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July 2016



### **Bidwell Mansion**

*Photo courtesy of Community Memorial Museum*



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\*The year the director joined the Board.

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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 2016 dues are payable as of January 1, 2016. Mail your check to the Community Memorial Museum at 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City, 95993-2301 530-822-7141

Student (under 18)/Senior/Library.....	\$ 20
Individual .....	\$ 25
Organizations/Clubs .....	\$ 35
Family .....	\$ 40
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## President's Message

We have had a few 100 degree days already this year; but this morning I need a sweater. We do have an interesting climate here in Sutter County.

The picnic in the Buttes in April was well-attended. We had sunshine and lots of beautiful wild flowers. The vernal pools were bright yellow with the wild flowers. We saw no snakes but we did see a few lizards. Everyone who attended had a great time. The nice thing about the Historical Society meeting is that we are not putting people on committees and asking them to raise money. You can just come and visit with your friends and neighbors. What a fun, relaxing, enjoyable time we have at our quarterly meetings.

Our June meeting was in Ettl Hall. It was an old fashioned potluck picnic with flush toilets, running water, a kitchen and clean level floor and no mosquitoes. You can not get any nicer and easier than that plus everyone got to visit and learn something new. Betsy Monroe talked about her book, *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*. She described her research and told some stories of her family and other historic figures in the valley. Some of my family settled in the Capay Valley. You can read what she's written on her website, <http://www.greatercapayvalley.org>. It's a great site with photos, videos and links to local businesses and events.

We are still very interested in learning about Century Farms in Sutter County. I am sure there are lots more farms than we have yet identified – let's hear from you! You can leave me a message at the Museum (530-822-7141), call me at 530-7550702, or talk to any of our directors.

I have updates on two historic schools in Sutter County. One is West Butte School, about which we have written several articles. Unfortunately, the Historical Society has decided we are not able to take on the renovation of this important building. But we would still like to hear the stories you have of the school or the town of West Butte.

There's another school, this one in south Sutter County, which deserves preservation. Vernon School is in Verona and was built in 1862 and may be the oldest existing school building in California. A committee of interested people is working to develop a plan for restoring the school. They will be looking for help with this important effort and we'll keep you up-to-date on what's happening with it.

Sarah Pryor, President

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## Director's Report

On June 21 we received some very good news. The Board of Supervisors approved both Museum positions to be restored to full time, beginning July 1. So Sharyl and I will be back to working Monday through Friday! As part of this, the Museum will restore our previous public hours on Tuesday and Sunday. We'll need your help with this, as we need to recruit more volunteers to help cover the hours. If you know someone who you think would be interested in volunteering, please send them our way! Our goal is to restore our public hours by November. It is wonderful to have this support from the Board of Supervisors. If you know your Supervisor, please thank them for supporting the Museum!

There is a lot happening at the Museum over the next few months, so here goes:

Our summer Children's Program has been scheduled for July 14. We're calling it *Let's Get Moving!* — it'll be a look at popular sports through the ages, and we'll be using photographs and artifacts to discuss with the kids how sports have changed over time. The kids will then do 15-20 minutes of yoga with Elizabeth Smart from PureJoy Yoga.

On July 16, Dick Marquette will be giving another talk for us. This time he'll be retracing his steps through Marysville, touring us over his postal route, and sharing stories of different stops and characters he encountered along the way.

August 13 will be the last day to see our current exhibit *Sacrament: Homage to a River*, which is a black and white photography exhibit of the Sacramento River Watershed. We're trying to schedule an event with the photographer and the author of the book that the exhibit is based on — we'll let you know if we're able to do it. Following *Sacrament* will be our annual fall art exhibit. This year, it is *The National Park Service: 100 Years of Heritage*. Guest-curated by Don Payne, a local artist who has participated in our previous art exhibits, it's going to be fantastic. A number of local and regional artists are participating. The opening reception will be on August 26, and the exhibit will open to the public on August 27.

Also on August 27 is our annual Pig Roast Fundraiser! If you haven't attended in the past, it's a great dinner with all the sides you could want. Beer and wine are also included in the ticket, which is \$30 if you purchase it in advance or \$35 if you purchase the day of the event. (Children are \$12.) We'll have live music, and a silent auction to round out the evening. Buy your tickets early, as this event could sell out!

On September 24, we will have Stephen Kinsey here to give a talk on the Jewish Cemetery in Marysville. Mr. Kinsey is the Chairman of the Commission for the Preservation of Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks of the West, a group which acts as the custodian of seven pioneer Jewish cemeteries in Northern California. It should be a great event!

Finally, we're having a sale in the gift shop. Many items have been marked down, and we're giving 15% off all kids' books through the summer. So if you know of a kiddo who needs something to do during summer break, come pick up a few books!

As always, thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at the Museum!

Jessica Hougen  
Director/Curator

## Memorials

In memory of **Vivian Bugarin**  
Helene & Michael C. Andrews

In memory of **Clara Callahan**  
Meryl Rudge

In memory of **Adona Chesney**  
Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **William "Bill" Clark**  
Connie Cary

In memory of **Elton Correll**  
Marnee Crowhurst

In memory of **Beth Davis**  
Suellen Teesdale

In memory of **Connie Foss**  
Connie Cary  
Sharyl Simmons  
Julie Stark

In memory of **Jean Goss**  
Jim & Ann Johnson

In memory of **Lorraine Hoag**  
Tom & Jolyne Williams

In memory of **Robert Ketelle**  
Marnee Crowhurst

In memory of **Jean Reische DeMattos**  
Carol Ray Trexler

In memory of **Debbie Miller**  
Merlyn Rudge

In memory of **Fred Nevis**  
Russ & Rita Schmidl

In memory of **Ross Scott**  
Suellen Teesdale

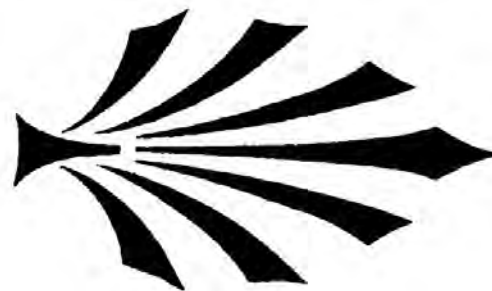
In memory of **G. Dave Teja**  
Julia Patton

In memory of **Shirley Winship**  
Doty Family

### Outright Gift

A. A. U. W. Marysville-Yuba City  
Lee Jones  
Robert & Rose Wood

Gift to save **Vernon School**  
Arlene Chesnut  
Jean Jacuzzi



# The Great Write-in, One Day in Sutter County, October 17, 1991

by  
Dorothy Jenkins Ross

*In 1991, Sutter County residents took part in “The Great Write-in, One Day in Sutter County, October 17, 1991.” One participant was Dorothy Jenkins Ross, an avid supporter of the Museum and author of two books, Jenkins Farm and The Blue Oak. After 40 years in Los Angeles, Dorothy and her husband Ron retired to Live Oak to live on the family farm where Dorothy grew up. The dry yard exhibit in the agriculture wing of the Museum largely came from the Jenkins farm. Dorothy chose to write on three days – a practice run on September 17; the Write-in on October 17; and then what she called “another one” on November 17, 1991. Her graceful reporting of three ordinary days in a Sutter County life make for a relaxing read.*

## Warming Up

September 17, 1991

Up at six thirty to have coffee and cereal while watching news and weather. Went out to check my prunes drying on trays by the woodpile, then out in family orchard to pick up fresh fallen figs to add to the tray out there. Noticed raccoon tracks. The “scare cats” (black tin cat heads with big green eyes) were more than whirling on their strings from the tree, but Mr. Coon doesn’t scare, I guess. The orchard has been rolled so smooth for harvesting the nuts on the east side, that animal tracks show up very clearly in the dust. Quince have started to fall but there were no tracks in that area.

Back by the garden I picked all the little tomatoes to scald, peel and cook later in the day to can tomorrow. Also picked peppers and squash and looked to see if any more pumpkins had set. While picking some grapes I noticed the raccoon had been eating them, so straightened up the scarecrow and dusted him off. Heading back to the house I noticed the jujubes were coloring up and the olives sizing up. Made a mental note to check and see if

I had lye on hand for processing the olives.

After scalding the tomatoes I went out into the cedar grove while they cooled and sat on a stump to weave a few strands of passion vine into the baskets I have under construction out there. Also took a picture of a huge garden spider web among the four o’clocks. I first sprayed it with mist to bring out the pattern. It should be pretty with flowers showing through. I moved some hoses watering the orange trees before going back inside. After peeling the tomatoes I took the garbage out to bury and went on to the mailbox to mail a letter. Going past the cabin I checked to see if the squirrels were active around and under. They were. At least the bats were gone from the windows since I opened the shutters. Sunburned nuts are the only ones falling so far.

At noon I fixed sandwiches to eat with our grapes on the front porch where we watched a parade of harvest crews go by on Clark Rd. It’s back-hoes and tractor-trailer loads of dead trees and broken limbs now that peaches and prunes were all picked. After lunch I

worked on my ranch history and did some bookbinding until mail time when we had some ice coffee while reading the papers. Going outside to change the water I looked over my nature garden: the pokeberry, heavy with fruit; the cocklebur bristling with burs, and Jimsonweed (Jamestown weed) showing off its prickly pods. The mullein is tapering off with blooms. Around five while getting dinner I quartered and cooked the tomatoes to can tomorrow. Warmed up slices of leftover roast in gravy to serve with rice. Cooked some squash and cut up some tomatoes I had set aside for salad. Had some canned peaches from a jar I canned the other day that didn't seal, and that was it.

After dinner we hiked to the river to see how low it had gotten and to water the wild roses we had planted on the banks, now so high and dry. Leaves are starting to fall from cottonwoods, but saw no signs of grapes on the wild vines that cover some of the trees. No wonder the coons are wandering afar! I wished for my camera as antlion holes in the sandbar were in perfect form for pictures. Lots of bird tracks and rabbit tracks were in the sand.

Back home we watched the evening news and I got out my sewing frame and sewed a while on a book I'm putting together out of three Geographic articles on Fruits, Flowers and Vegetables.

### **Sutter County Write-in Entry** October 17, 1991

We were up at 6:30 with a red sunrise over the orchards to have coffee and cereal with the last of our fresh prunes while watching news and weather report on TV. The forecast is

continuing hot, dry days which is making walnut harvest a disaster.

After straightening up the house I cooked the last of our quince and processed some more of the prunes I had dried (wash, boil and bake). As soon as the sun was high enough we went out in the orchard to photograph a large cluster of walnuts we had spotted that shows several phases of nuts breaking out of their hulls. I won the Walnut Growers photo contest this year and might as well try again!

After setting the hose to water young peach trees in the family orchard, we walked across the road to see Bruce (brother) loading up "gear and grub" for a seer hunt with his grandson. He has retired, as we have, on a part of our old family ranch. We went on past his shops to the walnut huller to watch the noisy operation under an open roofed area. Because of the hot, dry weather, the green outside hulls on the nuts are not cracking and loosing up to come off easily. Harvest (shaking, sweeping, picking up), stopped at one point, but when it was noticed the nuts were molding under these stick-tight hulls, harvest machines started up again.

Here at the huller several bins were on hand filled with Chandler walnuts, many tight in their hulls. In a normal year most nuts lose their hulls in the harvesting operation. This year many hulls are still so tight after being knocked around in the orchard it is difficult to adjust the huller to do its job without cracking the nuts. Three men were standing beside a wet, vibrating assembly line picking out and discarding many nuts with hulls partially intact after going through a revolving cylinder that usually removes and washes away all traces of hull.

Several wire cage “cars” were standing by, one being filled with wet, hulled nuts off an endless belt and about ready to be pushed along narrow rail tracks into the dehydrator for drying. We were told it is taking longer than usual to dry them because they have been kept so moist inside the thick hulls. This was once where a prune dipper was located and tiny rail cars carried prunes into the dehydrator’s hot air tunnels.

Back home — on our side of the road — Ron started edging the dichondra and blowing the drive and when I changed the water I noticed birds had eaten some of the still green Fuyu persimmons. I moved the “scare cats” from the fig tree and hung them in the persimmon. I made a mental note to put the artificial owl in the Hachiya persimmon and wondered if the scarecrow guarding the grapes should be moved there too. Passing by the garden I picked some tomatoes and peppers, and stopped by the cedar grove to turn over the wreaths the garden clubbers had made. While enjoying the cool shade and the beauty of the blossoming four o’clocks, I pulled some passion vine out of the shrubbery and sitting on a stump wove strands into the baskets I have under construction there.

In the house to fix lunch I first took a book I am binding out of the press to paste up its back endpaper and put it in again. Although it was pretty warm, we ate our lunch out on the front porch where we could look out over the grass and flower beds and down the drive to the beautiful peach orchard across Clark Rd. We had chicken sandwiches and banana bread with the last of our Flame grapes.

Back in the kitchen I twisted wires on some tiny ears of colored popcorn to have them ready to decorate a wreath to show the Live Oak 4-H girls something they might do to earn some money. Still in the house we worked a while organizing our Soviet slides for a showing to AAUW Travel section, and I mixed up a meat loaf and made a frozen salad for dinner. Later, to get some exercise, we put on hats and walked down the dusty boundary lane past peach and prune orchards to climb over the levee and find the river at a record low. At the boat ramp we watered the wild roses we had planted on what was once a moist bank, then circled past the sandbar to a kiwi patch. Harvest had not begun here, but the grassy field was mowed and ready for pickers.

We walked back along the top of the levee to work our way down the steep side on gopher mound “steps” again to return along the lane. Near Bruce and Mary’s house we stopped to look at a young walnut orchard growing on what was once our home place dry yard where apricots, peaches, prunes and grapes were dried in the sun before our parents had a dehydrator.

We picked up the mail and papers at our mailbox on Kent, then rested and read while dinner cooked, Ron reading the Wall Street Journal and his agenda for an upcoming L. A. board meeting (Regional Airports Improvements). I am reading a book of oral histories of some girls of the classes of 1934-37 at Cal Berkeley.

After dinner we walked around the gardens then read some more, did a little writing and watched a little TV. Before retiring I checked the book in the press up in the hobby room and we



opened all the windows into the cooling night air.

### **Cooling Down**

November 17, 1991

We got up at 6:30 to let the cat in off the deck and go downstairs to change water in the jars of olives we are processing. Ron fed the cat in the garage and we had our coffee and cereal while watching the seven o'clock news on TV. As it was chilly outside we stayed upstairs in the hobby room, Ron doing bookkeeping and me working nearby on Pennsylvania Dutch ornaments I am making to trim a tree for the Trees and Traditions party at the Museum in December.

Later I cleaned out some kitchen cupboards — with Thanksgiving in mind and with company coming and I mixed up some brown bread and put it in the oven. Ron cleaned out the refrigerator in the garage, finding some frozen fruits gone stale, some stale dried apricots, forgotten bulbs, and a red headed woodpecker (that had been found dead and saved for some Indian craft).

After Sunsweet Growers store called saying a box of dried peaches had been returned that I sent the governor of Kykotsmovi, I called his Hopi Indian village office, found him alive and well, so ordered the box sent back. Once outside, Ron started digging up his detected passion vine, while I twisted some last strands on a few more wreaths, and helped pull it out of the shrubbery and trees it had invaded. I picked pomegranates to mail to the Ohio grandchildren, and decided I had better gather tomatoes before we had a frost.

At noon we came in for lunch and had some hot brown bread and

sections of Fuyu persimmon and chunks of cheese out in the sun on the front porch. Overlooking the golden leaves of the peach orchard across the road we noticed how low the sun had gotten in the south. Gold leaves cover the trees and the ground underneath!

After lunch Ron went back to digging vine roots which were into everything. I helped haul prunings to the burn pile, gathered some twigs for my wood stove, then came in to write some letters and make some phone calls to find a substitute volunteer for the museum. One letter was to a Williamsburg cousin about our family Foundation meeting in October that I did not get to. I also made some cartons and packed the pomegranates in nuts for mailing, planted some bulbs and helped haul pine needs to spread out on paths.

Going through the family orchard for mail, I picked up some windfall walnuts and noticed how dry the ground was. We had a cup of coffee while reading the mail, then studied our Yucatan material with our January trip to Central America in mind. Had no luck getting Ron Jr. on the phone and decided he had already left for England where he is working with British Aerospace in a joint venture in cryogenics.

For dinner I enjoyed some deer liver the latest hunters brought back from Colorado. Ron had a pork chop with our banana squash and red taters and a salad of our wonderful vine ripe tomatoes. In the evening Ron read his Wall Street Journal and I read a book Janice brought by about the life of Maria Martinez, the famous potter of San Ildefonso. After a little TV we put the cat out and went to bed.

# A Prince and a Saint in Chico

by Larry Harris

Surprisingly they have the same name — Bidwell, John.

John Bidwell said that he was born at the age of twenty. This statement reflected his stressful childhood. He was born in New York on August 5, 1819. His father was Abram (Abraham) Bidwell. Abram was born in 1769 and died in 1842. With his first wife Abigail Benedict they had seven children. After she died Abram could not provide for his children and bound them into indentured servitude. He married again to Clarissa Griggs in 1816. Their second child, of five, was John. For 20 years Abram constantly moved from place to place. During these moves John managed to get a common school education. In 1837 he set out on foot on a 300-mile journey to the Kingsville Academy in Ashtabula County, Ohio.

After one term he passed the examination to teach school. He decided to “Go west, young man” and homesteaded two farms. He abandoned the first and while he was teaching near Weston, Missouri, his second homestead was taken over by a squatter. As John wasn’t yet 21 and didn’t live on the homestead he had no legal recourse.

During this very low point in his life he learned, in 1840, about California from a fur trader, Antoine Robidoux, who had returned from California. Robidoux described California as a veritable Garden of Eden. He also read letters from John Marsh who had settled near Mt. Diablo and who wrote of the wonderful opportunities in California. From these

descriptions a Western Emigration Society of 500 was formed. The aura of California was dampened by the report of a lawyer who, after returning from California, said that it was very dangerous there.

When it was time to leave only one wagon was at the rendezvous site. More arrived and on May 19, 1841 sixty-one people departed. When they reached Soda Springs, Idaho the party split up. Bidwell’s group, of 36 souls, now without the guidance of Thomas “Broken Hand” Fitzpatrick, a seasoned Westerner, headed West and South with no maps or plans.

The Bidwell-Bartleson party was so named as Bidwell became famous and Bartleson, who had eight men to join the party, demanded the leadership. The de facto leader was Ben Kelsey. His wife, Nancy, was the most remarkable of the party as she, eighteen years old, carried her infant daughter to California.

The only casualty before reaching Soda Springs was a man who was pulling his rifle from his wagon when it discharged into his chest, killing him. Ironically his name was Shotwell.

At about 75 miles short of the Humboldt River the oxen gave out, no longer able to pull their load. The men tried to put their goods on the oxen’s backs and use them as pack animals, but the oxen resisted mightily. They proceeded on foot. After most difficult traveling conditions over the Sierra, they crossed the San Joaquin Valley to John Marsh’s ranch at the foot of Mt. Diablo. Marsh, who had assumed the

title of “doctor,” was, as Bidwell wrote, “one of the most selfish of all mortals.” Bidwell left Marsh’s and traveled eight days in rain and mud to Sutter’s Fort. He arrived there on November 30, 1841.

Sutter hired him; he became Sutter’s “strong right arm.” He remained associated with Sutter for the next eight years. His salary, for four years, was \$25 a month. Any significant event in Northern California for the next six years involved John Bidwell. He was Sutter’s bookkeeper and manager. He dismantled Fort Ross, he helped finish Sutter’s Fort, he helped settlers get land by mapping “diseños,” their sites. He supervised the Hock Farm and built the two-story home for Sutter there. Like Sutter, he became a Mexican citizen without becoming a Catholic which was one of the conditions to acquiring a land grant. He obtained land grants in his own name. One of these, near Rio Vista, he gave up because of too many mosquitoes. Another at Colusa he sold to Colonel Charles D. Semple who, with his nephew Will Semple Green, developed the town of Colusa. Bidwell later said it was worth a million but he got \$2,000.

Will S. Green established an irrigation system, became county surveyor and editor of the local newspaper.

Shortly before the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), fighting broke out between factions in California. Bidwell joined Sutter in supporting Governor Micheltorena’s army to stem the rebellion against the government in Southern California. Sutter and Bidwell were captured and were lucky to escape severe punishment when Governor

Micheltorena surrendered and returned to Mexico. Bidwell and Sutter returned to Sutter’s Fort.

With the outbreak of the Mexican-American War in 1846, John Fremont appeared on the scene and led his California Battalion, with General Kearney and Commodore Stockton’s aid, to victory over the Mexicans. Bidwell became a Second Lieutenant. He was promoted to Captain and took charge of the Mission San Luis Rey (Orange and southern San Diego counties). He became a Major in Kearney’s troops.

On release from the army he laid out the town of Sutterville, and surveyed a road between the fort and the flour mill at Natomas. He collaborated with Sutter to conduct a census of California’s Indians in the north end of the Sacramento Valley above the Sutter Buttes. He meticulously reported 82 whites, 19 “tame” Indians and 19,500 wild Indians.

In 1845 Bidwell began leaving Sutter’s employ. A source of conflict was Sutter’s use of Indian workers whom he treated as slaves. Although Bidwell disapproved of Sutter’s methods, he remained grateful to Sutter and continued to be Sutter’s friend the rest of his life. The biography *John Sutter: A Life on the American Frontier* by Albert Hurtado referred to Bidwell 38 times. Bidwell continued to work with and for John Sutter, but began expanding his own holdings in California.

Bidwell obtained a part interest in Farwell’s Rancho New Salem. Bidwell built a small cabin there and began living there in 1847. In July 1848 he bought half of the George McKinstry ranch; two years later he bought the

other half. In 1852 he built an adobe home there.

In 1847 he drew up a contract between Sutter and a carpenter named James Marshall. Gold Rush!

In 1848 Bidwell found some “scale” gold near the present town of Hamilton (Glenn County) on the Feather River. He reasoned that the source was upstream. It was!

With partners including William Dickey from whom he later bought Rancho del Chico and a team of Indians and Chinese workers, he was able to work the area thoroughly before news spread. One day he spoke to an Indian who did not reply. The Indian had a mouthful of gold. His partners said, “Let’s shoot them.” Bidwell had a different suggestion — when they would bring in a cup of gold he would give them a cup of sugar. Bidwell won this argument.

With the more than \$100,000 from the mine he bought Dickey’s Rancho del Arroyo Chico. It was 22,214 acres and with his portion of the Farwell grant he had 33,000 acres. He also bought several hundred acres from Sam Hensley’s Agua de Nieves land grant. He subdivided and sold it.

When Bidwell moved on to the Rancho no Indians lived there. In need of labor, he offered the Mechoopda tribe land for a village. The village of Mikchopdo was established one hundred yards from his house. It was later moved a mile away and called Bahapki. The proximity was mutually beneficial. At the time the Indians were being enslaved, exterminated or moved to reservations they were protected by John Bidwell. In return, Bidwell had the labor force he needed to improve his rancho.

The protection by Bidwell was essential for their survival. At this time the whites versus the Indians became a bloody war. The Indians, hungry and pushed off their traditional lands that they had had for at least 6,500 years, raided the white invaders trespassing on their lands. These raids spawned murderous reprisals.

Indian tamers (executioners) became well known. Manoah Pence’s company killed 30 or so Indians. Robert Anderson and Harmon “Hi” Good were celebrated Indian fighters. They killed scores of Indians and never lost a man. Hubert Bancroft wrote, “The California valley cannot grace her annals with a single Indian war bordering on respectability. It can, however, boast a hundred or two of as brutal butchering, on the part of our honest miners and brave pioneers, as any area of equal extent in our republic...” And from Roxanne Bailin, “It was one of the last human hunts of civilization, and the basest and most brutal of them all.” Robert Anderson would become a two-term sheriff of Butte County.

Bidwell was a reluctant Indian fighter who went on three reprisal raids of the Indians who had murdered his men and stole his cattle.

In order to farm his extensive land holdings, he needed a source of labor. He began using Chinese workers to tend his crops. As anti-Chinese prejudice and discrimination became overwhelming, Bidwell and the other ranchers were forced to discharge their Chinese workers at a great loss.

Bidwell became a prodigious farmer, using new techniques, irrigating, and experimenting with virtually all vegetables and fruit trees. He found that lemons did not do well.

His production by 1860 was enormous: barley 36,000 bushels, wheat 33,000 bushels, cattle 675 head, sheep 4,500 head, honey 1,611 pounds, wool 10,664 pounds. His favorite melon was the casaba as he was successful in raising them.

He exported most of his grain, keeping the best for his Chico Roller Flouring Mill. The mill was his highest source of income until he sold it to the Sperry Flour conglomerate for \$50,000. He canned 370,000 cans of peaches in 1887. Canning peaches involved making the cans from strips of metal and soldering them closed after the fruit was cooked. He donated 37 acres for experimental forestry. That land later became part of Bidwell Park.

He was a visionary, planning for a statewide system of irrigation canals, reservoirs, dams and levees. He was a half-century ahead of the Central Valley and California State Water Projects. The State and Federal projects stopped short of his vision as they quit building "headwater dams" and neglected needed reservoirs in the mountains. They ignored the drought periods that occur every three to four years.

John's political career was only partially successful. His political forays included state offices, representative to Congress, four times running for Governor and one attempt at the Presidency. His platform of prohibition prevented his election. As his wife Annie was a dedicated prohibitionist, he was also a prohibitionist.

In 1864 John was commissioned Brigadier General by Governor Leland Stanford. Ostensibly he was to control the Indian raids and keep the peace in Northern California. Not well known was his appointment to contain the

Southern sympathizers in Northern California. In the town of Chico there were many families from the South. In Colusa there were so many sympathizers that it was called South Carolina in California.

He did not want to be called "General" but the rank was well known. His future wife and her family knew him as General.

Bidwell was a Representative to Congress in 1864; he served until 1867. He met Joseph C. Griffith Kennedy, head of the Census Bureau, who invited John to social affairs. John met and became totally enamored with Kennedy's daughter Annie. His courtship of this petite (4'8") socialite was mostly by postal correspondence. This little lady was the epitome of perfection to John. She had social graces, was pretty, well-educated and had an overwhelming purpose in life.

Annie, born June 30, 1839, was committed to the Presbyterian Church at the age of 15. At the age of 29, she had not found a suitor who met her wishes.

John, after declining John Sutter's offer of the hand of his daughter Eliza in 1851, was a confirmed bachelor.

One evening, John confessed his sins and Annie, believing in the concept of the Church that "sin followed by rededication can bring salvation, to help a sinner was to bring true joy," was not displeased by his revelations.

She accepted the challenge of reforming this farmer from California. She was not displeased that he was reported to be enormously wealthy and politically prominent and that he possessed an empire in California.

She accepted his proposal and they were married April 16, 1868 in the

Kennedy home in Washington, D.C. attended by President Johnson, Generals Sherman and Grant, and foreign diplomats.

John Bidwell's life was totally changed. His love for this little bundle of energy and purpose was to affect his lifestyle until his death.

Annie had a reality check when she arrived at Rancho Chico. The \$60,000 mansion was not finished. John was in debt and short of cash. The frogs kept her awake. The death of an Indian in the nearby village resulted in an outpouring of grief that disturbed her. When Annie requested the keys to the mansion from Nopanny, the Indian who had been in charge of the mansion, she received a shock. "You second wife, I first wife, no keys," and Nopanny kept them. What the extent of Nopanny's duties were is not known. However, she later became Annie's friend and was her link to the Mechoopdas.

Annie, a very devout Presbyterian, had a compelling mission to "civilize and Christianize" the Indians. John had respected their religion and lifestyle and had not interfered with it.

All of Annie's life she crusaded against alcohol and later for women's suffrage and her Indians.

John pulled out his wine grapes and discontinued his profitable winery.

It is suspected that John's confession of sins included the fathering of two children, Amanda and George. This was never proved. However, these Indians did receive some special treatment from Bidwell.

Annie and John's love affair was constant all of their lives. Often it was by long distance as John was gone frequently. When he was away he

wrote every day and she responded with many letters. Many of these letters have survived and give insight into their relationship. Annie returned to her mother's home frequently, especially when her mother had dementia.

Annie was very ill early in their marriage. It was probably an early miscarriage, but these things were never discussed in those days. Annie had to stay in her room frequently from nervous anxiety. She was diagnosed with consumption and spent a year at Ojai resting.

Annie had four goals. First was to ban alcohol. Second was for women's suffrage and third to take care of and civilize and Christianize her Indians. The fourth was to love John, who indulged her many requests. Her intense feelings affected John's career. He ran for governor four times, president one time and did not win an election. His platform (Annie's) was prohibition and women's suffrage, a very contentious platform.

When John died in 1900 Annie inherited everything, including a \$366,000 debt. She handled the business well, selling Rancho Chico except for the mansion. After the mortgage was paid off she had a substantial fortune left. She became philanthropic. She built many projects for the Mechoopda. They considered her the "little white mother." She was declared to be a "Patron Saint" for the Indians.

Annie had an urge to build. As she and John had spent much time at Big Meadows, she built a ten-room "cottage" there. She called it "Robin's Nest." It was later to be a retreat for Presbyterian ministers.

Later, a dam was constructed on Butt Creek. This created Lake Almanor. (The lake was named from the contractor's daughters' names, ALice, MArY, and EleaNOR – Almanor.)

In 1916 Annie sold the Robin's Nest and the 500 acres around it for \$30,000. The home was later moved to nearby Chester, CA, first as headquarters for the lumber company and then as Bidwell House, a bed and breakfast. You can stay there for eighty five dollars a room or one hundred ninety dollars for Annie's room. Her most lasting and appreciated gift was that of Bidwell Park to the city of Chico.

Annie died in 1918 just one year short of the culmination of her life's crusade. The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to establish prohibition was passed in 1919, but it was repealed by the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment 14 years later. Another of her causes, women's suffrage, was granted by the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920.

His construction of the Bidwell Mansion was one of "architectural preeminence."

The mansion was neither Chico's living room nor its community center. It was, however, a stopping place for the elite. Guests in the mansion included Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Muir, Asa Gray, Leland Stanford, General Sheridan, Sir Joseph Hooker and many others.

As with all notable people there are those who would find fault with them. "John Bidwell: A Reconsideration" by Michele Shover seems to be a consideration of Bidwell's greatness but includes fault-finding based on rather insignificant analyses of his shortcomings. It is a review of what she conceives as public perception of

Bidwell by the citizens of Chico. For example, she criticizes his establishment of a Presbyterian Church as the other local churches were hard pressed.

Shover's critique of Bidwell concludes that "simplistic accounts of Bidwell's past have reduced the man to a p.r. stick figure." This characterization of John Bidwell is not justified after an appraisal of his life in California including his monumental efforts to establish his rancho and subsequently the town of Chico. His history of courage, ability and hard work resulted in his establishing an agricultural empire and being a significantly great figure in early California history.

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# Russell Young Remembered

11/26/1930 – 12/31/2014

by

Bob Barkhouse

The Young and Barkhouse gang go back to the grammar school days. We lived two miles apart, eight miles south of Meridian and 20 miles from Yuba City. Before we were 16 years old, if we wanted to visit, it was a pedal bike ride.

Russ was a very bright common sense man but he did have his devilish side. One of the early memories was his Studebaker 4 door sedan. The Tisdale Gang would load up in the Studebaker and head to Sutter. One thing Russ learned in his Sutter trips was that the Studebaker, after a little practice, could make square turns at intersections with gravel flying. If his dad only knew.

One Halloween we loaded up his old flatbed truck with pumpkins because the Sutter City boys were coming to Meridian to raise a little heck. We found that we could drive alongside the Sutter boys and heave pumpkins off the truck onto the roof of their cars. Little did we realize those pumpkins would make dents in roofs of their cars. One car had the roof completely caved in. I wonder what kind of story was told to their parents the next morning.

Then came the introduction of Marilyn to Russ. I had an old 27 T Ford that Russ, Tom and I would head to Meridian to cruise. We found that the old T could also make square corners and throw gravel all over. Marilyn came out on the front porch of her

house to watch the Tisdale antics. Mom soon grabbed her daughter and took her inside to escape the Tisdale Gang. Too late, Russ had already spotted that beauty and she was fair game for him.

Russ and Marilyn (both shy and on first dates) decided to double date with my date and me. We decided after the show to go out in the country and park. I was in the back seat and thought I was a seasoned veteran until I saw him in action. It did not take him long to fog up the windows.

Tom and I used to go down to the Young house in the evening and convince Cy (Russ's Dad) and Russ to churn up a batch of ice cream. Mind you, Russ and Marilyn were only married for a couple of years and we had her husband out turning ice cream when he should be home in bed. Trouble was we had to go to Yuba City and get ice which took several hours. Finally we had our feast and sent Russ home to Marilyn late at night. All she could say to Russ was, "if it's not one darn Barkhouse it's the other!!"

When we finally got out of High School, these two country hicks who had never been beyond the local city limits decided to hit the road and see what was out there. We left here in my 37 Ford coupe headed towards Sacramento only to find out that the Sacramento cars drive differently than Sutter City drivers. At a Sacramento intersection on the North side of town at a red light a vehicle banged into the



rear of us. Minor damage, so we headed out to Santa Barbara. Went to a movie that night and were in awe. There were lights all over the ceiling that looked like stars. We thought we were in an outdoor theater! On to LA, wow, a jillion cars and they are all in a hurry. Next stop, Las Vegas. Arrived at night and were amazed at all of the lights. Got something to eat and on to Tonapah, Nevada arriving at around 3:00 am. Only one room in town and that was above a bar. Too tired... slept on TOP of the sheets. The next morning got the heck out town as soon as we woke up!! Headed to Reno, no stopping. At this point, these two country bumpkins figured there was no place like home.

After high school, I joined the Navy and shortly after, Russ joined for a year. Yep, "if its not one darn Barkhouse it's the other."

For years, we had a great time at Lotts Lake. Russell was the camp cook and he took great delight in singing "Oh Sweet Mysteries of Life" to us as he cooked and nipped on his Loenbrough [Lowenbrau]. By the time his dinner was ready for us, the beer was called "Munchkins" because it was made in Munich. Russ was the main man at Lotts Lake and we all thank him for many good times at the lake and on the

trips up and back.

Russ passed his carpenter skills on to me as we both built a house each summer for three years. I am thankful for that experience. Those were hard days, seven days a week sun-up to sun-down.

After working with me, he took on Dennis Richardson for a couple of years. He also benefitted from Russell's experience to become one of the area's better contractors.

He was also the backbone of our local Native Sons of the Golden West. For years, as bartender, he setup and supplied us with refreshments and friendly chatter with each purchase. He, for years, was the bookkeeper and kept us always in the black. After the meeting, Russ would join the poker game with us... but a funny thing, when he was losing, he would say that he had to go home and shut off the irrigation pump. Mind you, even if it was raining outside.

On a more serious side, Gayle and I really enjoyed our visit to his cabin at Mineral, and the many times that we either had dinner at our house or out at a restaurant. But most of all, we enjoyed our close friendship over all these years. Thanks, Russ, you will never be forgotten. Rest in Peace.

# June Membership Meeting

by

Kim Cupples

*In June the Historical Society held its Membership Meeting at Ettl Hall. The potluck luncheon was followed by a very interesting program given by Betsy Monroe. Kim Cupples, Historical Society Vice President, wrote the following introduction.*

I have the honor of introducing Elizabeth “Betsy” Monroe, author of *The History and Stories of the Capay Valley*. Betsy is a graduate of U.C. Davis and worked in the Sonoma Valley as an educator. She spent many years researching the region, and her current book is a compilation of, get this, 18 volumes of her newsletter in one book.

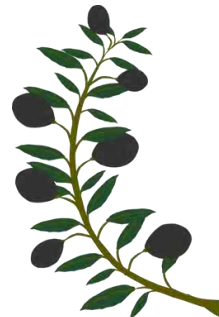
Though not from Missouri, I adhere to its motto, “The Show Me State,” so the week before the meeting I took one of my rural wanderings to the Capay Valley to see it for myself. It is, indeed, “nestled” in undulating waves of brown hills with the foothills farther on west. Wanting to see the book in person, I stopped on the way to the town of Capay at the Esparto Library. I sat with the book for a couple of hours, truly fascinated with it. The thing that struck me most, after the well-written and fact-filled text, was the cornucopia of illustrations and photos. (You can tell I’m a teacher, and I gave its writing and format an A plus.) I learned about the city’s and valley’s founding by settlers, its wild plants and trees, its abundant agriculture, its bootleggers, murderers, horse thieves, and bank robbers, always necessary to the functioning of a well-run society, and many other facets of the area. By the way, Betsy will certainly share with you the importance of one of her ancestors given the job of, indeed, making the

area well-run and safe from these miscreants. The book is catalogued very well for all this information. I didn’t know that the Fremont Expedition passed through on its way from the Sutter Buttes.

Speaking of agriculture, the area produces two of my favorites, honey and olive oil. I bought a jar of the local honey from the BZ Bee apiaries, and can attest to its flavor. I’ve been a hobbyist beekeeper since boyhood, so am an expert. I dropped into the Seka Hills Olive Mill and Tasting Room about ten minutes from Capay. I enjoyed the pleasant afterburn after swallowing a sample of the oil, and I bought a bottle of it, loving pasta with red sauce with lots of olive oil. I buy only local, and have found a new source in addition to the local oil produced around Orland and Corning.

Betsy has an interesting pedigree in the Capay Valley, and I’m sure she’ll be sharing that with you.

I’m now going to do what you’ve been wanting me to do for the last five minutes and shut up. Here is Betsy to tell you much more.



# **Stevenson Elected to Lead New Historical Society into Promised Activity**

From the Independent Herald  
Thursday, May 27, 1954  
Front Page

Virtually every phase of Sutter County history, from its earliest known Indian days, is covered in the range of interest expressed Tuesday evening by a group that completed organization of the Sutter County Historical Society at a meeting in the supervisors' room of the new Sutter County office building.

Noel Stevenson, one of those active in promoting the organization, was elected president. Other officers are Frank Lamb of Cranmore, vice-president; Ida E. Doty, second vice-president; Mrs. Bernice Gibson, secretary; and Harold W. Moore, treasurer. Directors named in articles incorporating the society as a non-profit agency are Liane Weber, Winifred Baun, Ethel L. Albertson, Ida E. Doty, Eleanore Reische and Stevenson.

In the presence of Roy G. Hull, born in Sutter County March 11, 1871 and Mrs. Ida Jones, a Sutter County native born on December 2 of the same year, who were the patriarchs in attendance, Stevenson appointed several committees to launch the work of the society.

Stevenson exhibited ancient court records recovered when county offices were moved from the courthouse and hall of records to the new office building as well as a rare picture of Zakery Montgomery, one of

the county's first district attorneys. Mrs. Gibson displayed a water color reproduction by Liane Weber of the only known picture of Gen. John A. Sutter's Hock Farm as it was when the county's namesake occupied the household south of Yuba City.

Membership rolls will be kept open for a time for the admission of charter members at \$2 a year and life memberships will be sought, it was decided.

It was indicated that the society will be particularly interested in compiling a complete record of the county's past and possibly will attempt to produce a more or less regular historical publication. The matter of a county museum will be of special interest to some members.

## **Article insert**

The Marysville City Council resolved all questions in the matter Tuesday evening when it voted unanimously to accept the bequest of the Mary M. Aaron home, 704 D Street, as a municipal museum. The bequest was made in the will of the late C. Frank Aaron who provided a \$100,000 fund for its operation. Various organizations will be asked by the city council to form a committee to work with the council in launching and maintaining the museum.

# Sutter County Waterways: Looking Back to Look Forward

by

Simran Chahal

River Valley High School

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

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

*We are proud to present the winning entry for 2015.*

On January 17, 2014, over a year ago, Governor Jerry Brown declared a state emergency, one that put people's livelihoods and the entire state's future in jeopardy. However, it was not due to a terrorist threat or domestic riots. The problem is worse. California is in a severe drought. The state has estimated there to be only enough water supply to last a year, unless there is torrential amounts of rain or people learn to change their habits. In times like these, of extreme drought, of conservation, and of fear, one can truly appreciate the sheer fortune to have been blessed with the waterways present in this region.

Sutter County is bounded by the Sacramento River on the west and the Feather River on the east. These rivers have dictated much regarding the fates of those residing in the valley. For the Maidu people living here prior to the arrival of Spanish and Mexican scouts in

the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, they created a pattern of migration.

When John Sutter settled here after obtaining a land grant from the Mexican government in 1848, the waterways continued to have an impact, but this impact had changed. Now, the water functioned as a port for traveling passengers and trade goods. It also attracted gold miners during the Gold Rush of the late 1840s and early 1850s, after hearing of stories such as that of the small group that retrieved a sum of gold from the Feather River valued at over three million. The role of the Sutter County waterways once again changed when the levees were built. The rivers could not longer function as ports, changing the social dynamic once again. John Sutter, who had quickly seen the agricultural value of this valley, had already established the beginnings of an agricultural empire just north of Yuba City immediately following settlement here.

The waterways allowed for the success of rice paddies. During the Great Depression, many from far away were attracted to the job possibilities due to these orchards and fields. Even today, ninety-two percent of Sutter County is considered agricultural land.

The waterways have been crucial to establishing society here, whether discussing the Maidu or the current dwellers. However, the same rivers can have detrimental effects. When the levees cannot hold against the power of the water, the waters flood the county and devastate the lives of those who live there, as they did in December 1955. Storms lead to the rivers overflowing and breaking the levee. 550 to 600 people were rescued by helicopter and 38 were not so fortunate and lost their lives. The project to repair the levee to prevent such disasters cost the county nearly a hundred million dollars. The rivers can lead to just as much damage as prosperity.

The current problem however is almost the opposite. These waterways

have had such a pivotal role to society in Sutter County. If they dry up, what will become of the community? This community's history is so entangled with the waterways, can we survive without them? They provide water for the farmers. They also form a recreational facility. Many people go to the Feather River Parkway for a swim, and my cross country team goes there for many practices. It does not appear to be significantly lower than normal years. However, when a friend walked in for an English film project, she walked several yards in and the water still only reached her knees. This cannot be normal. Though this paper focused on the effects to Sutter County, these rivers also provide drinking water to central and southern California, as the main source of water for the California State Water Project. Until there is enough rainfall, further preventative measures need to be taken to ensure that the waterways that have been in this community continue to be here.

## October Meeting

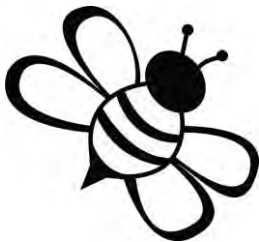
Our next membership meeting will be **October 8, 11:30 am**, at the **Cordi Winery** in the Sutter Buttes. We'll have a catered lunch, wine tasting, and learn about the winery and how they produce their wines. We'll be sending out more information before the meeting, but it's not too early to put it on your calendar.

The Cordi Winery is the first winery in Sutter County. The first vines were planted in 2009 and Cordi has won a number of awards in California for their wines. They have a variety of wines available for purchase at reasonable prices.

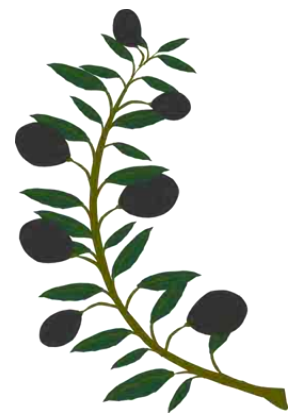
You can check out their website at [www.cordiwinery.com](http://www.cordiwinery.com).

# Puzzled?

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ANNIE	MARSHALL
BIDWELL	MICHELTORENA
CAPAY	NOPANNY
CHICO	RUSSELL
CUPPLES	STEVENSON
DOROTHY	SUTTERVILLE
ELEANORE	TISDALE
HARRIS	VERNON



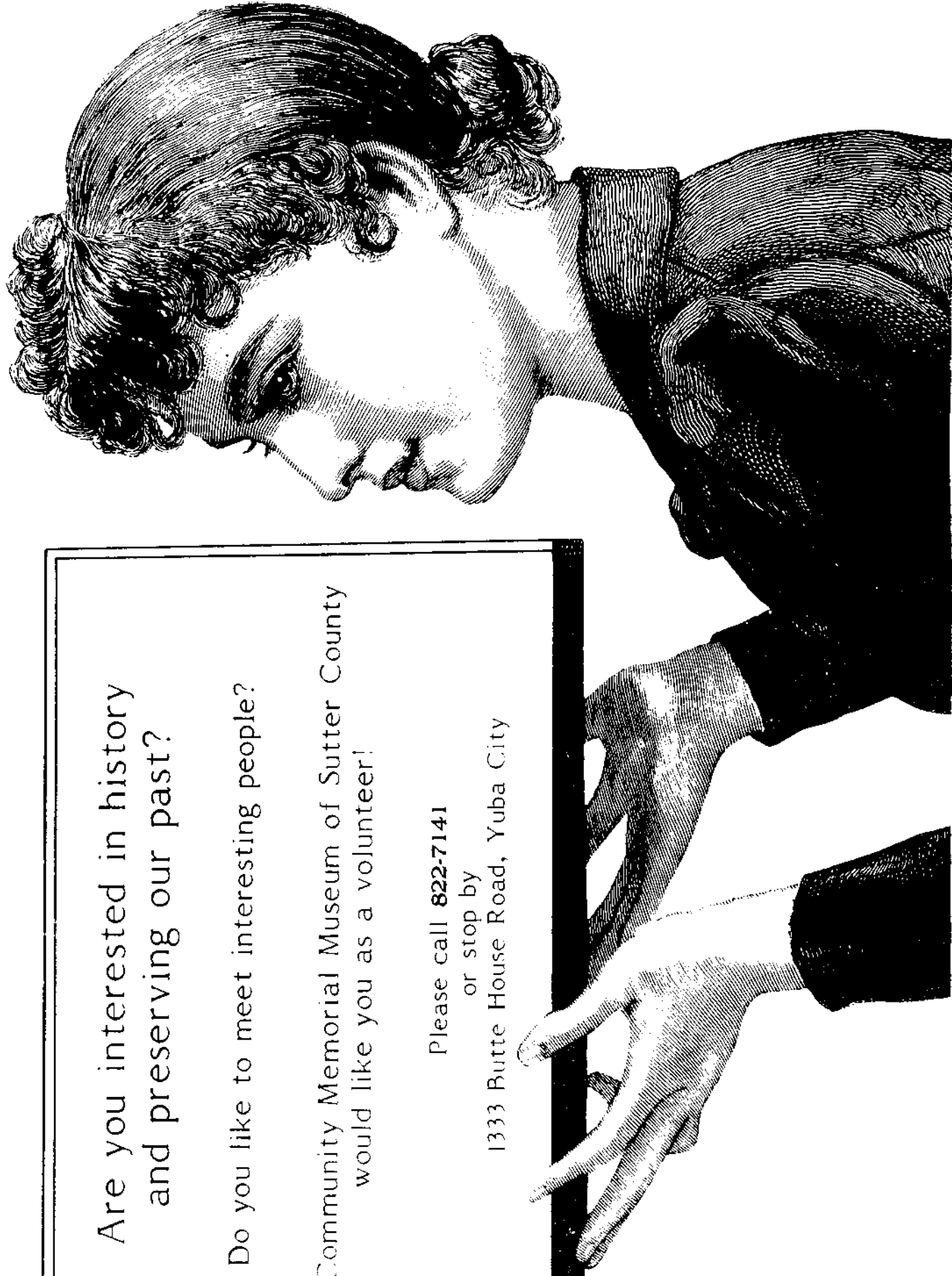
Are you interested in history  
and preserving our past?

Do you like to meet interesting people?

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

Please call **822-7141**  
or stop by

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City



# Calendar of Events

## July

- Sacramento: Homage to a River* photography exhibit at the Museum
- 14 Children's Program, 10:00 am at the Museum  
Program: Let's Get Moving!
- 16 An Afternoon with Dick Marquette, 2:00 p.m. at the Museum

## August

- 13 *Sacramento: Homage to a River* photography exhibit ends
- 26 *The National Park Service: 100 Years of Heritage* Art Exhibit Opening  
Reception, 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Museum
- 27 Pig Roast, 6:00 p.m., Ettl Hall  
\$30 in advance, \$35 at the door

## September

- 24 The Jewish Cemetery in Marysville, 2:00 p.m., by Stephen Kinsey

## October

- 8 **Membership Meeting, 11:30 am, Cordi Winery see page 20**
- 11 Volunteer Appreciation, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum
- 19 Ornament Workshop, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum

## November

- 10 Ornament Workshop, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum

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