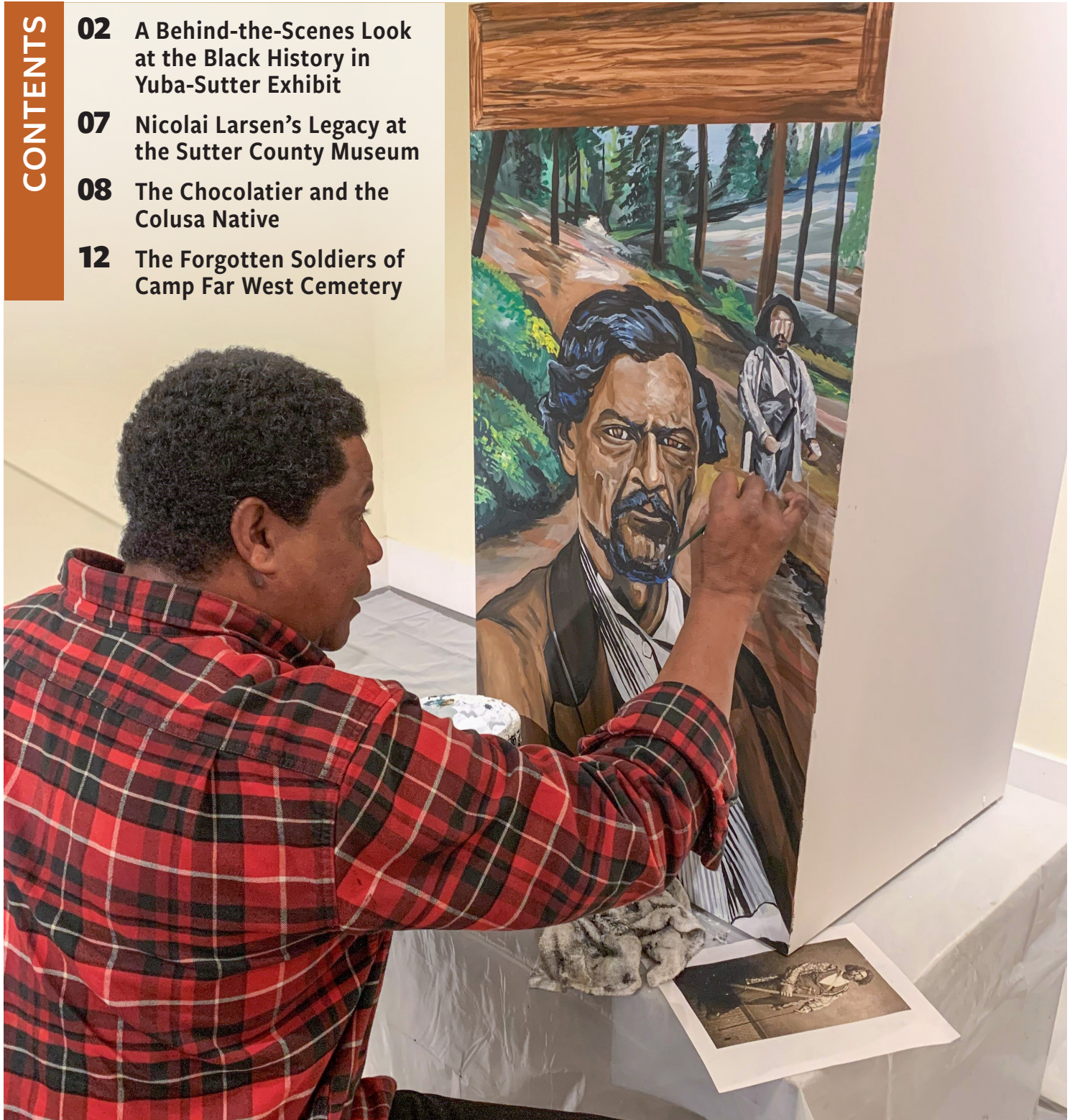


# BULLETIN

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## ON THE COVER:

LOUIE LETHRIDGE PAINTING THE EXHIBIT CASES.  
SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

## Sutter County Museum Staff

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## Visit the Museum

1333 Butte House Road  
Yuba City, California 95993  
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[www.suttercountymuseum.org](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org)



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**.

## 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

Manny Cardoza

Tony Kurlan

Babs Cotter

Sandra Muñoz

Eric Gruenthal

Margit Sands

Scott Hankins

Sharyl Simmons

Wade Kirchner

Phyllis Smith

## Exhibits

We are excited to host another great hands-on exhibit for kids this summer! ***Hello From Japan*** will be on display from May 16th until August 22nd. Come play with us on the streets of Tokyo as you learn about Japanese culture! Stroll the bustling Harajuku district, visit a tranquil Shinto shrine, sing karaoke, and “order” bento boxes. Explore the contrast between the urban, high-tech world and ancestral customs. Discover a society where the past, present, and future harmoniously coexist.

*Hello From Japan* is an exhibition from the Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose, based on the original exhibition at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan. Support for this exhibition was generously provided by the Sutter County Children & Families Commission, with additional public programming support from the Marysville Japanese American Citizens League.



WHEATLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FIELD TRIP. SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

## New School Program Opportunities

March 1st marked the end of our three-year state grant project to update the Middle Gallery exhibits (Nisenan, Gold Rush & Westward Expansion, and Yuba-Sutter Floods) and revamp our opportunities for schools and teachers. Funding for this project was provided by the Specified General Fund for the Museum Grant Program under the California Cultural and Historical Endowment.

### Educational Kits

We now have three different kits that teachers can borrow from the Museum! Each kit contains five adaptable lesson plans for activities aligned with California state content standards, a teacher’s guide, digital resources, and materials for the included hands-on activities. There are three different kit topics: Flood and Natural Disaster (3rd Grade), Nisenan (4th Grade), and Gold Rush and Westward Expansion (4th Grade). More information and the form to request the FREE kits can be found on our website: [suttercountymuseum.org/events#education](https://suttercountymuseum.org/events#education)

### Bus Grants

The state grant provided funding for buses that brought over 360 students and teachers to the Museum for free. Now that the grant is over, our nonprofit Museum Association has generously planned to continue offering this resource to the community next year. Remember the special donation fund for our 50th anniversary to support educational programs for kids? Our generous community donated over \$16,000 to the special donation fund for the 50th anniversary to help us sustain educational programs for kids, such as the bus grant opportunities.

## 50th Anniversary Remembrance Ceremonies for YCHS Choir Students

Two upcoming events will honor the victims and survivors of the 1976 Yuba City High School A Cappella choir who were involved in a tragic bus accident in Martinez, CA on the way to a weekend choral music exchange.

The first event will be held at the Martinez Waterfront Park, located at 245 N. Court Street, 94553 on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at the YCHS Choir Memorial Monument dedicated by the firefighters in 1996. Questions can be directed to Christine Dean at (925) 383-2240.

The second event will be held in Yuba City on Saturday, May 23, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at the YCHS Choir Memorial Monument located on Veterans Memorial Circle near City Hall. For more information, please contact Jan Roberts-Haydon at (530) 902-9882.

# A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Black History in Yuba-Sutter Exhibit

By Molly Bloom and Gwen Ford

*Editor's Note: Most people who walk through a museum have no idea of the amount of preparation that goes into each exhibit. For visitors, it's like magic and seems that over a weekend the staff created an exhibit, built the exhibit furniture, and installed it. This article makes clear how much preparation it takes and how many people are involved to make it a success. Congratulations to Molly for strong leadership and endurance, Gwen for the insight and outreach she brought as the project advisor, all the terrific staff that worked on the project, and especially all the volunteers who gave of themselves to make it happen.*

## BACKGROUND

Curating an exhibit on local history offers unique challenges and involves many steps, decisions, and moving parts. We wanted to share a behind-the-scenes look at the multi-year process of developing the exhibit *From Barbers' Row to Beale Air Force Base: Black History in Yuba-Sutter* at the Sutter County Museum.

In 2005, the Multi-Cultural Gallery was added to the Museum as a new wing. The goals of this space are to share the local history and culture of diverse populations in Yuba-Sutter. Staff used census data to determine historic minority communities with high populations in Yuba-Sutter, and the exhibits were subsequently created with a community partner or agency representing each exhibit. All other planned exhibits were added to the gallery through 2015. Since the beginning, space has been reserved for a local Black history exhibit. With Gwen Ford of Connecting Cultures Collaborative Inc. offering to serve as the project's Humanities Advisor, the Museum applied for and was awarded a \$25,000 grant from a competitive grant program through California Humanities. A research team was assembled, consisting of Ford along with Museum staff and local researchers who volunteered their time to this project. With space, funding, and a team in place, the exhibit process began to move forward in early 2023.

## RESEARCH & OUTREACH

Conducting research for a local history exhibit can be unique because sources are often compiled together to construct the narrative, as opposed to having dozens of books, articles, and photos already available related to the subject matter. We thought of this project as if we were creating an archive of information on the Black history of Yuba-Sutter.

Initially, we utilized a few key reference books in our research, including *The African American Heritage of Yuba County 1849-1870* by Lester C. Pogue, *The Black Pioneers of Yuba County* by Carol Withington (who also contributed to our research team!), *The Negro Trail Blazers of California* by Deliah L. Beasley, and *Blacks in Gold Rush California* by Rudolph M. Lapp. We hired three interns, Katelyn Bell, Huy Dao, and Emily Dominguez, to support the research phase of the project. Our volunteers, staff, and interns compiled hundreds of pages of research as well as photographs, spreadsheets, and video resources. Gwen worked to identify local members of the Black community who were willing to share their ideas, stories, photographs, artifacts, and insight for this project.

We held outreach events at the Museum, used print and digital media, and attended community events to spread the word about the project. This led to many connections, and we conducted oral history interviews, met with individuals to learn about local stories, and saw many new artifacts and photographs donated to the Museum's collection.



LYNNE TAKAHASHI FROM THE YUBA CITY FAMILYSEARCH CENTER SPEAKS WITH A COMMUNITY MEMBER AT THE MUSEUM'S EXHIBIT OPEN HOUSE OUTREACH EVENT. SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

Museum staff attended a workshop through the American Association of State and Local History on methodologies for interpreting the history of enslavement within museums and historic sites; consulted books and resource guides for museums that discussed curating Black history exhibits and engaging communities; and met with Susan D. Anderson, History Curator at the California African American Museum (CAAM). This helped us ensure that we were incorporating current best practices in the museum field throughout our process.

The exhibit content was heavily informed by the community involvement and the images and objects donated, as well as the



GWEN FORD PRESENTING AT THE SUTTER COUNTY LIBRARY'S JUNETEENTH EVENT FOR THE PROJECT'S OUTREACH. SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

invaluable oral history interviews; without these, we would have no objects to display and fewer than ten identified photographs. We learned through our open house event that stories of Tuskegee Airmen with a connection to the region were very important to community members. Many people expressed that they would like to see this information included, and we were able to connect with relatives of decorated Air Force Colonel George Iles, who shared great photographs and information for the exhibit.

Many people interviewed for oral histories, such as Ullrey Memorial Chapel Funeral Director Randolph Deas, spoke about the importance of Black-owned barbershops and how they served as community resource centers for the local Black community. Mr. George's barbershop was a recent example, and his family connected with us and shared many photographs of events that took place through the years and objects from the barbershop. Dennis Finley, whose family has deep roots as some of the earliest Black pioneers in the area, shared dozens of historic family photos that identified local residents and significantly added to the archive we were developing. Lynne Takahashi on our research team conducted genealogical research on local Black families who were identified in the process. Carol Withington donated an archive of notes, sources, and photographs collected during her time spent researching *The Black Pioneers of Yuba County*. The successful research and outreach phase helped us develop a significant archive of information related to Black history in Yuba-Sutter.

## DETERMINING A NARRATIVE

With so much information to analyze, we then began to determine how we wanted to tell the stories within the exhibit. This involved taking a very large volume of information, condensing it, and figuring out how to incorporate it into an exhibit space of just under 150 square feet. What were the key themes that emerged during the research phase? What are the overarching storylines? How will the stories from the 1850s

to the present be incorporated cohesively? What physical items can we display that support the storyline? How can we make the information engaging and educational for a museum audience?

The final result should have text panels, photos, and objects to support the narrative storyline and reinforce the key local history themes that are uncovered in the research phase. Keeping these aspects in mind would help us curate a strong exhibit that fits with our Museum's display style and feels cohesive with the other permanent exhibits, while sharing accurate local history stories of Yuba-Sutter.

The key themes that we landed on were to include an overview of local Black history; early pioneers and migration to the area; the Gold Rush and the early Black community; the establishment of Black churches; local events and businesses; the importance and legacy of Black-owned barbershops; and Beale Air Force Base, the Tuskegee Airmen with connections to the region, and military service. These themes would be supplemented with biographical panels about individuals whose personal history and experiences connect to those key themes.

## EXHIBIT WRITING & DESIGN

With the narrative determined, we planned the layout of the exhibit. This helped us decide how to size the text panels and what would fit within the available space. We looked at the objects and photographs that had been donated to the Museum and chose artifacts and images that were related to the storyline. To include even more content in

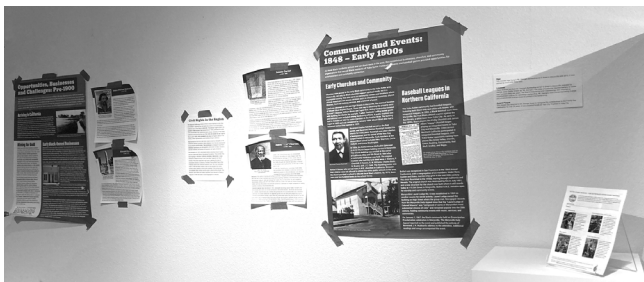
a limited footprint, we connected with Louie Lethridge, a local Black artist and muralist. He painted the exhibit cases



LOUIE LETHRIDGE PAINTING THE EXHIBIT CASES. COURTESY OF LINDA BAKER.

with key themes in local Black history, using historic photographs and documents as inspiration to create eight original artworks. Louie also painted live at the Museum, attracting more project attention.

The writing and editing of the text panels took several months. We wrote the text, chose images and newspaper articles to incorporate into the panels, and spent several rounds editing the text. We sourced photographs and secured permission from photographers for any images not from the Museum's collection. The text was reviewed by researchers, expert *Bulletin* editors Sharyl Simmons and Phyllis Smith, and CAAM Curator Susan D. Anderson. This process helped us remain consistent with our language, ensure that content was clearly communicated for a public audience, and receive perspectives of people familiar and unfamiliar with the content. We then worked with local graphic designer Gina Crawford, who incorporated our ideas for the layout and color scheme. We had an idea to use red, white, and blue as the colors – a call to several themes in the exhibit: the colors on barbershop poles, the colors to honor the U.S. military, the colors of the Juneteenth flag. Gina met with us and measured the space, created the design scheme, and then printed full-size text panels so we could review the layout, adjust sizing, and make sure text was legible and the spacing was appropriate. The graphic panels were also reviewed and edited several times by the team before they were printed by Signworx in Olivehurst.



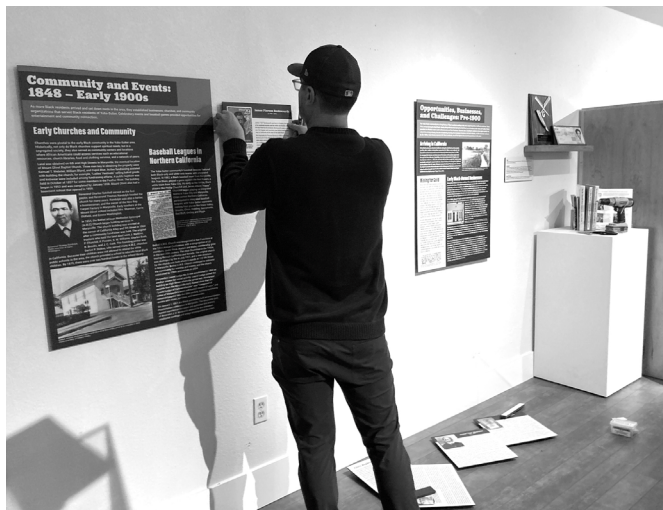
BLOCKING OUT THE EXHIBIT SPACE WITH FULL-SIZE PRINTOUTS OF THE TEXT PANELS. SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

VOLUNTEER NICK LASHWAY MEASURES AND HANGS BIOGRAPHICAL TEXT PANELS ON CLEATS. SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

## INSTALLATION

With a local history exhibit like this, we wanted to build our exhibit with maximum flexibility. We know that there are more stories, photographs, and artifacts out there. We therefore designed the exhibit to incorporate the physical objects and photographs that are showcased today, but with options to add new objects and stories as they are shared. The biographical text panels we created on James Beckwourth, Edward Duplex, Jennie Carter, James Churchill, George Jones, George Iles, and Isaac Crawford are hung on the walls with cleats, allowing them to be easily swapped or moved to rotate in additional stories in the future. The object labels are inside the cases to avoid covering Louie's beautiful artwork and to allow us to easily rotate in new artifacts if additional material is donated. There is a photo wall, and we chose to include a mix of identified and unidentified photographs with a handout instead of labels so that perhaps people will be able to help us identify some of the people in the images, and the handout can easily be taken offsite, helping us continue our outreach efforts.

To install the exhibition in the Museum, we hung the panels, photographs, and labels on the walls. We installed a display shelf for some of the objects from Mr. George's barbershop and hung his iconic sign directly on the wall. Object cases were placed so that they could be seen on all sides, and we measured to ensure ADA accessibility in the placement of cases. Artifacts were installed in the cases with attention to preservation, making sure



the positioning puts no stress on the objects and they are supported and secure in place.

We added a pedestal with copies of several books on local Black history, a binder of genealogical history compiled by Lynne Takahashi, and handouts we created with information on the photo wall display and the case artwork by Louie Lethridge. Volunteers Mike and Jean DeBorde created a small wooden structure to look like a façade of a mine, calling to the history of the Sweet Vengeance Mine and other Black-owned mines. Volunteer Debbie Reid painted a rustic sign to complete the look. The structure was installed, adding another element of visual interest to the space.

## THE FUTURE

As more people visit, more people are learning about these important local history stories. These are stories that came from the community and will continue to be shared with the community. The enthusiasm for learning about Yuba-Sutter's Black history has grown exponentially and is reaching well out of this area to people who have had family here in the past and are willing to share information and help us grow our knowledge. We hope that the exhibit is a starting point to build upon in the future, just as with the other permanent exhibits at the Museum. Our plan is also to build up our digital resources and create an online archive for sharing information on Yuba-Sutter's Black History beyond



ATTENDEES AT THE EXHIBIT'S  
OPENING RECEPTION.  
SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

## RECEPTION

The exhibit opened with a public reception in November 2024. We have continued to host public programs, conduct surveys, and compile feedback to help us improve. When asked in a survey what they learned from the exhibit, we received comments such as “That we’ve had African Americans in our area for a long time & they contributed to our community,” “I’m learning a lot about the history in my environment, information I’ve never heard anywhere!” and “Black Americans from our area made and make an impact and difference. It’s important to highlight this @ our local museum.”

what fits inside the small footprint of the exhibit. Stay tuned!

We are very grateful and honored to have had so many community members willing to share their memories, stories, photographs, and objects. Thank you so much to the many people who contributed and generously shared their time, ideas, and stories to build an educational and engaging exhibit. We hope that people will continue to visit and learn about the many Black community members, businesses, and community events that helped shape the history of Yuba-Sutter.

# Nicolai Larsen's Legacy at the Sutter County Museum

By Marika García

Nicolai Larsen (1952–2025) was an internationally commissioned painter and muralist whose work spanned public, private, and commercial settings. Known throughout California for his inventive and visionary style, Larsen created large-scale works that celebrated place, history, and the natural world.

In September 2022, the Sutter County Museum commissioned Larsen to create a major painting that would serve as a visual introduction to the themes explored throughout the Museum. The resulting work, *Jewel of the Valley*, is installed in

the main entrance gallery, where it welcomes visitors and establishes a sense of place from the moment they arrive. The painting highlights the distinct character of our Yuba-Sutter region through a sweeping agricultural landscape, a winding river, the Sutter Buttes, native flora and fauna, and references to Nisenan culture. Together, these elements emphasize the richness and complexity of the land and its history.

In reflecting on Larsen's legacy, the Museum's Director and Curator, Molly Bloom, and the Secretary of the Sutter County Museum Association, Marika García, attended the artist's retrospective at Chico Art Center in January 2026. Seeing Larsen's work presented across the arc of his career offered deeper insight into the themes and visual language that also shape *Jewel of the Valley*. The retrospective underscored Larsen's enduring commitment to storytelling through place, a focus that resonates strongly within the Museum's own galleries and permanent exhibitions.

Larsen's painting was part of a total of three paintings commissioned by the Museum and partially funded by a community grant from Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture in 2022. The funds were re-granted through the American Rescue Plan by the National Endowment for the Arts. Through this support, Larsen's work continues to engage Museum visitors and serve as a lasting creative interpretation of this land and place we call home.

View *Jewel of the Valley* on the back cover of this *Bulletin*.

For more information and to see additional images of Larsen's work, please visit:

<https://nicolailarsen.com>

<https://chicoartcenter.com/nicolailarsen>



A VIEW OF THE RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION OF NICOLAI LARSEN'S WORK AT CHICO ART CENTER.  
COURTESY OF MARIKA GARCÍA.

# THE *Chocolatier* AND THE COLUSA NATIVE

By Carol Withington

*Is there anything more inviting than the aroma of chocolate chip cookies baking in the oven? Perhaps a cup of hot cocoa on a cold, wintry day suits your fancy. Whatever you prefer, the following feature may be quite enjoyable to you. It's about the history of a well-known chocolate company with its local connection. You might grab a box of tissues, too. This journey will unveil the bittersweet lives of a popular San Francisco family over a 100-year span.*

## ADDIE COOK

Addie Cook was born to parents Henry and Ellen Cook on April 19, 1858 in St. Joseph, Missouri. She was the youngest of six children. The oldest child of the Cook family was Henry, born 1837, followed by Thomas, born 1840, and sisters Clarissa, born 1842, and Ellen, born in 1845. Four years later, the third son William joined the growing family. As you can tell, there was a 21-year span between Addie and her brother Henry.

At the age of three, Addie, her parents, two brothers, and a sister travelled by wagon from Missouri to California where they settled on a ranch in Colusa at the foot of the Buttes. Addie's childhood must have been magical on the 1,000 acres of land where her family resided in a large home. Eventually, some of her family moved to San Francisco.

When Addie reached the appropriate school age, she boarded in Marysville while attending Eugenia Poston's Young Ladies Seminary. Her social life blossomed in both the school and her beloved St. John's Episcopal Church where she taught Sunday School. It appears both the Seminary and St. John's played a significant part throughout her life.

Addie would later become a member of the Eugenia Poston Club which was composed of former pupils, teachers, and friends of Mrs. Poston's Seminary. The object of this organization was to "give support, companionship and sympathy to Mrs. E. C. Poston in her old age and to keep green in their hearts the memories of school days and school friends." In addition, St. John's would introduce her to Episcopalian teachings that Addie embraced all her life. When Addie was age 16, the remaining family moved to San Francisco and her life changed forever.

Living in San Francisco must have been a dream come true for Addie Cook. There were so many places to go for this social butterfly who loved fashionable clothes, entertaining, and meeting new people. It was then that Addie met her future husband, Domingo Ghirardelli Jr., the eldest son of the founder of the famous chocolate company.

## THE GHIRARDELLI CONNECTION

Domenico Ghirardelli, Sr., the founder, was born in Rapallo, Italy in 1817. He married Elisabetta Corsini in Italy, and they immigrated in 1838 to Uruguay. He was widowed in 1846 and married Carmen Alvarado Martin, a widow, in Lima, Peru in 1847. A year later, he opened a confectionary and began using the Spanish spelling of his name, Domingo.

In 1849, news of the discovery of gold in California reached Domingo. The couple with their newborn son Domingo Jr. soon sailed to California. Domingo Sr. at first tried prospecting for gold. Failing in that endeavor, he opened a general store in Stockton where he was quite successful. Domingo expanded into San Francisco with still another store. Sadly, in 1851, he lost both establishments to fire. But Domingo was not defeated. A year later, he opened Ghirardelli and Girard, a confectionary in San Francisco where the family settled. Eventually, sons Joseph and Louis were added to the family, followed by daughter Angela in 1859. Over the ensuing years, an evolving Ghirardelli Chocolate Company survived a bankruptcy, recovered, and continued to grow.



DOMINGO GHIRARDELLI, SR.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE  
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.



GHIRARDELLI FAMILY CIRCA 1862.  
LEFT TO RIGHT: DOMINGA, ELVIRA,  
CARMEN, ANGELA, VIRGINIA, CESARE,  
DOMINGO, LOUIS AND JOSEPH. THE  
ELDEST SON, DOMINGO JR., WAS AT  
SCHOOL IN ITALY. STILL TO COME WAS  
EUGENE, THE YOUNGEST CHILD.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF RICKY'S HISTORICAL  
TIDBITS.

It was into this famous family that Addie Cook, age 19, was married to Domingo Jr. in 1877. The newlyweds made their home on Pacific Avenue in San Francisco. It would eventually be filled with their six surviving children. Two daughters, Maurine and Hope, died at birth.



CARMEN ALVARADO GHIRARDELLI.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE  
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

## ALIDA GHIRARDELLI – The Artistic One

Alida was born on September 3, 1879 in San Francisco. Both talented and beautiful, she studied fine art in Paris and later lived with her uncle and aunt Christopher and Angela Ghirardelli Jorgensen at Carmel-by-the-Sea. Alida's aunt was a major influence in her life. Angela began drawing at age of 12. One of her artworks was awarded a diploma at the Mechanics' Institute Fair. Studying at the School of Design in 1881, she met and later married Christopher, her instructor. Alida was considered an accomplished artist at a young age and was often mentioned in magazines and periodicals during the late 1800s. But her life was short-lived.



ALIDA GHIRARDELLI CIRCA 1909.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF FIND A GRAVE.

According to her biographer, J'aime Rubio, records indicate that upon returning to Carmel after a lengthy trip in Europe in August 1909, Alida stayed at the Pine Inn Hotel, about a half mile from her aunt and uncle. On August

14, it was reported that she had nearly drowned in the sea but fortunately had been saved just in time. Oddly enough, two days later, Alida drowned in the "very same waters." Her body allegedly disappeared for nearly a month before washing ashore.

During a 1985 oral interview of Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence, grandniece of Addie and Domingo Jr., it was relayed that Alida's father sat on the beach for hours hoping she would either wash ashore or come ashore. She was 31.

## LYLE GHIRARDELLI – The Loyal One

Lyle, the first son, was born in 1881. He was named for his father but went by either D. Lyle or Lyle. He had only been married two years when Alida's tragic death occurred. In fact, Lyle and his wife, the former Alice Belau, had become parents of their first child daughter Inez during the fateful year. In 1918, son Domingo Kent was added to the family. Like his father, he chose to go by his middle name.

A graduate of Stanford University and considered "very intelligent," Lyle was appointed the Ghirardelli Company president in 1922.

About that time, a major tragedy occurred. During Polly Lawrence's interview, she said that Lyle and his wife Alice were walking across the street on a hill between Divisadero and Broderick in San Francisco and were hit by an automobile. Alice never fully recovered and was an invalid the rest of her life.

During Lyle's twenty-two years as president, it was hoped that his son would eventually take on the position. But Kent had other ideas. He wanted to become a banker. He moved to Honolulu where he remained estranged from Ghirardelli family members. Kent changed his last name to Ghirard to further distance himself. His sister, Inez, moved to Honolulu as well, but still associated with her family. Neither Kent nor Inez ever married.

Alice died in 1956. Their former residence was sold, and Lyle moved into an apartment. He remained active in various clubs until his death in 1958.



D. LYLE GHIRARDELLI.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF CALISPHERE.

## **EDWIN GHIRARDELLI – The Son Who Left**

Born in San Francisco on December 27, 1884, Edwin also aspired to become an artist like his sister Alida. He, too, lived with his uncle and aunt Christopher and Angela Jorgensen in Carmel. Edwin’s mindset was not in the family business. It was in the arts. This factor angered his father, Domingo Jr., who not only disregarded his son’s career choices, but also Edwin’s personal life. Edwin refused to give in to his father’s demands. He traveled to Oregon to work elsewhere.

It appears that Edwin never got along with his father. His mother Addie’s deep religious convictions which she constantly conveyed to all her children was another reason that Edwin was estranged. He wanted freedom from his parents.

According to biographer Rubio, around Christmas in 1912, Edwin contacted his family about coming home for the holidays. He was told not to come. Edwin was being punished because of his choices. For some reason, his “misdeeds” had also been related to his mother who shared in his father’s “deep sorrow.” But more sadness was to come.

Edwin died by suicide from cyanide poisoning while in his room at the Byron Hotel in Portland on December 30, 1912. His body was found on New Year’s Day. Still another tragedy in the Ghirardelli family.

## **CORONA GHIRARDELLI HYDE – The Chaotic One**

Many members in the family considered Corona as a “real living character.” You never knew what she was going to do next. Born in 1889 in San Francisco, Corona was described by Polly Lawrence, her niece, as a “posey” sort of woman. She evidently believed that striking poses, some unfortunate, would increase her attractiveness. Young cousins would also laugh behind her back about her husband George Hyde. Although considered a “nice man,” he always had dandruff on his collar.

Corona lived a long life, passing away in 1979. Since she had no children, Corona left everything to her niece Margery Menefee who later put the entire amount in a trust for her grandchildren’s education.

## **ESPERANCE GHIRARDELLI ALVORD – The Estranged One**

Esperance, a twin, was born in 1892. Her twin, Hope, died at 10 months. According to Polly Lawrence, Esperance, too, did not get along with her mother. It seems that Addie imposed her religious fervor on all her children early, and Esperance rebelled. She eventually became a Christian Scientist.

In 1924, Esperance married Vernon Alvord. She was always considered a “lovely woman” and well thought of in the community. Sadly, she died of complications from a fallopian tube pregnancy in 1927.

## **RUTH GHIRARDELLI MENEFEE – The Rebellious One**

Ruth, the youngest in the family, was born in 1898. Like her sister Esperance, she did not accept her mother’s rigid standards. Ruth led her own life. She married a man by the name of Menefee, but it did not last. He left her to raise their daughter Margery alone. Ruth never remarried.

Despite her feelings toward her mother, Ruth was never entirely estranged from the family. She spent a lot of time at her parent’s home. Perhaps Ruth wanted her parents to have a close relationship with their granddaughter Margery. Ruth died in a fire in 1961.

## **DOMINGO JR. & ADDIE**

Domingo Jr. died in 1932 after a short illness, leaving an estate estimated at \$1,000,000 (approximately \$23.6 million today). He left half of his estate to Addie, \$100,000 to his namesake, and \$1,000 a month for life to his surviving daughters. He also gave \$5,000 to Addie’s brother, William. Addie joined him in death in 1950 at the age of 92, leaving her estate to 19 charities including the San Francisco Community Chest, Episcopal Old Ladies Home, and the Children’s Hospital. A significant amount was added to the trust fund established for her daughters when their father died.



CEMETERY AT CAMP FAR WEST. PHOTO COURTESY OF JEANNE YOUNG.

# The Forgotten Soldiers of Camp Far West Cemetery

*by Anne Constantin Birge*

## INTRODUCTION

The Mexican American War started on April 25, 1846, when the U.S. Army invaded Mexico in a dispute over the border of the recently-annexed Texas. Many American soldiers died and were buried on Mexican soil. Many more were wounded and survived. On February 2, 1848, the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo finally ended the war. In return for a payment of 15 million dollars, Mexico ceded Alta California to the United States, an area of land which included the states now known as California, Nevada, and Utah, as well as parts of present-day Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. The Rio Grande River was declared the border between the United States of America and Mexico.

Just nine months after the end of the war, many enlisted men and officers, some veterans of the war and others recently enlisted, sailed to Alta California to establish forts in hopes of protecting the '49er Gold Rush immigrants. Some of those soldiers died and their bodies never returned home. The following article pays homage to those who remain at Camp Far West.

## PROLOGUE

The word cemetery comes from a Latin word that is derived from an ancient Greek word meaning *bedroom, sleeping place, or resting place*. Some other names for cemeteries include graveyards; memorial parks; pioneer, national, garden, or even the new ‘green’ or natural burial grounds. No matter what they’re called, cemeteries remain places to bury our dead. But aren’t they really just places the living go to talk, cry, reminisce, and speak the names of the dead so they’ll never be forgotten?

Metal and stone markers last a long time, and wooden markers usually disintegrate over time, and identifying information drifts with the breeze lost in time. More permanent grave markers can be covered with dirt, broken, removed, or made illegible from time’s corrosive nature. Visitors can no longer read their names

and the knowledge of those who rest below us are lost.

This is what happened to the Camp Far West Cemetery, located at the earliest and westernmost United States Army post in Northern California. This 175-year-old military cemetery, the second oldest in California after Fort Benicia (Benicia Barracks/Benicia Arsenal), is in Yuba County, California. Nearby, thousands of wagons, untold numbers of livestock, and more than 100,000 people of all ages arrived at the end of the trail at Johnson’s Rancho to find gold via a trail which still bears the scars of their journey. This grassy, hard-pan site of the fort is adjacent to the Bear River and near the terminus of the 2,000-mile long Emigrant Trail – the dusty, rutted superhighway (of the day) to riches.

Gold was discovered by James W. Marshall at Sutter’s Mill (January

24, 1848). The U.S. government wanted that gold and knew they had to protect those who mined it. The Army became part of the greatest migration of people in American history. For at least 14 soldiers, their story ended at the long-abandoned Camp Far West cemetery. In the late 1860s through the early 1890s, the U.S. Army disinterred their troops from many of the 1850s California forts and reburied them at the Presidio of San Francisco. They forgot the 14 U.S. Army soldiers in Companies E and F in the 2nd Regiment of Infantry buried in unmarked graves at Camp Far West. This is the story of those men and the two-plus year-long search to locate their correct names and place them on a monument to honor them for being the blue line between the chaos of the Gold Rush and the promise of a good life.

## OFF TO THE WESTERN FRONTIER TO KEEP THE PEACE

The story began when ten companies of the U.S. Army’s 2nd Regiment of Infantry returned to various forts across America after serving in the Mexican American War. Soon they received orders to report to Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York and prepare to sail to the western frontier. On November 7, 1848, approximately 750 officers and men of the 2nd Regiment of Infantry boarded four troop transport ships and left Fort Hamilton. Thus began their 243-day overseas odyssey to California to set up the Regiment’s new Headquarters at Monterey. They, and later officers and men of the U.S. Army’s Artillery and Cavalry, had orders to establish forts, camps and cantonments in

California. Their orders: keep the peace and protect immigrants and miners from the perils they’d encounter.

The four troop transport ships, *Iowa*, *Sea Queen*, *Rome*, and *Mary & Adeline*, had a long 15,200 nautical mile (or 17,492 land miles) voyage ahead. Some of the soldiers got sick aboard the ships. Though most recovered, some died at sea. The first illnesses occurred just one week after they left New York. By November 14, smallpox struck the crew and passengers of the transport ship *Mary & Adeline*. The soldiers and ship’s crew, led by West Point graduate Captain Hannibal Day,<sup>1</sup> were quarantined for almost six weeks at Old Comfort Point, near Fort

1 Hannibal Day (1804-1891) retired from active service after 40 years shortly after taking part in the Battle of Gettysburg. He continued to serve on military commissions and courts until 1869 and retired as a Brevet Brigadier General.

Monroe, Hampton, Virginia. She re-embarked on December 26 and sailed “with the first wind.” They arrived at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on February 19, 1849. After resupplying the ship and losing

many men to desertion, they once again set sail on March 2, 1849. The *Mary & Adeline* soon encountered and escaped the treacherous waters for which Cape Horn, Chile is known.

To resupply the ship’s stores, she anchored in the harbor at Valparaiso, Chile on April 29, and six days later, sailed for Monterey, Alta California and then San Francisco.

## FROM TRAVELING ON WATER TO TRAVELING ON FOOT

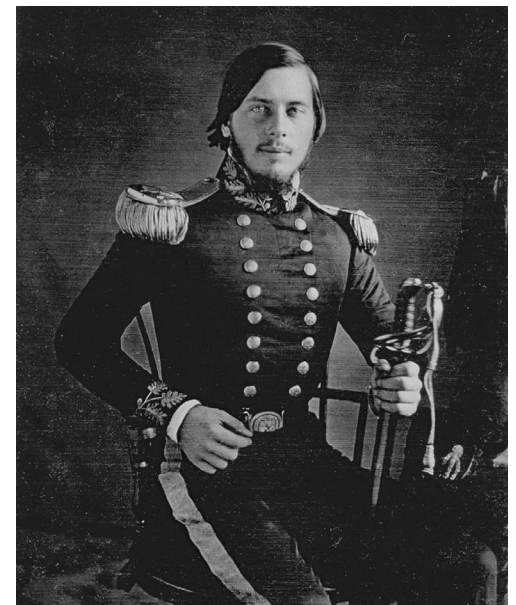
A San Francisco newspaper, *The Daily Alta California*, noted the location of the ships as they transited from New York to San Francisco. On Sunday, July 8, 1849, the *Mary & Adeline* arrived in San Francisco harbor, and the troops immediately marched 36 miles to Benicia. The troops had a brief respite and were supplied with provisions. Then Captain Day and Company F marched 60 miles, in late July, to Camp J. W. Anderson, near Sutterville (present-day Sacramento). There they met Captain Julius J. B. Kingsbury, Company E’s commander. He was miserable and unhappy with everything and everybody. Around September 17, Kingsbury transferred command of the camp to Captain Day and took an Unauthorized Leave of Absence (most think he went gold mining). Five days later, Captain Day and Companies E and F left Camp Anderson and marched about 46 miles northeast.

Captain Day, his officers, and his approximately 150 men marched for six days and halted near the mouth of Bear Creek (now called Bear River, a Feather River tributary). On September 28, Captain Day and Lt. George Horatio Derby,<sup>2</sup> a West Point graduate topographical engineer, located a small plateau of high ground near Bear Creek (four miles east of present-day Wheatland). Derby reported it was an ideal location with its potable water and the beef and vegetables available at nearby Johnson’s Rancho. There was gold in the Bear River to keep the soldiers busy on their days off and keep them from deserting for the gold fields. Great idea. Didn’t work!

In spite of the hardships in getting to Camp Far West, Day had explicit orders to “Keep the Peace.” He was to protect the gold miners and thousands of families, businesspeople, workers, miners, and criminals arriving in the West along the Emigrant Trail. So, with what little was available to establish a temporary camp, they immediately tried to do just that. This temporary



CAPTAIN HANNIBAL DAY C. 1860. COURTESY OF WIKITREE.COM.



LT. GEORGE HORATIO DERBY. COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA.

2 George Horatio Derby (1823-1861) served as part of the Army Topographical Engineers and was responsible for choosing the best location for Camp Far West. After establishing that location, he traveled throughout Northern California mapping and describing the terrain. Aside from his military duties, he also wrote humor columns published in newspapers under the names Squibbob, John Phoenix, and John P. Squibbob.

camp was their home where they would live for almost three long, horrible years. While many endured malaria<sup>3</sup> and other diseases, some died from arrow wounds, drowning, and a few unlisted causes.

## LIFE IN AN ILL-SUPPLIED WESTERN POST – Camp Far West

Captain Day knew his men joined the U.S. Army at a time when their fellow soldiers died from all manner of causes. Sadly, disease was one reason for declining Camp Far West ranks. Within a month of their arrival, four men died. The Post Surgeon, Robert Murray, said more would die unless the troops had adequate shelter, clothing, and food. Soldiers died throughout California from: apoplexy (strokes), fractures, cholera, consumption (tuberculosis), diabetes, diphtheria, drowning, dysentery, epilepsy, influenza, malaria, scurvy, smallpox, typhoid fever, pneumonia, tetanus, measles, yellow fever, and arrow, knife, and bullet wounds. Other causes of death noted were frostbite, delirium tremens, gangrene, and suicide.

Because mining for gold was more lucrative than the low-paying and hard-scrabble life of a western frontier soldier, it is probable that many soldiers deserting from their post was a significant cause for the decline in the 2nd Regiment's ranks. In one of his almost daily letters to his superiors, in which he constantly complained about the conditions, Captain Day said there was lumber at a sawmill located about 20 miles from Camp Far West. He wrote, with the lumber, "We can shelter ourselves from the winter rains" ...to do... "justice to a command already reduced by desertion." The cabin hospital was finished and others were under construction, but the Northern California winter arrived before two 20' wide, 40' long barracks were finished. The men used shingle-roofed barracks, while supplies were in a canvas-topped warehouse. Officers had log cabins or floorboarded tents. The guardhouse was a tent. That was a soldier's life in an ill-supplied frontier fort.

It seemed for Camp Far West's men that they would get one step ahead and be shoved two steps back. Such was the case when by mid-January 1850, the troops had shelter, but many developed scurvy due to a lack of vitamin C. In February 1850, a merchant piloted his supply-loaded boat nearby and was ready to sell to Captain Day, but with no authority and no money to purchase anything, all Day could do was ponder his situation. Finally, in March, Camp Far West's Quartermaster purchased vinegar, sugar, garden hoses, scythes, and a half dozen ball and chain sets with the camp boats to transport them via Bear Creek. According to the National Oregon-California Trail Center, because vinegar was used to clean and sanitize, it was used as an antiseptic, antibacterial,

and anti-fungal medicine. It functioned as a thirst quencher when mixed with water on marches and was used to pickle/preserve food.

Tensions were high between miners, settlers, and Indians<sup>4</sup> in the area. In May 1850, Day learned some Indians, who treated his men "kindly and hospitably," allegedly attacked two settlers after some settlers killed two Indians they accused of rustling cattle. The unharmed strays soon returned on their own.

In his daily letters, Captain Day said discipline among the troops was a continual problem and desertion a major issue. He groused about the fact he considered Camp Far West similar to Botany Bay, the 1788 Australian penal colony. In 1850, a U.S. Army private stole a miner's gold dust worth \$1,200, was found guilty and sentenced to 200 lashes. After 20 lashes, he confessed where to find the stolen gold dust. A year later, Day wrote he couldn't



LOCATION OF JOHNSON'S ADOBE, THE END OF THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL. COURTESY OF JEANNE YOUNG.

3 Introduced by fur trappers in the 1830s, in the 19th century malaria was endemic in California.

4 The term "Indian" reflects the terminology used in that era and Captain Day used in his letters.

administer soldiers' re-enlistment oaths because the local Justice of the Peace was indicted by a Grand Jury and absconded.

### JOHNSON'S RANCHO

In 1844, Pablo Gutierrez, a John Sutter employee, obtained a 22,197-acre Mexican Land Grant on the north side of the Bear River. As required by the grant, he constructed some adobe buildings adjacent to the Bear. In 1845, Pablo took John Bidwell, another Sutter employee, to where Pablo allegedly found gold, but supposedly didn't show Bidwell the location. Then, while delivering a message for Sutter to someone in Monterey, Alta California, Mexico, Pablo was captured and hung by unknown assailants. Sutter then oversaw Gutierrez's property which was auctioned for \$150 to William Johnson and his partner Sebastian Keyser or Kayser. The land, soon known as Johnson's Rancho, was the site of Johnson's Crossing (on the Bear River) and the end of the Emigrant Trail.

Few people today realize that before February 1848, everyone, immigrants and soldiers, who went to California, left the safety of American soil and headed into a foreign country. In 1849 alone, while California awaited statehood, over 10,000 wagons and 100,000 mostly unwashed, exhausted, but hopeful immigrants arrived on foot, horse or by wagon pulled by the few oxen, mules, and horses that survived the 2,000-mile overland journey along the Emigrant

Trail from Independence, Missouri. Some estimate 6% to 12% of the immigrants perished along the way and another 20% died within the first six months of arrival from disease, starvation, and exposure.

All along the westbound California and Oregon trails lay clothes, household goods, wagons, human remains, and decomposing carcasses of livestock. At the end of the trail was Johnson's Crossing, used by multitudes of pioneers heading west on the Emigrant Trail from Salt Lake City and Donner Summit to Sutter's Fort, Sacramento and other locales. A few years earlier, the Rancho was also the staging and supply station for one of the most dramatic rescues in history: the 1846-1847 rescues of the Donner Party survivors.

In 1849, Lt. Derby laid out the proposed town of Kearney, adjacent to Camp Far West. It wasn't until 1866 that the town of Wheatland was laid out on a portion of Johnson's Rancho that was on higher ground and escaped the Bear River's annual floods.

### THE ARMY BIDS "ADIOS!" TO CAMP FAR WEST

At times, three or four companies of soldiers were garrisoned at Camp Far West, which was renamed Fort Far West in 1851. For less than three years, the troops assigned to this place safeguarded the immigrant trails and wagon routes to the area's mines and cities. In September 1849, when Captain Hannibal Day arrived at the location designated Camp Far West, his constant complaint letters to his East Coast superiors reflected the horrible conditions on the western frontier and his desire to be assigned closer to home. He described the assignment as "...the hardy and well-armed miner was being defended by an under-fed and scurvy-weakened soldier from a miserable race of savages... armed only with the bow and arrow."

When Day's reassignment papers finally arrived in January 1852, he transferred command of Camp Far West and Company F to Lt. Nelson H. Davis.<sup>5</sup> On May 4, 1852, Lt. Davis obeyed orders to march Company F and the remaining 40 soldiers approximately 125 miles north to a post near Cottonwood, called Fort Reading, to protect settlers and travelers there. Though they escaped the unhealthiness found at Camp Far West, a few years later, Company F



COL. NELSON H. DAVIS. COURTESY OF FIND A GRAVE.

<sup>5</sup> Nelson H. Davis (1821-1890) finished his military career in 1885 as a Brigadier General, as Inspector General of the Army.

abandoned Fort Reading because the soldiers got sick again from malaria.

## **SOLDIERS POSSIBLY BURIED AT CAMP FAR WEST FROM 1849 TO 1852**

Three soldiers from Company F died and were buried at sea while enroute to California. On July 10, two days after the 2nd Regiment of Infantry arrived in San Francisco Harbor, 21-year-old Private Newton Barnes died aboard their ship the *Mary & Adeline*.

The cemetery, on the one square mile military reserve where Camp Far West was located, was used as a cemetery by locals as early as 1844. According to the Official Post Returns, at least 27 soldiers died while assigned to the camp, but only 14 are presumed to be buried in cemetery.

Within the first six months of establishing Camp Far West, between September 26, 1849 and March 18, 1850, seven camp deaths were registered in the camp's Post Returns. By May 1852, seven more soldiers, some on detached duty to the camp, were also buried in the camp's cemetery. Historians have long wanted to properly identify and honor those buried in the Camp Far West Cemetery with a permanent memorial to stand alongside the one vandals destroyed, but which will never be removed. The obelisk's original zinc (white bronze) plates with names of four soldiers were replaced sometime around 1946 by U.S. Army Brigadier General James Roy Newman Weaver, the Commander at Camp Beale, former prisoner of war, and survivor of the Bataan Death March.

## **WHEATLAND RESIDENTS HONOR SOLDIERS WHO ARE BURIED AT CAMP FAR WEST (unknown date)**

Privates Barney Newton and John Stephenson, two soldiers identified as buried in Camp Far West Cemetery, were actually buried elsewhere. Also, Barney's name is really Newton Barnes. A third soldier identified by only his last name was discovered to be Private William Baldwin. It took months of online research and obtaining most of the soldiers' Compiled Military Records from the National Archives and Records Administration

(NARA). Though fourteen 2nd Regiment of Infantry soldiers are identified as probably being buried in Camp Far West's cemetery, there are no photographs of them. The following soldiers are listed in chronological order by date of death.

### **PRIVATE WILLIAM H. WALSH AGE 21**

Born in Germany in 1827, the clerk enlisted in Company G, 2nd Regiment of Infantry. He and Private William Baldwin were then transferred from the General Depot to Co. E on August 17, 1846, when William was only 18. On September 26, 1849, two days before Companies E and F arrived at Camp Far West, Private Walsh died of natural causes. At his enlistment, William was 5'6½" tall, had light hair, blue eyes, and fair skin.

### **PRIVATE THOMAS NELLEND AGE 20**

Much of Thomas' information was illegible on the Enlistment Record. We continue to search for more information on all the 2nd Regiment of Infantry soldiers. Thomas was born in 1828 in New York. The 20+ year-old, 5'3" tall farmer enlisted in Company D. He drowned on September 30, 1849, at Camp Far West, two days after the regiment established Camp Far West.

### **PRIVATE/MUSICIAN GEORGE ECKWELLER AGE 19**

In 1830, Private/Musician George Eckweller was born in the state of Prussia (now Germany). On November 8, 1845, the 15-year-old enlisted in the U.S. Army, 1st Artillery, Company D, in Columbus, New York. Because he was only 15-years old, his parents had to sign for his five-year enlistment. He then transferred to Company F, 2nd Regiment of Infantry. On October 16, 1849, just one month before his fourth year of service, the Musician drowned in the Bear River at Camp Far West. In one personal letter, Captain Hannibal Day wrote that Private George Eckweller had "gone over the hill."

### **PRIVATE JOHN GLYNN AGE 33**

Amid their ranks, Company E's troops enjoyed the company of two men named John Glynn. John Glynn was born in approximately 1815, in Roscommon, Ireland. Like so many Irish citizens,

John emigrated to America. While situated in Boston, Massachusetts, John enlisted in the U.S. Army on September 27, 1848, just one year before he would die at Camp Far West. On his enlistment form, John stated he was a laborer, had gray eyes, brown hair, ruddy complexion, and stood 5'7½" tall. On November 7, 1849 at age 33+, Private John Glynn died at Camp Far West, two days before his 21-year-old friend, John Glynn.

### **PRIVATE JOHN GLYNN AGE 21**

The younger John Glynn, assigned to Co. E, 2nd Regiment, died in November 1849. He was born in 1827 in Montreal, Canada. On August 30, 1848, he enlisted in Boston, Massachusetts, just one month before the older John Glynn. The brown-haired, gray eyed young man, with a ruddy complexion, stood 5'11¼" tall when he drowned at Camp Far West, in Bear Creek.

### **SERGEANT JOSEPH S. HAACK AGE 24**

Sergeant Joseph S. Haack, a coppersmith, was born in Franklin County, Pennsylvania in 1824. He was 22 when he enlisted on February 3, 1846, in Buffalo, New York. His eyes were gray, his hair brown, his height 5'5" tall, and his complexion fair. On May 2, 1846, he was assigned to Ft. Brady in Michigan and on October 22, 1848, he was assigned to Company E, 2nd Regiment of Infantry. His death, on November 9, 1849, at age 24, occurred at Camp Far West, when he drowned in Bear Creek, the same day as the younger John Glynn.

### **PRIVATE NICHOLAS SMITH AGE 23**

Private Nicholas Smith, with hazel-colored eyes and dark hair and complexion, was a 5'7" Irish farmer when he enlisted on July 14, 1848, in New York. He was assigned to Company F, 2nd Regiment of Infantry when he died at Camp Far West on February 3, 1850.

### **PRIVATE CHRISTIAN MILLER AGE 31 (real name is probably Müller)**

Born in 1818, 29-year-old, 5'5" tall, dark-haired, dark-eyed German laborer, Christian Miller, enlisted on December 29, 1847 in St. Louis, Missouri. A few days later, he received a \$6.00 "bounty" for enlisting

to serve in the Mexican War. On October 22, 1848, while at Jefferson Barracks, MO, assigned to the 8th Infantry, he was reassigned to Company E, 2nd Regiment of Infantry, to prepare to sail to California. On March 13, 1850, Private Miller died at Camp Far West, California.

### **PRIVATE JOHN PERMILION AGE 21**

The 5'8" tall, blue-eyed, brown-haired, fair-skinned farmer John Permilion, born in about 1828, enlisted on March 18, 1845, in Georgetown (Washington, DC) when he was at most 16-years-old. Just nine days shy of being enlisted for five years, Private Permilion died on March 9, 1850, at Camp Far West, California.

### **SERGEANT ROBERT HAYS AGE 23**

Sergeant Robert Hays, a member of Company F, was born in Boston, Massachusetts in about 1827. When he was an 18-year-old clerk he enlisted on April 9, 1846 in Detroit, Michigan and again on December 11, 1848 in Cleveland, Ohio. On May 29, Sergeant Robert Hays was wounded by arrows "during a skirmish" with Indians at the Colorado River. In June 1850, U.S. Army Post Return stated he died later on June 7, 1850 at Camp Far West.

### **PRIVATE WILLIAM BALDWIN AGE 31**

According to a U.S. Army Post Return, Private William Baldwin joined Company E from the General Depot on August 17, 1846, the same day as Private William Walsh. Born in about 1818, in Wayne, New York, Baldwin enlisted on August 16, 1846, at age 28 at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As per his enlistment form, he stated he was a farmer, had gray eyes, brown hair and fair skin, and was 5'6½" tall. Private Baldwin lingered from an undisclosed illness from April 9 through June 8, 1850, when he died at Camp Far West.

### **PRIVATE JACOB H. TYMESON AGE 21**

Jacob H. Tymeson, a 21-year-old farmer born in 1828 in Montgomery, New York, enlisted as a private in Baltimore, Maryland on May 3, 1848. He was described as 5'6¾" tall with gray eyes, black hair, and dark skin. He was with Company C, 2nd Regiment of Infantry for almost two years when he was shot

with arrows on July 5, 1850, during a “skirmish with Indians” near the Pitt River. Because he died on July 7, 1850, it is probable Private Tymeson was buried at Camp Far West.

### **PRIVATE JAMES H. NEWLAND AGE 24**

In December 1850, James H. Newland, born about 1827, possibly in Missouri, was a gold miner living in Placerville, California. On January 19, 1852, Private Newland, assigned to Company A, died at Camp Far West.

### **PRIVATE MICHAEL LEAHY AGE UNKNOWN**

Private Michael Leahy, a soldier assigned to Company E, 2nd Regiment of Infantry, died on May 25, 1852, at Camp Far West after the Company left for Fort Reading.

### **HEROES LEFT BEHIND AND FORGOTTEN**

Captain Day, of course, didn’t know that his fort, his men, and his name would soon pass out of memory and never cause a seismic ripple in California or United States history books. By 1856, there were no more burials at Camp Far West cemetery, and the camp was abandoned. No one stayed behind to see the log and adobe structures at the site of Camp Far West and Johnson’s Rancho crumble into dust and be scattered across the Bear River. No one was left behind to maintain the graves and remember the names of those buried at Camp Far West’s cemetery.

To make matters worse, in the late 1860s, the U.S. Army Quartermaster Department returned to disinter soldiers’ remains from cemeteries at some California forts and re-inter them at the Presidio of San Francisco. Camp Far West was forgotten, and the soldiers’

remains were left behind in unmarked graves, in an abandoned, unfenced graveyard with no signage stating it was a soldiers’ cemetery. More than 175 years later, any wooden grave markers which may have been placed to identify the dead are now decomposed splinters buried in the soil inside the four river rock walls of Camp Far West Cemetery.

By May 1852, Camp Far West ceased to exist as an active post. The soldiers’ bones and a few memories written on official governmental documents are all that’s left. Family members likely had no idea where their family members were buried.

On April 29, 1909, the Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW) Grand Parlor and Marysville Parlor No. 6 submitted



IN 1911, NATIVE SONS OF THE GOLDEN WEST PLACED THIS OBELISK TO HONOR THOSE BURIED IN THE CEMETERY. MEMORABILIA PUT INSIDE WERE STOLEN, AND THE FOUR PLATES ARE MISSING. COURTESY OF SHARYL SIMMONS.

a resolution providing for a monument at Camp Far West. Two years later, the NSGW surveyed an 83' x 65' area of land on which to place the memorial. In 1911, the NSGW Grand Parlor, Marysville Parlor No. 6, Rainbow Parlor No. 40, and Silver Star Parlor No. 63 (Lincoln) installed a white bronze obelisk to honor the dead. In 1950, Native Daughters of the Golden West, Camp Far West Parlor No. 218, dedicated a beautiful wall built from rocks gold miners dredged from the Bear River.

During World War II and the forming of U.S. Army Camp Beale, the cemetery was under military control a second time. After WWII, Camp Beale was

reduced in size, and the cemetery lost its military protection again.

Over the last few years, ground-penetrating radar and human remains cadaver dogs assisted in the location of 18 graves inside and just outside the cemetery walls. If we possessed a Camp Far West Burial Record or Death Register, we might have been able to identify which soldier or civilian rests in which grave. There is one brick-edged grave that is believed to be Betsy Parker, a child who died in 1850. Now on private property, the entire site is owned and protected by a very caring and history-minded businessman.

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*(Editor's Note: The author's list of sources was quite long and is edited here for space.)*

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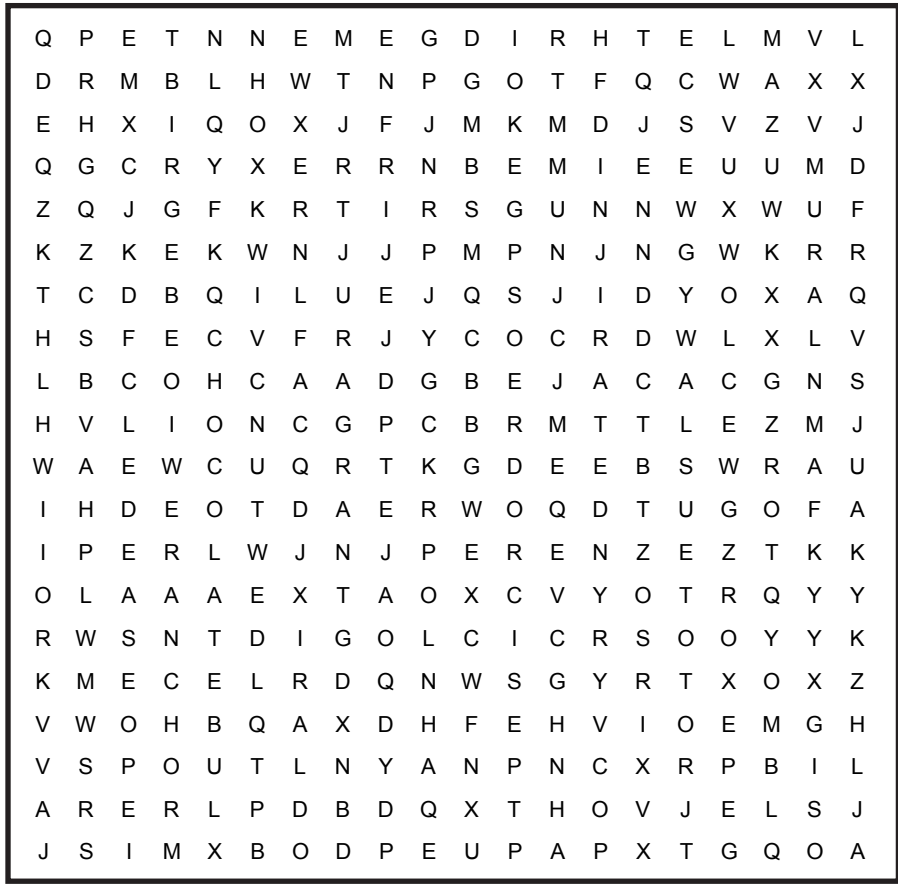
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- Come visit us!** You can use a credit card, cash, or check to donate in person
- Donate online** through our website
- Legacy Giving:** please contact [info@suttercountymuseum.org](mailto:info@suttercountymuseum.org) to learn more

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](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org/support#volunteer)





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## Renew your membership today!

Funds from your membership directly support the work we do, including taking care of our collections and offering stellar educational programming.

**Not a member?**

Consider joining today!

And, don't forget, a membership is a great gift!

**For more information, visit [suttercountymuseum.org/support](http://suttercountymuseum.org/support)**

# Memorials & Donations

October 1, 2025 - February 22, 2026

## 50th Anniversary Campaign: Donations for Education

Ray & Karen Brooks  
In Memory of Wallace &  
Dorothy Coats  
John Crowhurst  
Lou Anne Cummings  
Heather Esemann  
Scott & Barbara Hankins  
Diane Ketelle  
Karen Kraatz  
Amber & Zachary Milner  
James & Jenette Ochsner  
Debra Jane Rozzen

## Community Garden Donation

Tony & Joan Kurlan

## Programs Donation

Marysville JACL

## Outright Gifts

American Association of  
University Women  
Kelly Bishop  
Constance Cary  
John Cassidy  
Dianna Ceballos  
Russ & Donna Clark  
Gloria Estrada  
Mary Ann & John Frye  
Mary Agnes Nolan Gobel  
Jessica Graf  
Rebecca Graf  
Laura Granados  
Diane Hilbert  
Teresa Iraigit  
Caleb Longest  
Dr. Phuong Luu  
Marysville JACL  
Donna & John McAvoy  
Brett & Kelly Meyer  
John Nichols  
Elaine Novak  
Albert C. Powell  
Punjabi American Heritage  
Society  
Randolph & Barbara Schnabel  
Sicilia Vineyards  
Carmen Smith

Julie Stark  
Irene Western  
Laurie Zenger

## In-Kind Donations

Ronald Ross

## Memorials

*In Memory of Gail Ahlers*  
Molly Bloom & Nick Lashway  
*In Memory of Ross Cockrell*  
Kay, son Chris, grandchildren  
Clyde & Charlotte  
Kay & Larry Matsumura

*In Memory of Lila Mae Davis*  
R. James Staas

*In Memory of George Jones*  
Randolph & Vernice Deas

*In Memory of Nicolai Larsen*  
Marika García & Christopher  
Holmes

*In Memory of Jan Rubiales*  
Molly Bloom & Nick Lashway  
Kelly Gash  
Marcia Stranix

*In Memory of Wyman Wong*  
Lorene Wong

## Middle Gallery Interactive Map Fund

Luria Lee

## Patio Pavers

County of Sutter  
Debrah & Mike Reid

## Trees & Traditions: Sponsorships, Donations, & In-Kind Gifts

Nancy Aaberg  
Anonymous  
*Appeal-Democrat*  
Karm Bains  
Beeler Tractor Co.  
Molly Bloom & Nick Lashway  
Paul Boehmke  
Carol Bordeaux

Patience Boudreaux  
Logan Brooks  
Butte Sand and Gravel  
Manny Cardoza  
City of Yuba City  
Close Lumber- Frank R. Close  
& Son Inc.  
Colusa Rice Company  
Cordi Winery  
Davis Machine Shop, Inc.  
Jean & Mike DeBorde  
Donighi Exchange  
Early Risers Kiwanis Club of  
Yuba City  
Family SOUP  
Friends of Sutter County  
Library  
Geweke Ford Kia & Towing  
Grocery Outlet  
Scott & Barbara Hankins  
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino  
Sacramento at Fire Mountain  
Harkey House Inn  
Kim Herman & Scott Kirchner  
Hilbers, Inc.  
Vern & Phyllis Hill  
Holycross Funeral Home &  
Crematory, Inc.  
Diane Ketelle  
Wade Kirchner & Lisa  
Buschmann-Kirchner  
Joan & Tony Kurlan  
Randie & Doug Marr  
Amber & Zachary Milner  
Munger Family Vineyard  
Papé Machinery  
Plumas Bank  
Debrah & Mike Reid  
Debbie Rozzen  
Margit Sands  
Sapphire Marketing Group  
Tyrone Shaeffer  
Shaw and Associates  
Sicilia Vineyards  
Sharyl Simmons  
Sound Annex  
Sutter Buttes Business Services  
Sutter Buttes Regional Land  
Trust

Continued on page 25

# New and Renewing Members

October 1, 2025 - February 22, 2026

Allen County Public Library  
 Richard & Haruko Arent  
 Linda Baker  
 Bancroft Library  
 Gail Beduhn  
 Tim & Linda Beilby  
 Mitchell Bloom  
 Skip Brockman  
 Ray & Karen Brooks  
 Ma'Carry Cairo  
 Ann & Michael Chesini  
 Nance Contreras  
 Shannon Desmarais  
 Sarah Donighi  
 Teeann Duncan  
 Susan & Ron Eggleston  
 Susanna Ford  
 David & Judi Freiler  
 Mary Ann & John Frye  
 Laurie Gidel

Mary Agnes Nolan Gobel  
 Sarah Graf & Alan Bloom  
 Scott & Barbara Hankins  
 Sarah Heckman  
 Kimberly Heisch  
 Allen & Kathe Herr  
 William & Marilyn Kenyon  
 Diane Kettle  
 Richard & Sue Keys  
 Joann King  
 Scott & Karen Leone  
 Sandra Muñoz Lule  
 Donna & Barry McMaster  
 Meriam Library  
 Amanda G. Moore  
 Lorelle Mudd  
 Thea & Carl Norum  
 Elaine Novak  
 Gary Ries  
 Patrick & Wendy Rosales

David Rubiales  
 Michael Schuster & Ruth  
 Mikkelsen  
 Benoit Schutz  
 Tyrone Shaeffer  
 Sharyl Simmons  
 Keith & Vera Smith  
 Phyllis Smith  
 Lynne Takahashi  
 Craig & Maureen Tarke  
 Timothy Tudor  
 Jolyne Williams  
 Tom & Tina Williams  
 Dennis Wilson  
 Carol & Roger Withington

## Business Memberships

Sutter Buttes Business Services

## Membership Information

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

For a complete listing of benefits by level, visit [www.suttercountymuseum.org/support](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org/support).

### Membership Levels

Basic*	\$35
Basic Plus*	\$60
Bronze**	\$100
Silver**	\$250
Gold**	\$500
Harter Circle**	\$1000

\*\$10 discount for Student/Senior/Military/Long Distance (200+ miles away)

\*\*\$15 discount for Student/Senior/Military/Long Distance (200+ miles away)

\*\*\* 20% discount for Non-profits

### Business Levels

Business Basic***	\$250
Business Basic Plus***	\$500
Business Sustaining***	\$1000

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](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org/support) for more information.

## Trees & Traditions: Sponsorships, Donations, & In-Kind Gifts *continued from page 24*

Sutter Buttes Soap Shoppe  
 Sutter County Children &  
 Families Commission  
 Sutter Orchard Supply  
 Sweco Products, Inc.  
 David Tarke – Edward Jones

Whit Taylor – Edward Jones  
 Treat 'Em Like A King  
 Foundation  
 Ullrey Memorial Chapel  
 Maris Wagener  
 Diane Warnock – Edward Jones

Thomas P. Winn Foundation  
 Yuba City Honda  
 Yuba-Sutter High Wheelers



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Yuba City, CA 95993

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Our **public hours** are:

WEDNESDAYS – FRIDAYS  
**from 9am-5pm**

SATURDAYS  
**from 12-4pm**

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