SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM

SUMMER 2026

# BULLETIN

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HAND TINTED PHOTOGRAPH OF OBA C. ALGEO
TAKEN ON JULY 4, 1942, AGE 69.
COURTESY OF SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

# 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.**

# Sutter County Museum Staff

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# Visit the Museum

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**www.suttercountymuseum.org**

Sutter County Museum  suttercountymuseum

# Museum Association

The Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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:

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Marika García, Secretary
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Sign up for our **e-newsletter**

to receive the latest updates about Museum exhibits, programs, and events!

Visit our website at **www.suttercountymuseum.org**

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

# News

- The Sutter County Museum has been selected for an Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) for our exhibit *From Barbers' Row to Beale Air Force Base: Black History in Yuba-Sutter.*

  The AASLH Leadership in History Awards are the nation's most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history. The exhibit was truly a community effort, and we are very grateful and honored that so many individuals were willing to share their memories, stories, photographs, objects, ideas, and skills to create an engaging and educational display. Special thank you to Gwen Ford, Executive Director of Connecting Cultures Collaborative, for serving as the project advisor and providing stellar leadership, and to local artist Louie Lethridge for creating eight original artworks for the exhibit.

  This project was made possible with support from California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit calhum.org

- We were thrilled to partner again with local Sutter County artist Madelyne Joan Templeton on an exciting project! She has created an original artwork for the Artisan Community Garden with themes of nature, local plants and insects, and fun activities that you might see kids enjoying in our community garden. Templeton and fellow talented local artist Richard Jacobo have completed this new mural filled with flora and fauna of the region. Check it out the next time you are driving past the Museum! See a photo of the new mural on the back cover of this *Bulletin*.

  This project was made possible thanks to support from Sutter County Children & Families Commission, the Sutter County Museum Association, and a generous donation in memory of Karen Price.

GWEN FORD SPEAKING AT THE OPENING RECEPTION OF *FROM BARBERS' ROW TO BEALE AIR FORCE BASE* IN NOVEMBER 2024.

# Exhibits

- *Hello From Japan!* is on display through August 22nd! Explore the streets of Tokyo this summer at our temporary family exhibit. Visit the Harajuku district, a peaceful Shinto shrine, and discover kawaii culture. Sing karaoke, "order" bento boxes, and make a wish on the wishing tree. Experience the blend of high-tech fun and timeless traditions. Come play with us!
  - *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.

VISITORS ENJOYING *HELLO FROM JAPAN!* AT THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

- *The 2027 Sutter Buttes Regional Calendar Exhibit* will be on display from August 28th – September 17th. This exhibit celebrates and shares the work of photographers chosen for inclusion in the 2027 Sutter Buttes Regional Calendar. Join us for the free reception on Friday, August 28th from 5:00-7:00pm.
  - The annual calendar is a fundraiser for the Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The land trust works to protect and maintain the natural and agricultural resources of the Sutter Buttes and the surrounding region for present and future generations.

# A Pioneer Heritage: The Algeo-Vestal Story

*By Oba C. Algeo*

### HA!

When I grow old I'll be benign

And go to bed each night at nine

But while I'm young – fun I'll rate

At least, until I'm ninety-eight.

*Oba C. Algeo – age 83*

OBEDIENCE (OBA) CAROLINE ALGEO, AGE 99, READING A COPY OF HER BOOK IN DECEMBER 1972.
COURTESY OF THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

*Editor's Note from Sharyl Simmons:*
*Obedience "Oba" C. Algeo was born near Nicolaus in 1873 shortly before her twin brother. These twins were the eighth and ninth children born to John Mahon Algeo and Amy Vestal Algeo. There were ten children in all; only one of the children, Frances Esther, did not survive to adulthood.*

*Oba began her teaching career in Sutter County at the age of 18. In 1897, she moved to Pacific Grove and taught there until 1923. At that point, she moved to Fresno and continued teaching until she retired in 1939. As dedicated as she was to teaching and her students, she devoted herself to living as full a life in retirement as possible. She wrote poetry and took up sculpture. She was very active in various retired teacher associations. Although she never married, many of her siblings did, and she was part of a large, active family.*

*In 1966, at the age of 93, she moved into the Pioneer House in Sacramento, an assisted living facility built that year, where she was in close contact with relatives in the area. At the age of 99, she published her family's story, family tree, and many of her poems in* ***A Pioneer Heritage: The Algeo-Vestal Story.*** *She gave a copy to the Museum in 1972 and, as the last of her generation, passed away at the age of 102 in 1975.*

*For many years, her doll, Gertrude, was a centerpiece of the children's corner at the Museum. Oba received the porcelain-headed doll from her Aunt Rachel for Christmas in 1882 when she was 9 years old. Following her death, her family donated the doll to the Museum, and we've treasured it ever since.*

*We are publishing excerpts from her book* ***A Pioneer Heritage: The Algeo-Vestal Story.*** *The Algeo and Vestal families settled in the area between Nicolaus and Wheatland in the 1850s. What follows is a lightly edited version of their story.*

## INTRODUCTION

All my long life I promised myself that I would write the story of my pioneer family. I have kept notes of important events in my life all through the years. When I retired from teaching in July, 1939, I started my search for early Algeo history. Now I have been asked to write the pioneer saga of my family for the State Library at Sacramento as a part of the early history of California.

So, at age ninety-seven, I am finally fulfilling this lifelong wish in publishing this book. I will try to make you see what pioneering in a new-found land was like by relating the experiences that came to me and how I met them.

I was born on July 24, 1873, accompanied 20 minutes later by a twin brother. We were the eighth and ninth children of Judge John Mahon Algeo and Amy Vestal Algeo who lived on a ranch four miles from Nicolaus, Sutter County, California. Now I am the only one left of a family of ten – three boys and seven girls – who were all born and raised on this pioneer ranch.

This is the heritage I share with you in the following pages.

*Obedience Caroline Algeo*
December 10, 1970

OBA AND THOMAS CURRAN ALGEO, APPROXIMATELY AGE 3.
COURTESY OF THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

# The Family

John Mahon Algeo
(4/5/1824 – 7/3/1889)

Married Amy Vestal
1/5/1854
and had ten children

Amy Vestal
(2/14/1835 – 4/19/1903)

- Georgiana Vestal Algeo (10/25/1854 – 12/13/1952)
- Mary Ann Algeo (2/24/1857 – 7/3/1928)
- Franklin Warrington Algeo (11/29/1858 – 4/13/1946)
- Frances Esther Algeo (3/31/1861 – 8/13/1876)
- Andrew Jackson Algeo (2/15/1864 – 12/25/1950)
- Amy Catherine Algeo (1/5/1867 – 11/13/1950)
- Margaret May Algeo (12/24/1869 – 10/11/1962)
- Obedience Caroline Algeo (7/24/1873 – 11/30/1975)
- Thomas Curran Algeo (7/24/1873 – 3/16/1964)
- Agnes Amelia Algeo (4/13/1877 – 12/31/1956)

The Algeo family can be traced back to northern Italy in 1647 where they secretly practiced their Protestant religion in a very Catholic country. Over time, the family migrated north through France, finally leaving France for Scotland and Northern Ireland when Protestant persecution increased, culminating when the French King, Louis XIV, issued the Edict of Fontainebleau, which essentially made Protestantism illegal in France.

My grandfather, James, left Scotland for Pennsylvania in the company of two brothers to join another brother already in Pennsylvania to avoid mandatory military training. On the voyage, an English military ship stopped them and took his two older brothers into service, but allowed James to continue on to Pennsylvania where he lived with his older brother, William, and his wife Rebecca. James ultimately continued west to Steubenville, Ohio where he married Margaret Mahon and eventually established a law practice.

My father, John Mahon Algeo, was the oldest son; then there was Mary Ann and three other younger children. Scarlet fever ravaged the family and the three youngest died. My father said the doctor told Aunt Polly (the woman who cared for them after their mother died) that she should not give the children water for it would kill them. During his illness, he could see through the adjoining room that a water pitcher was on the table. When Aunt Polly sat by his bed she went to sleep. John decided he would rather die than not have a drink, so he got up and went to the pitcher. It was full of water and he drank it all – and then went back to bed to die. He was about 13 years old at this time and got well with no aftereffects. His sister, Mary Ann, survived but was always frail.

Time passed and my father went to college, majoring in law. He earned his sheepskin. In those days diplomas were put on real sheepskin. I remember seeing his, but it has since become lost.

In 1841 the Superior Court admitted my grandfather, James L. Algeo, to the Bar in the state of Ohio. Six years later, in 1847, John M. Algeo was admitted to the bar. John Algeo was ready to hang out his shingle when adversity struck the family. His father had signed a security note for a client who then disappeared, leaving James Algeo responsible for the debt. James had to sell the family home in Steubenville to make good on the debt.

This discouraged John from beginning his law practice, so he decided to enlist in the Army during the Mexican-American War. When he told a friend from college what he planned to do, the friend wrote back telling him he was too well educated to go in as a private. "When you get to New Orleans, go to the post office and ask for your mail. I will get you a commission from Washington and send it to you there." The only way to get to New Orleans was by river – first the Ohio River to where it merged with the Mississippi and then on to New Orleans. He worked his passage on a freighter which took him six months. By the time he got to New Orleans, the war was over and he turned around and worked his way back up the rivers to Cincinnati where his father and half-brother were living.

On the way back to Ohio, he heard of the gold strike in California. All kinds of rumors floated about of fabulous finds of gold and tales of picking up nuggets at Coloma, California. Everyone was leaving work and rushing off to find nuggets of pure gold. John tried to get to Cincinnati as quickly as possible to persuade his father to form a train of ox teams and wagons to go to California. James agreed and with his two sons, John and Charles Lewis, went down the Ohio River and over to Missouri where they formed an overland train in 1848-1849.

Grandfather did not fancy a slow ox team, so he purchased eight mules to draw his wagon. He also purchased three little bronco riding ponies for himself and his sons. Regular horses, it seems, could not endure the overland trip. I suppose they had to live on grazing along the way. When Grandfather got his mules, he found he did not know how to drive them or care for them, so he advertised for a man to drive and care for his eight mules. A man came who said he would do the job for his passage. Grandfather hired him.

All went well. They had no serious trouble with Indians or illnesses

to delay them as they proceeded on the trail through Utah. When they arrived at the top of the Sierra Nevada mountains near Lake Tahoe, my grandfather put the wagon train in the care of his assistant. He, his two sons, the driver, and a man named George Brittan[1] went on with the mule team to Coloma where gold had first been found in the mill stream.

When they arrived at the Coloma mines they found that all the large nuggets had been picked up and the best claims taken up. Only digging and washing the soil would enable them to get the gold – hard work for white-collared men who had never performed hard labor. James found the mules a heavy expense and concluded he would sell them. He and the driver drove down to Sacramento and sold eight mules for $1,600. The driver asked for half of the money. My grandfather said, "He was a younger man than I and a better shot," so he gave him $800 and never heard from him again.

George Brittan, who came with them across the plains, later settled in Sutter City, Sutter County, and built a two-story red brick home which still stands there under large oak trees. Years later, from 1901 to 1906, I taught school in Sutter City. The Brittan House, as it is called, is still occupied. The school district is called the Brittan School District.

DEVORE HOUSE (FORMERLY THE GARDEMEYER HOUSE) IN SUTTER. OBA LIVED WITH THE DEVORE FAMILY WHILE TEACHING IN SUTTER AND INDICATED WHERE HER ROOM WAS IN THE HOUSE.
COURTESY OF THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

James L. Algeo and his two sons worked in the mines in El Dorado County, wintering in Sacramento for a couple of years. In 1851 they decided to go up to the Yuba County mines. They rode their bronco ponies north from Sacramento. There was a ferry across the Feather River at Nicolaus. To reach this they rode through wild oats that were higher than they were on horseback. John Algeo thought it would be easier and more profitable to make the wild oats into hay and sell it to the miners than to work the mines.

At that time, one could take up government land for $1.25 an acre by living up on it and improving it. After several months in the mines in Yuba County, that was what the Algeos did. They selected 320 acres four miles from the Feather River and the village of Nicolaus, where the ferry was the only way to get across the river.

They had no way of knowing that before long, hydraulic mining in the foothills would fill up the riverbeds so that during the rainy months, the water would overflow the banks and cover miles and miles of land, drowning out grain and other crops. In time, high water did cover most of the land when a rainy spell hit the mountains. The Algeo ranch had these overflows on the 160 acres to the east. My father sold

[1] George E. Brittan, a successful farmer at South Butte (Sutter), was born in Virginia in 1821 and moved as a boy to Missouri. There he married Mary A. E. Gear in 1848, and the following year, he made the trek to California to strike it rich in the gold fields. She followed him a year later, and they had nine children. Following a time in the gold fields, he acquired land in Sutter County and began farming. In 1870, he was elected county supervisor for District 3. By 1879, he owned 320 acres and donated land for the site of a school. The current Brittan School is named for him.

these, but the other 160 acres were adobe soil which needed abundant water. The overflow rarely stayed over three days. This did not hurt the crops but seemed to cause an increased harvest of grain on the higher ground. Later, the lower 160 acres were in the levee district and had heavy taxes.

When the Algeos decided to make hay instead of mining they hauled this hay by teams to the Yuba mines. This took them two days – fifteen miles to Wheatland and fifteen miles from there to the mines. They stayed overnight at Wheatland in 1852 with the Thomas Vestal family, who had settled there when they arrived by ox team from Missouri in 1852. It was at this time that John Algeo met Amy Vestal. A romance started. They were married on January 5, 1854 and went to the Algeo ranch to live. They raised a family of ten children, all born on the ranch.

DAGUERREOTYPE OF JOHN MAHON ALGEO AND AMY VESTAL ALGEO AROUND THE TIME OF THEIR MARRIAGE.
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

The Algeos began to build a home. They chose a high mound for the house and another for the barn. Later the boys built a foot bridge across the gulch. When floods came, we were high and dry with water all around us. The underpinnings were logs that the teamsters had cut in the hills on their trips taking the hay to the mines. I was told the windows and doors on the Algeo ranch were the first to come around the Horn. Grandfather James Algeo had gone back to Pittsburgh and had them shipped along with the weather boarding.

They planted cottonwood trees over the mound, which in time grew to immense size, and later had to be trimmed and topped every few years. In the back yard they planted two apple trees, a fig tree, and three pear trees. A quarter of a mile to the north they planted an acre of grapes. A grape vine made an arbor over the pump which always gave cool drinks from a well that was 80 feet deep.

Grandfather Algeo lived with the growing family at the ranch until he died in 1877, when I was about four years old. I do not remember him.

GEORGIANA VESTAL ALGEO (1854 – 1952), ELDEST CHILD OF JOHN AND AMY. FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

**A TRUE STORY – BELIEVE IT OR NOT**

One sunny afternoon in the village of Steubenville, Ohio, in the year 1840, John Mahon Algeo, a tall, teenaged boy, went plodding along, merrily whistling, on his way to visit his best friend, Nathan Hager, who lived out some distance from town. The young folks often gathered there to play horseshoes and other games out under the trees where there was plenty of room with no restrictions. The hours slipped away pleasantly and John was invited to stay for supper.

When the evening meal was over, the whole family with their guest gathered about the open fireplace. At one side the young folks were busy with a game of dominoes, when suddenly they paused to listen to the tall tales that the older men were spinning as they smoked their corncob pipes before the open fire. You see, in those far away days many people believed in ghosts and haunted houses and the bad luck which would follow if a black cat should run across your path, and all those old superstitions at which we laugh today.

Throughout the country in those days there were many long-neglected old burying grounds out of which many of these tall tales grew. In fact, John had taken a cater-cornered path through one of these

burying grounds on his way out there. But he was so absorbed in thought that he took no notice of the many old white tombstones that he passed.

As the tales grew more and more exciting, the gullible young people stopped their game and slipped nearer to listen with ears alert and hearts beating more rapidly. Each man tried to outdo the other so they grew more and more earnest in relating their own experiences until chills from fear began to chase up and down the spines of the young listeners, and their eyes grew large with wonder, their cheeks flushed with excitement. The tale-swapping continued and grew more breathtaking each hour.

Time passed unnoticed until the clock in the corner began chiming solemnly, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong, bong. Twelve o'clock! Midnight – the time when ghosts walked. No one spoke. As the last chime died, John, with chills running up and down his back, remembered the tombstones in the old, neglected graveyard through which he had to go on his way home. Uppermost in his mind, too, was that last terrifying tale of what might happen in a neglected graveyard after midnight.

He could never recall afterward how he got started home, or how he said his goodbyes for he was shaking with fear and his heart was in his mouth as he ran for home, hoping to get through the old graveyard in double-quick time. He was about halfway through and well out of breath when he heard a noise. Looking in its direction ahead of him, to his horror, he saw a white object climbing slowly out of a grave and then starting toward him. In the bright moonlight it seemed dazzling white. He tried to turn and run but was petrified with fear and could not move. As he gazed in terror, the white moving object seemed to grow taller and taller as it came on slowly and silently step by step, on and on and on – nearer and nearer and nearer until he closed his eyes, afraid to look – he could not move. Terror froze his heart and paralyzed his legs. At last he fell to his knees – he tried to pray, but no words came. It seemed an eternity ... as he knelt there hearing the measured step ... coming nearer and nearer ... and nearer to him. Then it stopped – he dared not look up ... then – horror of horrors – he felt a soft, moist touch around his ear ... and then a plaintive voice said, "baa ... baa." He opened his eyes and looked up – he saw only a white nanny goat. "Oh, am I glad you are a goat and not a ghost. I'll never believe in ghosts again. Never, never, never." Nanny goat had been feeding in a sunken grave.

## THE VESTAL STORY

THOMAS CURRAN VESTAL
(1801 – 1880)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

OBEDIENCE WILLIAMS VESTAL
(1804 – 1888)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

The Vestals were a birthright Quaker family and quite conservative. My great-great-grandfather Thomas (I) Vestal and his wife, Elizabeth Davis, emigrated to America from England and settled in North Carolina where they raised ten children. Great-grandfather Thomas (II) Vestal and his wife, Amy Thomson, had nine children. My grandfather, Thomas (III) Vestal married Obedience Williams. Obedience was not a Quaker and when they married, Thomas (III) was turned out of the church.

Amy Vestal, my mother, was born in North Carolina in 1835, the seventh of eleven children born between 1822 and 1847, before the family came to California. I do not know how long they lived in North Carolina. Mother went to school there. They finally migrated to Missouri. She was a teenager there. The Vestals were very conservative and were not sure if they should risk going to California. The oldest boy, William, made a trip to see if the family should go and that led to the decision to leave Missouri for California. In 1852, the Vestal family crossed the great plains in an oxen train, through Utah, and finally landed in the little settlement of Wheatland in Yuba County, California.

OBEDIENCE VESTAL AND HER DAUGHTERS (L-R) SARAH ANN, LOU, AMY (OBA'S MOTHER), RACHEL (AUNT WHO GAVE GERTRUDE TO OBA FOR CHRISTMAS), AND MARY, C. 1860S. FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

Grandfather Thomas Vestal was a farmer and he took up land there. Their first ranch, near Wheatland, was where the Algeos stayed overnight in 1852 when John Algeo first met Amy Vestal, whom he later married. Thomas Vestal was unable to get a clear title to the land near Wheatland because of a Spanish Land Grant, so he gave up those acres and took up land near the Algeo ranch four miles from Nicolaus. He farmed this new ranch until he was too old to farm, and his children all had homes of their own. He and Obedience raised nine children there. They finally moved to Petaluma to be near their two oldest sons. Thomas III died there July 3, 1880.

Grandmother Obedience Vestal then went to Sacramento to live with her youngest daughter, Mrs. Lyman Gilman, my Aunt Rachel. Grandmother was blind before she passed in 1888. When she was living at my Aunt Rachel's, she invited me, a ten-year-old schoolgirl, to visit her in Sacramento and help her use a music box that had been given to her. I enjoyed doing this but went back to the ranch when school started. I was named for this grandmother and she gave me little extra thoughts and gifts occasionally.

It is interesting to note that both the Vestal and Algeo families were in the habit of naming new babies after someone already in the family. I have never found any consistent rule regarding it, but it is a rather nice plan, for namesakes are given special attention through the years. I was named for my maternal grandmother, Obedience Williams. My whole name was Obedience Caroline Algeo. When I was six years old and started to school in the Illinois District in Sutter County, I found it difficult to learn to write my name and fit it on the paper. I did not like "Obie," so I finally cut it down to Oba C. Algeo.

My sister Maggie was three years older than I was. After her marriage to Alonzo Jopson, she had four boys but was determined to have a daughter. Her fifth child was a girl, whom she named Oba, after me. I am indeed thankful that she did, for now that I am the last child of the John Algeo family, my namesake is wonderful to me. I thank God dearly for her.

MARGARET MAY ALGEO
(1869 – 1962)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

I have never used my real name. We both like the shortened name, so use it happily.

**LIFE ON THE RANCH**

John Algeo was a large man, six feet one inch tall, with blue, blue eyes and white hair at age 35. He was a very jovial man and friendly. He was elected Justice of the Peace and had an office in Nicolaus where he went almost every day in a buggy that was used exclusively for this purpose. There were very few one-horse buggies like this, although almost everyone had a heavy cart and a high spring wagon for the family.

My father was not cut out for a farmer. His two older sons, Frank and Andrew, did most of the farming at an early age. I remember the boys teased him when he tried to plow. They said he tried to push the plow instead of letting the horses pull it. I cannot remember ever seeing him dressed as a farmer. My mother always had a nice clean white shirt for him each morning. The washing and ironing equipment were very crude compared to what we have now when the press of a button starts the washing machine.

JOHN MAHON ALGEO
(1824 – 1889)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

AMY VESTAL ALGEO
(1835 – 1903)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

My mother was a remarkable woman and a hard worker. She never complained but sang as she worked. She was a good listener and always interjected her "huh?" every little while as we talked. She had ten children, all born and raised on the ranch. The first, Georgiana Vestal, was born in 1854 and the last, Agnes Amelia, was born in 1877. Grandfather James Algeo also lived with us on the ranch until he died in 1877.

In 1887 my father brought my cousins Nellie, age ten, and Benjamin, age seven, to live with us. Their father, John Lewis Algeo, my father's half-brother, had been living in Oakland with his wife and four children, but he died and the following year their mother died. The neighbor who had been caring for the five-year-old sister wanted to keep her, so my father made out legal papers. They could keep her until she was eighteen years old, care for her and give her $1,000 at age eighteen. The other child, Walter Scott Algeo, went to live with my oldest sister, Georgiana, who had married George Lewis Leet and at that time had two children, Harriet Amy, about 14 years old, and Lilian Hester, nine. They had a farm near us at Fairview. Nellie and Ben stayed with us on our ranch.

I am amazed how early pioneers were able to supply such a variety of foods. We had bees that furnished us honey. We raised hogs and always had a hog for the killing time. The male calves were converted into different kinds of meat. We even had a band of goats that we used for meat sometimes. We always had plenty of eggs and fried chicken. Of course, we put up a supply of canned fruit. We dried figs to nibble on in the long evenings. My mother made pickled figs and preserved figs. My maternal grandmother had in her orchard some trees that grew little round pears that were lovely, canned whole. The grape vines furnished grapes for pickling, drying, and eating. My mother had a little fenced-in garden which supplied all kinds of vegetables throughout the year. We always kept about eight cows, so we were well supplied with milk, butter, cottage cheese, and cream.

After the grain crop was harvested, the ground was summer fallowed, which meant it rested until seeding time. My father would plant watermelon, musk melon, pumpkin, and other seeds all about the place. They would grow without any care and produce melons so we would have plenty during the summer. Early on summer mornings, someone would go out and bring a wheelbarrow load or two and store them in a closet under the stairway to keep them cool. Many a time the family and friends had a watermelon feast out under the large cottonwood trees.

We raised chickens and turkeys and had all kinds of wild game in season. The boys loved to hunt. We lived near a wild game area. The boys would ride our large

bull to the game spot and hide behind him as he grazed. They never came back empty-handed. They would carry the game on the bull's back and ride him home loaded down.

My mother would pick the geese and ducks, saving just the down feathers. She made each of her children down mattresses for their beds. I still have mine and use it on my bed yet!

In the fall, after the grain crop was harvested, the grain was teamed to Sacramento and a supply of flour, sugar, salt, and other necessary foods that would keep was brought back in the empty wagon and placed in a little storehouse near our kitchen.

My mother made butter for the family and to sell. She often made enough to pay the grocery bill. Her butter was in great demand at the Nicolaus store. With no refrigeration you may ask how she could do it. She had large earthen jars that she buried in the arbor over the pump and used this as a cool place to keep her perishable food. A jar would hold several gallons of food, butter, cottage cheese, etc. Someone also thought of making a cooler by covering a shelved box with burlap and then wetting it down.

Big black crows lived in the cottonwood trees, and they always knew when my mother was taking a supply of cottage cheese to the kitchen. They would try to light on her shoulder as she ran to the house. They loved cottage cheese.

The Algeo ranch had a large, well-shaded yard where everyone was always welcome. My father was a jolly extrovert and he enjoyed his friends. This large yard was hard as cement. We placed croquet on it and many other kinds of games. There was room for all, young or old, and it was usually full of activity. The whole community came to this playground.

In the long evenings, the neighbors came to play a "spelling down" game. Everyone took part and tried to win by spelling the words given out by my father. If you missed a word you would go to the foot of the line or sit down out of the game.

In my time, the only games not welcome were playing card games. My mother seldom interfered, but I am sure she knew what was going on all the time. I'll tell you why I think so. One evening we were playing at a large drop leaf table when one of the boys said, "Why don't we ever play with playing cards?" I said, "You'd better not bring playing cards here!" He said, "Who would care?" I said, "My mother."

"Oh, pew," he said, "I'm not afraid of her!" She was sitting behind the little wood heating stove half asleep. So, he took a set of cards out of his pocket and began to shuffle them out on the table. My mother was there in a minute!

I have never been able to remember what she said to Eugene, but he grabbed his cards and ran out of the house and down the road in double-quick time and did not return for a week, and then without his cards! I think my mother had an unpleasant experience with cards when she first came to live there. I know she never allowed us to play cards.

We children attended the Illinois District public school, walking two and a half miles to school. When it rained we were high and dry in the ranch home with water all around us. We children had fun rowing a boat and even sailing back home by putting up an umbrella to catch the winds. The flood never stayed more than three days as a rule.

The cottonwood trees had decayed holes 15 or 20 feet up on the trunk. These were caused by the topping of trees. Our hens, some way, used to get up to those holes and lay their eggs. Then when the chicks hatched, the hen would scratch the baby chick out. We children found that if we took the chick to the pump and put water on its head it would come to life and we would claim it as a pet. My chick would invariably grow into a gentle rooster and my twin brother's would be a fighting hen!

THOMAS CURRAN ALGEO (1873 – 1964), OBA'S TWIN BROTHER. FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

Every summer we would have a community picnic. We took our lunch and spent the day in the park. I remember the spring wagons and heavy carts that brought the people and I remember going with my folks. One time we got out of our spring wagon, and the only Negro family in that area drove up. My mother went over to speak to them with my twin brother and me holding her hand. She said, "I'm glad to see you, Aunt Rachel," and shook hands. My brother was pulling on my mother's skirt saying, in a low voice, "Mama, Mama, when did Aunt Rachel turn black?" One of my mother's sisters was our Sacramento Aunt Rachel. We did not know her well. That was probably the first time brother Tom or I had ever seen a Negro.[2]

My father, Judge John Algeo, served as Justice of the Peace for many years in the Nicolaus township. He liked people and was always the one who would settle their quarrels – and it seems there were lots of quarrels to settle all the time. He did not like for these people to come out to the ranch, but sometimes they would follow him out there to settle quarrels anyway. I remember one time some men came out. We had lace curtains in the living room. One of the men was handcuffed and he got all tangled up in the lace curtain. Afterwards my father said, "That's why I don't want these men to come out here. They get all tangled up in the furniture."

The Democratic Party wanted my father to run for the state legislature, but he felt it would require him to be away from his family too much. He persuaded his sister's husband, Franklin Warrington, to run. He was elected and served, I do not know how long.

Later, we children had his high hat and tails that had been left at our house. My brother Andrew used to dress up in these clothes and have fun with them. One time Andrew dressed up in the clothes as "the Doctor." A cousin who was visiting us answered his knock. He pretended he was a toe doctor and she did not know him for quite a while. This pleased him.

ANDREW JACKSON ALGEO
(1864 – 1950)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

FRANKLIN WARRINGTON ALGEO
(1858 – 1946)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

My brother Frank was an ideal big brother. I used to climb up on the fence and he would carry me piggyback up to the house when he came to get ready for supper. Later, my brother Frank rented the Whitney ranch next to the Algeo ranch and farmed on a large scale by building canals and levees to protect his crop. Still later he farmed a large ranch of his own that his son and now his grandson still farm. His son, George, died March 16, 1968. The youngest grandson is still there. They have recently planted quite an acreage of walnuts on the home ranch.

The Cottonwood School was across the road from my brother Frank's barns. My mother's sister, Mrs. Nathan Rogers, and her family lived in the Cottonwood School District and Aunt Lucinda Obedience Rogers was elected trustee. The school was four miles from our home in Nicolaus. I attended the eighth grade at this school one year when my sister, Amy Catherine, taught there.

COTTONWOOD SCHOOL. COURTESY OF SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.

[2] This was the Benjamin and Rachel Berry family, who raised their family and farmed in the Nicolaus area. In 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, Mr. Berry was one of the first African-American farmers in California whose homestead was accepted as valid. The Homestead Act of 1862 excluded African-Americans from claiming land.

When Amy Catherine Algeo was through the elementary grades she decided she wanted to be a teacher. She was a teenager then and the oldest child at home to help her mother with the housework. Frank was farming the ranch and renting the Whitney ranch at the time and the farm hands boarded with my mother.

AMY CATHERINE ALGEO
(1867 – 1950)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

Amy asked me if I would be willing to stay out of school and help mother so that she, Amy, could go to school and take up high school subjects so that she could be a teacher. I said I would do that, and I did. She promised to help me later. She would help me become a teacher also. No one objected to our plan, so I stayed out of school and studied as best I could.

Amy passed the Sutter County examination and taught at Vernon and later in Sierra County. She did help me later, in many ways. She made me a wonderful new dress. Our father died on July 3, 1889, and I needed her counsel then!

Amy bought a beautifully trained horse name St. Elmo and needed me to drive him, and to open and shut the gates.

Then Amy was asked to take a course in shorthand at a private school in Stockton by Mr. Ramsey, the owner, who then employed her to teach in the shorthand department. This she was doing when I took and passed the eighth-grade exam for Sutter County graduation. I went to Stockton where Amy was teaching and entered the Stockton Business College and Normal Institute to prepare to be a teacher. I matriculated there January 3, 1893.

All went well and I studied hard. That spring San Joaquin County held a county examination for teachers. Amy thought I should take this for practice. She said, "You won't succeed in the exam, but it will give you valuable experience when your time comes for your final examination." So she gave me two dollars entrance fee, and I took the county exam in Stockton. I passed for a primary credential, but never used it because I wanted to teach in Sutter County.

Amy later taught in Fresno. She retired in June 1938, after many years of teaching. She was especially successful with teenaged children and happy in her work.

In November of 1950, as she crossed the street, a car hit her. She died before they got her to the hospital. She never married, so there were no children.

Then I was to have another unexpected turn in my experience. A friend of my sister Amy's wrote to ask if I would like to substitute for her for a month while she got her teeth mended in January. I decided to do this even though it meant I would have to take the Sutter County teachers' exam at Christmastime. When I was about through the exam, the friend came to the courthouse to see me and tell me she had decided to get married and I would have to teach school until it closed in May.

Aunt Lucinda Rogers persuaded me to teach at the Cottonwood School. I boarded with my mother while teaching there. I drove a horse and buggy four miles to school for four years. My brother Frank let me put my horse and buggy in the wagon shed across the road from the school, and in rainy weather I could stay overnight if I cared to. Most all the children were my relatives. They called me "Miss Oba."

COTTONWOOD SCHOOL BELL, PURCHASED THROUGH THE FUNDRAISING BY OBA AND HER STUDENTS. THE BELL WAS DONATED TO THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM IN 2023 BY TOM BLATTMAN, AN ALGEO FAMILY DESCENDANT. THE BELL IS NOW LOCATED NEXT TO THE MUSEUM FRONT DOORS.
COURTESY OF SHARYL SIMMONS.

When I was teaching at Cottonwood, the school was newly built and white. I, with the

help of young people in the community, gave plays and earned the money to buy the bell for the school belfry. The school was finally closed when they united the school district and built the new Pleasant Grove School. My brother Frank bought the little schoolhouse and moved it in 1895. One of my seven-year-old pupils at that time was Clarence Coppin, who is now over 80 years old and lives at the Trinity House here in Sacramento. We sometimes meet to reminisce and recall those school days of the gay nineties.

My father, Judge John Mahon Algeo, died on July 3, 1889 at the family home after a short illness. My mother and the younger children remained at the ranch. Frank farmed the ranch.

When Andrew Algeo was 18 years old he went to Oregon to take up land. He rode a pony he had raised. Later he returned and raised his family in Santa Rosa.

Mary Ann, the second Algeo daughter, married William Pierce and finally went to live on a ranch near Pleasant Grove. There Fred, Henry, Elizabeth (called Lizzie) and William J. were born. Later they lived at Cool above Auburn where George and Annie came to the family – a family of two girls and four boys. I remember that my brother Tom and I drove a cart up there to Cool for a visit when we were about 14 years old. Mary's husband, William, took us out to do some gold mining. We got some color, but not enough to count. We had an iron pan that we washed out our colors in, in proper style. Later the William Pierce family moved to a ranch near Live Oak. They lived there until the children were grown and had homes of their own.

MARY ANN ALGEO
(1857 – 1928)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

AGNES AMELIA ALGEO
(1877 – 1956)
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

The Algeo children had mostly grown up and had homes of their own, leaving Mother and her youngest child, Agnes Amelia, at home.

In vacation time 1895 a friend asked me to go with her for a few days to get her summer home ready to rent at Pacific Grove. I had never been down there before, so I accepted the invitation. I was so pleased with the change of climate that I purchased her summer home that she wanted to sell. I paid $150 for it – ten dollars down and ten dollars a month. I was teaching, but my salary was only $65 a month. I had to pay $20 for board, so she let me buy it on time.

The next summer my sister Amy helped me financially to build it into a pleasant cottage so we could move my mother and Agnes down to the coast. They lived there five years before Mother died on April 19, 1903. She enjoyed the ocean climate and was very happy.

**EPILOGUE**

A short time ago my niece, Eleanor Olds, came and we drove to the original Algeo ranch. All was changed – there was nothing left to mark the place where the trees, house or location of the different objects once were. The water control had changed it with improvements and control of the river water. Nothing stands still – time passes. The changes of the past 100 years are tremendous. Think of the inventions – the airplane, the auto, television – it is all marvelous. I wonder what change will come in the next 100 years.

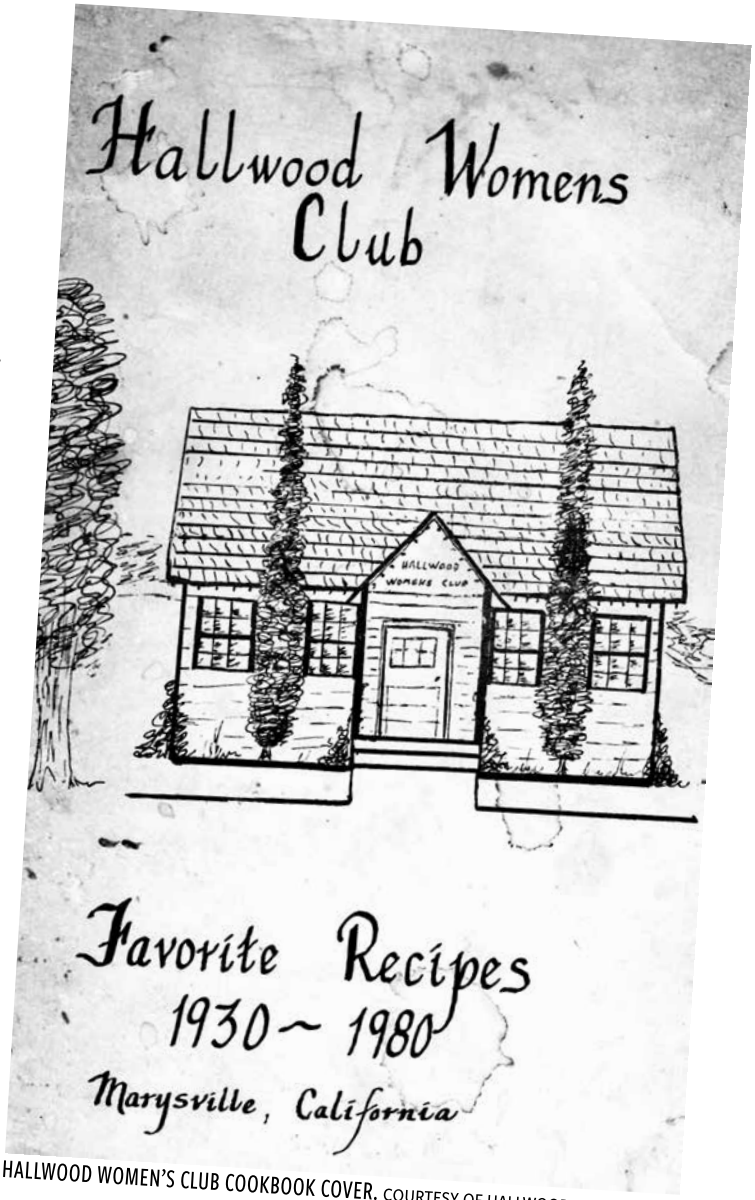
OBA ALGEO (1873 – 1975), C. 1907.
FROM *A PIONEER HERITAGE.*

*This book was presented to the Sutter County Historical Society on September 14, 1972, by Miss Oba C. Algeo, 99 years of age. Miss Algeo was an honorary member of the historical society when she presented the book.*

# History of the Hallwood Women's Club

*By Phyllis Smith*

*This article first appeared in the* **Yuba Legacy Newsletter,** *published by the Friends for the Preservation of Yuba County History (FPYCH). They are dedicated to preserving, protecting, studying, and sharing the history of Yuba County. After years of supporting the historic Marysville City Cemetery, including maintaining the grounds, replacing headstones, and fundraising to support its upkeep, the FPYCH officially adopted the cemetery in 2025.*




HALLWOOD WOMEN'S CLUB COOKBOOK COVER. COURTESY OF HALLWOOD WOMEN'S CLUB.

The Hallwood Women's Club was formed in 1930 and is still in existence today. In 1980, Irma Kibbe, in an introduction to a book with 50 years of recipes, detailed the history of the club as recorded in the meeting minutes. This article draws largely on that source to showcase the accomplishments of the club.

The club began as the Hallwood Improvement Club in November, 1930. Originally it was to be a sewing club but expanded over time to encompass many more activities. The first meeting was held in the home of Nell Plantz, and the group continued to meet in private homes twice a month. In December, 1930, the club elected officers. President was Myrtle Groh; Vice President Reita Hudgins; and Secretary/ Treasurer Verna Smith.

Even though they were supposedly a sewing club, they also held public meetings, card parties, and dinners (and they sewed). They played whist, a classic English trick-taking card game that was widely played in the 18th and 19th centuries. They raised funds for their club and to donate to other organizations. In 1931, they had a whist party and gave prizes, including chickens, rabbits, cakes, and agricultural products. They raised funds and split them evenly between the club and 4-H, giving $10.87 to each. That doesn't sound like much, but that would be about $230 today.

In 1933, apparently as a nod to modernity, the members decided to start calling each other by their first names. To us that may sound odd, but many of us remember when women didn't even have first names, they called themselves Mrs. John Jones.

That same year the club began to think seriously about having their own meeting place, a club hall. They received their first two donations of $10 each ($256 in 2026). They looked at buildings for sale, such as the Iowa City Hall (in the Loma Rica area) and other properties.

The club officially changed its name to the Hallwood Women's Club in 1936, and in that same year Frank

Dutra agreed to sell the women some property so they could build a hall. They began fundraising in earnest, making and selling aprons, holding bazaars, dinners, dances, and card parties, and making community quilts. They decided each member would donate plants and shrubs for their new site, and in 1937, they bought a half acre on Highway 20; the highway was designated with that name in 1934.[1]

They decided the hall would be 20 x 40 feet, with a 10-foot ceiling and a foundation 14" high, made of cement. They ordered lumber and received donations from members for materials: 10¢ per meeting, even if they couldn't attend. That was about $2.25 per meeting. They also received donations of cement.

Work began on the building on Sunday, April 16, 1937. Much of the initial work was done by members and their husbands and families, but they also hired Bill Plantz to work on the hall at $4 a day, to be paid when the hall was finished.

All told, the club hall cost $1,195.70 ($28,242 in 2026).

The Hallwood Irrigation District, founded in 1909, agreed to put a pipe in the ditch in front of the hall, after the state granted a permit. The club received many donations for the new club hall, such as window treatments from local furniture stores. They continued their fundraising with a dance, rummage sale, and quilting projects. Several of the members' husbands donated time and tools to construction.

The club held its first meeting in the hall on June 1, 1938. After the business meeting they visited and had refreshments. They got their first PG&E bill: 51¢ ($12.05 in 2026) and decided they could wait until the next month to pay it. They planned more fundraisers, including a dance at the Burris Barn in Browns Valley, where they raised $112.31 (over $2,600). They were working hard.

All told, the club hall cost $1,195.70 ($28,242).

Fundraising continued throughout the years. They rented the hall for events such as bridal and baby showers and elections, selling advertisements on a curtain they bought for the Cordua School stage, card parties, bake sales, and rummage sales, and in 1940 they decided to charge dues of 50¢ annually.

During World War II it doesn't seem there was much activity. There are very few minutes from that era. Near the end of the war the club decided to serve refreshments at the USO once a month. They brought their own cakes, pies, and other goodies. But even though they were baking for service members, they were refused sugar rationings.

The club continued to improve and do maintenance on the hall. Some of their efforts included installing lights in the kitchen, new tables, refinishing the floors, painting, adding gravel in the yard, landscaping, and repairing the roof. In 1951, the minutes say they started work on the bathroom – had they been without all these years? The minutes explained the high PG&E bill of $3.88 (nearly $50 today) was because the carpenter was using an electric saw in the bathroom. That same year the Division of Highways (now Caltrans) told the club they would be putting in a new road within two years, which might affect their ditch, so even though they had wanted to make a change, they decided to forgo that.

In the 1950s, the club began donating to more organizations – the 4-H and Cordua School, as they had done before, and the March of Dimes, Polio, Heart and Cancer funds, Campfire Girls, and Bluebirds. Many more organizations began using the hall for their meetings and events, including 4-H, Bankers, and Horseman's Club. They paid $5 per meeting for rent. The club also used their hall, of course, having good turnouts of 20-25 members per meeting, and they also started holding monthly card parties at the Green Room, which was a room in The Rib, a restaurant at the corner of Onstott and Colusa Highways in Yuba City. Members married, started

[1] Previously known as the Ukiah-Tahoe Highway.

families, and held their wedding and baby showers in the hall. They also started two new programs: secret pals and Queen for a Day. The latter was always a surprise to the chosen Queen.

The 1955 flood disrupted the group, and they didn't hold a meeting until March, 1956. They decided to keep the same officers for another year and they began holding meetings once a month. In April, 1957, Myrtle Groh, the club's first president, passed away. The ladies start having lunch at different local restaurants, then returning to the club hall to play whist.

In the 1960s, more renovations and maintenance were done. The 4-H Club put a sidewalk in front of the hall. A big storm pulled shingles off the roof and the insurance paid $35 while the actual cost was $132 (nearly $1,400 today). A member donated an air conditioner in 1969. The ladies added the county hospital to their charity list, giving them used bedsheets, quilts, towels, and other linens. They continued fundraising, adding a white elephant sale, bake sales, and previously-read magazine sales. Cordua School's 7th and 8th graders used the hall for a Halloween party and the 8th graders held a graduation party. The club discussed making a cookbook, but decided to wait.

In the fall of 1974, the members decided to form a Junior Women's Club. Many of the original members had passed away or moved into town, and the club hadn't been meeting at the hall because of that. *The Appeal-Democrat* reported on the election of officers of the newly-formed Hallwood Junior Women's Club. There were 21 officers and members. They added a wig fashion show, a potluck dinner, and a Christmas Bazaar to their fundraising efforts. They added CPR classes in 1979, for both members and the public. Some of the minutes recorded were for the juniors, although their minutes were very scattered.

In 1979, Caltrans met with the club to talk about widening the highway. The club was given $150 for agreeing to let workers trespass on their property. The club adopted Laura's Rest Haven to help out with their extra needs.

To celebrate 50 years, in 1980 the hall received a "real good cleaning" and Howard and Louise Carter of Carter Homes, Inc. donated paint for the kitchen and main hall, kitchen cabinets and mar-proof counter tops to match, and kitchen curtains. The bathroom roof was repaired and new sheetrock was put on the bathroom ceiling. The club bought a new sink and drapes. They published their second cookbook in 1980.

The club continued to bring in new members almost every year. By 1980 they'd had a total of 165 members over the years. Some family names showed up many times. There were two Adays, Andersons, Bryans, Campbells, Dutras, Grohs, Johnsons, Marriums, Springers, Sweets, and Yakliches; three Jorys, Lasters, and Taylors; four Lolmaughs, Millers, Plantzes, Rubels, and Wurms; five Davises; and six Kibbes. Generations of women made a difference in their community and continue to do so.

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*The Appeal-Democrat,* October 31, 1959, The Woman's Page

*Hallwood Womens Club: Favorite Recipes 1930-1980*

# The 2026 Crowhurst Memorial Essay Contest

PROMPT:

**Heroes of Sutter County –** The author-participant must interview and write a profile of a Sutter County resident who has made an impact on the author's life or Sutter County.

*The Crowhurst Memorial Scholarship Award was established in 1979 in memory of Estelle Peirano Crowhurst, who was known for her column The Diary of a Housewife. The column was published weekly in the* ***Independent Herald,*** *a Yuba City newspaper. The award also honors Estelle's son, Thomas J. Crowhurst, who wrote* The Sutter Notes, *a column for* ***The Appeal-Democrat,*** *and contributed to the sports pages.*

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

Each year, a topic is chosen for students to write about. This year, we are printing the top two essays. In a twist of fate, the winning essay by Ryan White honors Garrett Fremd, who was the second-place winner this year with his essay about Harold Ray. The two winners are good friends at Sutter Union High School.

## FIRST PLACE
Ryan White
**SUTTER UNION HIGH SCHOOL**
**CLASS OF 2026**

## HEROES OF SUTTER COUNTY: GARRETT FREMD

Garrett Fremd is an individual who has managed to balance academics, sports, and involvement in multiple organizations, all while making a meaningful impact on Sutter County. Through his work in service clubs, his personal commitment to restoring his family's ranch, and his leadership in the project "Landmarks of Legacy," Garrett has shown a strong sense of responsibility to both his community and his family's history and is the perfect embodiment of a Sutter County hero.

Garrett's involvement in the community was shaped by his family. He explained that his grandparents were "deeply involved in our community and very active in school," which inspired him to follow a similar path. Wanting to give back while also preparing for his future, he joined organizations such as CSF (California Scholarship Federation), Key Club (service club sponsored by Kiwanis International), and FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America). These experiences helped him build leadership and interpersonal skills, while also giving him opportunities to contribute to his community in meaningful ways.

One of Garrett's most significant contributions is his "Landmarks of Legacy" project, which focuses on preserving the history of Sutter County. The project highlights seven historical landmarks throughout the Sutter County area with informational signs/placards that include important and interesting facts, images from the Sutter County Museum, and QR codes that connect visitors to more information. Garrett and his team also created a travel guide/brochure and gave presentations to local elementary schools.

JOHN CROWHURST CONGRATULATING RYAN WHITE.
IMAGE COURTESY OF JOHN CROWHURST.

He further explained that the goal of the project is to "preserve our local history for generations to come and honor the stories that have shaped our region." By making local history more accessible, the project helps ensure that important stories are not forgotten.

Garrett faced several challenges along the way. While working on "Landmarks of Legacy," he struggled to find historical photos for some locations because many records were difficult to access. He also described the workload as overwhelming at times, with long hours/nights spent making sure everything was completed on schedule. Despite these challenges, he and his team remained committed and were able to successfully finish the project. These experiences helped him develop strong organizational and project management skills, along with the ability to stay focused under pressure.

In addition to his community work, Garrett has taken on a deeply personal responsibility by restoring his family's 10-acre ranch. After his grandparents passed away, the realization hit him that the property had fallen into poor condition, with scrap metal, overgrowth, and years of neglect. At just fourteen years old, he decided to take action. What began as a difficult task soon became something much more meaningful. Garrett shared that his goal was to "honor my grandparents' legacy

and make them proud," while also creating a space his family could use in the future. Through hard work and persistence, he has made steady progress while staying connected to the memories tied to the land.

Through both his ranch work and community involvement, Garrett has developed a strong work ethic and a willingness to take on challenges. He explained that these experiences pushed him out of his comfort zone and helped shape who he is today. They also strengthened his motivation to continue making a difference in his community.

Garrett hopes to inspire younger students to take pride in where they come from. Through his presentations, he wants others to understand "the importance of preserving our past" and to recognize their connection to their community. He believes that when people value their local history, they are more likely to take initiative and contribute in meaningful ways.

When asked what advice he would give to others, Garrett emphasized the importance of passion and taking initiative. He encourages people to identify issues they care about, seek guidance from others, and not be discouraged by challenges. He wants it to be known that no idea is silly and says to "never think anything is too much/too difficult." His message is simple: real change begins when someone is willing to take action.

Garrett Fremd represents what it means to be a hero of Sutter County. Through his efforts to preserve history, honor his family's legacy, and improve his community, he has shown that meaningful impact comes from dedication, perseverance, and a genuine commitment to making things better.

## SECOND PLACE
## Garrett Fremd
**SUTTER UNION HIGH SCHOOL**

## HEROES OF SUTTER COUNTY: HAROLD RAY

Born into a farming and heavy equipment operating family in Live Oak, Harold Ray is the youngest of three siblings. Constantly he worked on his family's ranch, milking cows, feeding chickens, brushing horses, tending to peaches. The list goes on! Never once was there a still day for Harold. Never was he not doing something. But never would you hear him complain. Resilience was instrumental in the daily workings of his life.

From a very young age, Harold recognized that he was the least favored of his siblings. Always stuck with the grunt labor, the hand-me-downs, and rarely ever receiving a congratulatory word, he was hurt. However, he turned his pain into unstoppable motivation, creating a fierce work ethic and drive that has taken him far in life.

JOHN CROWHURST CONGRATULATING GARRETT FREMD.
IMAGE COURTESY OF JOHN CROWHURST.

During his school years, Harold was an aspiring and successful student. He participated in anything and everything that was offered at Live Oak High School. Harold was mainly consumed by sports, as he played football, basketball, baseball, and track during his four years of high school. On each team, he was

elected team captain, as everyone recognized his drive and passion to succeed.

Furthermore, Harold was immensely active in the school. He was president of FFA (Future Farmers of America), a CSF Lifetime Member, Debate Team member, Student Council member, Senior Class President, and Mr. Quercus or the prom king! In all seriousness, there wasn't a single thing Harold didn't do, or be the best at.

Everything seemed planned out for Harold in terms of his life. He was going to attend college, attain a degree in drafting or engineering, and follow a relatively normal path. However, life always has its twists and turns. Harold, in his junior year, unexpectedly became a father to a son. His whole life was thrown out of balance by the birth of his first son. Harold had to sacrifice almost all of his dreams. No longer was he allowed to attend college, or gallivant around with friends, but instead had to take care of a family, and become a father. Harold quickly married his girlfriend, in Tijuana, Mexico, as it was legal to marry at 16 there. Harold stepped up to the plate of fatherhood with a brave face; never did he shirk his responsibilities as a parent, but instead cared for the new life he brought into the world, at the expense of his own aspirations.

Upon graduating high school, the transition into adulthood for Harold was not an adjustment, as he had already been ushered into it at 16. Life was smoother sailing for Harold. He was working with Murray's Conveyors, designing airport baggage carousels, and installing them in airports across California. Tragedy struck when Harold's older brother, Jerry, was killed in a train accident in Live Oak in 1965. Their father was devastated by the loss, and could no longer operate the family-owned backhoe business, so, once more, Harold had to sacrifice his dreams and fill the role that was forced onto him. At first, he was unhappy at having to take over his father's company, though as time passed, he grew to love operating the equipment again.

Ray's Backhoe Service has served Sutter County for decades. Harold's business has supported the development of housing all across our county. He worked diligently throughout the years, creating a reputation of excellent craftsmanship and professional business dealings. Harold never had to advertise his business, as word of mouth about the quality of his work did the advertising for him. Ray's Backhoe Service was one of the first digging services in Sutter County and has played a key role in expanding our county. Harold built and installed septic tanks for rural farms and new housing developments along with digging large pits for agricultural wells. At the time, septic tanks were not prefabricated but were constructed using redwood forms and precision concrete pouring. Harold made a fine career out of the backhoe service, and supported his ever-growing family, breaking down the roadblocks life had set up and supporting the growth of our county behind the scenes.

Leading a life like Harold's, one is forced to become

## Thank You to the Museum's Volunteers!

To honor and appreciate our volunteers year-round,
we'd like to recognize many who have newly reached milestones
of regular, ongoing service to the Museum this year.

**FIVE YEARS**
Ainsley Nelson
Tyrone Shaeffer

**TEN YEARS** (*or more!*)
Julie Stark
(retired as Museum Director/Curator in 2016)

They join our many other long-term volunteers in these service milestones.

## CROWHURST ESSAY continued from page 21

resilient. Persevering through the difficulties of life, with very little support, is attributed to a resilient spirit, and a heart full of love. His incredible mind, devotion to his career, and unrelenting work ethic has carried him through the storms he faced and benefited the development of our county for decades.

# Puzzling

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**TEACHER**
**UKIAH**
**VESTAL**

# Donate

The Museum is a partnership between Sutter County and the Sutter County Museum Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. 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.

# New and Renewing Members

*February 23, 2026 - June 30, 2026*

AgWest Farm Credit
Carol Anderson-Clark
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Molly Bloom & Nick Lashway
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Elizabeth Brooks
Dianna Ceballos
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Jeanette Christopherson
Pam & Jerome Circo
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Katy Coladarci
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Dealla Crother
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Janice Deaton
Easter Seals
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Christina Estabrook
Terry Farmer
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Shannen Fremd
Marika García & Christopher Holmes
Nancy Garr
Laurie Gidel
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Kathy Goodnight
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Tamara Henry
Kim Herman & Scott Kirchner
Greg S. Johnson
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Maryann & Robert Just
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Marilyn Kirby
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Kenneth & Barbara Lemos
Lois Licari
Donna & Michael Long
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Laverne & Maria McPherrin
Judy & Wayne Meyer
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Debbie Naylor
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Elaine Novak
Jerry Paine
Toni Parhizgar
Josephine Parker
Susan Polhemus
Lee Roy & Sarah Pryor
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Hugh & Sandi Smith
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R. James Staas
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Steven & Grace Suwabe
David & Gina Tarke
Jon & Susan Whiteman
Dale & Danarae Whitmore
Art & Dee Worledge
Linda Zall
Robert Zirzow

## 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**

MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES

*Advancing the understanding of the natural and cultural features of the Sutter Buttes through interactive educational activities for schoolchildren and the public.*

To sign-up for our e-newsletter, view hike schedule, and more, visit:
**www.middlemountainhikes.org**

## 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

# Memorials & Donations

*February 23, 2026 - June 30, 2026*

### Memorials

*In Memory of* **Sydney Bankert**
Allen & Kathe Herr

*In Memory of* **Joe Benatar**
Lee & Bob Jones
Merlyn Rudge

*In Memory of* **Paul Boehmke**
Molly Bloom & Nick Lashway
Sharyl Simmons
Carol & Roger Withington

*In Memory of* **Ross Cockrell**
Lee & Bob Jones

*In Memory of* **Dean Estabrook**
Phyllis Smith

*In Memory of* **Dennis Finley**
Sharyl Simmons

*In Memory of* **John McIntire**
Sharyl Simmons

*In Memory of* **Larry Munger**
Donna & Barry McMaster
Lee Roy & Sarah Pryor

*In Memory of* **David Nakao**
David & Olivia Rai

*In Memory of* **Gary Pack**
Donna & Barry McMaster

*In Memory of* **R. James Staas**
Sharyl Simmons

*In Memory of* **Philip Ross Thunen**
Sharyl Simmons

*In Memory of* **Ronald L. Ward**
Katy Coladarci

### Outright Gifts

Anonymous
Rogelio Contreras
Roland & Roberta D'Arcy
Megan Dhalliwal
Early Risers Kiwanis Club of Yuba City
David Giongco
Tricia Haines
Kim Herman & Scott Kirchner
Lee & Bob Jones
Susan Polhemus
Julian & Nancy Rolufs
Jeanne Schultz
Sharyl Simmons
Carmen Smith
Kate Van Eckhardt

### Community Garden Donations

*In Memory of* **Karen Price**
Amber & Zach Milner
Family SOUP
Alexandra Garcia-Perez & Christian Galvan
Girl Scout Troop 2179
Michelle Sanchez

### Patio Pavers

County of Sutter
Allen & Kathe Herr

### Beyond the Five Rivers Exhibit Sponsorship

Punjabi American Heritage Society

### Hello From Japan Exhibit Sponsorship

Sutter County Children & Families Commission

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# Trees & Traditions: Toyland

Save the date and join us for **Trees & Traditions: Toyland** on Friday, December 4th from 6:00-9:00pm to celebrate the season. Enjoy an evening filled with delicious hors d'oeuvres, adult beverages, live music, and, of course, holiday trees and traditions. Tickets for this annual fundraiser will be on sale this fall.

All proceeds from Trees & Traditions benefit the **Sutter County Museum Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit,** and go directly toward programs that educate, inspire, and connect our community.

**Sponsorships are available now!**

- $5,000 - Hot Wheels
- $2,500 - Care Bears
- $1,000 - Silly Putty
- $500 - Gumby
- $250 - Slinky

Please visit our website at suttercountymuseum.org/events to learn more and download the Sponsor Benefits & Commitment Form. You are welcome to contact us at 530-822-7141 or info@suttercountymuseum.org for questions.

# 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.

### Membership Levels

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

### Business Levels

| | |
|---|---|
| Business Basic*** | $250 |
| Business Basic Plus*** | $500 |
| Business Sustaining*** | $1000 |

All Business Memberships include Basic benefits as well.

*$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 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.

SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM

1333 Butte House Road
Yuba City, CA 95993

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Our **public hours** are:

WEDNESDAYS – FRIDAYS
**from 9am-5pm**

SATURDAYS
**from 12-4pm**

THE NEW MURAL IN THE ARTISAN COMMUNITY GARDEN AT THE SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM.