

BULLETIN



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ON THE COVER:

STANDING BEFORE THE FRIESLEY FALCON ARE (LEFT TO RIGHT) JAMES SIMPSON, MECHANIC; CLIFFORD STROTHER, MECHANIC; GRAFTON T. REED, LEAD MECHANIC; BOND M. SPENCER, DESIGNER, BUILDER AND TEST PILOT OF THE FALCON; AND HAROLD M. FRIESLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE FRIESLEY AIRCRAFT CORPORATION.

CREDIT: HENRY SACKRIDER

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Our Mission

The Sutter County Museum shares local stories to strengthen community bonds, to inspire celebration of our diverse cultural heritage, and to demonstrate how understanding the past prepares us for the future.

About the Bulletin

The **Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Community Memorial Museum Association. Editors are Sharyl Simmons and Phyllis Smith. Payment of annual membership dues provides you with a subscription to the **Bulletin**.

Museum Association

The Association is a 501(c)(3) organization that fundraises and supports the operation of the Museum.

Applications to join are always accepted (available on the Museum's website). If you are interested in history and want to do something meaningful for our community, please consider applying! New applicants to the Association are approved by a vote of the full Association. Members serve for 4 year terms.

Current Association Members:

Phyllis Smith, President

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Chuck Smith

From the Director

Hello Friends,

You may be surprised to still see my name listed as Director/Curator. I am too! When I put in my notice, I offered to continue to do portions of the job remotely around my new job in Oregon, to keep the museum operating as well as possible and to smooth the transition. I did not imagine that I would be doing it for so long, but here we are. Our first round of recruitment to fill the position was unsuccessful. By the time you read this, I am hoping we will have offered the job to a fantastic candidate - we are in the middle of a new round of recruitment as I type this, and we have some great applicants.

I want to apologize for this edition of the Bulletin making its way to you so late. It is difficult running two institutions at the same time. And, for this fiscal year we decided to continue publishing the Bulletin only three times per year, due to the financial ramifications of the pandemic. While we are limping by, we could really use your help. Please consider doing some of your Christmas shopping in our Museum Store. Although we have not been able to fulfill all of the membership benefits that we promised when we relaunched our membership program in early 2020, I hope you will consider renewing at the same level or higher anyway. And I urge you to consider making a tax-deductible donation to support us.

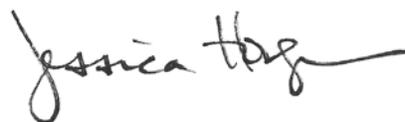
For a long time, we have not done a good job of expressing our financial needs to you, our supporters. Well, here it is. We need your help. To continue moving the museum along the path of growth and revitalization that we have been on for the last 6 years, we need your support. Renovating the building was just the beginning. We have been working with an exhibit design firm to create a master plan that will guide the redevelopment of our permanent exhibits. This work is not cheap. If you have room in your budget to donate, please consider it.

On top of everything else, we have decided not to hold Trees and Traditions this year. Early in the summer we thought it was safe to do so, but with the Delta variant still raging we just don't feel it is safe to plan for a large indoor party. I know some of you are wondering why we would make this decision given that the numbers are going down. Yes, they are improving. But as we still have between 50 and 100 new cases every day (as of the writing of this note), I don't feel it is safe. And with only slightly over 54% of the Yuba Sutter community fully vaccinated, it is highly probable that we will see another surge of cases.

We are planning an alternate fundraiser. We are putting together Christmas gift baskets that will be for sale and will be delivered directly to the home of the purchaser or recipient if it is purchased as a gift. We will begin advertising this soon, so keep your eyes peeled.

Thank you for your patience with us during this time of transition and difficulty. And as always, thank you for your support.

Best Regards,



Director/Curator

HAROLD FRIESLEY'S DREAM

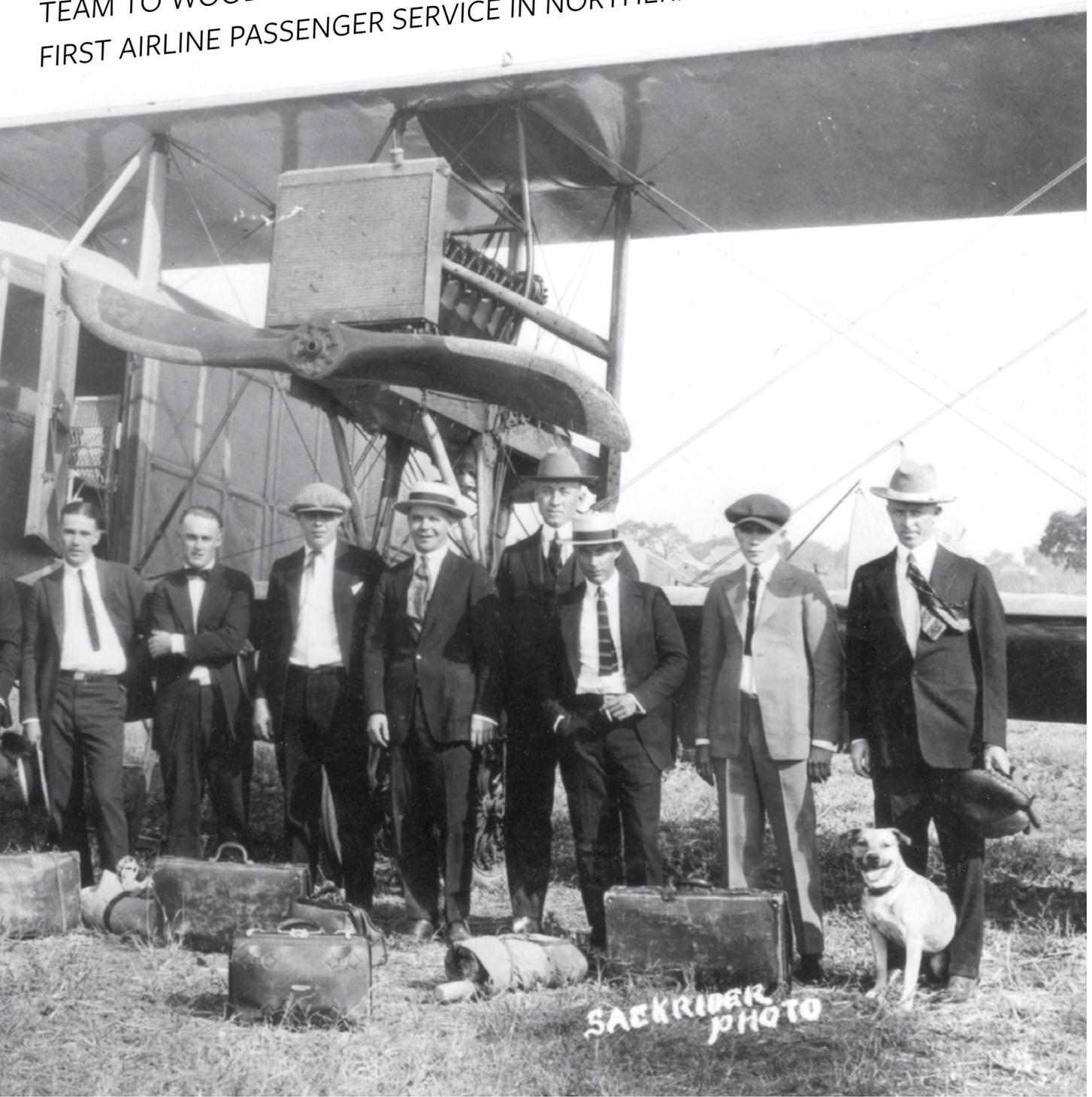
By Allen Herr



THE FRIESLEY FALCON 12 SEAT AIRLINER WITH THREE MAN CREW AND 12 MEMBERS OF THE MARYSVILLE MERCHANTS BASEBALL TEAM AT FRIESLEY FIELD NEAR GRIDLEY ON AUGUST 7, 1921 JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTING FOR A GAME AT WOODLAND. LEWIS WILCOXON IS 8TH FROM THE RIGHT.

PHOTOGRAPHER: HENRY SACKRIDER. IMAGE COURTESY OF SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM

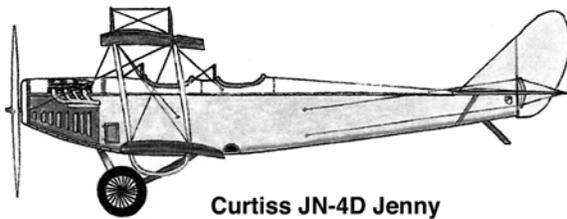
A NEW LOOK AT THE 1921 FLIGHT OF THE MARYSVILLE MERCHANTS BASEBALL TEAM TO WOODLAND AND HAROLD FRIESLEY'S DREAM OF CREATING THE FIRST AIRLINE PASSENGER SERVICE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



The largest aviation trade magazine in America, *Aerial Age Weekly* reported in its August 25, 1919, issue that due to a railway strike the Ft. Sill (Oklahoma) Post Field Aerial Baseball Club was flown to and from a scheduled baseball game at Marlow, Oklahoma, in Curtiss airplanes.

The Curtiss aircraft were undoubtedly the ubiquitous Curtiss JN-4 Jennies that were built in the thousands during the Great War. The JN-4 Jenny training plane was one of only two aircraft designs that were built in great numbers during the war, the other being the de Havilland DH-4 day bomber. The Jenny carried only two people, the pilot and a flying student or passenger.

To haul an entire nine-man baseball team, the coach, and equipment the 25 miles from Ft. Sill to Marlow in one flight would have required an entire twelve-plane squadron. Of course, it could have been done with fewer aircraft making multiple flights.



Curtiss JN-4D Jenny



Standard J-1

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALLEN HERR

As the airlift of the Ft. Sill baseball team to Marlow was reported in an August 25 issue, due to publication delay the game itself would have been played at an earlier date. Unfortunately, the exact date of the game has yet to be established.

The Ft. Sill flight takes off the table the claim that the Friesley Falcon flight carrying the Marysville Merchants baseball team to Woodland to play the local American Legion team was the first time a baseball team was flown to play a scheduled game.

This author continued to rationalize the Friesley claim, and the local legend, with the belief the flight was the first time an entire baseball team flew to a game in the same aircraft. Then about a year ago a good friend sent me a newspaper clipping from the October 14, 1977, issue of the *Sacramento Bee*. The clipping contained an

interview with Lewis Wilcoxon, who was a 20 year-old left fielder for the Marysville Merchants baseball team and made the flight to Woodland in 1921.

On August 7, 1921, Wilcoxon and the others assembled at Friesley Field, two miles south of Gridley on Highway 99, where the airliner was built. There they boarded the huge twin-engine biplane with its Pullman-like fuselage for what would become the legendary first flight of a baseball team to a game. However, the Falcon airliner couldn't carry the entire team.

Larry Wilcoxon told the *Bee* reporter that he "vividly remembered" the team's flight to Woodland. He remembered that, "...half of us flew to Woodland and came home (after the game) in cars. The other players drove to Woodland and rode back in the plane. I think we flew (down) at about 1,500 feet (at) maybe 80 miles per hour. We followed the highway down past Live Oak in Sutter County and then out across the (Sutter) by-

pass to Knights Landing (and on to) Woodland in Yolo County." Bond Spencer, one of the pilots that day, knew the route well and the location of the landing field, four miles west of Woodland. He had flown the Falcon to Yolo Fliers Club Field, Woodland's airport, three months prior when the Fliers Club held the first major postwar air meet in central and northern California.

The Yolo Fliers Club still exists and still sits just off the northern threshold of the runway at what is now called Woodland-Watts Airport. The club's emphasis is no longer aviation. It is a golf club and there is a large course on the club's property.

After Spencer and the newly hired co-pilot Roy Francis landed the Falcon on Fliers Club Field next to the rolling foothills of the California Coast Range, which jut out unusually far into the Sacramento Valley there, he



FRIESLEY FALCON WITH CREW, AN UNKNOWN WOODLAND CONTACT AND SIX MEMBERS OF THE MARYSVILLE MERCHANTS BASEBALL TEAM LATER ON AUGUST 7, 1921 AFTER ARRIVING AT YOLO FLIERS FIELD NEAR WOODLAND. LEWIS WILCOXON IS AT THE FAR RIGHT.

IMAGE COURTESY OF SACRAMENTO ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM COLLECTION CENTER

parked the Falcon amongst the towering oak trees that inhabit the grounds. The baseball players disembarked from the Falcon and met with the rest of the team who came by car. They then proceeded to the Woodland ballpark where they were soundly defeated 15-5, according to Wilcoxon.

When asked about how it felt to fly in the Falcon, Wilcoxon said he was afraid but fascinated by his first flight in an airplane. He said, “The worst part was the takeoff at Gridley. It seemed we were a long time getting into the air.” When he looked out the window and saw they had left the ground he said the “...wings seemed to be slapping up and down. I thought we were falling apart. But it got us there and it got the other half of the team home from Woodland.”

The 1919 Ft. Sill flight burst the belief that the Falcon’s flight to Woodland of an entire baseball team in 1921 was the first such event in history. What was accomplished with this flight was half of a baseball team was flown to a game on the same plane and the Friesley Company achieved its most successful publicity flight in the corporation’s history.

Harold M. Friesley, president of the company, hired Henry Sackrider, his go-to photographer, to record the well-planned publicity event. Sackrider, a professional photographer, who with his wife Delzzie ran a photography studio in Marysville from 1913 until 1935, took the iconic photo of the entire Marysville Merchants baseball team standing in front of the Friesley Falcon that August day in 1921. It was photo that would immediately be published in many newspapers in northern California and elsewhere. Copies of the photo would hang in barbershops and beer-joints in the Twin Cities for decades.

In Sackrider’s photo there are, standing in line in front of the Falcon, fourteen men, one boy, and one dog, plus seven bags of baseball equipment lying on the ground. We know from other Sackrider photos of the Falcon’s interior there were



FRIESLEY FALCON AT FRIESLEY FIELD NEAR GRIDLEY. NOTE THAT BOTH 400 HORSEPOWER LIBERTY ENGINES ARE RUNNING AND BOND SPENCER, DESIGNER, BUILDER AND TEST PILOT OF THE FALCON STANDS BETWEEN THE WINGS ON THE FAR RIGHT.

PHOTOGRAPHER: HENRY SACKRIDER. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GRIDLEY MUSEUM

two seats in the pilots' cabin and behind a bulkhead were ten more seats, five on each side of the aisle in a cramped passenger compartment.

With the Falcon's crew of three (two pilots and a mechanic) there was no room on the plane for more than nine passengers much less their heavy bags of baseball equipment. No competent pilot, even in these early days of aviation, would have attempted a takeoff in an essentially experimental aircraft, overloaded, on a hot August day. The Friesley people were fudging a wee bit with their publicity of the flight by optically suggesting that the Falcon carried everyone in the photo and their bags.

Another photograph taken that same day at Woodland's Yolo Fliers Club Field shows the Falcon airliner sitting amongst the foothills and oak trees adjacent to the landing field with a lineup of the three crew members and seven team members in front of the Falcon. This much more optimal passenger load would have made for a safe flight. The ten men in the photo had just gotten off the Falcon as Lewis Wilcoxon is in both photos. The Fliers Club photo

supports Wilcoxon's memory of the flight that half of the team flew down for the game and the other half flew back after the game.

The baseball team's flight was the apex of the Falcon's flying career. At the time of that flight, Bond Spencer and Roy Francis had made 69 flights in the Falcon and carried over 400 passengers, mostly men and women of wealth who the company hoped would invest in Friesley's dream of starting a regularly scheduled airline between Portland and San Francisco.

Unfortunately, the baseball flight and all of the other publicity flights plus Friesley's salesmen scurrying around Butte, Yuba, and Sutter counties in their white Ford Model T automobiles couldn't bring in enough money to keep the Friesley Aircraft Co. in Gridley. On September 28, 1921, the Friesley Falcon made its last flight in the Sacramento Valley. It was flown back to the Bay Area where its initial construction had started. Let's look back at how the Friesley Falcon came into being and how Harold Friesley's dream of creating the first passenger service in northern

California failed.

Harold Friesley incorporated the Friesley Aircraft Co. in mid-1919. He had been described in the newspapers as a wealthy pottery manufacturer. Prior to the Great War he was known as Herold Friesleban. Born in Oroville in 1892, his family moved to San Francisco when he was only a year old. He was educated in the Bay Area and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley. His family had acquired their wealth from real estate, a hotel, retail business, and farming in Butte County. He changed his name to Friesley during the war, as did many Americans with Germanic sounding names.

Aeronautics had progressed rapidly as a new technology during the war and there were a growing number of capitalists who wanted to take that progress into civilian life after the war – how to do it was the big question.

One of the first out of the gate was Alfred W. Lawson. He wanted to start a regularly-scheduled passenger service from New York City to San Francisco. Lawson was

able to successfully build a large twin-engine transport plane and have it flying by mid-1919. He had made several test flights, some carrying passengers, in the following months, but creating an airline service was an entirely different problem. There were no airports across the United States where he could land his enormous Lawson C2 transport plane. There was no infrastructure to support his passengers or his aircraft. He would have to create it himself. He began by traveling across the country negotiating with various city fathers to encourage them to clear landing fields and establish airports where he could refuel his transports and pick up and drop off passengers.

For the western terminus of his proposed passenger service Lawson negotiated with the head of Redwood Aviation Co., Gordon Ferrie, at Redwood City on south San Francisco Bay. This was the only established Bay Area airport that was safe enough with a long landing field for his transport aircraft.

Harold Friesley knew about Lawson's big transport plane and his plans for a transcontinental passenger service as Lawson's progress was followed closely by most of America's major newspapers. In June 1919 Friesley incorporated his new aircraft company and planned to get in on the ground floor of airline service in the United States.

In September while negotiations were going on at Redwood City, Harold Friesley took his two daughters for an airplane ride in one of Redwood Aviation Company's planes. He was convinced that flying was safe, but he knew he had to convince the man on the street if passenger service was to be a success. So with a newspaper reporter present, Friesley took his 17 month-old daughter, Ruth, and his three year-old daughter, Eleanor, with him for a half-hour airplane ride in a Standard J-1 aircraft, a World War trainer quite similar to the JN-4 Jenny. The Standard, which had a larger passenger seat than the Jenny, could carry Friesley and his two daughters safely. The Standard was flown by Frank Bryant, considered one of the best instructor pilots in the Bay Area and known for his "safe and sane" flying technique. Bryant was a unique character in this postwar era of "wild" barnstormer pilots left over from the war.

The following day, September 25, 1919, the Redwood City Democrat came out with the headline on page one: REDWOOD SELECTED AS BIG AVIATION TERMINAL with a long column about the selection and Lawson's negotiations. Next to that column with a much smaller print headline stated 17 MONTH - OLD BABY TAKES RIDE IN AEROPLANE HERE with a shorter column describing the Friesley's airplane ride.

Friesley strengthened his resolve to get into the aviation game. During the following year-and-a-half, he built a large double hangar and developed Friesley Field, a landing field two miles south of the city of South San Francisco on the bay near the location of present day San Francisco International Airport (SFO). There he opened a flying school and an

air taxi (charter) service after acquiring three JN-4 Jennies. He hired four ex-army pilots, Capt. Bond Spencer, Lt. Len E. Melendy, Lt. Bunny Woodworth, and Capt. J. McGraves. They taught flying and made charter flights from Friesley Field and the smaller but more active airport on the old Panama-Pacific International Exposition grounds called Marina Field. This airport was across the street from today's Marina Green, one mile east of Crissy Field in San Francisco.

While attending to his new flying service, Friesley began construction of a large twin-engine transport with an uncanny resemblance to Alfred Lawson's C2 aircraft. He reincorporated in early 1920 and in the process took in Lt. Lowell Smith as vice president of the corporation. Smith was an active duty officer in the U. S. Army Air Service. In 1924 he became nationally known when he took over command of the Army's Around-the-World Flight.

Friesley's airliner design while under construction was named the Friesley BS-1 "Aircar." It was named after one of Friesley's pilots, Bonifield Melville Spencer who was called simply Bond Spencer. Spencer designed and was a hands-on builder of Friesley's Aircar. He was a high time ex-army pilot with 3500 flying hours and would test-fly the Friesley when it was finished. Once construction started on the Aircar, a target date for the first flight was September 1, 1920, a date that was impossible to keep.

Friesley established the Friesley Aircraft Corporation headquarters at 703 Phelan Building in San Francisco and had his sales manager, L. Ponton de Arce, begin the hunt for investors.

It became apparent that Alfred Lawson's transport would handle all transcontinental flights. It is not known whether an agreement was made beforehand, but there was never any doubt that from Lawson's Bay Area terminus, Charles McHenry Pond of the pioneer Stockton McHenry family, with his partner, Ross L. Gardner, would haul Los Angeles passengers to and from the terminus in an eight-passenger Eagle airliner built by the



Lawson C-2 Air Line



THE LAWSON C-2 AIR LINE WAS INTENDED TO FLY PASSENGERS FROM NEW YORK TO THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA CIRCA 1921.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALLEN HERR

Curtiss Aeroplane Co. Harold Friesley's company would haul passengers from Portland, Oregon to and from Lawson's terminus in the Friesley airliner.

The pilots of Friesley's three Jennies began bringing in funds with their flight instruction and air taxi work but it wasn't enough.

In January 1920 an economic recession hit the United States and all of the countries allied with her during the Great War. For Germany and the Central Powers the recession started in 1919. In America the recession turned into a sharp severe depression in 1921. Investment money for new startup companies disappeared in the Bay Area.

The recession hit Harold Friesley hard; he greatly reduced his Bay Area operations and moved what had been constructed so far of his Aircar north. On May 26, 1920, the *Marysville Democrat* reported that a twelve-passenger airplane was parked at the Friesleben Ranch 15 miles north of Marysville on the east side of the Feather River. The report should have said, parked at the confluence of Honcut Creek and the Feather River on Friesleben Ranch were parts and pieces of a twelve passenger airplane.

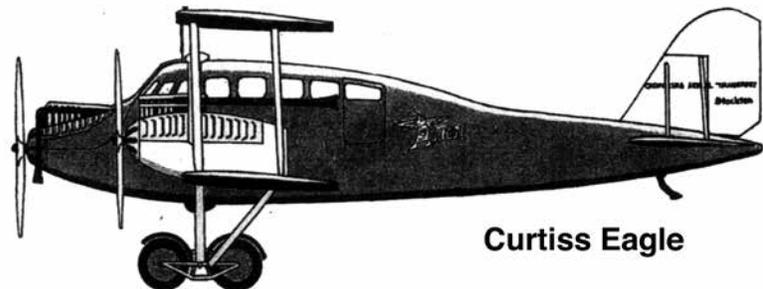
Harold had moved the Aircar project and one of his JN-4s to the family ranch where he spent his summers as a boy. The other two Jennies were left at Marina Field and Friesley Field near South San Francisco.

Not long after the move to the Friesleben Ranch, disaster struck the company. On June 13, 1920, Len Melendy, one of Friesley's pilots who remained in the Bay Area, was killed in a mid-air collision over the California coastal town of Ft. Bragg. He was flying a Varney Company aircraft at the time of the accident. On June 30, Dan Lane, who had been hired just three days before presumably to replace Len Melendy, crashed while attempting to land at San Francisco's Marina Field. He was carrying two passengers, his ten year-old cousin Paul Lane, and a man named Herman L. Tucker. All three on board were killed and Lane was flying one of the Friesley's Curtiss JN-4s. It was listed in the newspaper as a Friesley



Friesley Falcon Airliner

THE FRIESLEY FALCON AIRLINER WAS INTENDED TO FLY PORTLAND, OREGON PASSENGERS TO AND FROM LAWSON'S BAY AREA TERMINUS AT REDWOOD CITY.



Curtiss Eagle

THE CURTISS EAGLE (NAMED AVION) OF THE CALIFORNIA AERIAL TRANSPORT COMPANY OF STOCKTON OWNED BY CHARLES MCHENRY POND AND ROSS GARDNER WAS INTENDED TO FLY PASSENGERS BETWEEN THE BAY AREA TERMINUS AND LOS ANGELES.

airplane, not a Curtiss. That made the future of more Bay Area investment money even more problematical for Friesley.

Friesley needed property suitable for a large open landing field, which the family Friesleben Ranch didn't have. He also needed railroad access to ship the Aircar's heavy Liberty engines and the lumber from his dismantled hangar in South San Francisco. He struck a deal to lease a 185-acre parcel of land two miles south of Gridley on Highway 99 belonging to the Daniel Patrick Corcoran family on the west side of the Feather River. His hangar would be rebuilt next to the Union Pacific railroad tracks and Highway 99 with a suitable landing strip long enough for the heavy airliner to fly from. The South San Francisco hangar was dismantled shortly after October 16, 1920. The Corcoran Ranch location became the new Friesley Field.

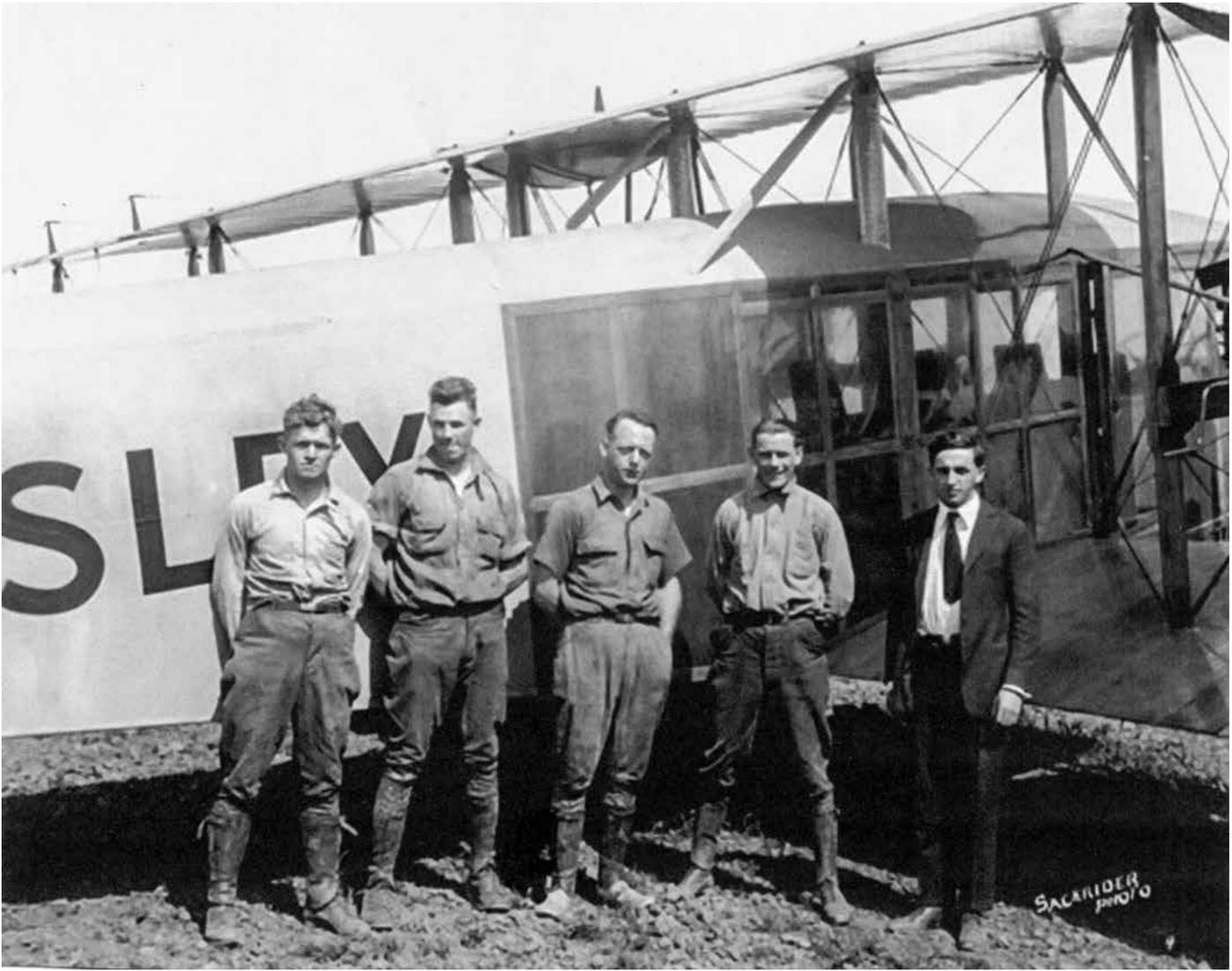


IMAGE COURTESY OF DAVID OSTROWSKI

THE FRIESLEY FALCON PARKED IN FRONT OF THE RECONSTRUCTED FRIESLEY SHOP/HANGAR NEAR GRIDLEY. THE HANGAR WAS DISASSEMBLED AND MOVED FROM FRIESLEY FIELD NEAR SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO TO THE NEW FRIESLEY FIELD TWO MILES SOUTH OF GRIDLEY ON HIGHWAY 99.

In September Friesley had announced a contest to rename the Aircar. Whoever submitted the winning name would receive 25 dollars. Two people submitted the name Friesley Falcon, Miss Irma Dodge of Gridley and Joseph H. Manford of Marysville and split the 25 dollars. Some of the other names submitted were: Diplax Elisa (latin for Dragonfly), Friesley Cloud Bug, Friesley Cuckoo, Friesley Skylark, Friesley Rocket, and the San Porto (for the plane's route – San Francisco to Portland).

Friesley moved the company headquarters from San Francisco to the First National Bank Building in Gridley and hired some high-pressure salesmen from southern California to canvass northern California farmers for stock sales in the Friesley Company.



STANDING BEFORE THE FRIESLEY FALCON ARE (LEFT TO RIGHT) JAMES SIMPSON, MECHANIC; CLIFFORD STROTHER, MECHANIC; GRAFTON T. REED, LEAD MECHANIC; BOND M. SPENCER, DESIGNER, BUILDER AND TEST PILOT OF THE FALCON; AND HAROLD M. FRIESLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE FRIESLEY AIRCRAFT CORPORATION.

CREDIT: HENRY SACKRIDER

On April 6, 1921, the Friesley Falcon made its first flight. It was flown unofficially two or three times before its official first flight April 17 during an airshow and celebration at Friesley Field.

For the grand airshow and celebration on the 17th, one estimate claimed 10,000 people and 2,000 automobiles attended the celebration. Another estimate claimed 17,000 people and 4,000 automobiles attended. At least eight other airplanes showed up including one flown up from Oakland by American war hero and top scoring fighter ace Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker. A couple of the aircraft put on aerobatic exhibitions and one pilot from Sacramento, H. G. Andrews, gave airplane rides to paying customers. Henry Sackrider was there to take publicity photos and a newsreel company took movies of the Falcon's first flight.

At 3:45 PM Bond Spencer, carrying Harold Friesley and

mechanic Grafton Reed, took off in the Friesley Falcon for the successful first official flight.

Friesley hired a famed Bay Area pioneer aviator, Capt. Roy Francis, in early May 1921. He hired Francis probably due to his fame in the Bay Area and because he had much experience flying the Army Air Service's twin-engine Martin MB-1 bomber in early 1919. He may also have believed that Francis could make upcoming publicity flights into San Francisco's dangerous Marina Field more safely than Spencer.

After many publicity flights, which included two flights into Marina Field, the big airshow at Yolo Fliers Club, and the later baseball team flight, Harold Friesley realized there was little more to be gained from staying in the Gridley area. In September the Falcon was flown to Marina Field in San Francisco.

In July 1921 the country suddenly began to pull out of the sharp economic depression it had fallen into. Even today modern economists can't figure out why the economy recovered so quickly. The Federal Government had done nothing to help.

This may have influenced Friesley to move back to San Francisco. Also his home was in Berkeley. The Falcon made at least two more publicity flights from Marina Field. Then in January 1922 the *Gridley Herald* published the news that Friesley had to sell off company assets to pay debts. The company filed for bankruptcy in February. Over its short life span the company had sold \$52,000 worth of stock to over 150 stockholders. Most of them lived in Butte, Yuba, and Sutter counties. The rest were from San Francisco and southern Oregon.

The Falcon, which cost over \$40,000 to build, was sold to representatives of the Chinese leader Sun Yat-sen for \$3,000 in May 1922. By August 1922 the Falcon and six Curtiss JN-4s were being disassembled and prepared for shipment to Fuchow, China for Sun Yat-sen's army.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE PAUL CHESBROUGH COLLECTION AND DONALD B. GRAY

THE FRIESLEY FALCON WITH OUTER WING PANELS AND TAIL FEATHERS REMOVED FOR SHIPMENT TO CHINA IN 1922-23. THE FALCON COST \$40-50,000 TO BUILD AND WAS SOLD TO CHINESE LEADER SUN YAT-SEN'S AIR FORCE FOR \$3,000.

One of Sun Yat-sen's officers, General Yang, asked Harry W. Abbott, who was training ten Chinese pilots on a makeshift airfield at Courtland, California, if he would travel to China with his ten pilots to help organize an air force for the Chinese leader. Abbott agreed to the General's proposal. The ten students were trained not only as pilots but also as mechanics. They were to travel to China where they would reassemble the Friesley Falcon and the six Jennies.

Once reassembly was completed and the planes were test flown, the Jennies were to be at readiness to bomb a rival warlord in the city of Canton. The Falcon was to be used to haul drums of gasoline to the numerous coastal fuel stops for the short ranged JN-4s while they made their way to bomb Canton.

How much of this operation actually took place is only speculative, as the targeted warlord had left Canton by the end of January 1923. The Jennies were moved elsewhere that year and the Friesley Falcon was never heard of again.

Marina Field pilots Dan Davison and Guy Colwell and mechanic Arthur “Pop” Wilde traveled to China with the Falcon. They didn’t fare so well. Davidson and Colwell died there of

typhoid. Only Wilde made it back to San Francisco. Harry Abbott was made a colonel in Sun Yat-sen’s air force and returned eventually to the United States.

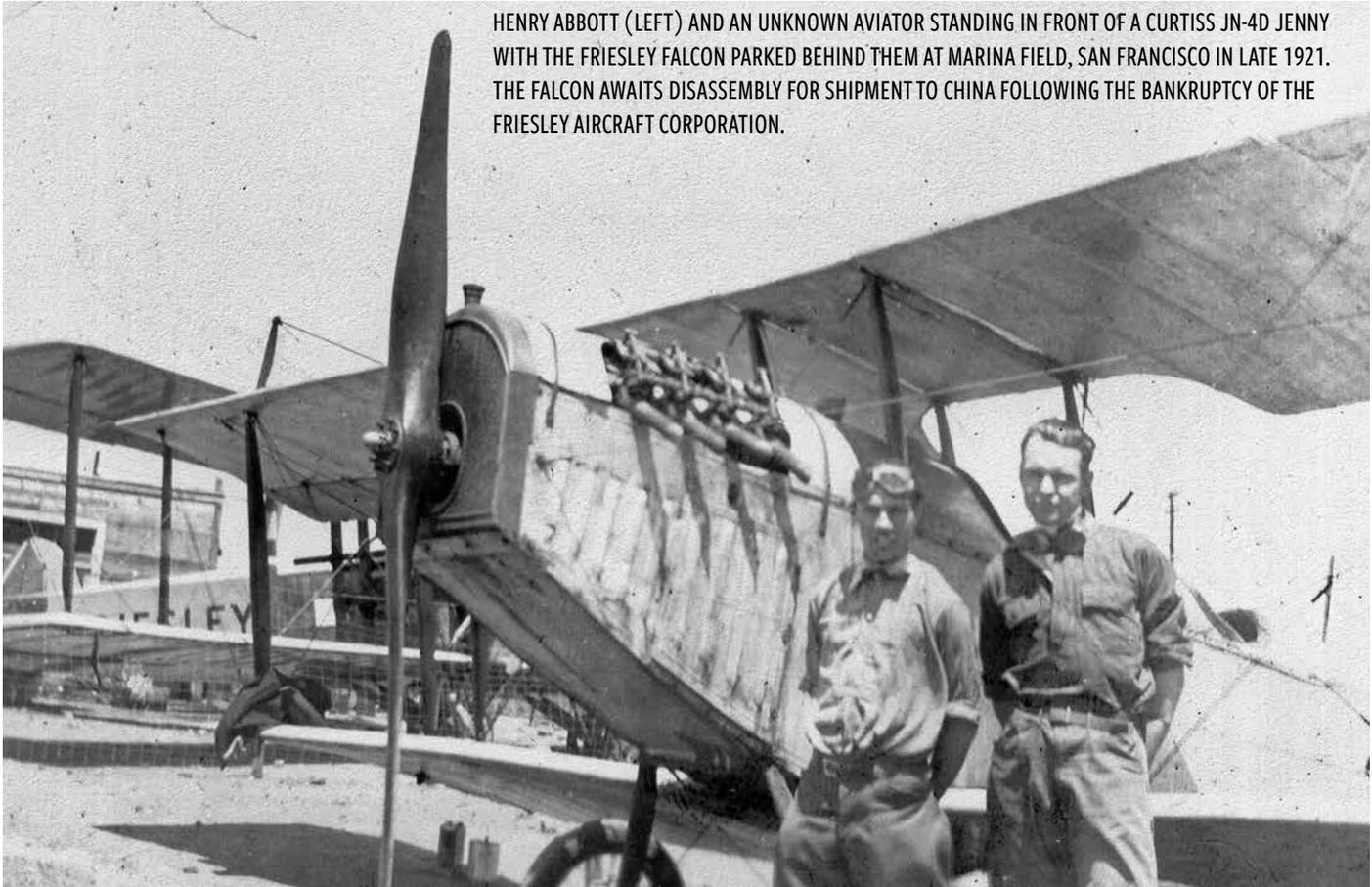
Alfred Lawson’s 26-passenger transport crashed and never carried a paying passenger. It also didn’t make it to San Francisco.

Charles McHenry Pond and Ross L. Gardner were able to fly a few passengers between Stockton, San Francisco and Los Angeles in their Curtiss Eagle named Avion before it to crashed, bankrupting their dream.

Harold Friesley and his Falcon failed to haul a single passenger from San Francisco to Portland. It would be seven years before such a service would be available.

If a description of Friesley, Lawson, Pond, and Gardner could be created in two words it might be that they were premature airliners.

For more detailed information and the sources about the men and events mentioned above please read Allen Herr’s *Aviation In Northern California 1910-1939 Vol. II (Golden Wings Over The Feather River)*, also containing Friesley information are *Aviation in Northern California 1910-1939 Vol. I (formerly Wooden Wings Over The Golden Gate)* and *Ragwings Over The Sacramento River (2nd edition)*. The books are all available in the Sutter County Museum’s gift shop.



HENRY ABBOTT (LEFT) AND AN UNKNOWN AVIATOR STANDING IN FRONT OF A CURTISS JN-4D JENNY WITH THE FRIESLEY FALCON PARKED BEHIND THEM AT MARINA FIELD, SAN FRANCISCO IN LATE 1921. THE FALCON AWAITS DISASSEMBLY FOR SHIPMENT TO CHINA FOLLOWING THE BANKRUPTCY OF THE FRIESLEY AIRCRAFT CORPORATION.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE DAN SAN ABBOTT COLLECTION

Fire in Sutter County – Growing from the Ashes

The 2021 Crowhurst Memorial Essay Contest

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. The column was published weekly in the Independent Herald, a Yuba City newspaper. The award also honors Estelle's son, Thomas J. Crowhurst, who wrote The Sutter Notes, a column for the Appeal-Democrat, and contributed to the sports pages.

The scholarship is awarded to a talented high school student. Written in journalistic style, winning entries are fact-based and focus on local issues and concerns. The Sutter County Museum is proud to participate in the essay contest and print winning essays in the Bulletin. Students interested in a career in journalism are encouraged to participate in this scholarship opportunity.

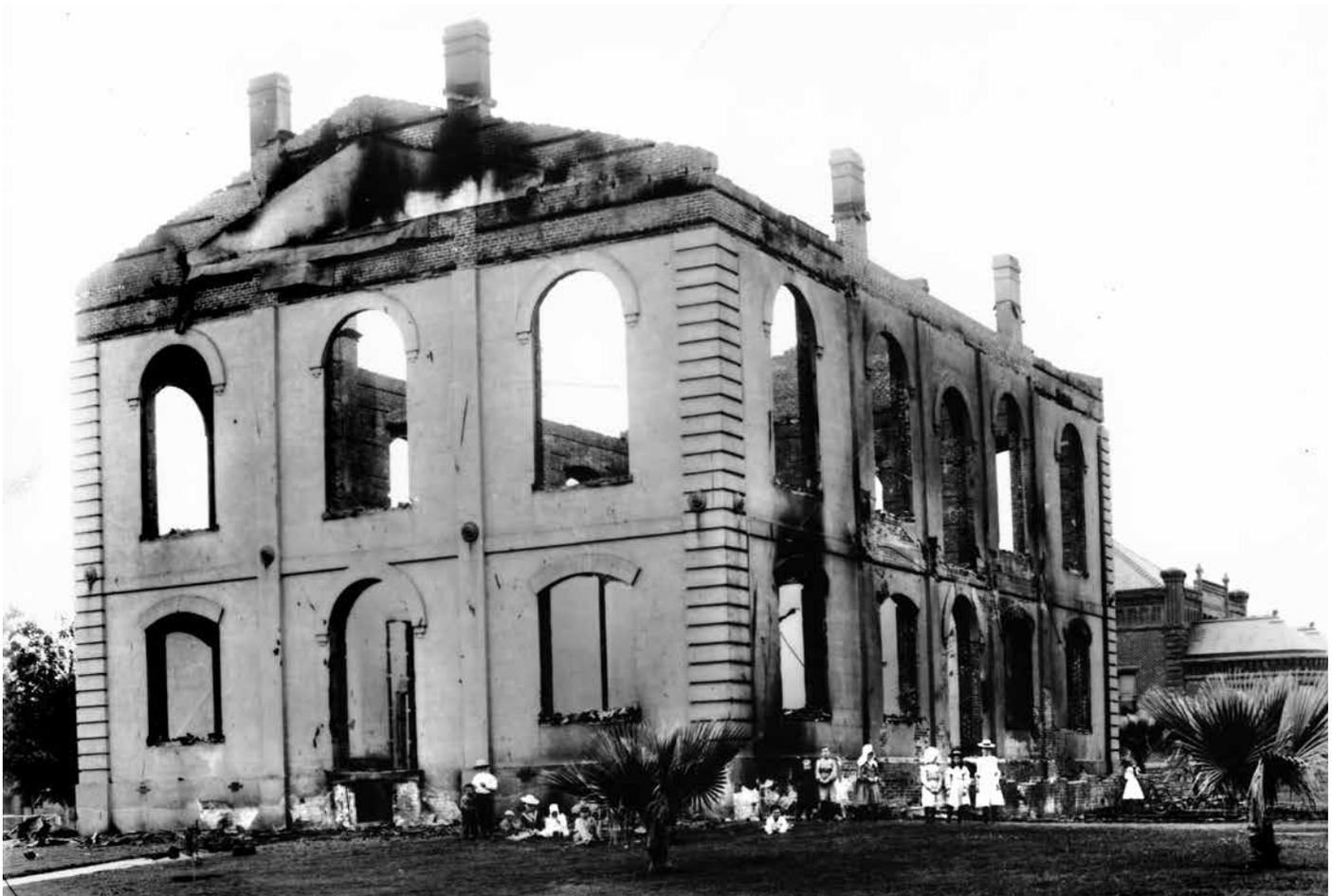
This past year students overcame an extremely difficult school year to turn in entries. Participation was hindered by distance learning and normal avenues of research being closed as a result of the COVID pandemic. Participating students conducted online research to write their articles. This year we are printing two entries, the first by Allison Newton, this year's winner, who wrote about the perseverance of Sutter County to rebuild the courthouse twice after devastating fires in the 19th century. The second entry printed is by Emma West, who focused on the effects of wildfires on agriculture in Sutter County.

Allison Newton
Winning Essay
 SUTTER UNION HIGH SCHOOL

The Sutter County Courthouse was named after John Sutter, an influential man in the Sutter area. He was the first person to bring the idea of agriculture to the area of California. And as the community grew, the development of a County Courthouse became not only inevitable, but essential. In 1858, the Sutter County Courthouse was built, bringing

with it both assurance and growth to a small and developing County. It was indispensable to a growing population, working to settle disputes and protect the rights of its citizens. Not only did it bring the county forward in development, but it was a promise of progression for the area in the coming future. However, in 1871 tragedy struck. Just thirteen years after the

Courthouse was built, it was destroyed by fire caused by “mice gnawing the heads of matches left in the office.” The symbol of an upcoming and thriving County, gone in the blink of an eye. But the citizens of Sutter County saw only one option: They rebuilt. And in 1873 they developed a second courthouse, grander and greater in size, where the first one had stood.



SUTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE AFTER THE FIRE, 1871

The citizens showed signs of perseverance and determination and rebuilt, although the plague of fire wasn't yet over. In 1899, the second Courthouse burned to the ground. Unlike the first fire, this one hadn't been an accident. As reported, the fire had been an act of arson by "a Cornishman who was in custody awaiting commitment to the Stockton asylum." There are records of women and children standing around the remains of what had been a great and important landmark in their community. With everything seemingly against them, the citizens of Sutter County again rebuilt the Courthouse for a third time. Though constant challenges had pushed against development, the citizens of Sutter County refused to not only give up but continued to develop and grow as a community. From the ashes of fire, a Courthouse was again rebuilt. And today it still continues to stand, a symbol of not only what Sutter County has gone through, but how it persevered.

SOURCES:

California Supreme Court Historical Society, History, Sutter County (<https://www.cschs.org/history/california-county-courthouses-alphabetical/sutter-county/>)

Online Archive of California, Photograph of Sutter County Courthouse 1899 Fire (<https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt8t1nd53q/?layout=metadata&brand=oac4>)

California Digital Newspaper Collection, Sacramento Union, Volume 213, Number 8, 8 March 1920 (<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU19200308&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1>)

Calisphere, University of California, Photograph of 1899 Sutter County Courthouse Fire (<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/kt509nd2jt/>)

Kathy Balestrini, Genealogical Historian, kbalestrini@surewest.net



SUTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE, CIRCA 1900

The number of wildfires has been on the rise and each fire has had a significant impact on growers and agricultural producers. As of September 16, 2020, wildfires had “burned nearly 6.9 million acres across 11 states” (USDA). The 2020 wildfires which affected the Sutter County region lasted from about August 14, 2020 to September 26, 2020. At the end of the year “nearly 10,000 fires had burned over 4.2 million acres, more than 4% of the state’s roughly 100 million acres of land, making 2020 the largest wildfire season recorded in California’s modern history” (fire.ca.gov).

The record-setting year of wildfires burning across the state of California affected agriculture in many areas, including Sutter County. Unlike other destructive setbacks in agriculture, there is no standard protocol to diminish the health and safety risks associated with wildfires. Wildfires are unpredictable, untamed, and often very damaging. They can begin and spread incredibly fast and can cause insurmountable damage to any land it comes in contact with. Local farmers are burdened with the responsibility of protecting their land and workers, along with the pressure of providing sustenance for the world. In order to support farmers in the ever-changing world, new resources and programs are being developed each year. The local wildfires show how in agriculture, everything is interconnected, and agriculture is a vulnerable business. With resilient workers and a strong sense of community, overcoming these challenges will only enhance the agricultural community and better prepare them for crises in the future.

Wildfires have a significant impact on farmers and farm workers. The UC Davis Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety discussed how wildfires affect agricultural workers. It explained how they are at risk for exposure to “ash and chemical residue due to their work outdoors and long shifts, both during an active fire as well as during cleanup and recovery” (aghealth.ucdavis.edu). Working in the field during fires can be extremely harmful to the workers’ health. Additionally, workers can struggle with stress and anxiety due to the fires (aghealth.ucdavis.edu). This demonstrates how much fires negatively affect farmers. Harmful air quality, stressful conditions, and negative effects on the economy for workers in agriculture will result from wildfires. Throughout the fires in Sutter County, workers have had to endure these difficult conditions.

Not only are farmworkers burdened by the effects of wildfires, but the crops, the basis of their livelihood, can often be destroyed. According to AgAmerica, in the article “Combatting the Effects of Wildfires of California Agriculture,” “Not only is the potential destruction of crops, livestock, and property a sobering reality, but ash-ridden fields and a lingering smoke haze makes harvesting exceptionally difficult.” This demonstrates how the immediate effects of wildfires, including ruined crops for that year, are not the only aspect affecting business. The ash-ridden fields pose a problem for farmers’ current harvests and for the harvests in years to come. Recovering from wildfires is troublesome and requires a lot of work. The article “USDA Assists Farmers, Ranchers and Communities Affected by Western

Wildfires” describes the various ways the USDA can provide assistance to farmers affected by wildfires. It illustrates that the USDA can help weather the financial impact by providing loans and other assistance programs. Businesses that need to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters are given the opportunity to apply for support through USDA’s Emergency Conservation Program. In addition to immediate relief, long-term support is offered (USDA).

Wildfires affect many communities every year, this past year being especially difficult for California agriculture workers and Sutter County. Despite the destruction the first have brought to the land and the workers in the area, Sutter County has continued to pull together and recover with a renewed sense of strength to get the job done with assistance from certain programs to recover. Although these record-setting wildfires occurred in Fall 2020, Sutter County continues to remain resilient and find ways to come out stronger. Learning and adapting along the way, the community grows more solid and whole.

Works Cited:

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). “2020 Incident Archive.” (<https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2020>)

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USDA Assists Farmers, Ranchers and Communities Affected by Western Wildfires. (<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/09/16/usda-assists-farmers-ranchers-and-communities-affected-western>)

A Very Brief History of Yuba County Schools

By Sharyl Simmons

We have much less information at the Museum regarding Yuba County schools than we do about those in Sutter County and hope that in the future people will share their stories and photographs with us.¹ Most of the information came from Peter Delay's *History of Yuba and Sutter Counties*.

The earliest schools on record in Marysville were private schools. The first opened the last week of May in 1850 by Rev. S. V. Blakeslee. He opened his school in an iron building and had an enrollment of nine pupils, both boys and girls. By mid-June the building was so hot during the day that the school was abandoned. In 1851 a school was established in the Presbyterian Church on D Street by Rev. Mr. Thatcher.

Although most of the population of Marysville was male in 1850, by late 1851 and early 1852 families began joining their fathers and husbands and the need for public schools became apparent. The first meeting to establish a school was small, but a committee was appointed to look into establishing a free public school. Interest grew and financing began with subscription – a promise to donate a certain amount of money to establish the school. Methodists in the community had raised \$5,000 to start a school and an offer was made to them to combine resources, but the church declined.

By mid-June of 1852 an ordinance was passed to establish a system of common schools in Marysville and in July the first public school opened its doors. At first the school occupied rooms in buildings built for other purposes including rooms in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first dedicated public school was built on the corner of 7th & B Streets in 1858.² It was a two-story building with four school rooms and a recital room.

¹ If you don't want to give your photographs to the Museum, they can be loaned to the Museum to be scanned and then returned. Please call Sharyl (530) 822-7141 to make arrangements.

² In 1924, this building was still being used for vocational training, municipal band practice and other purposes.

In a report to the School Marshal in 1857, Yuba County reported 13 school districts.

Districts	No. of Children	Year Organized
Marysville	535	1852
Bear River		1853
Oregon House	46	1854
Peoria House	38	1854
Foster Bar		1854
Pleasant Grove	65	1855
Linda	36	1855
Keystone		1855
Camptonville	103	1855
Rose Bar	65	1856
Brown's Valley	51	1857
Bear River No. 2	48	1857
Linda No. 2		1858

It appears that the districts were created, but some of them either didn't report the number of students or had not actually established schools in 1857.

Classes in Marysville were scattered between the original school at 7th & B Streets and basement rooms in the Methodist Church. In spring of 1870 another school was built on the corner of 7th & E Streets and the schools were divided by gender with the girls attending the newer building.

A census of Marysville taken in August 1870 reported 846 children classified racially with 817 white children, 26 Negro children and 3 Indian children between the ages of 5 and 15 years. Of these, 432 white children and 17 Negro children attended public school in the previous year; 243 white children attended private schools and 150 children did not attend any school. The survey revealed 24 Chinese children, but they are not included in the school attendance numbers.



PUBLIC SCHOOL AT 7TH & B STREETS

PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION

Several private schools remained in Marysville. The Marysville Eclectic Institute opened August 18, 1853 in the Methodist Episcopal Church and was run by Rev. James H. Bristow and his wife. They announced that the various branches of a thorough American education were to be taught and discipline was to be prompt, yet mild. Spelling, reading and writing were taught for \$5 a month; arithmetic (mental and practical), geography, definitions and critical reading, \$6 a month; and English, grammar, logic and rhetoric for \$8 a month.

The Poston Seminary was opened by Miss E. C. Poston in November 1857 on E Street between 7th and 8th Streets. Subsequently it was moved to the corner of 6th & D Streets where it flourished until the late 1870s under Miss Poston and others.

Miss Poston gave an extensive account of her school that appears in Peter Delay's *History of Yuba and Sutter Counties*:

“My work as a teacher in California began in January 1856 in a country public school located near the Sutter Buttes within the limits of present Sutter City. The position was obtained for me by George Brittan, an influential rancher in the vicinity and trustee of the school. His children were my scholars then, and his two daughters were afterwards with us at the Seminary. The early death of the eldest, Mary, was a great loss to me. The friendship of this family, so valuable at the beginning of my life struggle in this new and strange country, has continued through all the subsequent years.

The experience gained in this school – ungraded, of mixed classes, boys and girls of different ages – was ultimately of great service to me, giving an insight into the special needs of California girls, differing even then from their sisters on the Atlantic coast.

The term of teaching was brought to an abrupt close by an accident – a fall from my horse and the breaking of a collar bone. This led to an acquaintance with Drs. R. H. McDaniel and E. T. Wilkins, and other prominent citizens of Marysville, the result of which acquaintance was the erection of the Poston Seminary in that place.

One bright morning in September 1857, a group of young girls with some of their parents assembled in the just completed seminary on E Street to greet the new teacher. The eager, inquiring faces come before me now, and the surroundings – the large hall, the platform and desk and chair for teacher, the scholars' desks, the blackboards, the little music room in the rear – I see them all. Truly grateful for the kindly welcome I felt yet more deeply the confidence placed in me – a stranger and untried – by these parents in entrusting me with the training of their daughters, the future women of California – a work of vital importance to a state still in the formative period. And I vowed on that first day, God helping, to be true to the best interests of those given into my charge.

As our numbers increased, our lack of yard room was keenly felt. A change became imperative and in 1863 counseled by friends, I bought the Lindley property on D Street, and a smaller lot cornering on D and 6th Streets. On the latter a one-story brick building was erected for school purposes and the residence of Judge Lindley was occupied by the boarding school department, music classes, etc. Thus, in 1863 we found ourselves located under our own ‘vine and fig tree’ in as homelike a corner as was ever dignified with the title of Seminary. The Marysville courthouse bounding our view on one side, we felt ourselves under the special protection of the officers of the law, and indeed our grateful acknowledgements are due them for many, many kindnesses.

With the enlargement of our premises, the school grew rapidly. The rancher on the plains sent his daughters; the miner in the foothills sent his daughters, and his ‘nuggets’; towns far and near – Smartsville, Grass Valley, Nevada, Downieville, Shasta, etc. – gave their girls and their good will. We grew apace.”

In 1859 Marysville became a contender for the State Reform School started by an act of the Legislature. At a meeting of the common council held on November 7, 1859, a committee was appointed of Aldermen Mann, Covillaud and Fowler and along with a citizens committee promoted Marysville as the site. In December 1859, state commissioners chose a site for the school, 100 acres of land on the Feather River about five miles north of Marysville that was owned by Charles Covillaud. The land had been surveyed and purchased by the city of Marysville and conveyed to the State on December 6, 1859.

Legislation was passed to erect a building and \$30,000 was appropriated. The amount fell short, but three stories and a basement were built and the building partially enclosed with a brick wall. In 1861, another \$25,000 was appropriated to finish construction and furnish it. There was a turnover in trustees that year, but on December 2, 1861 the school was dedicated. The superintendents were J. C. Pelton who served for 20 months, George C. Gorham who served for two years, J. C. Sargent who served for 15 months, and H. S. Hoblitzell (a former teacher at the school) who was elected in 1865 and served for three years until the institution was closed in May 1868.

³ *Marysville Daily Appeal*, January 28, 1862

The inmates were all boys. One girl was sent from Sacramento, but there weren't accommodations so a place was found for her with a family in Marysville. There were two classes of inmates – those confined for criminal offenses and those placed by parents or guardians for “reformation.”

Competition for the site of the school was fierce. The San Francisco Industrial School, having lost the fight for the school originally, pushed for several years for the school to be relocated with the argument that San Francisco “furnished the largest number of boys.... Moreover, the facilities for disposing of the more vicious characters by sending them to sea, or otherwise, are far better in this city than they could possibly be in Marysville.”³

Appropriations were scant and the accusation was made that the influence of the managers of the San Francisco Industrial School caused the closure of the Marysville school. The land and buildings were given to the city of Marysville by the State. The buildings were dismantled, the bricks sold and the land sold to James Strain, who owned adjoining property.

Continued on page 24



HIGH SCHOOL AT G STREET

PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION

Memorials & Gifts

June – September 2021

In Memory of **Rajinder Singh Chohan**
David Rai

In Memory of **Morris Gotter**
Connie Cary
Kelly Gash
Sharyl Simmons

In Memory of **Keith Dailey**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Loretta Dean, D. V. M.**
Randolph & Barbara Schnabel

In Memory of **Joan Erfle**
Connie Cary
Kelly Gash
Sharyl Simmons
Phyllis Smith
Julie Stark
Suzanne & Clint West

In Memory of **Helen Heenan**
Audrey Breeding
Dorothy Coats

In Memory of **Teresa Hellberg**
Connie Cary

In Memory of **Wilma Leverett**
Connie Cary
Sharyl Simmons
Phyllis Smith

In Memory of **Doris Mitchell**
Marnee Crowhurst

In Memory of **Robert Powell**
Julie Stark

In Memory of **Leoah Stein Riese**
Merlyn Rudge

In Memory of **Pete Sands**
Randolph & Barbara Schnabel

In Memory of **Samuel Shannon**
Dorothy Coats

In Memory of **Dorothy Smith**
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In Memory of **Craig A. West**
R. James Staas

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Gifts

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45th Museum Anniversary

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BROWN'S VALLEY SCHOOL

PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION

A Very Brief History of Yuba County Schools, continued from page 22 MARYSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Marysville High School was organized in 1871 and by 1879, eleven girls and nine boys had graduated. The school opened in October 1871 in the building on the southeast corner of 7th & E Streets. The plan was to establish a prep school for students planning to attend the University of California and/or to continue their grammar school education. Twelve students started in 1871 and five graduated at the end of three years. In the 1878-79 fall term the school experimented by mixing its pupils with the senior classes of both grammar schools, but this was abandoned the same year. Until the Yuba City High School was built in the 1920s, some students from Sutter County attended the high school in Marysville.

In 1908 it was apparent that new buildings were needed. A bond issue was voted and the grammar school and high school buildings were constructed. Marysville Grammar School and Marysville Union High School were located on the block bounded by F, G, 6th and 7th Streets.

In 1924, rural schools included: Bald Mountain, Brophy's, Brown's Valley, Buckeye, Camptonville, Challenge, Clark, Cordua, Dobbins, Elizabeth, Feather River Union, Frenchtown, Goldfields, Greenville, Hansonville, Indiana Ranch, Linda, Lone Tree, Long Bar, Marigold, New England Union, Oregon House, Peoria, Plumas, Prairie, Rose Bar, Sharon Valley, Spring Valley, Strawberry Valley, Sugar Loaf, Virginia and Waldo.

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