

BULLETIN



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ON THE COVER:

GARDEMEYER HOUSE (SUTTER)
PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION

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 Sutter County Museum

 suttercountymuseum

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

Margit Sands, Vice President

Debbie Reid, Secretary

Amber Milner, Treasurer

Carol Bordeaux

Tony Kurlan

Manny Cardoza

Randy Lavender

Babs Cotter

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Eric Gruenthal

Sukh Sidhu

Scott Hankins

Chuck Smith

From the Director

Hello friends,

If you had told me last summer that the museum would still be closed at the end of January 2021 with no re-opening date in sight, I'm not sure I would have believed you. But, here we are. Under the state's COVID regulations we cannot open until Sutter County is back in the red tier. To get there, our average daily case count over a seven-day period needs to be less than 7. As I write this, we are at forty-five; it's going to be a while.

I want to thank all of you who have renewed your membership even though we haven't been able to honor many of the new benefits we rolled out last year. I also want to thank those of you who donated to support our \$45 for 45 campaign. This support, combined with grants we have been awarded by both Yuba and Sutter counties, guarantees that when we can re-open we will be able to offer all the exhibits and programs you have come to enjoy.

Although the museum is closed, we are hosting the Sutter County Library's curbside pickup program as they get ready for some interior renovations. It has been nice to have more people on property again! If you weren't aware of this program, I recommend you look into it. You can special order books through the Sutter County Library at <https://www.suttercounty.org/library>. They will call you when your books are ready for pickup at the museum.

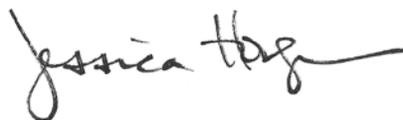
We can also offer shopping in our gift shop by appointment. If you're interested in setting this up, please call the museum and one of us will get back to you within a few days.

Even though we've been closed for quite a while now, work has continued. We are making great progress on the physical inventory of our artifacts, which is paramount to ensuring that we are giving them proper care. The artifacts are, after all, the heart of the museum. We have also continued working on our master plan with Brent Johnson Design. This plan will guide redevelopment of all our permanent exhibits. We're aiming for a late-March completion date for this plan, and I'm very excited to share some details with you once it is finalized! (Check the back of this issue for a sneak peek of the work we're doing!)

The other big project that has been in the works for the last couple months is an annual report. It has been written for our most recent fiscal year, which was July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020. We intend this to be an annual publication that will be mailed to our members and shared with elected officials and potential donors. It will be a useful tool in tracking the museum's accomplishments on an annual basis. You will receive this in the mail in the near future; it has been written and is with our graphic designer now.

Again, thank you for your support during this difficult time. We can't wait to welcome all of you back into the museum!

Best Regards,



The Walton Family – George, Hiram and Virgil

Contributed by Elsie Walton & Carolyn Walton Williams



HIRAM WALTON



LENA WALTON

The Walton family was prominent in the settling and developing of Sutter County from its early years. The first member of this branch of the family to come to Sutter County was George Walton, who came across the plains from St. Joseph, Missouri in a wagon train in 1853. He was born in Pennsylvania, but his forebearers had settled in New York in the 18th century and had taken part in the Revolutionary War, later migrating to Pennsylvania.

George was lured to the west during the gold rush, but after a short time prospecting, he settled in Sutter County where he became a prominent agriculturist and horticulturist, experimenting on the types of crops which could be best grown in the area. He met his wife, Mary, here and they married in 1856.

He took much interest in the affairs of both his own community and the state. He and Mary had four sons (Hiram, George Jr., Richard and Francis) and two daughters (Sadie Newkom and Josephine Haugh). George Sr. died in 1913 at the age of 88. Mary pre-deceased him.

George's oldest son, Hiram, was born on the Walton homestead a few miles west of Bogue Station on June 20, 1857. During his lifetime, he was active in both farming and business affairs of the community. At one point he was in the mercantile business in partnership with E. G. Van Arsdale and John Duncan. In later years he planted a large vineyard near Tudor in an attempt to develop the Thompson seedless grape industry in Northern California. He was a member of Enterprise Lodge #70 in Yuba City and of the Royal Arch Masons and Knights Templar Lodge of Marysville. He was one of the first stockholders of the Farmers Union Bank in Yuba City. Lena died in 1922 and Hiram joined her in 1929.

Hiram and Lena Walton had three children, Virgil, Ellis and Lois (Cassidy).



HIRAM WALTON WITH TWO OF HIS SONS, ELLIS (LEFT) AND VIRGIL (RIGHT) ABOUT 1898



THE FAMILY SURREY WITH HIRAM AND VIRGIL IN THE FRONT SEAT. LENA AND ELLIS ARE SEATED IN THE BACK SEAT, ABOUT 1898

Virgil Walton was born in Yuba City on September 3, 1890 and lived in the community until his death on February 10, 1971. After serving in France during World War I, he was in business with his father on the Tudor ranch and, in later years, continued his agricultural pursuits as an appraiser for the Production Credit Association. He was a director of the Marysville Savings and Loan for over thirty years, a member of St. John's Episcopal Church and a former vestryman of the church, a member of the Marysville Elks Club, and a charter member of the Yuba City Rotary Club. He and his wife, Elsie, were married January 31, 1920 and celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1970, a year before Virgil's death. Virgil and Elsie had one daughter, Carolyn Williams, and several granddaughters. Elsie passed away in 1988.



VIRGIL AND ELSIE WALTON C. 1970

The Dauntless Dozen

By Carol Withington

INTRODUCTION

While glancing through the Thompson & West *History of Sutter County*, you will find a special section in the back of this 1879 publication. Titled the Biographical Directory of Patrons, there are 350 written accounts of various people along with lithographs of some of the residences. Patrons paid for their biographies and, with an additional contribution of around \$100, their homes and surroundings were pencil sketched.

In all probability, most residents wished to embellish these drawings. After all, this was an opportunity of a lifetime to put your dreams on paper by a professional sketch artist. And so they added a manicured garden entrance, the Sutter Buttes in the background, their young daughters at play in a beautiful setting and many other adornments to their picture.

During this time, writers William H. Chamberlain and Harry L. Wells researched the area by checking newspapers along with pertinent records. In addition, they spent time in settlements such as Nicolaus, Meridian, Live Oak, South Butte, Yuba City and surrounding areas while interviewing these early settlers of Sutter County. Among those contacted were twelve women who presented their biographies to be included in a publication that is still regarded as one of the best accounts of Sutter County's colorful history. Now it is time to meet these special women.

THE MISSOURI CONNECTION

While researching each individual, I discovered that half of them resided in Missouri before ever arriving in Sutter County. In fact, three of these women found husbands in Missouri. One even lived there long enough to wed two husbands. The other three either remained in Missouri for a brief time or for ten years or more before coming to California.

During the 1830s, a large number of Germans began settling in the farming country west of St. Louis and south of the Missouri River known as the "Missouri Rhineland." Ten years later, both German and Irish immigrants settled in urban areas. However, since both the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail began at Independence, Missouri,

there were those who emigrated from Germany, England or Ireland who chose to come westward to begin a new life in California. And among them were the twelve women who journeyed with their families, eventually settling in Sutter County.

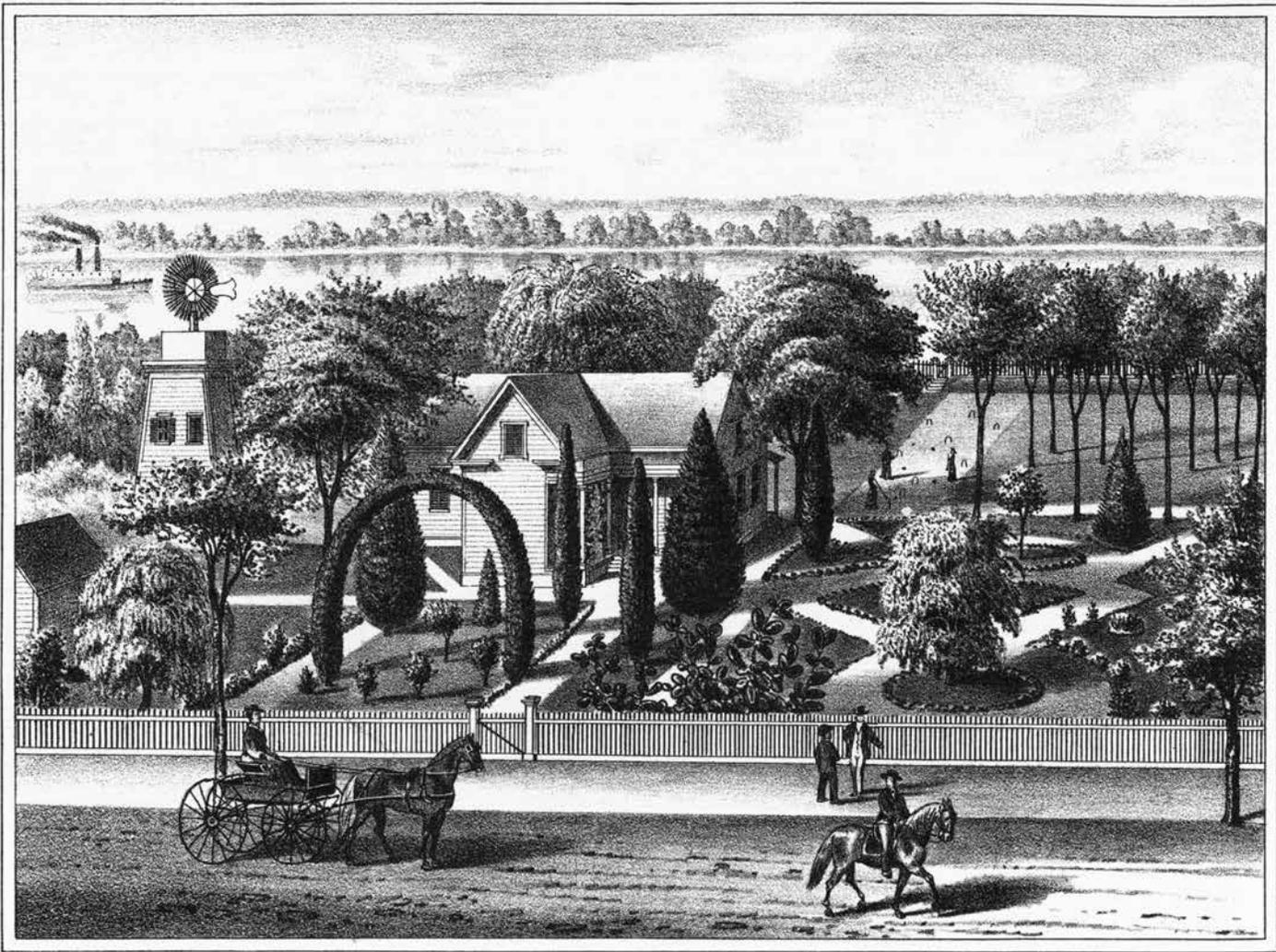
What lay ahead was not the life they had hoped. Some became widows at a relatively young age. However, they did what they could to maintain their homes and provide for their families while carving out their own place in the history of Sutter County. Each were dauntless in their pursuits. Each well deserve special recognition and honor, beginning with Almuth Arens.

ALMUTH ARENS

Almuth was only age 19 when she arrived in California in 1859, settling in Nicolaus. The following

year she married C.W.A. Arens. Both were natives of Bremen, Germany. Before Almuth's arrival, Arens operated a store along with a partner by the name of Kirkaldie at Bear River. By 1861, Joseph D. Barbee took charge of the establishment. At that time, their trade depended primarily on local ranchers who lived in the surrounding area as well as the Bear River District.

Over the next few years, the Arens family added three sons and one daughter. However, in 1870, tragedy struck. Both Arens and Kirkaldie died. The store was now entirely managed by Barbee. Worst of all, Almuth, a young widow, was left to provide for her family. It only seemed logical that a partnership with Barbee in the general



RESIDENCE OF **MRS. A. ARENS.** NICOLAUS,
SUTTER CO. CAL.

merchandise business would be the answer. In 1872, the partnership with Barbee and Almuth was formed. It appears their store was a thriving establishment.

By 1879, Almuth had accumulated 640 acres of swampland in Sutter County and 140 acres in and around Nicolaus. This was an especially good investment as the community of Nicolaus began to grow. The town now included one hotel, a drug store, four saloons, two blacksmith shops, a harness shop, two wagon shops and a well-boring establishment. In addition, four carpenters, one physician and one lawyer served the population of 230.

There were also three mail deliveries each week which was brought by stage from Sacramento with Almuth serving as postmistress.

The Arens family resided in the former Frederick Vahles home which once held sessions of the Court after 1854 when Nicolaus was the temporary county seat of Sutter. By 1856, the county seat was moved to Yuba City. This

residence is depicted in the 1879 Thompson & West *History of Sutter County*. The lithograph indicates a very comfortable home complete with a small out building and pumphouse with windmill. Although the home is no longer in existence, a monument has been placed near its former location describing that it once served as a Sutter County Courthouse.

Almuth Arens died on August 26, 1881 at the age of 41. She was buried in the Nicolaus Cemetery where her husband, son Thomas O. Arens and daughter-in-law Kate Jones Arens are also interred.

By all indications, Almuth was a woman of strength, determination and perseverance who utilized her business skills during her brief lifetime. She definitely deserves her moment of reflection in Sutter County's history.

Five women and their families who arrived in Sutter County during the early 1850s to late 1860s settled in the South Butte vicinity. According to history, early

pioneers arriving in this area were not influenced by the Gold Rush. In 1852 many of them began establishing ranches in the bottom lands. And while mosquitoes in the tule land and marshes of the Sacramento River often drove settlers away from the Sutter Buttes, by 1854 nearly all the land in this Butte Township was occupied or claimed by settlers.

One of the chief industries was cutting wood for the steamers that plied up and down the rivers. In fact, by 1854, it was recorded that nearly every settler had from 500 to one thousand cords of wood cut and ready for market.

Wild hay also grew in abundance near the Butte Slough. Not only did settlers cut and prepare the hay for market, but many from Yuba City and Marysville also took advantage of the hay seasons. The early 1850s also found settlers raising barley, wheat, grain, fruits and vegetables. In addition, cattle raising became an important occupation, especially north and west of the Buttes.

In 1871 Golder De Witt established a post office in a small settlement located around the southeast end of the Sutter Buttes.

Known as the South Butte Post Office, many of the surrounding ranches centered on or near the main road where stagecoaches made daily trips from Colusa to Marysville. South Butte became known as Sutter City in 1887.

Among the early pioneers of German descent who settled in the South Butte area was Catharine Niesen Phitzenreiter.

CATHARINE NIESEN PHITZENREITER

The former Catharine Marconi emigrated to the United States in 1847 at the age of 26. She first lived in New Orleans for two years, later moving to Osage County in Missouri

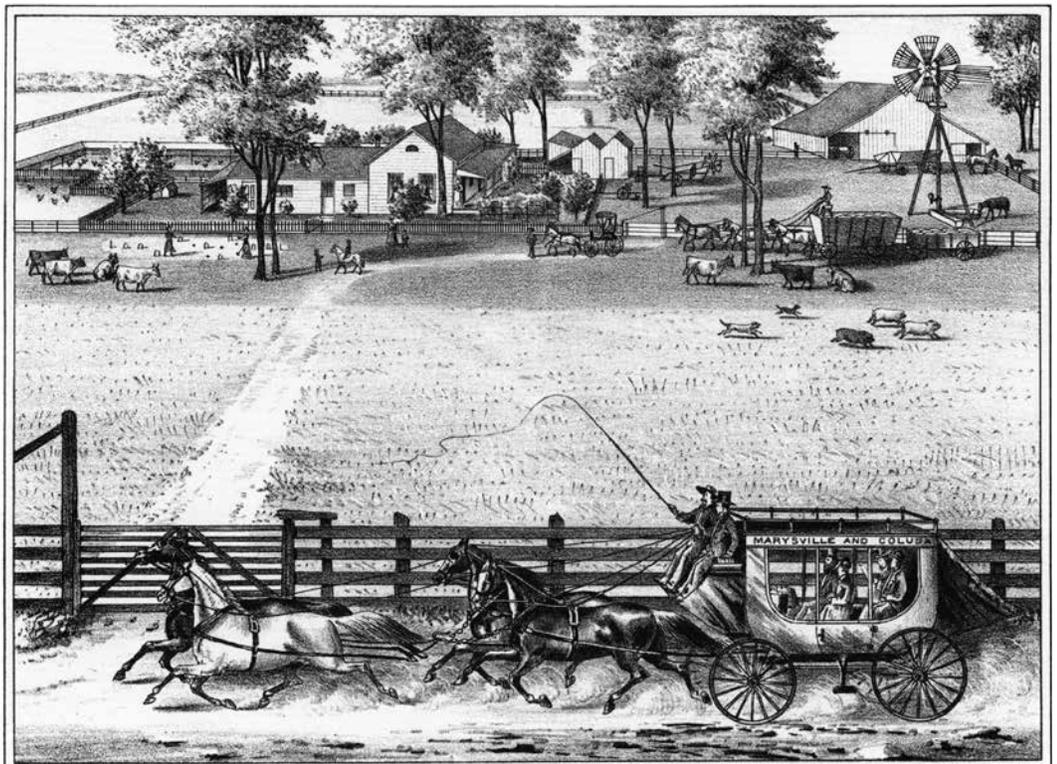
where many German newcomers first settled. Here she met and married Phillip Niesen in 1850. He died seven years later leaving Catharine with three children – Henry, age 7; Josephine, age 5; and William P., age 1.

Catharine and her family remained in Missouri where she eventually married William Phitzenreiter in 1860. Six years later, the family came to California, living first in Sacramento for a year before relocating to Sutter County where they purchased farm land. Their daughter Laura was born on December 8, 1866.

It is not known when William died, but by 1879,

Catharine was the owner of 320 acres located ten miles west of Yuba City. The family residence is depicted as a lithograph in Thompson and West's *History of Sutter County*. Titled "Niesen Place," a tribute to Catharine's first husband, the one-story home is nestled among the trees with smaller out buildings and a large barn. At a distance from the home is the main road with a depiction of the Marysville and Colusa stagecoach in full gallop.

Catharine's oldest son Henry A. Niesen died at the age of 31 on October 31, 1882. Catharine died on February 21, 1891, at the age of 69. Both are



A VIEW ON THE NIESEN PLACE THE RESIDENCE OF M^{RS} CATHARINE PHITZENREITER.
320 ACRES, 10 MILES WEST OF YUBA CITY, SUTTER CO. CAL.

buried in the South Butte Cemetery along with daughters Laura Phitzenreiter Brittan Bryan and Josephine Niesen Buttelman.

Catherine's son, William, served as Supervisor for District No. 3 for a term of eight years. He also was a trustee of the Brittan school district. In addition, when Sutter Union High School was

founded, Niesen served as clerk of the board of trustees for seven years.

Niesen was a member of the Odd Fellow's Yuba City Lodge and also the Marysville Encampment where he was a Past Grand and a Past Chief Patriarch of the order. He died at the age 88 on January 29, 1945 and is buried in the Sutter Cemetery.

Both Catharine and another woman who also lived in the South Butte area had many things in common. Mary Magdalena Charge was also from Germany and, in addition, had a son John William Charge who became quite prominent in a neighboring county. An account of his life in the 1918 publication – *History of Butte County*

– reveals his early years in Sutter County as well as his influential life in Chico. Perhaps Niesen and Charge inherited leadership qualities. But it is also quite possible they observed their widowed mothers as they labored daily to keep their families and homes intact despite many hardships.

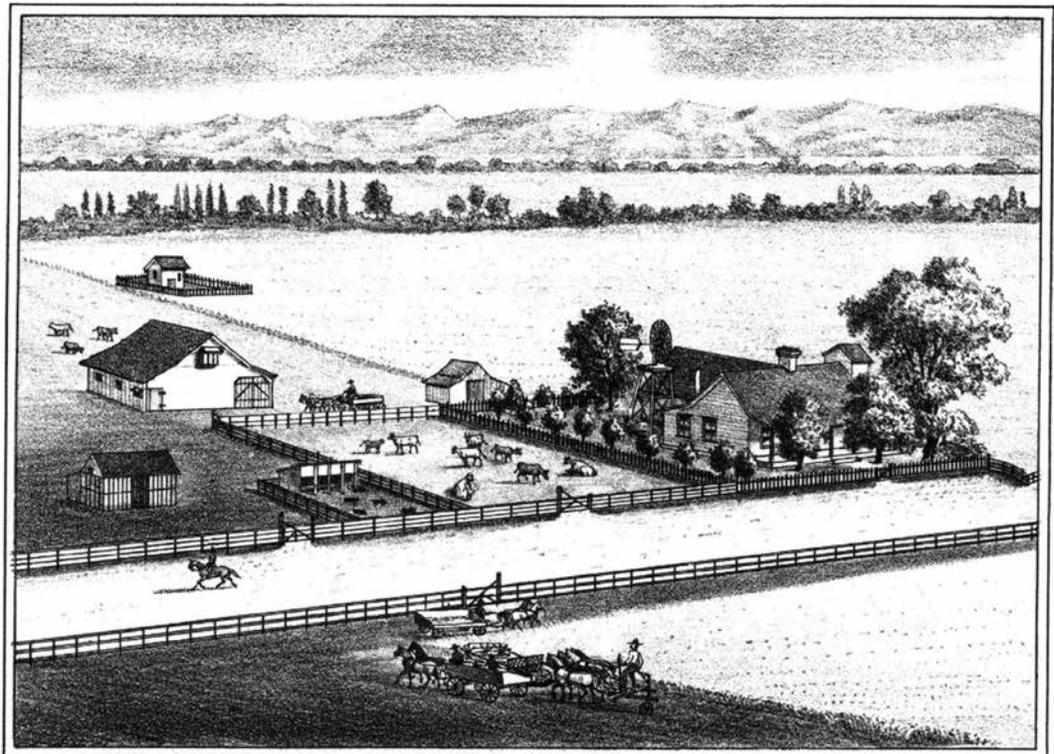
MARY MAGDALENA CHARGE

Born in 1824, Mary Magdalena was first married to a Mr. Weaver who died in 1857. The following year, she emigrated to the United States where she resided in St. Louis, Missouri for about a year. Mary Magdalena then moved to California where she eventually settled in the South Butte area. In 1861, she married Peter Charge, also a native of Germany.

At the age of 27, Peter arrived in the United States in 1857 and soon after crossed the plains to California where he located in Sutter County and purchased land. He took up farming and raised stock: draft horses and cattle. Peter was a neighbor and personal friend of General John Sutter.

Four children were born to the couple. However, in 1871, Peter died, leaving sons John William, age 9 and Martin Andrew, age 7, along with daughters Emma E., age 5 and

a daughter whose name and age are unknown. During this time, Mary Magdalena made sure her young family attended the public schools of the Butte Slough District while she kept her holdings intact. From age 12, John William assisted his mother on the ranch with help from the rest of the children whenever needed. At 14, he quit school in order to give full attention to his work, which he continued until 1888 when the 400 acre ranch was sold.



VIEW OF RANCH RES. OF MRS MAGD^A CHARGE. SUTTER CO. CAL.

In 1887 John William married the former Flora Luella Wimmer, a native of Missouri and daughter of William Riley Wimmer. She came with her parents across the plains at two years of age and was raised in Sutter County. The couple remained in the South Butte area until around 1900 when John William decided to relocate his family to Chico. It was the perfect move for him. Over the years, he built up a prosperous business. Mary Magdalena would have been aware of her son's successes as a Chico businessman as he worked his way up to an office job as a buyer for a feed mill, but she didn't see him open his own business as a wholesale dealer of hay and grain in 1913. She died on January 14, 1912 at the age of 82.



MARTIN & LENA CHARGE C. 1950S

Three of Mary Magdalena's children were blessed with long lives. John William died on August 23, 1959 at the age of 97 and is buried in the Paradise Cemetery. His brother Martin Andrew, who also died at age 97, is buried in the Meridian Cemetery. Their sister Emma E. Charge Robertson reached the age of 94 and is buried in the Sutter Cemetery.

A small lithograph of the family home is depicted in the Thompson and West *History of Sutter County*. The one-story residence along with a number of out buildings was located five miles east of Meridian. Cattle graze while a farmer appears to be harvesting grain. Could that have been John William?

CHARLOTTE ERKE

Another pioneer woman of German descent was Charlotte Erke, who immigrated to the United States in 1868 at the age of 22. Unfortunately, her life in her new country was beset with many tragedies.



HERMANN & CHARLOTTE ERKE



GARDEMEYER HOUSE (SUTTER)

Born on December 24, 1846, the former Charlotte Maria Katarena Harstromberg came directly to California after emigrating from Germany and settled in South Butte. Shortly after, she married Hermann Erke, a native of Prussia, who was a rancher in the area. To Charlotte's distress, he died six years later at the age of 38 on June 20, 1874, leaving a family of four children. It appears Erke left his family quite wealthy. By 1879, Charlotte owned 500 acres of land located seven miles from Meridian and was known as a woman of "considerable" means. This would eventually be her downfall.

In 1884, an unsavory individual by the name of Peter D. Gardemeyer arrived in the area posing as a sewing machine and patented gate salesman. During his travels in the Sutter Buttes area, he met the

widow Charlotte. He told her of his "dream" of establishing a town at the base of the Buttes. It was hoped that this new community called Sutter City would become the county seat. Charlotte must have been enticed to the "vision" as well and made a substantial investment in Peter's promotion. Along the way, a romance between them also began, which later resulted in marriage.

For some time there was a building boom in the area. Sutter City grew to a population of 800 by 1890. Everything seemed to be in favor of Peter for a few months until the rumors began. His syndicate was faced with financial problems. Suits were filed against Peter on mortgage defaults. Delinquent tax sales resulted. Many were forced to abandon their new property and lots were reverted to the state for unpaid

taxes. Then in 1891, with pressure of criminal charges mounting; Peter Gardemeyer left Sutter for good, leaving his wife and child to start all over again. But this time, Charlotte would not have money nor investment opportunities.

Fortunately, Charlotte was able to keep her home and did have the support of three of her children from her first marriage who were still living with her. The only member of Charlotte's former staff was Peter Schmidt, who had earlier met Gardemeyer in San Francisco where he unwittingly purchased a plot for \$850 only to find that it was already owned by another individual. He was hired to be the gardener for the Gardemeyers, but Schmidt continued to hold a grudge. Many of the nearby residents feared Schmidt. They thought him dangerous, but Charlotte felt she

could handle him.

One evening Charlotte and her daughter Minerva were confronted by an angry Schmidt who was protesting that he was not called in for dinner. Charlotte stated that she was not going to cook another dinner just for him. Schmidt then reached into his pocket, pulled out a gun and a shot rang out. Charlotte ran after Schmidt and began fighting with him. Two more shots were heard. Charlotte reportedly was still able to leave the house and chase Schmidt for about 80 feet until she realized she had been shot in the abdomen.

Charlotte died two days later from complications from her bullet wounds. Her death occurred on November 18, 1892 when she was 45. She was buried next to her first husband, Hermann, and two infant children in the Stohlman Cemetery. How does anyone sum of the life of Charlotte Erke Gardemeyer? It is impossible and too tragic for any words.

Rounding out the women who settled in the South Butte area are Elizabeth Ramey and Agnes Brice. They, too, exhibited great courage during tragic and unusual circumstances.

ELIZABETH RAMEY

A native of Jefferson County, Virginia, Elizabeth Ramey was born in 1819. At the age of 15, she married Isaac Ramey, who was only four years older. The young couple lived in Virginia until 1843 when they moved to New Franklin, Missouri. They remained in that state until 1853 when they came to

California, settling in South Butte.

Isaac purchased property from Charles Daly at a location where stages from Marysville to Colusa changed horses and then crossed at Winter's Ferry, north of Meridian. Isaac worked at farming and was able to accumulate 400 acres of land over a ten-year period. In addition, the Ramey family grew to seven children. Then a major tragedy occurred.

A local newspaper, dated March 1, 1863, reported the following: "A man named Isaac Ramey died February 26th near South Butte, Sutter Co. from injuries received by being dragged by a wild mule." Isaac was 50 and was buried in the Yuba City Cemetery. The details of his death were never included in Elizabeth's biography in 1879. Perhaps, it was just too painful for her to describe. However, Elizabeth was able, with the help of her large family, to successfully maintain the family ranch. It must have been quite a challenge with just two sons and her five daughters.

The various spellings of Ramey/Ramy that showed up while doing research is confusing. It was a complete shock to find the named changed to Reamy on the headstones of Isaac and Elizabeth who died on December 8, 1894 at the age of 79. Yet, no matter the spelling, Elizabeth's ability to keep both her family and ranch following Isaac's death is a major tribute to her perseverance.

AGNES BRICE

Agnes Brice was born in Northumberland County, England

in July 1798. She married Paul J. Brice in 1821 and the couple emigrated to the United States in 1849. En route, their ship was wrecked, but they finally landed in New Orleans. However, for reasons unknown, they decided to go to Kentucky where Paul died in 1850, leaving two children. Agnes remained in that state for six more years before deciding to take her family to California by way of the Isthmus of Panama.

Once again, Agnes encountered another unexpected event. The family was detained for six weeks due to the Walker Expedition. It seems William Walker¹, a qualified doctor, lawyer and journalist, sought after more adventuresome endeavors. He became a filibuster or "soldier of fortune" who engaged in planning expeditions and conducting unauthorized warfare against countries with which the United States was at peace.

In July of 1856, Walker invaded Nicaragua, captured the city of Granada and set up a puppet government naming himself as president. The attempt would end in less than a year, however. According to one account, Walker surrendered to the U.S. Navy in May 1857 while another report said he was run out by Costa Rican forces.

After their long wait, Agnes and her family arrived in California where they settled in South Butte. By 1879, Agnes had accumulated 400 acres of property – quite a major feat for a widow to undertake in a new land. She was 81 when she presented her biography. However,

¹ For a brief time William Walker practiced law in Marysville.

Agnes never mentioned her great-grandchildren who both died in 1876. Lillace B. Brice was age 4 and her sister Myrtle was only nine months old.

JULIA BLANKS

Julia Blanks was born in El Dorado County on March 1, 1852. At a young age, she and her parents moved to Petaluma in Sonoma County where her mother died when Julia was only six years old. Two years later, her family moved to Yolo County where they remained until 1864.

The next move was to Colusa County, where Julia lived until 1874. During that year, she married J.B. Carder, and the couple made their first home in Marysville. What her husband did for a living is unknown. However, it appears the Carders moved frequently between Marysville and Colusa for the next two years. Unfortunately, Julia's husband was shot and killed in Chico, leaving her with their young son Harvey Frank Carder. His twin brother died at birth.

After the untimely death of her husband, Julia moved to Colusa but remained only a short time. She finally settled in Meridian to begin a new life. On November 15, 1876 Julia married Joseph B. Blanks, a native of Virginia. But once again, tragedy struck. Blanks died on June 4, 1878. And to add to Julia's "heavy burdens," her only son Harvey Frank died at the age of 4½ on February 12, 1879. Both husband and son were buried in the Meridian Cemetery.

Since her life was one of countless misfortunes and were fresh in her mind, Julia described them in detail when interviewed by the journalist for her biography. Julia remained in Meridian where she worked as a seamstress and was able to accumulate town property. By this time the community had many of the important businesses and services to meet the needs of its population of approximately 120.

For example, there was a hotel, two general stores, two saloons, a drug store, meat market, blacksmith shop, paint shop and barber shop. In addition, Meridian had a telegraph office, post office, church and schoolhouse, two warehouses and a boarding house, which was owned and operated by Mary E. Nordyke.

MARY E. NORDYKE

Born in Bedford County, Virginia on February 28, 1830, Mary and her family moved to Missouri where she met and married William Nordyke in 1848. A year later, the couple came to California by way of Mexico, a journey of ten months. Upon their arrival, William engaged in mining for the next five years. There is a possibility that he was not that successful as the Nordykes returned to Missouri where they remained until 1864. When they returned, they crossed the plains to California, settling in Tehama County.

In 1869, the family moved to Colusa County where William died, leaving Mary a widow with five children. By 1871, Meridian, which had suffered a flood in 1867-68, was beginning to fully recover. In order to support her family, it seemed an opportune time for Mary to open a boarding house.

But Mary was not without disasters in her life. One of her daughters was Sarah, who was born on September 13, 1854. Prior to her 18th birthday, Sarah married Daniel J. Brooks on April 30, 1872. They made their home in the Meridian area. A son, William, was born on December 28, 1873. However, in 1875 it appears smallpox or some other epidemic occurred in the area, taking the lives of an infant daughter Nettie May, age one month and

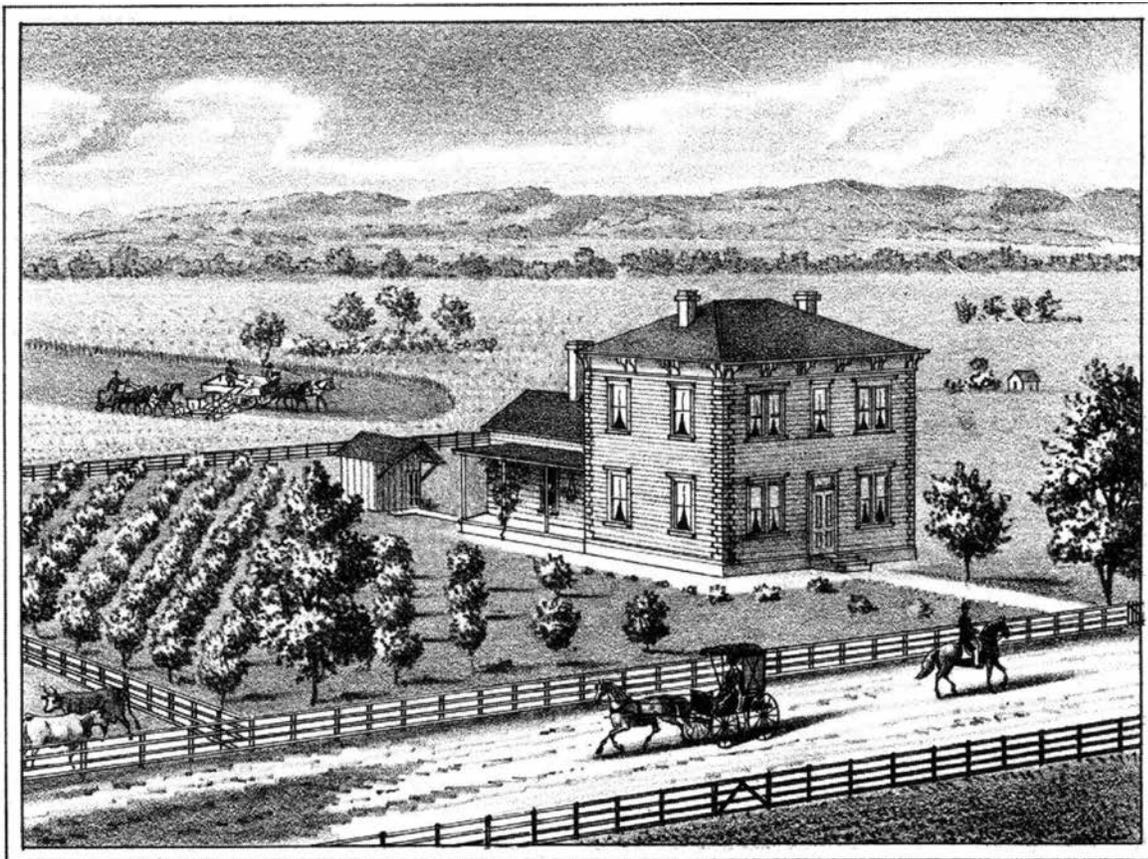
20 days on April 30; Sarah, age 20, on May 15; and son William, who was nearly one and 1/2 years old, on May 18. All were buried in the Meridian Cemetery.

To lose a daughter and two grandchildren within weeks and days of each other must have been devastating for Mary Nordyke. But like other widows, she knew she must carry on and that's what Mary did.

JULIA HUNTER

Julia Powell Hunter was born in Nicholas County, Kentucky in 1833. When she was at a young age, the Powell family moved to Missouri where Julia later married Samuel Jefferson Hunter on November 24, 1852. The couple crossed the plains to California where they settled 12 miles below Meridian where Enoch Edward was born in 1859 and Jerry Lee was born in 1866. What happened to both of the sons is a tragedy of its own.

Located 14 miles south of Meridian on Cranmore Road a small Hunter Cemetery includes the bodies of Enoch Edward who died in 1865 at the age of six and Jerry Lee who died in 1867 at one year and one month. Was there an epidemic during these years? Or was this simply the way families struggled without medical treatments while living miles away from doctors who usually resided in larger communities?



HUNTER PLACE NEAR MERIDIAN

The Hunters eventually moved in 1875 to be nearer Meridian. However, Julia was a widow within a few years, leaving her with four sons and three daughters to support. By 1879 Julia owned 164 acres of farm land along with her home. A lithograph in the Thompson and West History of Sutter County reveals a stately two-story residence with a single-story attachment in back surrounded by an orchard and farming land. The Hunter family

seemed to have prospered in the Meridian area. It is possible that the property and home were later sold, however, as Julia moved to the Bay Area where she married Burges Edward Jacobs.

On August 6, 1906, Julia died in Oakland and was buried in the Mountain View Cemetery. She was 73 at the time and among her living children were sons Byron, Samuel and Frank and daughters Mary Jane, Rose and Lola.

Thus concludes the saga of a seamstress, boarding house owner and a rancher who in their own special ways played major roles in the community of Meridian despite the countless hardships in their lives. Julia Blanks, Mary E. Nordyke and Julia Hunter all epitomize the real meaning of dauntless.

The final three women settled in various communities throughout Sutter County including Live Oak, which began to emerge in 1869 when trains began operating in this hamlet due to the California and Oregon Railroad which incorporated to build a line from Marysville to Portland, Oregon in 1865.

By 1874, a post office was established in Live Oak along with a store which was opened by H.C. Gregory. Five years later, Live Oak had a population of 125 people. By then the settlement included an additional store, a hotel and boarding house, blacksmith shops, a butcher shop and shoemaker shop. There was also a school, an express office and about 25 residences. Among these early settlers was Amy Childs.

AMY CHILDS

Amy was born on February 1, 1819. Her family moved to Michigan when she was around 11 years of age and remained there for 12 years. During that time, Amy married Alex B. Davis on November 3, 1833. The couple remained in Michigan for another nine years until they moved to Missouri.

The Davis family later came to California in 1854 by way of the Isthmus. They settled in the Live Oak area where they farmed. Unfortunately, Alex died ten years later leaving Amy with three children including son Albert E. Davis. On May 5, 1871, Amy married George Childs. He died during the fall of 1872. Amy remained in Live Oak where she and her family maintained 160 acres of farm land.

Amy died in 1891 at the age of 72. She was buried in the Live Oak Cemetery along with her son Albert E. Davis who died in 1921, age 72; her daughter-in-law Maria Johnson Davis who died at age 75 in 1932; and Arthur Davis, Amy's grandson and the only son of Albert and Maria, who died at the age of 22 in 1902.

Over her lifetime, Amy must have experienced many changes in the community of Live Oak as did Mrs. E.J. Hobbs, who witnessed a growing population in the Yuba City area.

MRS. E.J. HOBBS

A native of Ohio, Mrs. E.J. Hobbs was born in 1839. She and her family moved to Illinois three years later. In 1846, the family went to Iowa where they remained until they crossed the plains to California in 1855 – a six-month journey.

After spending a year in Yolo County, the family settled near Yuba City where in 1857 Mrs. Hobbs married her first husband George Rose, a native of England. He died five years later. A second marriage occurred in 1864 to J.W. Hobbs, a native of Kentucky. He died in 1875 leaving a family of two sons and three daughters. Extensive research could not reveal too much about either the Rose or Hobbs families. However, in the 1880 Census, a George

Rose appeared whose age was 20, born in 1860 in California and living in Sutter County. By all accounts, he was the son of George and E.J. Rose.

Although the family members lived a distance from Yuba City, they no doubt often traveled to this thriving community of about 600 where they purchased supplies and utilized other services from its many businesses as well as contributed to Sutter County's flourishing agriculture industry from their 160 acres of farm land.

However, Bedelia Schillig, whose family would become prominent citizens of Yuba City, along with her husband chose Grand Island in Colusa County to make their home.

BEDELIA SCHILLIG

Born in Longford County, Ireland on February 28, 1835, the former Bedelia Cox emigrated with relatives to the United States in 1848. They first settled in Greene County, New York where Bedelia remained until 1855 when she came to California, living in Marysville for about three years. Bedelia married Paul Schillig, a native of Ohio, in June 1858. Following their marriage, the couple first moved to French Corral but remained there for only four months. They then settled on Grand Island, located about eight miles southeast of Meridian.

During this time, mail was delivered by stage to Colusa and then to the Grand Island Post Office and rowed across the Sacramento River, picked up by a wagon with delivery to the various families.

Over the years, the Schillig family grew to seven children – three daughters and four sons. Sadly, their son Charles died in 1872 at the age of ten months. What made it even harder for Bedelia was that she shared the same birthday (February 28) as Charles. Two years later, her husband Paul died on November 3, 1874 leaving Bedelia to handle the family affairs which by 1879 included 360 acres of farm land.

On November 9, 1891, Bedelia died at the relatively young age of 56 from heart disease. The Sutter County Farmer newspaper described her as an "estimable lady" of West Sutter. She was buried in the Schillig family plot in the Meridian Cemetery along with her husband and infant son Charles.

It is interesting to note that Paul and Bedelia's son Lawrence served in the capacity of district attorney as well as city attorney of Yuba City. In fact, he was the city attorney at the time Yuba City was incorporated in 1907. He also chaired the incorporation committee and served in the Assembly. And as an added note, he was the father-in-law of the famed writer Frederick Faust, also known as Max Brand. But that's another story.

This concludes the series of the dauntless dozen who shared parts of their lives in the Thompson and West History of Sutter County. Even though they arrived to this area from many states and countries, they had many things in common. And despite their many struggles, setbacks and sadness; they remained strong and steadfast, and along with their families, helped to shape the history of Sutter County.



LAWRENCE SCHILLIG

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'49 Experi

By William Armstrong

**Dictated by Mr. Armstrong in 1877 to S. S. Boynton,
an assistant researcher for H. H. Bancroft**

Editor's Note: H. H. Bancroft arrived in San Francisco in 1852 to open up a west coast office for his brother-in-law's bookstore. He resigned from the business in 1868 after accumulating a library of material and began writing and publishing history. Part of this collection, which resides at the Bancroft Library at U. C. Berkeley, included interviews that he, or more likely his assistants, gathered from early pioneers in California. William Armstrong and his wife, who was never named, came to Yuba City in 1849 and although they didn't stay long, his account of their trip west and of the very earliest days of Yuba City are presented here.

I was born in Scotland and came to America when I was fifteen years of age. Was married in Indiana, my wife being a native of Ohio. I was twenty-nine and my wife eighteen when we left Russellville, Ill. for Cal.

We started on the 4th of March and I drove my wagon pulled by three yoke of cattle. My wife was the only woman in the train. We had one child, a boy, four or five months old. On the 23d of May we crossed the Missouri River at St. Jos. and fairly started across the plains.

wife and her baby. They did not offer to molest us in any way while we were near there.

We followed up the south side of the North Platte to near Fort Laramie where we crossed the river again.

Before reaching the fort we were startled one day by seeing a crazy man stark naked (sic) wandering on the plain. He was at once taken in charge of by "Colonel" Loring of the United States Mounted Riflemen W. S. troops.

ences

On the Platte, shortly after leaving Fort Kearney, the cholera broke out and many of our company died. So many had died along this part of the route that for many miles we were never out of sight of emigrants' graves. We followed the usual route up the Platte River but experienced considerable difficulty in crossing it at the forks of the South Platte. The quicksand was so bad that we could hardly manage to get our wagons over. We had to wade in the water to keep the cattle in motion and had to have drivers on both the off and near side.

Before reaching the river we had come to a Pawnee village completely deserted on account of the presence of a strong war-party of Sioux Indians.

We found the huts or cabins made in good shape and with some degree of taste.

The Pawnees had left so quickly and so short a time before our arrival that the fires were still burning in their huts. As I looked into one of the huts I found a Pawnee left behind on account of being blind. I spoke to him and he came out and followed me back to the wagons. All that day he walked behind my wagon but at night a young Indian boy came into our camp and led the blind one away.

As we climbed up the bank of Platte River we found this war-party of Sioux to the number of two or three thousand camped near the stream. They crowded around our wagons and seemed to take pleasure in looking at my

On getting into the mountains beyond Fort Laramie we camped one night in a place where we had to swim the cattle across the river in order to get them on to grass.

The men had to swim across and as I was a good swimmer I took their clothes in a tub and pushed the tub ahead of me across the stream. In the morning I swam across again and brought back their clothes.

Soon after we past (sic) the road leading into Oregon. We camped one night on a level plain without water. Our Captain, John Alexander now of Watsonville, placed a guard of several men over the stock with orders to watch them closely.

In the morning half the work cattle were lost. We were all very angry and threatened to hang the men that stood guard. We found those stock a few miles ahead at a stream of clear, cold water.

We drove them back, yoked up and drove on up to where we found the lost stock.

When we got to the South Pass we thought we were half way to the golden regions. From there at least we knew the water ran into the Pacific.

On the bank of the Green River we buried one of our company, Carl Walls from Jasper County, Illinois. We sewed him up in his blankets and buried him at night with wolves and coyotes howling around us on all sides.

Adamstown, here we saw men at work digging out the gold. Saw a woman with pies for sale. I asked her how much they were worth. She answered, "Two dollars apiece." We left at once for only had a half a dollar between us. At Long's Bar we bought two ship biscuits with our half dollar and sat down to eat them. Went back to camp again in the rain. That night my tent blew down several times and we got wet through.

Next day Capt. Allender made a trade with John C. Hall – afterwards a leading merchant of Marysville, to haul some goods he had to Sacramento and I started with them.

For two days it rained so that our cattle and wagons would mire down every few moments. At last we stopped at Yeates' ranch¹ for we could go no further. Allender advised me to go to work for Yeates. At this time Capt. Yeates' ranch was a central point for many miners. The hotel consisted of three small rooms, one 8 x 10, one 10 x 12, and one about 10 x 15. We hired out to Yeates and my wife did the cooking

in the hotel.

Yeates and Clinton kept a bar and many men stopped at the place. Gambling was carried on both night and day. The first Sunday we were there as soon as the dishes were off the table men put their blanket on and sat down to gamble as usual. My wife asked them not to gamble in the house on Sunday. They didn't want to hurt her feelings but could not stop gambling so they went out under a tree and played cards all day. At night they were going to stop but the man who dealt the game – monte – hired two men at the sale of fifty cents an hour each to split up wood and keep a fire and light. While here a man died. He had two yoke of cattle and large quantity of provisions in his wagon. Dr. Sparks took care of him and when he died, claimed the cattle and wagon for the doctor's bill. Dr. Sparks was soon taken sick and Dr. Clinton took care of him. Sparks died and Clinton took cattle, wagon, provisions and all the property of Sparks had for his bill.

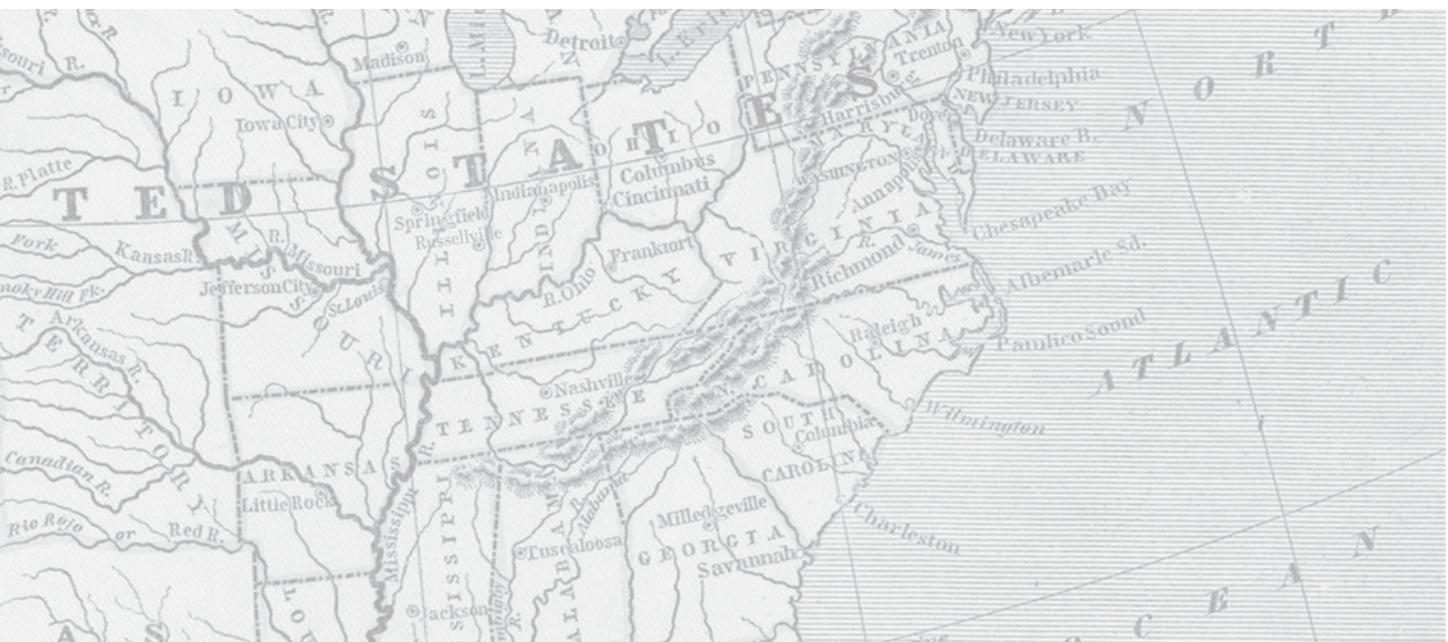
While at Yeates' ranch we voted on the adoption of the State

Constitution and we had a majority at that precinct in favor of California being admitted as a free State, though most of the men were from the South.

Owing to a difficulty with Yeates and Clinton we left the house and started for Yuba City with a man driving three yoke of oxen. He agreed to haul us and our things about two hundred pounds weight for twenty-four dollars. Within six or seven miles of the city he camped, as it was raining and nearly night. We had no place to sleep so started afoot and walked the remainder of the distance after dark. At this time there were plenty of bears and large wolves on the bottoms. Got to Yuba City and to Mrs. Linder's tent about ten o'clock.

At that time Yuba City consisted of Linder's tent and a half pole, half canvas tent put up by Rolfe and Cheevers. These last two men claimed to be the agents of parties owning the town lots. They offered me two lots if I would put up a

¹ Yeates' ranch – Gridley, California



house on one. I agreed to do so and put up the first house at Yuba City. The house was built of oak-clapboards and in the spring I put a floor in that cost \$500.00 a thousand feet.

Every night after the house was built men would come and offer to pay a dollar a night to sleep on the floor. Travelers I mean, of course.

In Feb. 1850 I started the first ferry at Yuba City and my first job was ferrying over the packs of thirty-five mules. I had a whale boat to use for a ferry boat.

The first man that died here we sewed up in his blankets and buried without a coffin. When the second burial took place we found the wolves and coyotes had dug up and eaten the first body. The first man that was buried with funeral ceremonies was Anderson and Geo. M. Hanson preached his sermon. Pine coffins cost \$50.

A man named Smith was in Feb. brought to my house on a plank. He could hardly move from the effects of inflammatory rheumatism.

As soon as he could sit up and long before he could use his hands, he hired a young man to play poker for him. Smith would tell how to bet and so on while the man would merely handle the cards for Smith. He won enough money to pay his board bill in this way at the rate of twenty-one dollars a week.

About March 1850 a dance - or ball - the first one was gotten up at Capt. Power's in Marysville. It proved a failure. In April I think at the opening of the Covilaud (sic) Hotel a two-story frame building, the first real ball took place.

There were plenty of men, tickets an ounce each and champagne flowed freely. The ladies found they only numbered seven so before the ball opened they persuaded John Brayier (?), son of a clergyman in Boston to dress up in some of their clothes. He did it and danced half the night ere any of the men knew but what he was a woman.

In the summer of 1850, I went to Hopkins Creek but the mines wouldn't pay to work. As a company of us were leaving the creek a man and his wife had a quarrel. One of our men said, "I will give you my mule for your wife." "Done," said the man and came and took the mule and left. Our man and the woman went on with us on foot.

Went then to Nelson Point on Feather River, big pine tree for foot bridge, no houses or tents there. Nelson Creek was well-worked by means of wing-dams. In building these dams sacks, filled with sand, was used. An empty flour sack was worth a dollar. From Nelson Point I went to Rich Bar four days after gold was found there. I saw a man take out in two days' time gold we all estimated at \$15,000. On first (washing so far?) I saw ten or twelve men digging in the soft dirt where an old pine tree had burned. They had tin cups and knives or spoons searching for lumps of gold. Some had their cups half full, others two thirds full, some hardly any. They were all dusty and black with the soot but seemed quite happy. Some of the lumps were as large as peas, others the size of walnuts.

All of us were half starved. I lived two days on flour and wild onions. Two beeves were driven on to the bar and killed, cut up with an ax. Meat brought a dollar a pound. We heard there were richer diggings at Smith's Bar so went there. Found Major Smith digging a pan of dirt, said, "Now boys we will go to the river and pan this out." The bottom of the pan was completely covered with gold. The ground was soon staked off and claimed for hundreds of men came in a few days.

In the fall I left here and went back to Yuba City where I wintered. Came to Butte County in 1851 have been here twenty-five years.

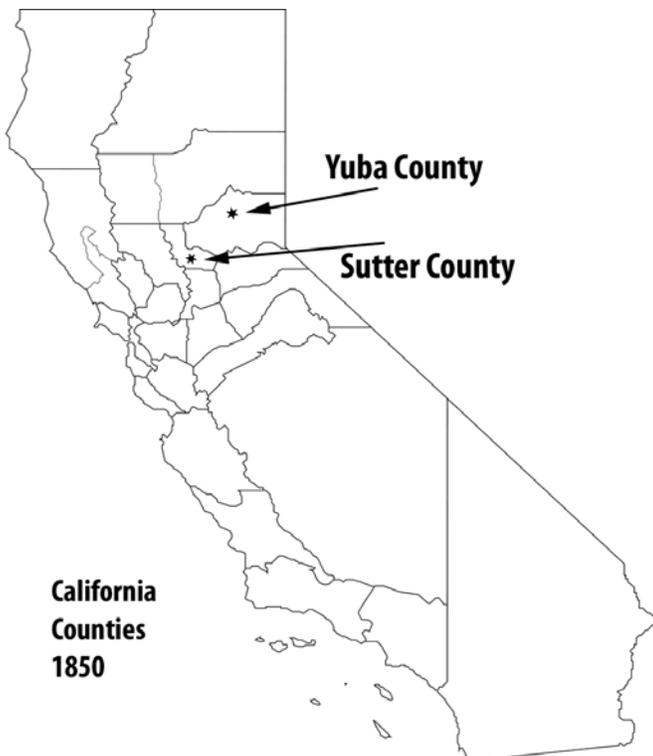
Note: Mr. Armstrong is a well-educated man and has served two terms as County Recorder.

Signed: S. S. Boynton

Did You Know?

Sutter and Yuba Counties are two of the original 27 counties in California. Over the years, the shape and size of both counties have changed.

- Most of the territory in Sutter County has been in the county since 1850. However, part of Sutter County was moved to the newly-created Placer County in 1851 and a portion of that was returned to Sutter County in 1866.
- The border with Butte County remained rather fluid with part of the original Sutter County moved to Butte County as early as 1850 and portions returned to Sutter County in 1852, 1854 and 1866.
- Part of Sutter County became permanently part Colusa and Placer Counties.
- Yuba County has changed substantially since 1850. Portions of Yuba County were carved into Nevada, Placer, Plumas, and Sierra counties.





Part of the master plan process is not only looking at the exhibits we already have and how to tell the stories more effectively, but looking at if we are telling a comprehensive story throughout the museum. At the same time we are examining how we use our spaces to further the telling of this comprehensive story. This image is one proposed idea for our entry gallery, which will set the stage for the rest of the museum. This is not a finished product, rather an idea in the early stages of development.

If you haven't signed up for our **eNewsletter** yet, you should!

It's the best way to keep informed on how COVID-19 is impacting the Museum, particularly our open hours and public programs.

Just visit our website at

www.suttercountymuseum.org and scroll to the bottom.

You'll see the box to sign up.

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August 2020 – December 2020

In Memory of **Annette Crawford**

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In Memory of **Jerry Fulkerson**

Allen & Kathe Herr

In Memory of **Pamela Hardwick**

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In Memory of **John McConnell**

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In Memory of **Teddy Patrick**

Julie Stark

In Memory of **Pete Sands**

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Sharyl Simmons
Phyllis Smith

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August 2020 – December 2020

Allen County Public Library	Tony & Joan Kurlan
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Michael Dockrey	Tyrone Schaeffer
Susan Eggleston	Tom & Barbara Silver
Marilyn Elliott	Sharyl Simmons
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The Museum is a partnership between Sutter County and the Community Memorial Museum Association, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Association supports all of the public programming aspects of the Museum, including education programs, fundraising events, temporary exhibits, updates to permanent exhibits, and the Museum Store. Donations made to the Association are tax deductible.

There are many ways to donate to the Museum:

- Mail a check
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- Planned Giving

We also have corporate sponsorship opportunities for our events and temporary exhibits.

Volunteer

We would not be able to do what we do without our volunteers. Volunteers staff the front desk when the Museum is open. This includes greeting visitors, answering any questions they may have, answering the phone, and selling items in the Museum Store. Volunteers also work on special projects, help at events, make ornaments and help decorate for Trees & Traditions. We are always looking for more volunteers, so if you are interested please contact us or come by the Museum!

Membership Information

Our members are vital to the success of the Museum. The funds we raise from this program help us to properly care for our collection, bring in traveling exhibits, and provide education programs.

For a complete listing of benefits by level, visit www.suttercountymuseum.org

Membership Levels

Basic*	\$35
Basic Plus*	\$60
Bronze**	\$100
Silver**	\$250
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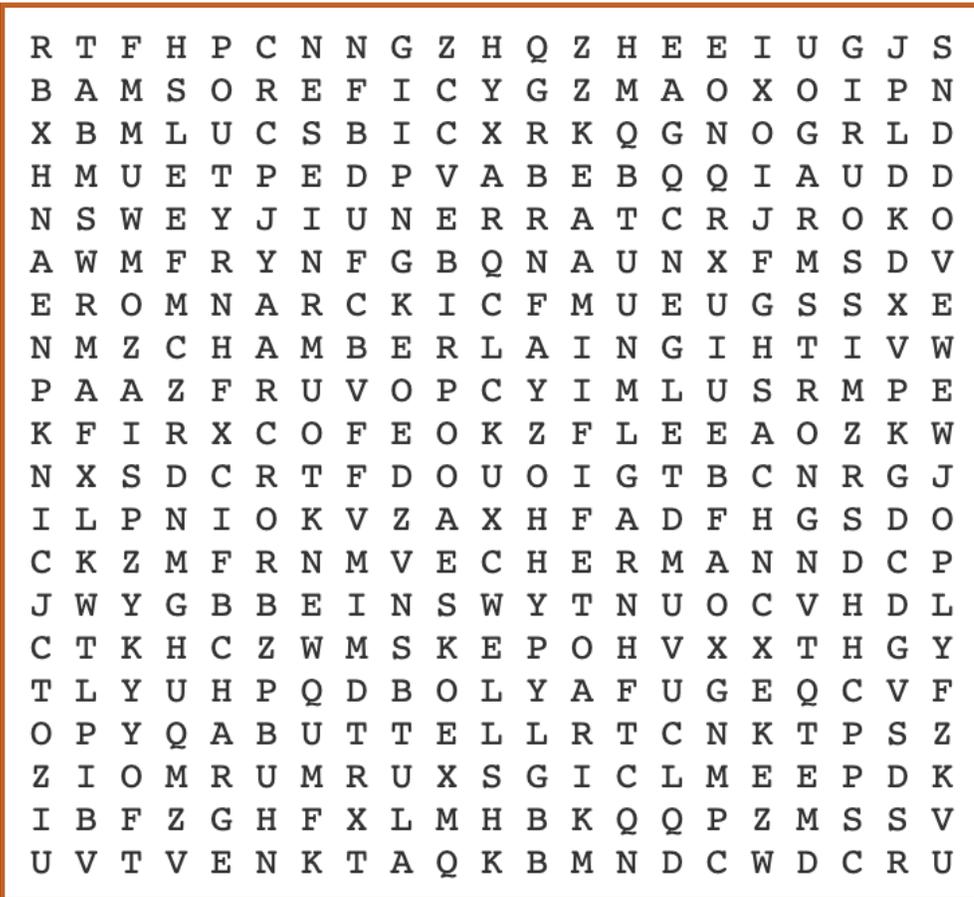
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