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Yuba City, California

July 2015



**Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Contest Winner  
Sofie Ramirez  
with Historical Society President Sarah Pryor**

*Photo by Phyllis Smith*



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The **Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Sutter County Historical Society in Yuba City, California. Editors are Phyllis Smith and Sharyl Simmons. Payment of annual membership dues provides you with a subscription to the **Bulletin** and the Museum’s **Muse News** and membership in both the Society and the Museum. Contact us at [info@suttercountyhistory.org](mailto:info@suttercountyhistory.org).

The 2015 dues are payable as of January 1, 2015. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City, 95993-2301 530-822-7141

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## President's Message

As you are probably all aware by now, Museum Director/Curator Julie Stark is retiring at the end of August. Julie has been a wonderful friend to the Sutter County Historical Society, sharing resources and actively promoting our events and goals. We will miss her and hope to work as closely with the new director.

We continue to research and showcase Century Farms of Sutter County. At our June meeting Ron Sullenger shared with us the history of his farm, including a photograph showing how the farm looked in 1906, before electricity had made its way there, and another picture of the farm in the 1940s, with the "new" house (built in 1919). The buildings have changed over the years, with three large barns blowing down in a huge storm, but the farm remains in the hands of the family that started it in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

If you have or know of a farm that has been in the same family for at least 100 years, please let me know so we can honor the farm and the family. Our Century Farm application is on our website at [suttercountyhistory.org](http://suttercountyhistory.org), or you can call me at 530-755-0702 or email me at [slettl@att.net](mailto:slettl@att.net).

Check out the calendar on the back cover for upcoming events. The Museum's annual Pig Roast is August 29 and our fall luncheon will be October 10. We're looking at a new venue this year - watch for details in our next issue of the Bulletin.

Sarah Pryor  
President

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## Director's Report

Our Museum is fortunate to have two Smithsonian traveling exhibits this year. We have just completed the showing of *Journey Stories*, and we now look forward to the opening of *I Want the Wide American Earth* on Friday, July 10 with a reception from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. It addresses the history of Asian Pacific Americans, a very diverse group representing Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, East Indians and others. The exhibit examines how Asian Pacific Americans have shaped and been shaped by the course of our nation's history. The exhibit remains through August 22. Be sure to see it while it is here.

The Summer Vacation Children's Program will take place on the Museum lawn on Wednesday, July 15 at 10:00 a.m. when the children will learn about metal detecting to locate objects buried underground. Often metal detecting is used to find historical objects that help us learn about history. The program is free and suitable for elementary school age and up. Refreshments will follow.

August brings some exciting events with the debut of the 2016 Sutter Buttes calendar at a reception on Thursday, August 27 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The photos will remain on exhibit through August 29.

Get ready for our popular favorite, the Pig Roast Fundraiser on Saturday evening, August 29. Tickets will be available at the Museum or from any Museum Commissioner starting August 1. It has been a sellout the last two years, so get your tickets early for a great time.

We are looking forward to the fall exhibit, once again an historically related collection of innovative art entitled *Flooded: Nature & the Human Spirit*. It will open with a reception on Friday, September 11 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The theme of the exhibit examines the seasonal flooding in the Sacramento Valley with resulting loss and recovery and, correspondingly, the cycle of flooding human emotions, involving loss and tragedy, joy and rebuilding our lives. Living as we do in a natural, vast flood plain, we experience loss and damage from the flood waters that also bring the rich soil to make our area one of the best agricultural areas in the world. Artists from our own locality join others from up and down the valley and beyond to bring together a stellar exhibit of unique art distinctly created for our area. Art will be available for purchase, so it's a wonderful possibility for enjoying in your home or office or as a special gift. The exhibit will remain through November 14.

Fall will also bring with it staff changes and a new Director/Curator for our Museum. After loving every day of my work here since 1986, it is time to pass on the work of the Museum to new hands. Look for news of the change in the September Muse News. Thank you for your support of the Museum, and I, too, will continue to lend my support to it in every way possible.

Gratefully,  
Julie Stark  
Director/Curator

## Memorials

In memory of **Dirck W. Arrowsmith**  
Marnee Crowhurst

In memory of **Alice Dewey**  
Virginia Filter & family

In memory of **Judy Giusti**  
Connie Cary  
Alice Chesini

In memory of **Bruce Harter**  
Mel & Bonnie Ayers  
Audrey Breeding  
Connie Cary  
Dorothy Jang  
Robert & Jeanne McClard  
George Post  
Peter & Margit Sands  
Sharyl Simmons  
David Tarke  
Sue & Clint West  
Troy & Susan Young

In memory of **Chuck Hendershot**  
Rose & Bob Wood

In memory of **Bill Herrod III**  
Alice Chesini

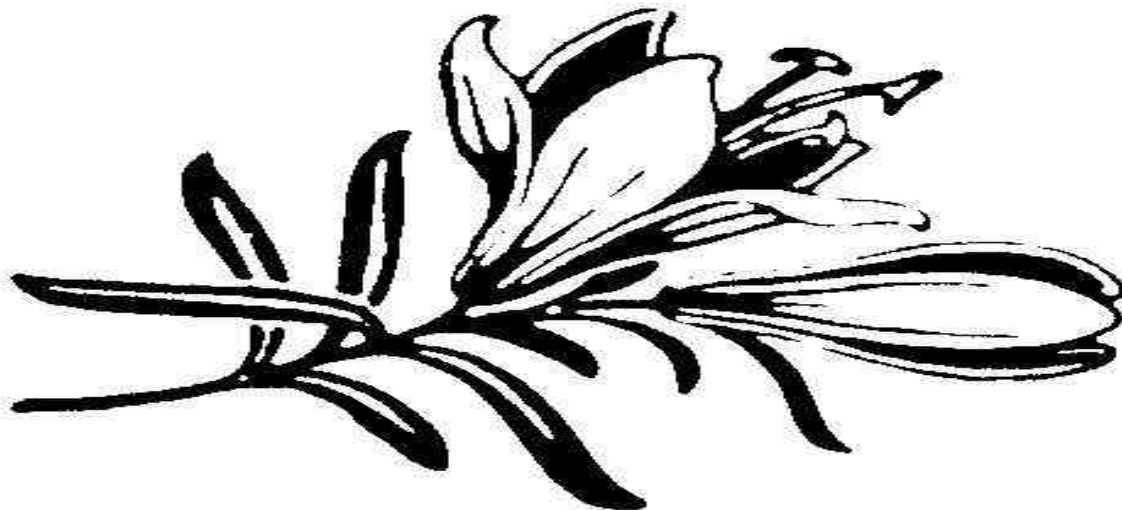
In memory of **Tony Luis**  
Jim Staas

In memory of **Wanda (Lorene) Patton**  
Alice Chesini  
Marnee Crowhurst  
Robert & Jeanne McClard

In memory of **Leonard Ray Pelfrey**  
Marnee Crowhurst

In memory of **Leela Rai**  
Vera Brown  
Ann & Mike Chesini  
Thomas A. Cuquet  
Theresa Hellberg  
Ilene Jacobs  
Jim & Esther Lazansky  
Robert & Jeanne McClard

Outright Gift  
Schnabel/Dean Family  
Inner Wheel of Yuba City



# Judith Barr Fairbanks Memorial Essay Contest

*This contest is in honor of Judith Barr Fairbanks, a local teacher who encouraged her students to embrace history. This year we asked fourth graders to compare schools in the 1890s to those of today. In addition to their essays, students also submitted original artwork – drawings, paintings and models. Our thanks to the students who shared their talents with us.*

## First Place

Sofie Ramirez

Brittan School

Teacher: Debbie Rozzen

## Now and Then

There are many differences between the 1800s and today. School in the 1800s was like eight grades in one classroom, and the kids all had to bring their lunch because there was no cafeteria or kitchen. Most kids either walked or rode a horse to school no matter how far the school was from their home. If you didn't behave in class the teacher would smack your knuckles with a ruler. Students had to write on chalkboards with chalk and they were taught by one teacher in a one room schoolhouse. A pass wasn't needed if you were late.

Nowadays there are multiple classrooms for each grade. We have kitchens and cafeterias that make school lunches. Kids now go to school by bus, car, walking, bikes, skateboards and scooters. If you don't behave you get a detention or worse, you get sent to the principal's office. Instead of chalkboards and chalk, we have whiteboards and dry erase pens and expos. You even have to get a pass to get into class if you are late.

In the 1890s, there were glass marbles. Now in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there are plastic marbles. Mr. Brittan had to build the first schoolhouse near his ranch before his wife would agree to come out to California to live. The school had an iron spiked fence surrounding it until Clyde Perry fell out of a tree on it and hurt himself. Maybe that's why we are not allowed to climb trees at school nowadays.

I'm glad I go to school nowadays rather than in the olden days when my great grandpa was born. So much has changed. I like that all my teachers are nice and can't smack us with rulers. Another thing I like is that the rules help us to stay safe.

# History of Trip of Jarius and Truman Bonney Family – Trip West from Fulton County

## To California Territory in Spring of 1845

by  
B. F. Bonney

*This journal was provided to us by member Rosalie Bonney. Her husband, Howard Dix Bonney, had an uncle, Frank Dupray, who gave the journal to the Bonneys many years ago. Benjamin Franklin Bonney traveled west on a wagon train at the age of 7 in 1845, well before the gold rush and one year before the Donner Party encountered the severe winter of 1846-47.*

I was christened Benjamin Franklin (born November 25<sup>th</sup> 1838). My father Jarius Bonney Jr. was born at (Cornwall), Litchfield County, Connecticut October 14<sup>th</sup> 1793. My mother was my father's second wife (Jane Elkins born in New York City, N Y May 11<sup>th</sup> 1809), he had five children by his first wife (Irena Larned) and eleven children by his second wife. I am the fifth child of the second brood. I was born in Fulton County, Illinois on November 25, 1838. My father was a millwright, carpenter, cabinet maker and cooper. When I was a boy flour sacks were not used, flour being shipped in barrels. My father ran a cooper shop and manufactured flour barrels near what is now called Smithfield, Illinois.

There was so much fever and ague in Illinois, father decided to move. He had heard of Oregon. The thing that decided him to come to Oregon was he had heard there were plenty of fish there. Father was a great fisherman, and while he caught pike and red horse there, he wanted to move to a country where he could catch trout and salmon. My father put in spare time for some months making

a strong sturdy wagon in which to cross the plains. My father's brother Truman Bonney, after talking the matter over with my father, decided that he also would come to Oregon. He had a large family.

My father and mother, with their children: Edward (born March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1832); Harriet (born November 10<sup>th</sup> 1833); Truman (born February 14<sup>th</sup> 1835); Martha Jane (born January 9<sup>th</sup> 1837); Benjamin Franklin (born November 25<sup>th</sup> 1838); Emily (born January 7<sup>th</sup> 1842); Ann (born 1843/4?) and myself, started for Willamette Valley on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1845. There were over 3000 people who started for Oregon in the spring in 1845. Presley Welch was captain of one of the trains, Joel Palmer and Samuel F. Barlow being his lieutenants. Samuel Hancock was captain of another train. Both of these trains left from Independence, Missouri. Another company with over 50 wagons left from St. Jose. The captain of this wagon train being A. Baclelman. Still another wagon train left St Jose, Missouri, under command of W. G. T'Vault, John Waymire being his assistant. Sol Tethrow was in command of still another wagon train.

I was seven years old when we started for Oregon. I can well remember what a hullabaloo the neighbors set up when Father said we were going to Oregon. They told him his family would all be killed by Indians, or if we escaped the Indians we would either starve to death or drown or be lost in the desert, but Father was not much of a hand to draw back after he has put his hand to the plow, so he went ahead and made ready for the trip. He built a large box in the home-made wagon and put in a lot of dried buffalo meat and pickled pork. He made over one hundred pounds of maple sugar the preceding fall which he took along instead of loaf sugar. He also took along plenty of corn meal. At Independence, Missouri, he laid in a big supply of buffalo meat and bought more coffee. He also laid in a plentiful supply of home twist tobacco. Father chewed it and mother smoked it. To this day I enjoy seeing some white-haired old lady smoking her Missouri Meeschain, as we used to call the corn cob pipes in those days. It reminds me of my mother.

When we passed through Independence it was merely a trading post. The Indians were camped all around and were anxious to trade buffalo robes for shirts, powder, lead and fire water, preferably the latter. Father bought four finely tanned buffalo robes of the Indians. There were several in Independence, a number of blacksmith shops and wagon shops as well as livery stables and hotels.

At Independence we joined the Barlow wagon train. Barlow soon took command of the train. In those days you could size a man up, but you can't do it anymore. There isn't the opportunity. Barlow had good

judgement, was resourceful, accommodating and firm. One man in the company by the name of Faines had a fine outfit. He had six wagons and was well to do. He settled in Polk County, Oregon.

One of the things I remember very vividly was a severe thunder storm that took place in the middle of the night. The thunder seemed almost incessant, and the lightning was so brilliant you could read by its flashes. The men chained the oxen so they would not stampede, though they were very restive. Our tents were blown down as were the covers off our prairie schooners and in less than five minutes we were wet as drowned rats. Unless you have been through it you have no idea of the confusion resulting from a storm on the plains, with the oxen bellowing, the children crying and the men shouting. The thunder rolled like a constant salvo of artillery with everything as light as day from the lightning flashes and the next second as black as the depth of a pit.

At Fort Hall (where California Trail joined Oregon Trail) we were met by an old man named Caleb Greenwood, who originally hailed from Nova Scotia, was an old mountain man and was said to be over 80 years old. He had been a scout and trapper and he married a squaw, his sons being half breeds. He was employed by Captain Sutter to come to Fort Hall to divert the Oregon-bound emigrants to California. Greenwood was a very picturesque old man. He was dressed in buckskin and had a long heavy beard and used very picturesque language. He called the Oregon emigrants together the first evening we were in Fort Hall and made a talk. He said the road to Oregon was dangerous on



account of Indians. He told us that while no emigrants had as yet gone to California, there was an easy grade and crossing the mountains would not be difficult. He said that Captain Sutter would have ten Californians meet the emigrants who would go and that Sutter would supply them with plenty of potatoes, coffee and dried beef. He also said he would help the emigrants over the mountains with their wagons and that to every head of a family who would settle near Sutter's Fort, Captain Sutter would give six sections of land of his Spanish land grant. After Greenwood had spoken the men of our party held a pow-wow which lasted nearly all night. Some wanted to go to California, while others were against it. Barlow, who was in charge of our train, said that he would forbid any men leaving the train and going to California. He told us we did not know what we were going into, that there was a great uncertainty about the land titles in California, that we were American and should not want to go to a county under another flag. Some argued that California would become American territory in time; others thought that Mexico would fight to hold it and that the American who went there would get into a mixup and probably get killed. The meeting nearly broke up in a mutiny. Barlow finally appealed to the men to go to Oregon and make Oregon an American territory and not waste their time going to California to help promote Sutter's land schemes.

Next morning old Caleb Greenwood with his boys stepped out to one side and said: "All you who want to go to California drive out from the main train and follow me. You will find there are no Indians to kill you,

the roads are better, and you will be allowed to take up more land in California than in Oregon, the climate is better, there is plenty of hunting and fishing, and the rivers are full of salmon."

My father, Jarius Bonney, was the first one of the Oregon party to pull out of the Oregon train and head south with Caleb Greenwood. My uncle, Truman Bonney, followed my father; then came Sam Kinney of Texas, then Dodson, and a widow woman named Teters, and some others. There were eight wagons in all that rolled out from the main train to go to California with Caleb Greenwood. The last thing those remaining in the Barlow train said to us was, "Good-bye, we will never see you again. Your bones will whiten in the desert or be gnawed by wild animals in the mountains."

After driving southward for three days with Caleb Greenwood, he left us to go back to Fort Hall to get other emigrants to change their route to California. He left his three boys with us to guide us to Sutter's Fort. Sam, the youngest of the three, was the best pilot, though all three of them knew the country as well as a city man knows his own back yard. We headed southeast. I never saw better pasture than we had after leaving the main traveled road. Our oxen waxed fat and became unruly and obstreperous. After two weeks traveling we struck a desert of sand and sage brush. Breaking the way through the heavy sage brush was so hard on the lead team of oxen that their legs were soon bruised and bleeding, so each wagon had to take its turn at the head of the train for a half day, then drop to the rear. On this sage brush plain we found lots of prickly pears. We children were

barefooted and I can remember yet how we limped across the desert, for we cut the soles of our feet on the prickly pears. The prickly pears also made the oxen lame, for the spines would work in between the oxen's hoofs.

One day Sam came riding back as fast as he could ride and told us to corral the oxen for a big band of buffalo were on the way and would pass near us. Whenever oxen smell fresh buffalo they go crazy. They want to join the buffalo. We got the wagons in a circle and got the oxen inside. The buffalo charged by not far off. The Greenwood boys killed a two-year-old and a heifer calf. We had to camp there for a few hours, for our guides told us that if our oxen crossed the trail of the buffalo they would become unmanageable. It is an odd thing that when oxen smell the fresh trail of the buffalo they stop and paw and bellow as if they smelled fresh blood. If you had ever tried to stop a runaway ox team you know what hard work it is. I remember seeing on the plains a stampede of oxen which were hitched to wagons. They tried to stop them but they had to let them run till they were tired out. Two of the oxen were killed by being dragged by the others. The men cut the throats of the two oxen, bled them and we ate them, though the meat was tough and stringy.

While we were crossing the sage brush desert, one of the men in our party named Jim Kinney, who hailed from Texas, came upon an Indian. Kinney had a big wagon and four yoke of oxen for his provisions and bedding. He also had a spring hack pulled by a span of fine mules. His wife drove the mules while Kinney himself also rode a mule. He had a man to drive his wagon

with the four yoke of oxen. Kinney was a typical Southerner. He had long black hair, long black mustache, heavy black eyebrows, and was tall and heavy, weighing about 225 pounds. He had a violent temper and was a good deal of a desperado. When he saw this Indian in the sage brush he called to his driver to stop. Kinney's wagon was in the lead, so the whole train was stopped. Going to the wagon he got a pair of handcuffs and started back to where the Indian was. My father said, "Kinney, what are you going to do with that Indian?" Kinney said, "Where I came from we have slaves. I am going to capture that Indian and take him with me as a slave." My father said to him, "The first thing you know, that Indian will escape and tell the other Indians and they will kill all of us." Kinney said, "I generally have my way. Any man that crosses me, regrets it. I have had to kill two or three men already because they interfered with me. If you want any trouble you know how to get it." Kinney was an individualist, and apparently held life so lightly that no one wanted to cross him. Kinney went to where the Indian was, jumped off his mule, and struck the Indian over the head. The Indian tried to escape. He put up a fight but was no match for Kinney. In a moment or two Kinney had knocked him down and gotten his hand cuffs on him and dragged him to the back, fastened a rope around his neck, and fastened him to the hack. Kinney told his wife to hand him his black-snake whip, which she did, as she was as much afraid of him as the men were. Then he told his wife to drive on. He lashed the Indian across the naked shoulders with the black-snake whip as a hint not to pull back. The Indian threw himself on the

ground and was pulled along by his neck. Kinney kept slashing him to make him get up, till finally the Indian got up and trotted along behind the hack. For several days Kinney rode back of the Indian, slashing him across the back with the black-snake to do what he called, 'break the spirit.' After a week or ten days Kinney untied the Indian and turned him over to his ox driver, telling him to break the Indian in to drive the ox team.

Kinney had a hound dog that was wonderfully smart. He had used him in Texas to trail runaway slaves. After two or three weeks Kinney did not tie the Indian any more at night, as he said if the Indian ran away the dog would pick up his trail and he could follow him and kill him to show the other Indians the superiority of the white man. He said he had killed plenty of Negroes and an Indian was no better than a Negro. After the Indian had been with Kinney for three weeks, one dark windy night he disappeared. Kinney called the Indian his man Friday. In the morning when Kinney got up he found the Indian had taken a blanket as well as Kinney's favorite Kentucky rifle, a gun he had paid \$100 for. He had also taken his powder horn, some lead and three hams. Kinney was furious. I never saw a man in such a temper in all my life. Everyone in the train rejoiced that the Indian had escaped but they all appeared to sympathize with Kinney for they were afraid of being killed if they showed any signs of satisfaction. Kinney saddled his mule, took his dog along, and started out to track the Indian. The wind had blown sand in ridges and hummocks, covering the Indian's trail. So after hunting for half a day in all directions and being unable

to track him, Kinney returned to the wagon train and we started on.

In our party were four or five young men who used to ride ahead with the Greenwood boys, sometimes in front and sometimes by the side of the wagons as body guard. One day when John Greenwood was acting as pilot, an Indian suddenly raised from the sage brush, frightening John's horse. John had a fine riding horse, one of the best I have ever seen. As his horse reared he jerked it savagely. It nearly unseated him. Several of the young men laughed. This made John Greenwood furious. He declared he would kill the Indian for scaring his horse. John took his gun from in front of his saddle and pointed it at the Indian. The Indian threw up his hands. The young men with John remonstrated with him and told him that the Indian meant no harm and not to shoot. One of the young men called to the Indian to run. The Indian obeyed and started to run away at full speed. This was too much for John, who drew a quick bead and fired, shooting him through the back. The Indian fell forward face downward in the sand. The men on horseback waited there till the others rode up, but John rode on as fast as he could. My uncle, Truman Bonney, who was a doctor, examined the Indian who was gasping for breath, and said he had been shot through the lungs and that it was a fatal wound. My mother took a quilt from our wagon and laid the dying Indian on it. She also brought him a drink of water but he shook his head and refused to drink. We drove on a mile or so and just about dusk, Caleb Greenwood and his son Sam, who were escorting some other emigrants, rode into our camp. They had come across the Indian, who was still living. Caleb

Greenwood told his son Sam to shoot the Indian through the head to put him out of his misery, which he did, and they dug a hole in the sand and buried him. When Caleb Greenwood came into our camp he said, "The man who killed that Indian must die." He thought Kinney had killed him. My father said, "Your son John shot him." Greenwood told the men of the party to meet and state the full facts. When he found that his son John had not shot in self-defense but had shot the Indian wantonly, he said, "I will act as judge of this trial. I order that the murderer of the Indian be killed." He told the men of the party that whoever saw John to shoot him on sight as they would a wild animal.

John, who had mounted on a fine horse, rode on as fast as he could and fell in with a Mexican and in a quarrel with this Mexican over a game of cards, was stabbed and killed; so our party did not have the opportunity to carry out the orders of execution.

At the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains we were met by ten Mexicans with a pack train consisting of flour, potatoes, dried beef and other provisions. We camped at the foot of the mountains for several days, waiting for other emigrants, who had turned off at Fort Hall to join us. After a day's traveling we came to a rim rock ledge where there was no chance to drive up, so the wagons were taken to pieces and hoisted to the top of the rim rock with ropes. The wagons were put together again, reloaded, and the oxen which had been led through a narrow crevice in the rim rock, were hitched up and we went on. Once again in the Sierras we came to a rim rock that could not be mounted, and repeated the process of hoisting the wagons up. It took us four

days to reach the summit of the mountains. In going down the side of the mountains, in the Sacramento Valley the mountains were so steep in places that we had to cut pine trees and hitch them to the ends of the wagons to keep them from running forward on the legs of the oxen.

At the foot of the Sierras we camped by a beautiful, ice-cold crystal clear mountain stream. We camped there for three days to rest the teams and let the women wash the clothing and get things fixed up. My sister Harriet was 14, and with my cousin Lydia Bonney, daughter of my father's brother, Truman Bonney, myself and other boys of the party, we put in three delightful days wading in the stream. It was October and the water was low. In many places there were sand and gravel bars. On one of these gravel bars I saw what I thought was wheat. But when I picked them up I found they were heavy and the color of dull yellow wheat. I took one of the pieces about the size of a small pea into campo with me. Dr. R. Gildes asked me for it. That evening he came to my father and, showing him the dull yellow metal I had given him, said, "What your boy found today is pure gold. Keep the matter to yourself. We will come back here next spring and get rich." My father thought Dr. Gildes was a visionary and did not pay much attention to him. Dr. Gildes asked me to pick up all the nuggets I could find. He gave me an ounce bottle and asked me to fill it for him. The next day we hunted along the edge of the rocks and crevices and soon filled his ounce bottle with little nuggets ranging in size from a grain of wheat to the size of a pea.

When we arrived at the fort, Captain Sutter made us heartily welcome. He told my father the fort would accommodate twelve families and the first twelve families joining his colony would be furnished quarters there. He furnished us with quarters in the fort and also gave us plenty of fresh beef, potatoes, onions, coffee and sugar. The families who joined the colony received the regular rations in accordance with the number of children in the family. He gave work to all the men who cared to work. Some of the men helped break the wild Spanish cattle to flow.

The native method of farming was by means of crude plows drawn by two yoke of oxen. Instead of yokes, the cattle had poles lashed to their horns. They used rawhides for chains and their method of plowing was to have one man lead the oxen and one man on each side with a long sharp stick to goad the oxen. Captain Sutter engaged my father to make ox yokes to replace the native rigging. Our men had a busy and strenuous job, breaking the native cattle to plow. They would put one of our well-broken teams in front, then put a yoke of wild steers in the middle and well-broken American yoke of oxen in the rear. In this way our men broke twenty yoke of oxen during the winter.

There was a large cookhouse at the fort, where we children liked to watch them doing the cooking. They cooked here for a large number of Indian laborers. In addition to the Indian workers, there were a lot of Indian boys who were being trained to work. Sutter had to keep getting new workers, as many of the Indians would die each winter of mountain fever. These Indian boys were fed in a

peculiar way. They ground barley for them, made it into a gruel and emptied it into a long trough. When the big dinner bell rang the Indian boys would go to the trough and with his fingers would scrape up the porridge and eat it.

In the middle of the fort was a big oven where the bread was baked. Near by was a well from which we all drank water. At the east end of the fort there was a pile of oak lumber. Here the Indians and other servants were punished for any infraction of the rules. The man or boy to be punished would be strapped face downward to one of the oak logs and would then be flogged on the back with a five-tail raw-hide. Out near the gate a large bell was hung. One of the servants rang this every hour so people would know what time it was.

So many emigrants were crowded into the fort that winter that as a result there was a good deal of sickness. In those days it was called mountain fever; now it is called typhoid fever. A large number of the natives died of this, as well as some of the emigrants, mainly children. Among those who died was Dr. Gildes. He was the one who was going back the next spring with my father to get rich picking up the gold nuggets at our old camping site. He died January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1846, and as you know, two years later gold was discovered in the mill race at Sutter's Fort. My Uncle Truman Bonney, who had gone north to Oregon, remembered where we children had found the gold, so he and some others returned to our camping place to stake out claims, but it had already been staked out and proved to be very rich ground.

The fall we arrived at Sutter's Fort there was a good deal of trouble about the coming of Americans to California. A Mexican officer named Castro brought up the question of the legality of foreigners coming to California without passports. The authorities at Mexico City had issued instructions that the Americans from the Sandwich Island could come to California even though their passports were not regular, but that the emigrants who came from Missouri of south from Oregon must have proper passports. The order which was published in California on September 12<sup>th</sup> 1845, said that the coming of American families from Missouri into California was apt to cause subversion of order and complicate foreign relations with California as well as create much embarrassment, and as a consequence positive orders were issued that no more families should be permitted into California unless they became naturalized. Castro and Castillero came north to ask the American emigrants as to their intentions in settling in California. Castro explained to them that friendly relations had been broken off between the Republic of the United States and the Republic of Mexico. The emigrants promised that if they were allowed to remain until spring they would go away peacefully. Vallejo was very good to the American settlers, supplied them with provisions, and did not require them to give bonds to keep the peace.

Sutter, himself, was more than kind to the emigrants. He was anxious to build up an American colony there and did everything possible for the Americans. In the spring of 1846, a Mexican general with thirty soldiers came to the fort and said all Americans

who did not care to become Spanish subjects must leave California. Late in April a meeting of the emigrants was called and the question was discussed. Most of the emigrants decided that they preferred going to Oregon rather than losing their American citizenship. Captain Sutter urged my father to stay, and told him he would give him six sections of land, but he refused. Captain Sutter gave him horses and wagons in exchange for his oxen.

Captain Sutter wanted to have as many Americans settle there as he could get, and planned to furnish them land so they would raise wheat. He wanted to buy all the wheat from them, as he planned to sell it to the Russian government at Sitka, Fort Wrangell, and other points in Alaska. He was a man of vision. The Russian government had given up their settlements in California; the Hudson Bay Company were retiring from Oregon to British Columbia, and he believed he could exchange wheat for furs with the Russians in Alaska and make a fortune. He probably would have done so if gold had not been discovered in California.

Those Americans who were unwilling to renounce their native country were required to move in the spring. We had always traveled by wagons and it was a problem how to move our families and our possessions on horseback. In the party to Oregon there were fifteen small children. Father and Mother were unusually anxious to go to Oregon because my oldest brother and my sister Ann had died and were buried at Sutter's Fort. So they regarded California as unhealthy. Among the Americans were some single men who were unwilling to take the oath of allegiance to Mexico

and wanted to stay in California; so they took to the hills and decided to stay anyway.

Among the young children to be taken to Oregon was my sister, Ellen Francisco (born January 12<sup>th</sup> 1846), who had been born at Sutter's Fort and who was only a few months old. There were no roads to Oregon, so the children had to go on horseback. An old Scotchman solved the problem by making pack saddles with arms fifteen inches high. He wove raw-hide strands around this framework, making a regular basket. Two children could be placed in each one of these pack saddles without any danger of their falling out. I will never forget the exciting forenoon we spent when we started from the fort. Many of the horses were not saddle broken, and when the children were put in these high pack saddles the horses would run and buck. At first many of the children set up a terrible clamor, but when they found they were not spilled out, they greatly enjoyed the excitement. Their mothers were frantic. After running for miles the horses were rounded up by the Mexicans who were to accompany us part of the way northward.

Captain Sutter furnished each family with a fat beef animal and he also sent ten Mexicans who were supposed to go with us about 250 miles to where Col. Fremont was camped. When he reached the camp we found Col. Fremont had gone to southern California, to join the American forces there. We camped at Fremont's camp while the Mexican killed our beeves and dried the meat for us. They told us we could follow the old Hudson Bay trapper's trail northward to Oregon.

After traveling a few days northward from Fremont's camp we

came to a beautiful lake beside which was a clover meadow. We camped there for the night. The young men who took the horses out to pasture found near the lake an Indian girl about eight years old. The little girl was perfectly nude, her long black hair was matted and she was covered with sores from head to feet. She could only make pitiful moaning noise. Dr. Truman Bonney, my uncle, examined her and said she was suffering from hunger and that the flies had almost eaten her up. Nearby we could see where two tribes of Indians had fought. She had apparently crept to one side out of danger and had been left. She had been living on clover roots and grass. A council among the men was held to see what should be done with her. My father wanted to take her along; others wanted to kill her and put her out of her misery. Father said that would be murder. A vote was taken and it was decided to do nothing about it, but to leave her where we found her. My mother and my aunt were unwilling to leave the little girl. They stayed behind to do all they could for her. When they finally joined us their eyes were red and swollen from crying and their faces were wet with tears. Mother said she had knelt down by the little girl and asked God to take care of her. One of the young men in charge of the horses felt so badly about leaving her, he went back and put a bullet through her head and put her out of her misery.

A few days later we came to an Indian camp. The Indians were subsisting on dried acorns and crickets. The crickets were very large. The way they prepared them was to catch the crickets, pull off their legs so they could not hop away, pile them in the

sun and let them dry, then mix them with the acorns, put them all together in a stone mortar and make a sort of bread out of them. The Indians gave us some of this black bread which looked like fruit cake but had a different taste. Some of we children ate it, while others were rather squeamish about it and did not care for it. That evening an Indian came to camp bringing an Indian boy about twelve years old. Allen Sanders traded a pinto pony for the boy. He cut the Indian boy's long hair, bought him clothing from one of the other members of the party, and named the boy Columbus. The first night Columbus was very unhappy, but after Sanders had given him a sound thrashing he seemed more contented. He reached Oregon safely but a few years later died from the measles.

A few days travel northward from where Sanders had bought Columbus, we were attacked by the Indians. When night had fallen our party moved back into the brush about 50 yards from where we had camped. The men put the packs in a circle to protect the women and children. The nine men who had guns crept out to the bank of the stream where they believed the Indians would cross. When everything was still the Indians started to cross the stream. Our men gave them a volley and the other men, who had cut clubs, with a loud yell splashed into the stream after the Indians, and the Indians disappeared. The next morning the men found plenty of blood along the trail where they had gone but did not find any bodies of Indians.

We reached the Rogue River Valley, in southern Oregon, early in June. I never saw a more beautiful valley. The grass-covered hills were

dotted with deer and elk. The streams were full of trout, and there was not only plenty of wood and water, but there were many little open spots and prairies. Several of our party decided to settle right there. Captain Levin Scott settled on the Umpqua and founded the town of Scottsburg. Eugene Skinner built a cabin at the foot of a butte now called Skinner's Butte and by it the town of Eugene, Oregon now stands. The rest of our party continued on down to the Willamette Valley and reached Oregon City on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1846. My father, who was a cooper and millwright, got a job coopering for Mr. Fellows, while mother secured work from Governor Abernathy.

The missionary association in the east had sent a large amount of clothing and other goods for the Indian students. The dresses were cut out but not made. The clothing was also cut out but not sewed, the intention being to have the Indians in the manual training school do the work.. The mission school, however, had been abandoned, so Governor Abernathy had the goods. He told my mother if she would finish knitting the stockings, make the dresses and finish the boy's clothing, she could have one half of all she finished. Mother soon had all her children outfitted with new clothing and also made dresses and suits, which she sold, Governor Abernathy of course selling his half.

Dr. John McLoughlin of Vancouver employed my father to go to Champoag to repair a grist mill there. He furnished Father a bateau with eight Indian oarsmen to take his family to Champoag. We landed near the old Indian landing near where the monument to the provisional government now stands. We stayed



there that winter while father worked on the mill. The winter of 1846 was one of the coldest that the oldest settlers of Oregon could remember. Hundreds of head of wild cattle and Indian horses died as they couldn't get at the dried grass beneath the snow. In the fall of 1847 we moved to our donation land claim two miles east of where the town of Hubbard now stands.

Among the pleasant memories of our stay in Oregon City was playing with a playmate, a son of Col. W. G. T'Vault, the first editor of the 'Oregon Spectator' at Oregon City, the first paper to be published west of the Rocky Mountains. One day young T'Vault and I were walking along the streets of Oregon City when we met Dr. McLoughlin and Dr. Barlow. Barlow had a plane bit in his hands. Dr. McLoughlin put his hand on my head and said, "Don't you boys want to earn some candy? If you will go with Dr. Barlow and turn the grind stone while he sharpens that plane bit I will give you each a handful of candy." As soon as Dr. Barlow had pronounced the bit sharp enough we hurried back to Dr. McLoughlin and he gave us each a handful of plain candy hearts with mottoes on them. That was the first store candy we had ever eaten or that we had never had in our hands.

Another recollection of Oregon City is going with my cousin, Wiswell Bonney, and young T'Vault to the building which was used as a mint. The men there would melt the gold dust on a blacksmith's forge, pour it into molds, roll it through a roller and keep rolling it till the bars were thin, when they would stamp \$5 and \$10 gold pieces out of the gold bar. They had a beaver on one side and were called

beaver money. They manufactured about \$30,000 worth of \$10 coins and \$25,000 worth of \$5 coins. By accident they made them too heavy, so they were worth more than five or ten dollars, so when the people got them they would melt them up or send them to the mint. That is why they are so scarce now.

My uncle, Truman Bonney, settled at Hubbard. He was what was known in those days as a calomel and quinine doctor, as that is what he prescribed for everything that ailed people.

My father died in 1856 (May 11<sup>th</sup> 1856). Shortly thereafter my mother married Orlando Bidwell. Our claim joined A. R. Dimick's claim. John Dimick, father of Grant Dimick, and I went to school together. The first time I ever saw the inside of a school house was when I was 14 years old. In those days they used to have big times at the barn raisings. When Dimick's barn was built it was christened the queen of the French prairies because it was the biggest barn on the prairie. Neighbors, with their ox teams, came for twenty miles around to help at the barn raising. One incident that barn raising I remember very distinctly. There was a man there named Zack Fields who offered to bet a \$5 beaver coin that no one could raise his head from the ground by his ears. It looked as if it would be easy, but when a man put up a five-dollar gold piece Zack greased his ears so the man's fingers would slip off, and Zack won the bet.

Father paid \$12 each and sent five of us children to school there. There teachers didn't have to know much about books, but had to be able to whip the big boys. I saw a teacher tackle George Dimick, who was 18

years old. It was a battle royal, for George put up a big scrap. The teacher wore out a six-foot hazel rod on him.

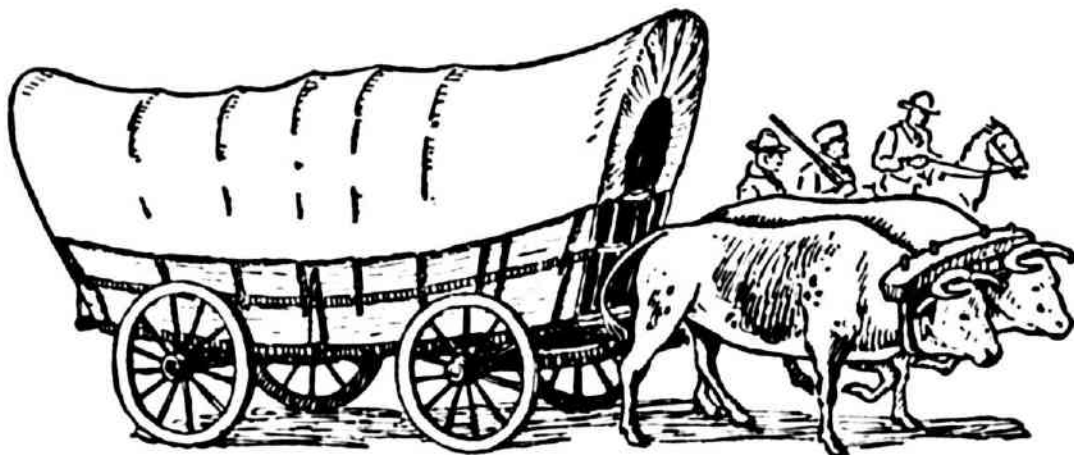
I put in most of my time making cedar shingles. My father's donation land claim on Pudding River bottom had forty acres of fine timber on it. We split our cedar timbers for both Ford's and Kiser's houses. We got \$10 per thousand for the cedar shingles. People came from all over mission bottom and French prairie to buy shingles of us.

The first time I was married I married Catherine M. Rhoades, who was fifteen years old. We were married on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1864, at Champoag, by Rev. T. B. Litchenaer of the United Brethren Church. We had nine children, seven of whom are still living. You will know we shifted around a good bit when I tell you that these nine children were born in seven different houses. My second wife was Louise Coats. We were married at Tygh Valley in eastern Oregon by Rev. Roland Brown. My third wife was a widow with five children. Her name was Mrs. Emma Jo Lamb. We were

married at Oregon City by Judge Grant Dimmock, son of my former schoolmate.

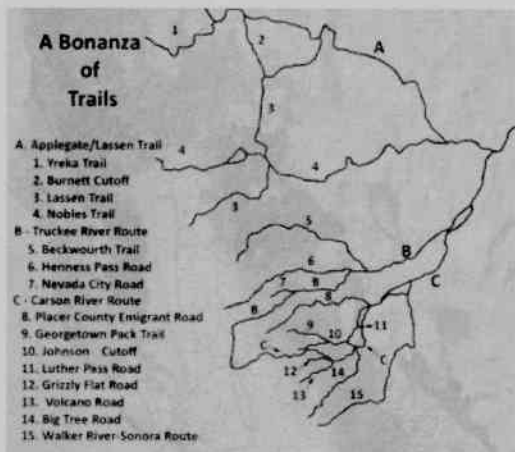
When I was a young man I worked as a carpenter and bricklayer. Then I got into a sort of peculiar business. I would take up squatter's rights on a piece of land, build a good house on it, and sell it to someone who wanted to homestead the land.

In 1861, I went to the Orofino mines in Idaho and had fair success. Some little time after the Civil War I decided to be a preacher. For eleven years I preached on the circuit from Dufua in eastern Oregon to Goldendale, Washington. Later I preached in British Columbia, and still later I had a circuit in the Puget Sound country. When I tell my grandchildren about the old days, about the plains being dark with vast herds of buffalo, about the Indians and mining camps, they look at me as if they thought I could not be telling the truth. Those old days are gone forever and the present generation can never now the charm and romance of the Old West.



# A Bonanza of Trails

## The California Emigrant Trail and Cutoffs



**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention  
September 21-25, 2015**

**HARVEYS**  
LAKE TAHOE

**Public Is Welcome To Attend**

**2- & 4-WHEEL DRIVE PRECONVENTION TOURS**

**ALL-DAY BUS TOURS**

Donner Memorial State Park - Truckee River Route

Carson River Route - Johnson Cutoff Loop

Coloma - Placerville, El Dorado County Museum

**ALL-DAY HIKE**

Hawley Grade/Luther Pass

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

**Speakers:** Topics varied as fur traders, pioneer women, the Carson River Route, J. Goldsborough Bruff, Sutter's Fort, Nisenan Indians, Donner-Reed Wagon Party and history of people and places on and along the California Trail and its opening and its cutoffs.

**Workshops, Special Events, Book Vendors, Authors' Night, Exhibits and More**

This year's host is the California-Nevada Chapter. It is one of 11 chapters of OCTA, an organization dedicated to the preservation, appreciation and enjoyment of all transmigration trails to the west; the trails that made the United States an ocean-to-ocean nation.

Join our chapter for trail work days, field trips, symposiums and other membership gatherings.



**CA-NV Chapter of OCTA**  
PO Box 1521 - Yreka, CA 96097  
tahoeconvention@gmail.com  
canvocta.org



# The Diary of an Average Housewife

by  
Estelle Crowhurst

*Estelle Crowhurst wrote a weekly column about her life for the Independent Herald from 1948 until 1969. The Crowhurst family donated a bound copy of these columns to the Museum. The following are excerpts from some early columns.*

June 18, 1951

*Shasta street progress and Leon Bunce swimming pool*

Progress is a terrible and a terrifying thing. I know we must have it. If we don't go forward, we must go back - there is no standing still. But sometimes I wonder if we are sure that we are really going forward. Or would it be so awful to go back?

For the past two or three weeks we have been seen the beginnings of progress on Shasta street - it must be widened. I don't know exactly why, but it seems that in must be done. Of course it is the next street parallel with our main business street, and that seems to be the reason why it must be wider than it already was. So in order to make it possible that cars can travel six abreast down Shasta street, (I presume that is why it must be wider) scores of beautiful shade trees have been removed from the west side of Shasta street. It only took a few days of work with heavy trucks and equipment to pull out those lovely, gracious, restful shade trees that have been years reaching their wonderful stature. Their shade gave to the homes they surrounded a look of gracious comfort, and to the whole street a feeling of quite restfulness. Now that they are gone Shasta street has a brilliant, sunny bleakness to it that is sickening. But that is progress for you. We can't enjoy the beauty and comfort

of the present, for worrying about the material gains to be had in the future.

Every summer, when the swimming pool in Yuba City opens, and hundreds of children who can not go away on vacations have the boundless pleasure of swimming, without charge, day after day. I think once more with gratitude of Leon Bunce, our former city engineer. It was his idea to utilize the old WPA built boat-landing as a basis and beginning for the swimming pool. At a time when Yuba City could not have possibly afforded to build a pool, he worked and planned and devised the present pool, out of what was already there. Every day, when I see the dozens of children who walk or ride bikes past our house, carrying their towels and suits, I think what a pity it is that Leon Bunce did not live to see what a wonderful service he did for the young people, and in fact the grown-ups of the community, too. The wholesome, stimulating recreation that the children derive from the swimming pool has not doubt kept many a youngster out of mischief during the long vacation hours. Of course we also owe a big vote of thanks to our city council, and the recreation commission who run the pool so capably. We parents should offer many fervent thanks to them.

If ever the time comes when the city can afford to develop the area around the swimming pool, and make

some sort of picnic grounds or park there, it would be a fine gesture to name the project in memory of Leon Bunce.

October 11, 1951

*Mother's washday for a family of boys*

If you are the mother of a family of boys and survive over a period of years, your chances of a long life are pretty good, it seems to me. You keep reading nowadays, about survival under atomic attack, but I feel that the mother of boys needn't worry too much about that. After all she has survived an awful lot, so courage and resourcefulness to last her through some pretty serious emergencies.

One thing that I think takes real stamina is the emptying of a boy's pockets. I have made several strict rules that all overall pockets must be thoroughly emptied before any such garments are put into the wash. But like most rules, they are quite often broken. Bitter experience has taught me that it is better to look, before I throw any jeans into the washing machine, even though there is a rule that says the pockets must be emptied. If they are not emptied you may have anything floating in your wash water, from dead leaves to a dead mouse.

Last wash day, as I hurried through the last machine full, I decided it was better to take the time to glance through the pockets than to find some foreign object in the machine. I hastily put my hand into several pockets and found nothing, and decided that all boys had for once done as they had been told to do. One pocket to go, and would have the last pair of jeans in the machine. And then I ran into a round,

soft, clammy wet object that strongly resembled something half alive. In my shock and excitement, I threw jeans and questionable contents clear across the wash room. Then when I could muster up the courage, I retrieved them, and very cautiously approached the pocket once more. Nothing was crawling out, so I took a deep breath and ran a hand down into the pocket. What I extracted was nothing but a red rubber bulb, such as fits on the handle of a bicycle horn. It was wet and squishy, and might just as well have been a frog, which I had pictured it as being. So I have decided that with such little incidents being just a part of every day for the average mother of boys, the future doesn't hold much terror for her.

April 24, 1952

*Men's magazine article*

Monday of this week I finished an exceptionally large washing early. Everything was on the line and the washroom cleaned before eleven o'clock, so I treated myself to a few minutes with a magazine. Reading in the mornings is much too much of a luxury for me ordinarily but I felt that such virtue as having the laundry on the line by eleven deserved a reward. But I chose the wrong reading material.

One of the boys gave his Dad a subscription to a new magazine for Christmas this year. It is a man's magazine, a very smart sophisticated sort of publication, quite expensive. It had been recommended quite highly, and our young man was sure it was something his Dad would really enjoy. It was brand new. The issue which came in the mail over a month ago was only the second issue to have been

printed. So Monday I decided I would really treat myself with some new and different reading. I only wish I had back my precious thirty minutes that I spent on it.

It is a beautiful magazine printed on heavy paper, most expensive and luxurious looking. The contents consist of articles on various subjects. There is an article on Art (definitely spelled with a capital letter.) There is an article on skiing, one on Oran, one on Photography. But the major portion of the magazine and what seems to be stressed most is Fashion for men. There are several articles on what the well dressed man will wear at the resorts this year. One is entitled "Fashion for Spring in Town," another "Sportswear for Spring in the Country."

One article in particular presents the home and activities of a well-known bachelor. His clothes particularly are pictured, and what an array of them! One corner of the bedroom, with an immense clothes closet open for inspection, depicts what the well dressed man wears at all times. The picture shows at least twenty of what the article nonchalantly calls "lounge and country suits." To me they all looked very much like Father's best suit, which he wears for church, funerals, weddings and parties. Imagine having twenty or more such suits, for lounging and country wear.

And then there are the advertisements, mostly of men's clothing and smoking and drinking accessories. There is a cigarette box

that costs twenty-five dollars, a polo shirt which you may have in white, blue or undyed natural for a mere twenty-nine dollars and fifty cents, and a cashmere sport jacket for three hundred and fifty dollars, if you please. And what pleased me most of all was an advertisement for men's toilet water called "Essence of a Gentlemen" at sixteen dollars for a sixteen ounce bottle. It's really quite costly to be a gentleman, according to this magazine.

No wonder this country is full of discontent, strikes and frustration. If you work hard to support a family, acquire a modest home and car it is bound to make for unhappiness to read of people who have a hard time deciding whether to wear a plaid dinner jacket or a midnight blue Tuxedo with satin-faced lapels for their evenings at some resort. It is a little disconcerting to read of someone who has twenty lounging-suits hanging in his closet while you are wondering if your best slacks will be home from the cleaner's by Friday night.

After a half hour of reading such drivel, where so much importance is placed on such trivialities, it was sheer pleasure for me to go out in the sunny backyard and bring in my washing. The north wind, after very accommodatingly having dried every thing, had died down. The Linnets sang in the black walnut tree, a robin walked chummily on the lawn near me. I would not care to trade places with the resort frequenters. Their life must be a most complicated and worrisome existence.

# Puzzled

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BONNEY	LEISURE
BRITTAN	MARBLES
BUNCE	MILLWRIGHT
CENTURY	NUGGETS
COLUMBUS	OREGON
CONVENTION	PIGROAST
CROWHURST	SOFIE
EXPOS	SULLENGER
FORTHALL	WAGON
GREENWOOD	WASHDAY



# Calendar of Events

## July

- 10 *I Want the Wide American Earth* exhibit opens at the Museum,  
6-8 pm  
15 Summer Vacation Children's Program at the Museum, 10 am  
22-25 Christmas in July Sale at the Museum

## August

- 22 *Wide American Earth* exhibit closes  
27 Buttes Calendar reception at the Museum, 5-7 pm  
29 Pig Roast at Ettl Hall, 6 pm

## September

- 11 *Flooded: Nature and the Human Spirit* art exhibit opens at the  
Museum, 6-8 pm

## October

- 10 Historical Society luncheon, 11:30 am

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