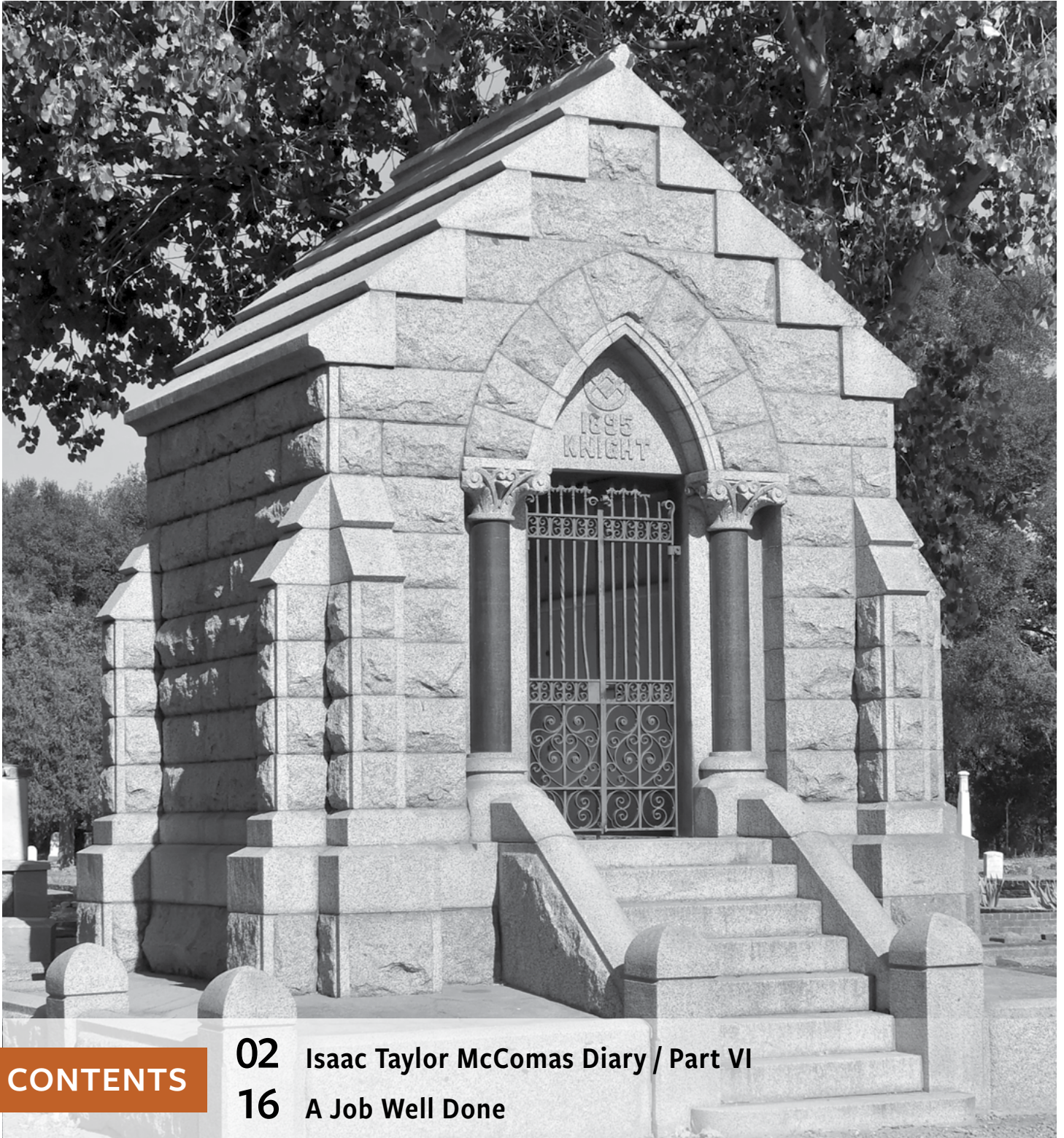


SUTTER
COUNTY
MUSEUM

FALL
2025

BULLETIN



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ON THE COVER:

DAVID E. KNIGHT'S CRYPT.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERTA SCHURTZ.

Sutter County Museum Staff

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Visit the Museum

1333 Butte House Road
Yuba City, California 95993
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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 by the Sutter County Museum Association. This year, the Association is publishing three editions. Editors are Sharyl Simmons and Phyllis Smith. Renewal of annual membership provides you with a subscription to the **Bulletin**.

www.suttercountymuseum.org

Museum Association

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

Applications to join are 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.

Association Members:

Debbie Reid, President

Barbara Hankins, Vice President

Marika García, Secretary

Amber Milner, Treasurer

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Golden Trees & Traditions: Memories & Melodies

Tickets are on sale (while supplies last!) for a special 50th anniversary celebration of **Trees & Traditions** on Friday, December 5th from 6:00-9:00pm. Join us for the Museum's annual fundraiser featuring festive food and drinks, local music, and, of course, holiday trees and traditions. Tickets are on sale for \$50 each at the Museum, by phone at 530-822-7141, or online at suttercountymuseum.org/events.

New Staff Bio



Amina Federspiel-Otelea
Museum Aide

Amina Federspiel-Otelea is eager to join the Sutter County Museum team as a Museum Aide. After graduating with her B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM, she takes joy in re-connecting with her hometown area and supporting the thriving Sutter community. She brings museum and education experience as an Art and Leadership program leader at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and spent three years building lasting connections and supporting a dynamic team as an RA for her college community. Planning to attend graduate school in Art History, she is very grateful for the opportunity to gain extensive hands-on experience at the SCM and to develop the diverse skills of a museum professional.

Exhibits

The Curious World of Seaweed is on display December 17th, 2025 through February 21st, 2026 .

Based on the book *The Curious World of Seaweed* by Josie Iselin, this exhibition examines seaweed's vital role in the ecosystem. Visit to learn about the history of seaweed in California through stunning "portraits" of seaweed, stories of Indigenous peoples' and women's connections to seaweed, and the ecology of the kelp forests of the Pacific Coast. From nori to giant kelp, from bull kelp to surfgrass and eelgrass, explore how these sophisticated marine plants keep our planet opulently rich in life.

The Curious World of Seaweed is a traveling exhibition from author and artist Josie Iselin in partnership with Exhibit Envoy. The exhibit is based on the book of the same name by Iselin (Heyday Books).

This is the end of the portion of the McComas diary that the Museum has in its collection. I enjoyed annotating the diary, figuring out who and what he was writing about, and watching the changes that took place in early Marysville. I would like to thank Victoria Tudor for her help with questions about the early days of Marysville.

Isaac Taylor McComas Diary

Part VI: 1864 – 1865

Edited and Annotated by Sharyl Simmons



MASONIC HALL AT THE CORNER OF 3RD & E STREETS IN MARYSVILLE. PHOTO IS FROM ABOUT 1900. PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION.

1864

Jan. 1, 1864

We laid the corner stone for the Masonic Hall today. The Masonic Order was out and we spent the day very pleasantly. We had a very nice dinner in the afternoon at the U. S. Hotel and a ball and supper at night. I was there.

Jan. 3, 1864

The Rev. Mr. Ely¹ the orator of the day at the laying of the cornerstone at the Masonic Hall preached for us today.

Jan. 7, 1864

I set the stone sills today at the Masonic Hall.

Jan. 13, 1864

I rented my house to McGuire² the druggist for thirty dollars³ a month.

Jan. 18, 1864

Evening I went to the stockholders meeting at the Odd Fellows Hall.

Feb. 1, 1864

We have all the walls up now except the front on 3rd St. for the 1st story at Masonic Hall. We are waiting for the front doorway of the hall.

Feb. 16, 1864

I started this morning for San Francisco and arrived about 10 at night.

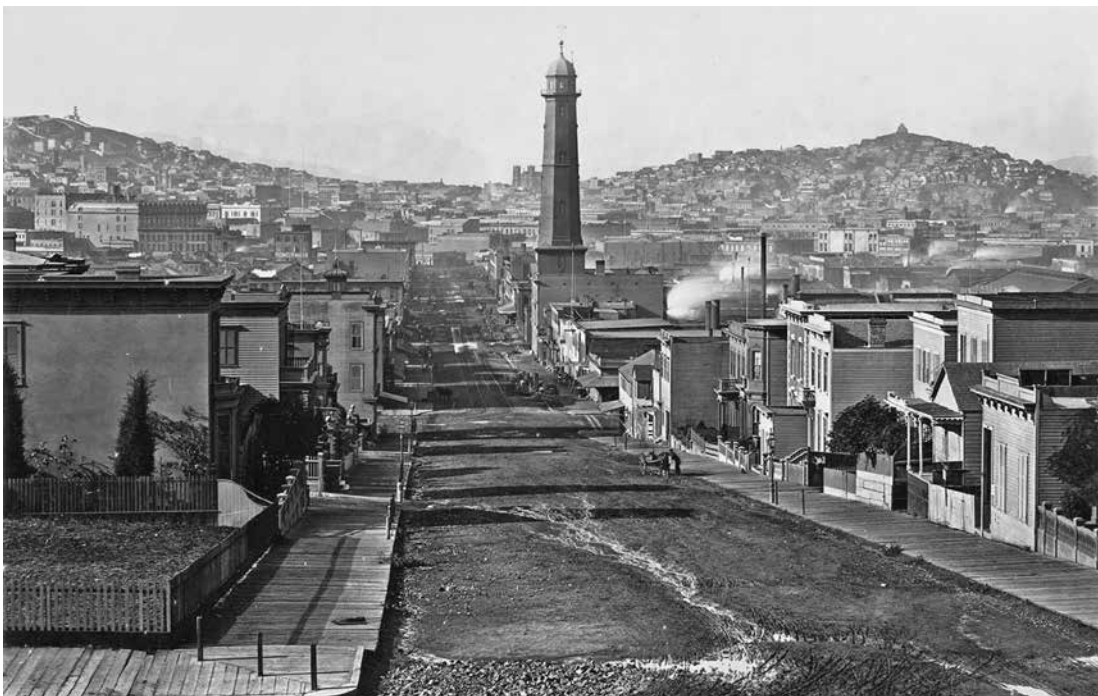
Feb. 17, 1864

I find everything very lively here and the place growing rapidly.⁴

Feb. 18, 1864

I went to the railroad to Santa Clara⁵ today but was quite unwell with fever and chills.

- 1 Reverend Benjamin E. S. Ely was originally from Pennsylvania. He was admitted to the Yuba County Bar in 1858-59 and served as an assemblyman in 1858. By 1879, he was still a minister and living in Southern California.
- 2 Either T. or L. McGuire who operated the City Drug Store on the southeast corner of D & 2nd Streets.
- 3 About \$618 in 2025. It's unclear which house McComas is referring to, as he owned several properties over the years.
- 4 In 1864, San Francisco's population was 108,000, and buildings were going up all over the peninsula.
- 5 The San Francisco to San Jose Railroad was completed in January 1864, so McComas took his ride about a month after completion. The railroad cut travel time from 8 hours by steamboat and stagecoach down to less than 2½ hours.



FIRST STREET IN SAN FRANCISCO, 1864. PHOTO BY CARLETON EMMONS WATKINS.



VIEW FROM RINCON HILL, SAN FRANCISCO IN 1864. PHOTO BY CARLETON EMMONS WATKINS.

Feb. 19, 1864

I started for home today and saw the men taking up the iron plating of the *Cammanchie*⁶ from the ship that sunk the day before I left.

Feb. 26, 1864

The old folks repeated their concert this evening. Sallie⁷ sang with them again. They made about \$650.00 to buy a new church organ.

Mar. 7, 1864

The Odd Fellows went up to Oroville this evening for a concert.

Mar. 21, 1864

After 3 weeks the stones finally came. We got ready at the Masonic Hall to raise the two very large stones at the great doorway leading to hall.



U. S. S. *COMANCHE* C. 1866. WIKIPEDIA.

Mar. 25, 1864

We raised the stones at the doorway of the hall. We started on the Third street front of the Masonic Hall today.

⁶ *USS Comanche*. An ironclad ship constructed in New Jersey, it was disassembled and shipped around Cape Horn on the cargo ship the *Aquila*. The *Aquila* arrived in San Francisco on November 10, 1863 and docked at Hathaway's Pier at the foot of Third Street (near today's McCovey's Cove at Oracle Park). The *Comanche* was to be reassembled at the pier, but on November 14th, a hurricane-strength storm sunk the *Aquila*. Work began raising the metal parts of the *Comanche*, and about six months later, the reassembly of the *Comanche* was completed. She was christened and launched in November 1864.

⁷ Sallie is McComas' wife.

Apr. 8, 1864

We started and got the huge stone up at the hall with no accidents.

Apr. 14, 1864

I went to Sacramento to try and get tenders⁸ for help in the Masonic Hall. I cannot get enough tenders in Marysville so had to look elsewhere.

Apr. 18, 1864

Started for home by boat with 3 tenders and arrived about five.

Apr. 19, 1864

Started on the hall again with 4 bricklayers and 3 tenders.

May 2, 1864

We finished up the third story about one o'clock. The Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterians all had a picnic at Oroville on the railroad today.

May 19, 1864

We finished at A. P. Barnes⁹ today and started on a fence for E. Hamilton.¹⁰

May 20, 1864

I got the third payment on the Masonic Hall \$1393.50. I laid brick today at Lambs. I am building an addition to his stable and it will take 26,000 brick. I commenced at the Masonic Hall to rig up a hoisting apparatus with three large buckets and I intend to hoist by horsepower. I get \$4.50 hour.

June 5, 1864

I started on the third story of the hall today to lay brick. My hoisting arrangements with the horses worked like a charm. It is a great saving.

June 18, 1864

I went to a meeting held at the City Hall for the purpose to take some measures in regard to draining the slough.¹¹ We finished the windows



EBENEZER HAMILTON.
PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION.

8 Mason Tenders who work assisting masons with material and site preparation for brick and stonework.

9 Avery Power Barnes was a contractor and builder in Marysville before going into the grocery business at the corner of B and 7th Street. In 1868, he became an undertaker and acted as the coroner and City Sexton (responsible for the City Cemetery).

10 Ebenezer Hamilton was an undertaker and City Sexton from 1851-1870 and then again from 1872-74. He refused to turn over the cemetery ledgers when he left office. From City Council minutes, he offered to sell them back for \$1,200 in 1874 (over \$35,000 today), and it was refused. He died in 1875 at age 53. In 1876, his widow asked for \$1,500 (over \$44,000 today) from the City Council to return them and was turned down. At least one other attempt to sell them to the City was rebuffed in 1885. As a result, there are no official records of burials in the Marysville City Cemetery before 1870.

11 The meeting established a committee to look into methods of draining the slough that was located near where 3rd Street is today. Stagnant water during

and walls up to the top of the third story a bit after noon.

June 24, 1864

I put my bid for a German church¹² and I was the lowest bidder.

June 27, 1864

I put on the last scaffold high on the third story of the hall.

July 4, 1864

We had one of the largest turnouts today that I ever saw in Marysville on the 4th of July. Everything went off very well. I went out with our new fire steam engine. They all thought it was beautiful.

July 11, 1864

I signed a contract last week to build a German church on the corner of E and 7th St. I finished my curbing at the hall today. I commenced my scaffolding on the fire walls.

July 26, 1864

Pat McCarthy¹³ and I started to lay brick on the German M. E. Church.

Aug. 5, 1864

Poor Pat McCarthy died today. He died 20 minutes past 5 this afternoon. I was with him when he died. He had the inflammation of the bowels. I was sorry.

Aug. 12, 1864

I was quite unwell today so much so that I could not work at all. I sent some of the men walling up the privy vault at the Masonic Hall.

Aug. 20, 1864

I finished the brick work on the hall today. I have finished the front and I am cleaning down the rest and that will let me out. It is real beautiful.

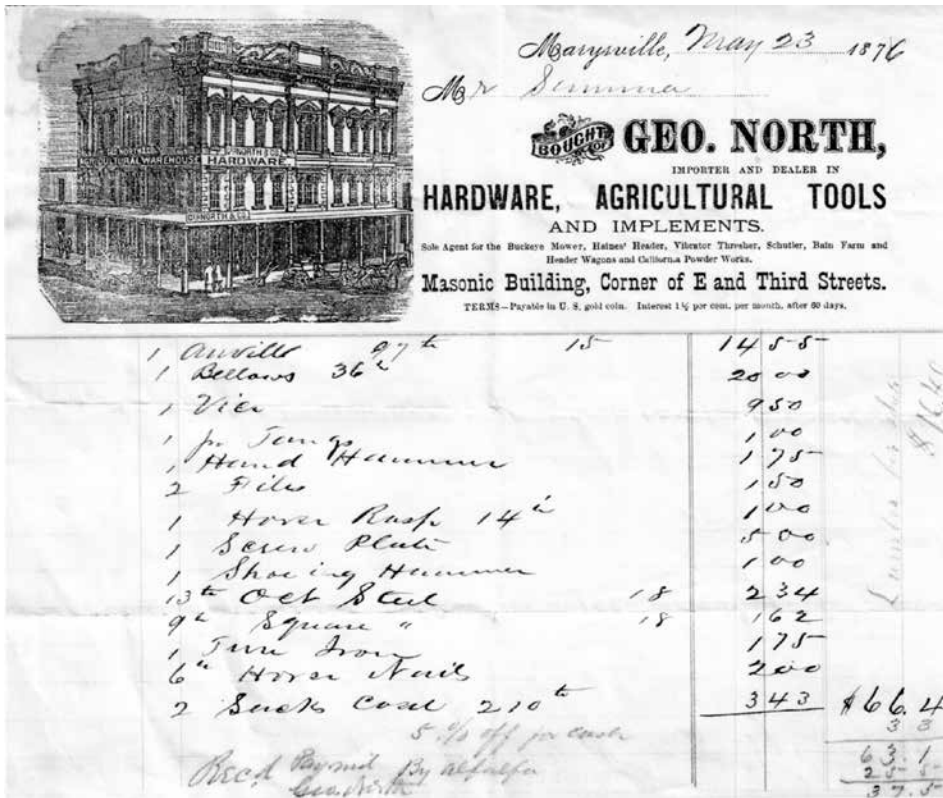
the summer and increased flooding in the winter led citizens to attempt to come up with a solution. McComas was on the committee to devise a method to drain the slough economically, and the committee came up with a proposal to drain the slough from the 3rd Street Bridge to the Yuba River with a channel 1,750 feet long with a fall of 7 to 10 feet. A flume made of two-inch wood would run the entire length of the channel to drain four feet of water with any low spots filled in. McComas was appointed to the committee to solicit contracts for the work. Solicitation advertisements appeared in the newspaper with a closing date of June 29th at 5:00 p.m. McComas is listed as one of the committee members who can be contacted for specific information about the job.

12 The German Methodist Episcopal Church's first service was about 1860. It was built on the corner of 7th and E Streets at an expense of \$2,000.

13 Patrick McCarthy was 28 and born in Limerick, Ireland. He was a mason and a member of the Hibernian Benevolent Society. To be a member you had to be Catholic, male, and Irish by birth or descent. He lived with his family on B Street between 7th & 8th Streets.

Aug. 27, 1864

I am thinking about trying to get along without working, just superintending my work but I am afraid it just won't work in this country. I got ready to do some work at the hall for George North¹⁴ the man that is going to take the corner store of the Masonic Hall.



BILL OF SALE FROM GEORGE NORTH'S STORE. PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION.

Sept. 10, 1864

I started a little stable for Mr. Peckham and a job for City Hall. I raised the fire walls for City Hall. I cleaned down the fronts of the Masonic Hall and that is the last thing I have to do to complete my contract in all its building.

Nov. 8, 1864

The election passed off today very pleasantly. About 1200 votes polled and the Republicans got 395 majority. I'm still cleaning down the fronts of the new hall.

¹⁴ George North was born in New York in 1831 and arrived in Marysville when he was 20. He had a hardware store and sold farm implements. When he returned for a visit in 1896, he recalled men fishing for salmon in the clear water of the Yuba River. He also mentioned lots near the Plaza near the river sold for \$15,000-\$30,000 at the time and later sold for \$10 a lot for the levee right-of-way. He relocated to Yolo County in the 1870s and lived there until his death in 1900. Two of his sons served in the California Assembly at the same time, one representing Yolo County and the other Alameda.



CITY HALL, 3RD & OAK STREETS. CONSTRUCTED IN 1854 AND THE CUPOLA WAS ADDED IN 1864. IT WAS VACATED IN 1938. FROM 1859 UNTIL 1906, THE CITY LIBRARY WAS LOCATED ON THE SECOND FLOOR. PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION.

Nov. 17, 1864

We had quite a fire, the theatre burnt down early this morning and part of the walls fell down. It was a beautiful theatre. What a waste.¹⁵

Dec. 7, 1864

Very heavy rain again and it is high enough this time to run over the 5th embankment. I think from appearances it will wash it all away.

Dec. 10, 1864

I did work for John Wright at his powder house.¹⁶

Dec. 27, 1864

The Masonic Hall was inspected by the Building Inspectors Commission and was dedicated today. We had a very nice time and after the dedication I went to the dinner but not to the ball which was given in the evening in

the hall. I want to start Starrs Mill now just as soon as I can.

Dec. 31, 1864

The last day of 1864. I feel very thankful to have to record once more on the eve of another year of the goodness of our heavenly father in providing so bountifully.

End of 1864



- ¹⁵ Early in the morning, a clothing store in the Theater Block (D Street between 2nd & 3rd Streets) caught fire and took out the entire block. The theater was a total loss of the building and contents including the belongings of the William's Troupe performing in the theater. The lack of wind and a recent rain was credited with the entire business district not being lost. Aside from the theater which was constructed in 1854 by R. A. Eddy, four businesses located in its basement were lost including an Italian fruit market, the clothing store, a tailoring shop, and a bookseller. The front of the theater collapsed onto D Street, and the south wall collapsed onto a building owned by Peter Decker and crashed through to the basement. All the fire companies were called out to work the fire and managed to keep it from spreading throughout the city.
- ¹⁶ John Wright owned a powder house located at the south end of the Yuba Bridge. He had work done to raise the floor of the brick building to literally keep his powder dry. The building is described as two to three feet above the ground. He sold both blasting powder and sporting powder.

1865

Jan. 2, 1865

The roads are very muddy. We worked all day at Mr. Starr's mill.¹⁷

Jan. 3, 1865

Evening at the Masonic Hall to night. We are so pleased with it.

Jan. 4, 1865

The city is building the bridge that washed away on Fifth Street.¹⁸ Water has kept very high in the slough all winter. The roads are so bad and muddy that teams cannot get in and out of the city. The farmers are all busy trying to put in their crops. I am the only one who has new brick in Marysville.

Jan. 21, 1865

W. C. Swain¹⁹ and I settled up this evening but he still owes \$228.00. I still have a little more jobbing to do on the Masonic Hall.

Jan. 23, 1865

I collected \$800 on the Masonic Hall and deposited with Jewett²⁰ and Decker. Swain still owes me \$228.00 on the hall.

Jan. 24, 1865

George North has raised to the degree of a Fellow Craft²¹ in the Masons. Everybody appears pleased with the building. I have \$300.00 stock invested in the hall. We commenced on the second story of the Star Mill with the following hands – Owen Fitzpatrick, Jas.



JOHN H. JEWETT.
PHOTO FROM SCM COLLECTION.

17 Abraham Dubois Starr came from Ohio in 1849. He worked the mines for a bit and then went into business supplying miners. He arrived in Marysville in 1856 and married Mary Anna Teegarden, daughter of Dr. Eli Teegarden. Dr. Teegarden, along with William Foster, owned the Buckeye Mill located at the corner of Yuba and 5th Streets. Starr began managing the flour mill and continued working in Marysville until 1867 when he relocated to Vallejo and built a large flour mill there.

18 The 5th Street grade to the bridge washed away in high water during December 1864. Temporary fixes were also washed out, and permanent repair was delayed until the threat of high water was over. The opening was considered a safety valve to prevent major destruction of the bridge.

19 William Caldwell Swain arrived in Marysville in 1854 and worked as a contractor. He was the contractor who got the job to build the Masonic Hall and subcontracted the work. He later partnered with William K. Hudson and built the Swain & Hudson Planing Mills. He lived in Marysville until his death in 1904, at which time he was the City Treasurer.

20 John H. Jewett was born in Connecticut and by 1852 had left the mines and was partners in a store in Marysville. In 1858, with Peter Decker, he bought the banking interests of Mark Brummagin and started his banking career with what eventually became known as Decker, Jewett & Company.

21 The second degree in Freemasonry. You enter as an apprentice, and when you prove your proficiency, you are passed into the second of the three degrees. The third degree is a Master Mason.

McCormick,²² and John Miller tenders. Billings, Jas. Cory, and Evan Knupp bricklayers.

Feb. 7, 1865

White, a carpenter that works with me on the hall, was raised to 1st degree.²³

Feb. 23, 1865

Sallie was baptized by the Rev. Henry Holcomb Rheese²⁴ paster of the 1st Baptist Church. We had a full church and God was certainly present.

Mar. 16, 1865

Owen and I worked all day at the Starr Mill.²⁵ I am getting along very well and I will have it all finished except the office and the engine



BUCKEYE FLOUR MILL, LATER SPERRY MILL, AT THE CORNER OF 5TH & YUBA STREETS. PHOTO FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.

²² James F. McCormack was a member of the Eureka Fire Company. Later in 1865, he purchased a marble company located at the corner of 5th and D Streets.

²³ In Freemasonry being “raised” means achieving the third and highest degree. I’m not sure if he’s confusing the term “raised” to mean he was accepted in the 1st degree or he has confused the highest degree, where the term “raised” is used with being #1.

²⁴ The Rev. Henry Holcomb Rheese was the minister at the 1st Baptist Church beginning in 1860. The church, located at the corner of 6th & H Streets, continued until the late 1870s, but at some point, the congregation split, and the majority of the members joined the new Union Baptist Church. Rheese also served as a public school commissioner and took over the Superintendent’s job for a brief period. In 1866, Isaac and Sallie had a son whom they named Holcombe Rhees McComas (1866-1870).

²⁵ Buckeye Mill located on Yuba Street.

room by the last of the week. I collected \$500.00 from Mr. Starr today, the first payment. The mill will be one of the largest mills in Marysville.

Mar. 21, 1865

My son Charlie²⁶ and I started for San Francisco today and arrived in Sacramento about 10 and arrived at the bay about 9 having had a nice trip.

Mar. 22, 1865

We spent the day in Oakland. I was very pleased with the place. Property is very high here. We went back to San Francisco in the evening.

Mar. 26, 1865

Going back we slept aboard the boat last night. At 12 noon we started in the boat for Marysville and arrived home about 8 o'clock.

Mar. 28, 1865

I am not at work today. I am trying to sell my brickyard and scaffolding, and I am thinking to give up bricklaying and making for a while and try and get along for a while without it.

Mar. 31, 1865

I worked all day at the water works²⁷ and at Ransom's Mill. I sold out my brick interest in Marysville with the back yard scaffolding. I sold to Steward and McDonald²⁸ for 800 dollars to be paid as follows. First note paid first of May, the 2nd note on the first of November 1865 and the last note bearing interest at the rate of one per cent per month.

Apr. 1, 1865

Worked at Ransom's Mill until noon. We got the news today of the taking of Richmond²⁹ and the people quite jubilant over it.

Apr. 5, 1865

I sent my horse out on the Paine Rancho.³⁰ I got my deed for the Sherman property from the Sheriff today and had it recorded.³¹

²⁶ Charles Slicer McComas (1861-1909) was the oldest McComas son. This was his first trip to a large city and his first view of the ocean. He moved with the family back to Maryland and later married Frances B. Haynes in Baltimore in 1882. They had five children. He worked as a mail clerk for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

²⁷ The Water Works Hall was at 4th & D Streets in Marysville.

²⁸ James McDonald, a former business partner.

²⁹ After a long siege, General Grant captured Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy. The military set fire to the town on *Evacuation Sunday*, and it wasn't extinguished until the city was officially surrendered and Union soldiers extinguished it.

³⁰ Sumner Paine, mason and brickmaker. He later farmed in both Yuba and Sutter Counties. McComas worked for him when he first came to Marysville.

³¹ My guess is that this was a foreclosure, but I cannot find evidence for it. Searching the name Sherman in April 1865 is a fool's errand, as the papers

Apr. 15, 1865

I started work at the 5th Street house second door from the corner making a back porch building, a bathroom and fence. I worked at home until noon today and about that time we got news of the death of our beloved President Abaraham Lincoln who was shot at the theatre in Washington and died this morning 22 minutes past 7 o'clock. The news fell very hard upon us all. We all loved our President very much.³²

Apr. 16, 1865

We went to church and Sunday School all day as usual. Our church was in mourning for the death of our great President. We all will surely miss him.

Apr. 19, 1865

We did not work today it being the day our president was buried. We had quite a turn out here at the Presbyterian Church. Oh, it was a very solemn day in Marysville. For respect most everyone was donned in black clothes.

Apr. 23, 1865

I am still jobbing about some of my houses and trying to get things fixed up in pretty good shape so as we can go home.³³

Apr. 27, 1865

I am making preparations to go to Baltimore just as soon as we can get off. I intend to leave my houses in the care of W. L. Williams,³⁴ and I intend to sell them just as soon as I can get a fair price for them.

May 3, 1865

I am still jobbing about home and waiting for Mr. Starr to get ready so as I can get his mill finished. I am still fixing about my house and trying to rent my house furnished that we are living in. I finished whitewashing our house today and find it a good deal of work to clean a house well. I paid my license and revenue tax today and paid \$74 for green backs.

May 12, 1865

I sold out. I have given up quite a number of good jobs.

May 14, 1865

I went to the funeral of Mr. Lothrop³⁵ a member of our Masonic Lodge.

are full of General Sherman's March through Georgia.

32 The news of the assassination appeared in the paper on the 16th.

33 This is the first outright statement that the McComas family was heading back to Maryland. McComas spent 11 years here.

34 W. L. Williams owned the Marysville mill on 2nd Street. McComas would have known him through the Masons. Earlier in 1865, he was on a committee to organize the Freedmen's Relief Society of Marysville to raise money for the benefit of freedmen, women, and children.

35 E. C. Lothrop, an officer in the Marysville Rifles, one of the founders of the

May 15, 1865

I got ready to finish Mr. Starrs mill. W. L. Williams agreed to take my houses with the parlor furniture for \$25 per month. On the 30th of this month we sell out at auction on the balance of our furniture and in the morning of that day I will send my family to San Francisco.

May 23, 1865

I did not get to work at the mill today on account of my tender getting tight.³⁶ We are getting ready for the sale which will take place next Tuesday and on that morning Sallie will go below.³⁷ I worked all day at the Starr Mill.

May 29, 1865

Sallie and Andy³⁸ worked getting ready for the sale which will take place tomorrow of our furniture and also getting ready for themselves to leave in the morning for the Bay while I stay and attend to the sale and arrange my business in a proper way and shape as near as possible and then join them soon.

May 30, 1865

My family left for the Bay in the boat this morning at 6 o'clock. My furniture was sold today at auction.³⁹ Some of the things sold very well. Our parlor furniture and some of our other keeps I did not sell. I felt very sad this evening after the sale being alone. But I thought I will soon be with them again, the Lord willing.

June 1, 1865

Today was Fast day⁴⁰ but I had to work. I am anxious to get done that I could not think of being idle. The post office is closed today so I could not get a letter to Sallie. I finished today at Starr Mill. John Cook and I figured it all out. The brick amounts to 336,315 at 13 cents. I will try and get off by Friday morning. I was busy today getting settled up with everybody and I have been very successful.⁴¹ I sold the sewing machine

Union Club and a member of the Corinthian Lodge #9, died at the age of 33.

36 While McComas was a teetotaler, some of his employees obviously didn't abstain.

37 This was a term used to mean going to San Francisco.

38 It is not clear who Andy is, but he accompanied them back to Maryland.

39 An advertisement in the *Appeal-Democrat* announced the public auction at the residence of I. T. McComas on 5th Street between E & F Streets as the family was leaving for the east. They auctioned the entire house of furniture consisting of parlor, bedrooms, and kitchen furniture of every description. There was also one cabinet sewing machine and a small library of about 100 volumes. The auctioneer was H. Barnett.

40 President Andrew Johnson and Governor John G. Downey of California declared June 1st as a day of fasting and prayer. Schools, government offices, and most businesses were closed.

41 It took a while to settle up everything. McComas built a cistern at the intersection of 7th & C Streets and billed \$417, but the contract was for \$342. The issue went to court, and he received payment of \$343 in December 1866.

to Mr. Shellenberger⁴² for \$70.00. I now at mid night have my trunk packed. I feel so sad and very sleepy.

June 9, 1865

I started for San Francisco this morning by the boat and arrived in Sacramento about noon. I found my family this morning after some trouble on Minna Street #310.⁴³ All very well. I missed my family while they were without me.

June 12, 1865

We are to remain in San Francisco for some time yet. The fares are so high on the regular line that I think it's best to wait a while hoping we can get lower fares. The steamer that goes out on the 18th is from \$225.00 to \$800.00 first class cabin outside state rooms and inside rooms \$200.00 second class \$120.00 storage in gold coin.

July 12, 1865

After all this time we are still in San Francisco waiting patiently for the opposition company to get here but owing to the telegraph down they cannot hear from New York. The loss of the *Golden Rule*⁴⁴ on the Atlantic side is the cause of the trouble.

July 19, 1865

We are getting ready to start for the East tomorrow. I have bought our tickets which cost me \$330.00 for my family and Andy first cabin.

July 20, 1865

We left California to go home today by steamer.

42 Possibly Hector J. Schellenberger.

43 Minna Street is a short street that runs parallel to Mission & Howard Streets and between 4th & 5th Streets in San Francisco.

44 The *Golden Rule* struck a reef in the Gulf of Mexico on May 29, 1865 and broke up. The crew had enough time to lower boats and build rafts before the ship broke up completely, and all passengers and crew were saved. Over 600 people were stranded on a 15-acre island for 10 days before U. S. gunboats rescued them and took them to Aspinwall (today Colón, Panama).



AFTERWORD

The family went back to Baltimore, Maryland in 1865, and in 1867, Isaac and his brother Jacob purchased Hoods Mill, which was located along the Baltimore & Ohio railroad line on the Patapsco River. They ran the mill until 1874.

Of course there is some confusion to the story. Isaac McComas still owned property in Marysville and returned there in November of 1869. It appears that he went back to Maryland in 1870 because his son, Holcombe Rhees McComas (1866-1870), is buried there. Isaac returned to Marysville with his family and once again worked as a mason and managed his properties. The family lived in a 1½-story brick cottage on D Street between 6th and 7th Streets. While here, their last child, Maude Virginia McComas, was born. During this time, there is mention of his oldest daughter, Ella, performing in a program at the Baptist Church her father helped construct.

In early 1873, McComas began selling his real estate holdings in Marysville, including the family home. The paper announced his leaving California to return to Maryland and that the community would miss him.

When the family left for the second time in April 1873, the contents of the house were sold and the house auctioned off. Again, there was a listing of items being sold in the newspaper that included “household and kitchen furniture, bedroom set, tables, chairs, carpets, stoves, mirrors, crockery and glassware, and an elegant church or family organ, nearly new, an extra fine family sewing machine and a large amount of household goods too numerous to mention.”

Isaac McComas and his family returned to Maryland for the final time. There is no mention of how the family traveled, but by this time, they could have traveled via the transcontinental railroad, which was finished in 1869.

Isaac continued his diary until he died in 1923 at the age of 94. Sallie pre-deceased him, dying in 1919 at the age of 89. One child, Margaret, survived her father.

Isaac Taylor McComas (1828-1923)

Sarah “Sallie” Slicer McComas (1830-1919)

Ella Frazier McComas (1860-1921)

Charles Slicer McComas (1861-1909)

Margaret Slicer McComas (1863 –

Holcombe Rhees McComas (1866-1870)

William Gees McComas (1868-1921)

Maude Virginia McComas (1871-1900)

A Job Well Done

By Phyllis Smith

Many (most?) of you have seen, and perhaps own, local history books from the Arcadia Images of America series. There are several for our area – *The Sutter Buttes*, *Marysville's Chinatown*, *Wheatland*, and *Browns Valley*, to name a few. They are for sale at the Sutter County Museum and other local stores. Each book showcases a narrow area of history with historic photos and captions.

In the spring of 2023, Victoria Tudor and I started discussions about publishing a book to highlight one of our area's treasures – the Historic Marysville City Cemetery. We both volunteer at the cemetery; Vickie has worked there for many years, while I'm a relative newcomer. Along with a team of other volunteers, we do groundskeeping – mowing, weeding, planting, pruning, watering... The city-owned cemetery is 14.5 acres, so you can imagine how much ongoing effort is required to keep it in shape.

In addition, our organization, the Friends for the Preservation of Yuba County History (FPYCH), raises funds to finance headstone and monument repair. The City of Marysville also contributes substantial funds to this effort. The cemetery was established in 1851, so most of the burials are quite old, and headstones and monuments have been through a lot of wear and



THE HISTORIC MARYSVILLE CITY CEMETERY. PHOTO FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.

“There are 10,000 stories in the cemetery.”





DAVID E. KNIGHT'S CRYPT.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERTA SCHURTZ.



BLACK BART. PHOTO COURTESY OF YUBA COUNTY LIBRARY.

tear. The main culprits are vandals, although vandalism has stopped since the City hired an on-site watchman; floods, which erode the underpinnings of the monuments; and ground squirrels, who dig so many tunnels the foundations collapse.

So what's involved in writing one of these books? First we bought several previous Arcadia books about historic cemeteries to see if the topic worked in this format and how others approached the effort. We submitted a proposal to Arcadia and engaged in some negotiations about format, and in September 2023 – six months after we came up with the idea – we signed a contract.

That's when the real work started. Arcadia has a strict set of requirements. We needed between 180 and 240 historic photos – we have 214. They had to be of a certain size and quality, and we needed permission to use them. We had to write 8,000 – 18,000 words for introductions and captions; we wrote 17,380. Captions generally had to be between 40 and 70 words, although there were some exceptions. Gathering photos, writing and editing captions, creating and revising chapter structure, gathering more photos.... All this took us 15 months of hard labor. We submitted our product in December 2024, and the book was published in October 2025.

But we can't yet rest on our laurels. Now we have to market the book. We don't want it sitting on store shelves gathering dust, we want people to read it. All our profits will be used by FPYCH to repair headstones. So now we begin our book tour. Johnny Carson, Oprah Winfrey, Geraldo Rivera.... Or maybe just local clubs and service organizations. We'll be making a presentation and signing books at the Sutter County Museum on January 15.



GATEWAY TO THE CEMETERY. PHOTO COURTESY OF VICTORIA M. TUDOR.

The cemetery is well worth a visit. Or several visits, given its size. It's on Highway 70 just north of Marysville High School and is open every day – winter hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. It's very much like a large park, with trees, shrubs and flowers, including roses donated to us by the Sacramento City Cemetery, and some of them came across the plains in the 19th century on emigrant wagons. There are picnic tables and benches, so you can take your lunch and rest underneath the large oak trees.

So what will you see there? What will you learn?

Marysville was founded because gold was discovered in the rivers and mountains, and an ocean-going sailing ship could head up the Sacramento and Feather Rivers to the new town. This made it the perfect place for those working in the northern mines to get supplies, mail, and entertainment. Many people who came for gold ended up running stores and providing services. They stayed on as civic leaders, building a city and raising families. And approximately 10,000 of them are buried in the Historic Marysville City Cemetery.

You'll undoubtedly know some names or recognize things they left behind. Harriet Murphy Nye was a survivor of the Donner Party. Her brother-in-law, Charles Covillaud, founded Marysville. W. T. Ellis, Jr. was instrumental in ensuring Marysville had levees to protect it



ANNA MCKENNEY. PHOTO FROM THE SCM COLLECTION.



LESTER BISHOP (LEFT) AND UNIDENTIFIED FRIEND. PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL ROBERT BISHOP.

from floods. Black Bart had a thriving career robbing Wells Fargo stagecoaches. William Hudson founded Union Lumber, still going strong 173 years later. Lester Bishop was the first man from Yuba County to die in the Great War in 1918, and the local VFW is named for him and his friend Paul Langenbach. Edward Duplex was the first African American to be elected mayor of a predominantly white city, Wheatland. Anna McKenney taught three generations of Marysville students.

The cemetery has sections for different groups – Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, Black, Masons, Odd Fellows, firefighters, and babies. There are many family plots. There is a large “potter’s field,” for indigent burials, which likely has 2,500 people.

There are 10,000 stories in the cemetery, and our book just skims the surface, telling 122 of those stories. We hope you will get a copy for yourself and give them to your friends as well, and come to the Museum on January 15 for our presentation. The book is available at the Museum Gift Shop for \$24.99.

In Honor of our 50th Anniversary

For this special milestone year, we have been asking our community to consider donating \$100 to the nonprofit Museum Association to support our educational programming for kids.

A \$100 donation enables us to host one free field trip for local schools. A \$100 donation enables us to purchase supplies for one free public program. If all current members and donors made a \$100 donation, we could secure another interactive, participatory exhibit for the kids of our community like *Potter the Otter* or *Voyage to Vietnam* in summer 2026. These exhibits

bring over 1,400 people each month to the Museum to share educational experiences with family and friends.

Admission to the Museum, field trips, and public programs are all FREE to the community and help us continue the vision of the Museum that began in 1975: to inspire, educate, and enrich the young people of Yuba-Sutter and beyond.

You can stop by the Museum or visit our website to donate toward the 50th anniversary fund for educational programming: www.suttercountymuseum.org/support#donate



KIDS POSING IN THE *VOYAGE TO VIETNAM* EXHIBIT.

Thank you for your consideration of a \$100 donation, and please know that a donation of any size supports the work of the Museum. Thank you to the many donors who have already contributed to this special campaign to sustain educational children's programming at the Museum!

Celebrating
50 YEARS
 OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY

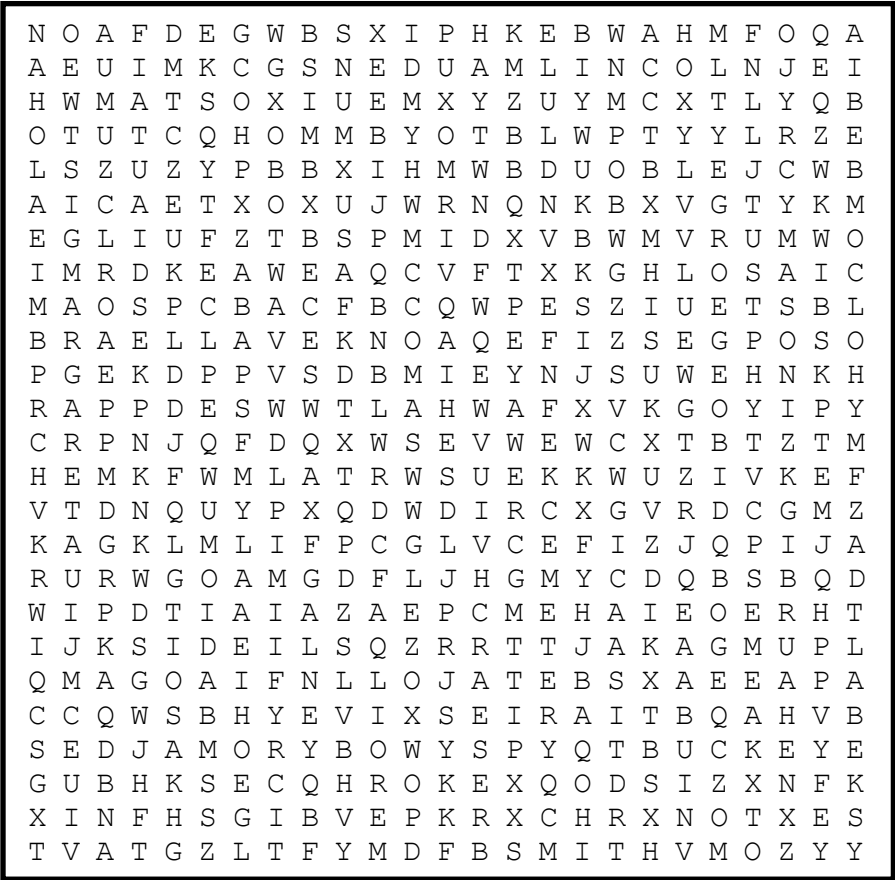
In honor of this special milestone, we are asking our community to **consider donating \$100 to support the Museum's educational programming for children.**

Help us continue the vision of the Museum that began in 1975: to inspire, educate, and enrich the young people of Yuba-Sutter and beyond.

THANK YOU!



Visit suttercountymuseum.org/support to learn more and to donate



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Visit our website at www.suttercountymuseum.org

Scroll to the bottom of the homepage, and enter your email address to subscribe.

Donate

The Museum is a partnership between Sutter County and the Sutter County Museum Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Association supports all of the public programming aspects of the Museum, including educational programs, fundraising events, temporary exhibits, updates to permanent exhibits, and the Museum Gift Shop. Donations made to the Association are tax deductible.

There are many ways to donate to the Museum:

- ☐ **Mail a check to:**
Sutter County Museum
1333 Butte House Road
Yuba City, CA 95993
- ☐ **Come visit us!** You can use a credit card, cash, or check to donate in person
- ☐ **Donate online** through our website
- ☐ **Legacy Giving:** please contact info@suttercountymuseum.org to learn more

We also offer 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, helping orient people to the Museum resources and exhibits, answering the phone, and using point-of-sale software to sell items in the Museum Gift Shop. Volunteers also work on special projects, assist at events, and help decorate for *Trees & Traditions*. If you are interested, please contact us, or download the application online: www.suttercountymuseum.org/support#volunteer



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For more information, visit suttercountymuseum.org/support

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June 9, 2025 - September 30, 2025

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June 9, 2025 - September 30, 2025

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

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Basic*	\$35
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All Business Memberships include Basic benefits as well.

Business Memberships

Consider a Business Membership to the Sutter County Museum! Annual rates start at \$250 and include benefits such as advertisements in the *Bulletin*, listings on the website, Gift Shop discounts, and more. Visit www.suttercountymuseum.org/support for more information.

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