Shotover Inn in Hamilton City. Some of these buildings may have been Design-Build projects undertaken before he passed the architectural licensing exams in 1907. In 1911,

Narbett moved to Richmond, California. His first project there was the La Selle Building where he set up his office. During World War I, he joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers where he designed buildings for an expansion of the Hercules Powder Plant. The Company successfully petitioned the War Department to release him from his commission so he might take charge of the construction work. After the war was over, Narbett continued his practice in Richmond and later moved his offices to San Francisco. He is responsible for numerous buildings in Richmond including the Elks Lodge, the Richmond City Hall, two fire houses, the Richmond Plunge, the Masonic Lodge and all but two of the City’s schools. Narbett’s renderings for two Richmond schools published in *The Architect and Engineer*, Mar. 1921, reveal his architectural skills. Other known Narbett buildings include the Calistoga National Bank, Brentwood Grammar School, the Captain H. S. Pond Residence in Alameda, Narbett’s personal residence in Richmond, Oakley Grammar School, Campus Theater (Berkeley), Danville Veterans’ Hall, the Syndicate Building in Oakland and the Nurses Dormitory at the Alameda County Hospital.

Narbett experimented with “modern” materials such as hollow clay tile brick and practical engineering including long span trusses, daylighting and climate control techniques such as operable skylights. His deft use of a range of architectural elements and styles from Classical to Spanish Eclectic shows an understanding of architectural history that is unexplained by his modest education although his membership in the San Francisco

Chapter of the American Institute of Architects would have put him in contact with some of the most distinguished architects of all time. His son, Keith Narbett, graduated from the University of California at Berkeley's Architecture School and followed in his father's footsteps, working on the award-winning Acalanes High School as well as hundreds of dwelling units for the Richmond and Pittsburg Housing Authorities during World War II.

Narbett's work represents a sophisticated balance of style,

ambitious structural engineering solutions and practical building sciences gleaned from practical experience, keen observation skills, and a lifetime of immersion in actual construction techniques. The West Butte Schoolhouse, although modest, is an example of Narbett's ability to marry program, site, design and practical engineering.

Bibliographical information is available from the Bulletin editors.

Calendar of Events

January

7 Undecoration Day, 9:00 a.m. at the Museum

18 Historical Society Membership Meeting

2:00 p.m. at the Museum

Program: Larry Green

Dessert follows the program

February

21 *Rare Chinese School Book Collection* exhibit (from Marysville's former Chinese School) opens at the Museum

21 Reception for new exhibit, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, at the Museum

March

8 *Rare Chinese School Book Collection* exhibit closes

April

5 Historical Society Membership Meeting

2:00 p.m. at the Museum

Program: West Butte School

Dessert follows the program

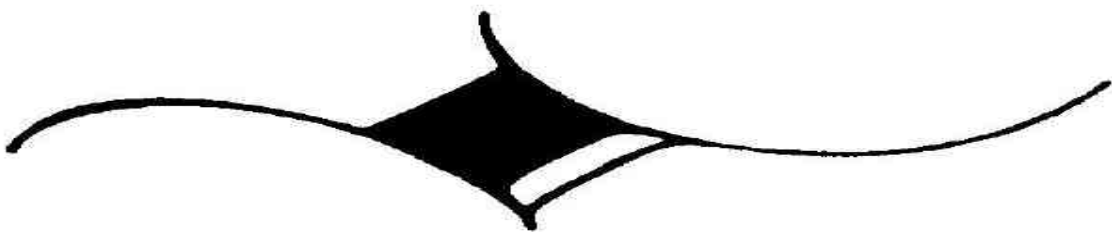
Local high school art department exhibits

Puzzling?

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RUBIALES
SCHOOLHOUSE
SMARTSVILLE
STRAUB
SUTTER
WESTBUTTE
WOOSTER



January Membership Meeting

Saturday, January 18 at 2:00 p.m.

at the Museum

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City

**Program: Larry Green,
Old Armaments near Beale AFB
See article on page 11**

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