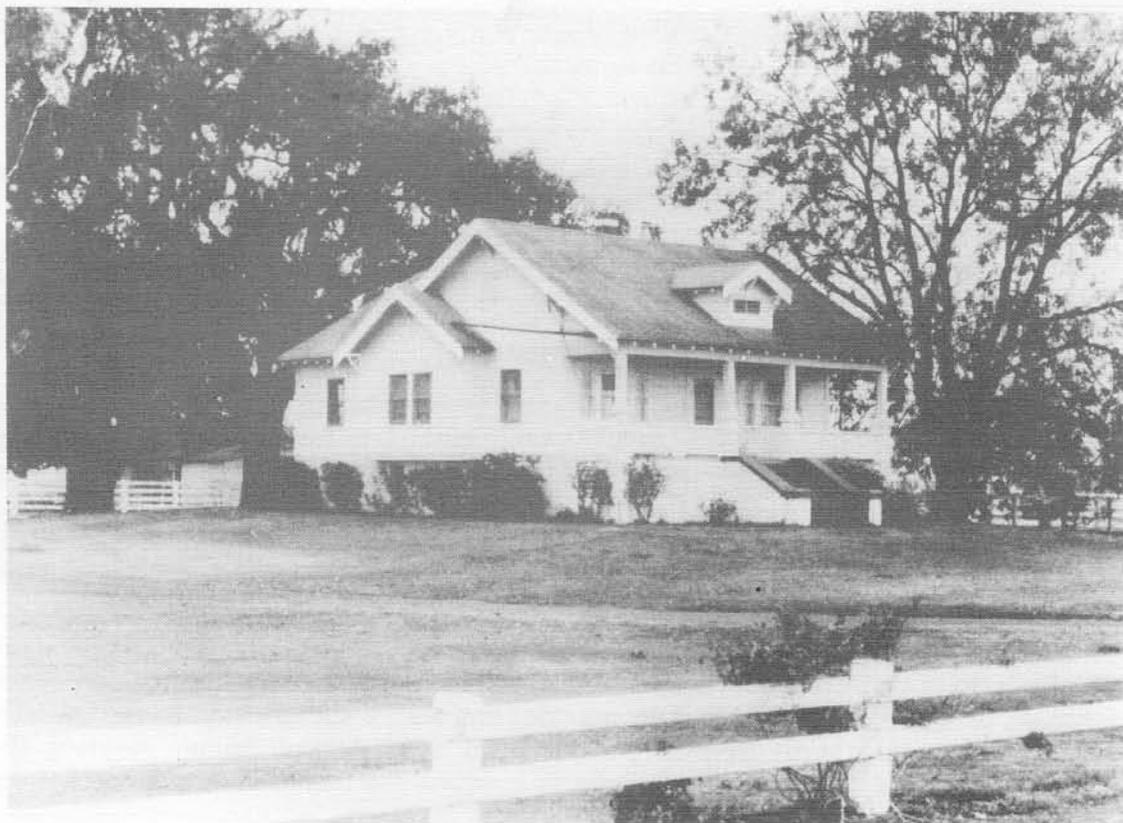


# Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin

Vol. XLIII No. 1

Yuba City, California

January 2001



**Ben L. Drescher House**  
**Nicolaus, California**

*Photo supplied by Lillian Scheiber*

## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

John Reische, President

Constance Cary, Secretary

Audrey Breeding, Vice President

Dorothy Ettl, Treasurer

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The **Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Historical Society in Yuba City, California. Payment of annual membership dues provides you with a subscription to the **Bulletin** and the Museum's **Muse News**. At the April 1987 Annual Dinner Meeting the membership voted to change the by-laws to combine the memberships of the Society and the Museum.

The 2001 dues are payable as of January 1, 2001.

Student (under 18)/ Senior Citizen/Library.....	\$ 15
Individual .....	\$ 20
Organizations/Clubs .....	\$ 30
Family .....	\$ 35
Business/Sponsor.....	\$ 100
Corporate/Benefactor .....	\$1000

## President's Message

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I report that the Sutter County Historical Society is on an impressive upswing in interest, participation, and attendance at quarterly meetings!

The July Picnic-in-the-Park was a great success with 57 in attendance. We had an excellent potluck dinner, business meeting and program. In response to many requests, I am sure that we will return to the park on the third Tuesday in July of 2001 (July 17).

Our October return to Nicolaus also had an impressive turnout of 67. The dinner served by the Hermann Son's Lodge was well-received; our thanks to the Lodge for their continued hosting and preparation of an excellent meal.

The Board of Directors is responsible for this positive upswing of activity and interest. Our publicity is reaching members; we have activated the telephone committee in an effort to contact members about meetings and activities. Membership response is very rewarding to the Directors and we ask that you continue your support by attending meetings, renewing your membership and providing input about your desires for the continued success of the Historical Society.

Information and publicity for the April meeting is in this Bulletin (see page 11 and insert) and will be in the Museum Newsletter. The Directors have made some changes in meeting places and dates - your comments and input concerning these changes are welcomed and needed to plan for future meetings.

It is always rewarding to be a part of a positive trend of any endeavor; I thank each of you for your support, interest and participating that is so vital to our continued success. A special Thank-You to the Directors who have been supportive, donated raffle prizes, and provided energy for our projects and committees.

John V. Reische  
President

## Director's Report

In looking at a brand new year on the horizon, the Museum has it filled already with great new exhibits, programs and activities for you. You will still have an opportunity to view the new exhibit *Our Photo Album: Yesterday in the Yuba-Sutter Area* through March. If you haven't seen it yet, you won't want to miss this marvelous look back at our own past. Over 80 photos from the recently donated Delores Bates collection give us a feel for how things used to be - and where they were then. You will also want to attend the accompanying program on February 27 at 7:00 p.m. when Dave Rubiales of Yuba Community College speaks about local history.

In February the Museum looks forward to the arrival of our Fulbright scholar, Leena Waismaa of Finland, who will work with us through July. She is interested in museum practices, oral history and the American system of volunteerism. We are most fortunate to have her with us, and we hope you will come to the Museum to meet her and make her welcome.

In March and April we will host the traveling exhibit *In This Land* with photos by Matthew Black that explore contemporary rural life in the Central Valley.

Two programs are scheduled for March. In conjunction with the Middle Mountain Foundation, we are pleased to announce that Brian Bibby, a professor at Sonoma State, will be here on March 3 to talk about the Maidu and other Northern California Indians. Professor Bibby will present a slide show focusing on the local Maidu and the Sutter Buttes. On March 20, we welcome Kevin Starr, the State Librarian. Details of his visit will be forthcoming in the Muse News.

Summer will bring another local exhibit about our own aviation history. If you have any information or know someone we should utilize as a resource, please call the Museum at 822-7141. We will examine local aviation from the first attempts to leave the ground through more recent agricultural, military, commercial and recreational flying. We are in the early stages of research and welcome all information. Did you know that John Montgomery, born in Yuba City, accomplished the feat of flying before the Wright brothers?

We are hoping that summer will finally bring the completion of the new patio and the laying of the memorial paving stones. We also look for work to be winding down on the new agricultural wing exhibits, which was long delayed by water-damaged carpet replacement. Additionally, the Museum Endowment Fund will begin a campaign to become established with the goal of eventually augmenting Museum funding for special projects and needs.

Julie Stark  
Director

## From the Editors

We'd like to use this column to focus on the contributor of this issue's feature article, Mrs. Lillian Scheiber. Mrs. Scheiber has lived in the Drescher house for just over 50 years and shared with us the house's history and her memories of the man who built it.

Lillian Wetzel was born the last day of the year in 1914 in Portland, Oregon. She had two brothers and two sisters. As a small child her family moved to Idaho, where her mother died when she was six. In 1927 some men from the Sutter Basin came north to recruit farm workers, and Lillian's father came down to check out the territory. When he got back to Idaho he asked the children if they would like to move to California - they said yes, so the family packed up again and settled in Robbins. At that time Robbins consisted of a store, the Sutter Basin Corporation offices, and a few houses for the workers.

Lillian's mother was Swiss, so her father took the family to picnics in Helvetia Park, on the Sacramento River between Woodland and Sacramento. It was there, at the age of 15, that she met Carl Scheiber. The Scheibers were musicians.

Lillian went to San Francisco to study costume design, and when she returned to Robbins she chanced to attend a dance and again encountered Carl Scheiber. They dated for three years, until Carl reached his self-appointed marriageable age of 25, and then

they were married in 1939. In the meantime, in 1937, Lillian was crowned Queen of the Sugar Beets and presided over a three-day sugar beet festival.

In 1940 Carl finally talked Ben Drescher into selling his house to them. The Scheibers raised four children, three boys and a girl, in the house, while Carl ran the Alpine Dairy. During the 1955 flood the Scheibers lost all their cattle, and started on a new business, raising thoroughbreds, which they did for 25 years.

Carl died of cancer in 1988 at the age of 75. The Scheibers' youngest son also died of cancer, at age 38, in 1993.

Mrs. Scheiber continues to live in the house on the old Drescher Road. You've all seen it - as you drive north from the Nicolaus Bridge on Highway 99, it's the stately white house sitting alone on the right side of the road.

As you read Mrs. Scheiber's article, please consider what piece of history you might be able to share with our readers. Mrs. Scheiber wrote her wonderful article herself, but if you're shy about writing, we'll be glad to let you tell us your tale in person, and we'll do the rest.

Sharyl Simmons  
Phyllis Smith

# Memorials

**In memory of Janice Anderson**

Ruth and Howard Anthony  
Everett and Elizabeth Berry  
Bob and Katie Bryant  
Tom and Marnee Crowhurst  
Mr. & Mrs. Lee J. DeWitt  
Bud and Joan Doty  
Esther Fortna Forsythe  
Etta Frink  
Ted and Bette Herr  
Jeanne H. Pederson  
Robert and Evelyn Pederson

**In memory of Robert D. Berriman**

Suzanne & Leonard Reynolds

**In memory of Ed Brown**

Dale and Alma Burtis

**In memory of Don Brown**

Marie E. Fuller

**In memory of Lolo Burks**

Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Boone

**In memory of Wallace J. Coats**

Bob and Katie Bryant  
Bruce and Gini Harter  
Sarah and Jim Pettis  
Barbara and Orland  
Tuttle Marlene Winger

**In memory of Richard Egger**

Marian and Mel Regli  
Susan and Tom Simmons

**In memory of Bruce Fergusson**

Marian Regli

**In memory of Jacki D. Filter**

Robert Coats

**In memory of Kathryn Fuller**

Marie E. Fuller

**In memory of Louis Fuller, Sr.**

Marie E. Fuller

**In memory of Ellen Gibson**

Danna G. Lindgren  
Dan and Phyllis Staple

**In memory of James E. Hall**

Burwell L. Ullrey  
Burwell W. Ullrey

**In memory of Joe Heller**

Joan Young

**In memory of Leo Hoffart**

Elizabeth Ann Hatcher

**In memory of Kenneth Hough**

Bob and Katie Bryant

**In memory of Mildred Lang**

Eleanor Holmes

**In memory of Dorothy Herr Larson**

Bee Brandt  
Etta Frink  
Ted and Bette Herr

**In memory of Margery McLaughlin**

Robert Coats

**In memory of Jeanette McNally**

Melissa Easton  
Kathryn Forderhase  
Nick and Jan Gomes  
Virginia Hawksley  
Gene and Babs Lonon  
Jim and LaVonne McGowan  
Ann and Michael Pariseau  
Norman and Loadel Piner  
David and Mary Powell  
Gerry and Ron Russell  
Melvin Schuler

**In memory of Carrie Nevis**

Sam and Becky Anderson  
Bogue Country Club  
Bob and Katie Bryant  
Robert Coats  
Gerald and Carmen Frye

**In memory of Carrie Nevis**

Nick and Jan Gomes  
Mr. & Mrs. George Post  
Russ Schmidl  
William Schmidl

**In memory of Lester Ohland**

Tom and Marnee Crowhurst  
Joan Martin

**In memory of Ruth O'Sullivan**

Harold and Evelyn Quigg

**In memory of Frances D. Prarat**

Mary Parke  
Burwell L. Ullrey  
Burwell W. Ullrey

**In memory of Les Sanborn**

Gerald and Carmen Frye

**In memory of James Edwin Smith**

Bonnie Dee Scriven

**In memory of Leo Stevenson**

Allen Sutfin Sr.

**In memory of Marilyn Strain**

Gerald and Carmen Frye  
Carolyn Mock Oswald

**In memory of Michael S. Ward**

Mr. & Mrs. Warren Hall

**In memory of Duane Wemple**

Elizabeth Ann Hatcher  
Walter and Jane Ullrey

**In memory of Anna Williams**

Georgia Green

**In memory of John O. Winship**

Robert Coats  
Gerald and Carmen Frye  
Gayle and Mitzi Morrison  
Mary Parke  
Ida J. Philpott  
Norman and Loadel Piner  
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Speckert  
Burwell L. Ullrey  
Tom and Jolyne Williams

**In memory of Rose Zundel**

Betty Taylor

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## **Where Does Your Contribution Go?**

The preceding list of contributions contains gifts to both the Community Memorial Museum and the Sutter County History Society.

Currently, all donations to the Historical Society are going into the General Fund. These monies were exhausted during the construction phase of the Agricultural Wing and we are now repaying the General Fund from donations. Monies from the General Fund are used to pay the Society's annual insurance premium, post office box rental, Bulletin printing and mailing expenses and other operating expenses.

All donations are greatly appreciated and help keep the Historical Society a viable entity in the community.

# Twenty Thousand Prune Trees

by  
Dorothy Jenkins Ross

There is an interesting story about Luther Burbank that Father once told me as we walked through an orchard years ago counting trees on our ranch.

Burbank, who became a celebrated horticulturist, came to California from a farm in the east, as did my father, around the turn of the century. California was being promoted as the fruit basket of the world, where orchards would produce California's new gold.

Burbank settled in the Santa Rosa valley to establish a nursery to supply new settlers with trees. Father came to the Sacramento Valley where *Sunset Colonies* near Live Oak were selling land claiming, "Ten acres will make you comfortable; Twenty acres will make you rich." After buying some acreage he began looking for trees.

While getting his small nursery started, Burbank worked as a carpenter and raised ornamental plants and flowers for quick sales. Fruit growing was slow to become accepted as trees took several years to produce. Wheat and other annual crops remained popular.

Burbank was unconcerned. Carpenters were in demand, and his real interest was plant development. California was a land of opportunity worth waiting for. In the fourth year of his nursery an astonishing order came for 20,000 prune trees - an order in March for trees to be set out in the coming Fall! This was for a wealthy San Francisco businessman whose real

interest was becoming an orchardist.

This seemed an impossible request. Was this his reward for patience? However, with some offers of aid, Burbank accepted it as an opportunity. He had only two acres of available land, but rented five more. According to Burbank in his book (*Trees*, Vol. VIII; P.F. Collier & Son, NY, 1921, p.256) he would use almonds for rootstock. The nuts, like corn, would sprout very fast and the prune buds could be put on in June.

Almonds were spread on coarse sand and covered with burlap and sand, which could be lifted to inspect for sprouting. As they sprouted (in less than fourteen days), they were taken up and planted in nursery rows about four inches apart in rows about four feet apart.

Toward the end of June, a large group of budders were hired to insert French prune buds from a nearby orchard onto the almond stalks. When the buds were united, in about ten days, the almond tops were broken over to encourage growth in the buds. New prune growth was tied alongside the almond stalk and when about a foot long, the almond stalk was cut away. By December, 20,000 prune trees were ready to be planted - 200 acres were developed in a single season.

Burbank was soon overwhelmed with orders. As he prospered, he was able to transfer to his real interest, plant development, for which he became famous. His home and gardens in Santa Rosa are a showplace.

Father had been an agriculture teacher whose real interest was fruit growing. His orchards, with a great variety of fruits, soon spread outside *Sunset Colonies*. In telling this story, I think it was the agriculture teacher talking. I was fascinated by this lesson of achievement in early California.

I was interested in history, not growing prunes, but I did learn to do budding.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dorothy Jenkins Ross** has written a book, Jenkins Farms, and lives on a piece of the original *Sunset Colony* farm where she was born. After many years in Southern California, she returned to Sutter County where she raises prunes and walnuts and has a great interest in history



## **Sutter County Veterans' Memorial Dedicated**

by  
John Reische

On November 4, 2000, a new page in the preservation of history of Sutter County was accomplished when the Sutter County Veterans' Memorial Monument was dedicated in the memory of the fallen veterans who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. A total of 119 names of the lost servicemen from World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam have been placed on commemorative plaques at the monument.

This monument was accomplished through the work of a volunteer Veterans' Memorial Committee comprised of citizens from Sutter and Yuba counties. Monies to build the monument came entirely from donations and fundraisers for this project; no government funds were

solicited or received.

The monument is located on Butte House road across from the Sutter County Memorial Museum and Park. Easy access and parking can be found near the Veterans' Memorial Building in back of the Yuba City City Hall.

The Sutter County Historical Society SALUTES and extends their thanks to the Veterans' Memorial Committee for recognizing the need for a monument and preserving an important segment of Sutter County history.

Sutter County Historical Society members are urged to find the time to visit this worthwhile and meaningful Veterans' Memorial monument.

# Sutter County Historical Society Forty-Five Years of Success

by  
John Reische

## **COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM OF SUTTER COUNTY, BUTTE HOUSE ROAD**

On October 1, 1973, with the establishment of the Community Memorial Trust Fund and the County's acquisition of the strip of land between the existing Memorial Park and Butte House Road, made possible by the gifts of Howard and Norma Harter and Gilbert Williamson, plans were underway for a new museum. Plans for a 4,480 square foot museum were developed, approved by the Board of Supervisors, and with funding assured a groundbreaking made in September 1974. Construction was by Neves Construction Co. with a bid of \$137,189. The museum was completed and accepted by the County on April 25, 1975.

The museum provided administrative, gallery, work and storage space as well as room for a library and document storage, a reception area and a small gift shop. Moving day from Carriage Square was set for April 24, 1976. In September 1975, a Community Museum Auxiliary was formed. The initial 40 volunteers, men and women, became an essential part of the museum operation. The Auxiliary assisted as hosts and hostesses, worked with the collection in accessioning and cataloging procedures, and assisted in special museum functions.

With the Museum now operating as a Sutter County facility under the direction of the Sutter County Board of

Supervisors and a permanent museum director, the management and staffing of the Museum was no longer the responsibility of the Historical Society.

Five entities are responsible for the operation and continuing development of the Museum:

- Sutter County Board of Supervisors
- Sutter County Historical Society
- Director/Curator of the Community Memorial Museum
- Community Memorial Museum Trust Fund
- Community Memorial Museum Commission

## **SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING FUND**

The Society adopted new goals with the establishment of a building fund and a commitment to continue publishing and distributing the quarterly bulletin.

By July 1978, it was recognized that the original facility did not have space for storage for the Museum's collection. A proposal was made to build a 1200 square foot east wing and was approved. The money for the expansion came from donations and fund raisers and in 1983 the first addition to the original plan was completed and occupied.

In 1985 it became apparent that the Museum's collection had once again outgrown the current space. Another proposal was put forth to add an additional wing on the west side of the

Museum to provide space for exhibits featuring the agricultural history of Sutter County. This project was also approved and donations and fundraising began in earnest to fund this expansion. Early in 1998 the announcement was made that sufficient funds were on hand, or had been pledged, to proceed with the construction of the agricultural wing. Plans were drawn, permits approved and a contract was signed. Extra costs, set-backs and un-foreseen hurdles demanded much time and effort to ensure the success of this building project. Finally, the building was accepted by the County and the new wing dedicated on May 16, 1999.

While this project depleted the Society's building funds, new ideas and plans were already beginning to be discussed. There was never any doubt that the development of the Museum and Park would continue. Future plans include the development of a commemorative memorial at the Hock Farm site south of Yuba City as well as the construction of pole barns on the Museum/Park site to exhibit antique farm equipment.

The successes of the last 45 years are a tribute to the members and

officers who have volunteered hours of time and service to help the Society realize its goals.

The Society continues to have general meetings on the third Tuesday of January, July and October; the Annual Meeting is held on the third Tuesday in April. A speaker or program is provided at each meeting and *everyone* is welcome to attend. The political structure of the Society consists of a Board of Directors, a maximum of 17, who elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer at the Annual Meeting. The Board of Directors are chosen biennially, in odd years, with a term of office of two years. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors are held on the first Tuesday of January, April, July and October.

Over the past 45 years, hundreds of Sutter County "historians" have contributed their time and talent to the Society. Naming them all is an impossibility, but without their - your - support there would be no Sutter County Historical Society. Our success is dependent upon people and their willingness to share and preserve the history of Sutter County. We eagerly anticipate years of success.



*Join us for our annual*  
**Hike in the Sutter Buttes**

This year we are offering two guided hikes on the Dean Ranch in the North Butte area.

**Sunday, March 18 and Saturday April 7**

Hikers meet at the Sutter County Memorial Museum at 9:00 a.m.

After a briefing, everyone caravans to the hike site.

For those who are carpooling, we will return to the Museum at 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Dress for hiking: wear comfortable hiking shoes and bring a sweater or jacket for a change of weather. Bring your lunch and water - camera and binoculars optional!

**Reservations and advance payment are required.**

The hike is \$20 per person and each is limited to 40 participants. Please complete the enclosed event registration form or call the numbers below for information.\*

The deadline for cancellations with refund is March 14 for the March 18 hike, and April 4 for the April 7 hike. If weather conditions prevent hikes, participants will be notified by telephone and refunds and/or rescheduling arranged.

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*Don't feel like hiking? Then come along on our*  
**Bus Trip Around the Buttes**

**Saturday, April 7**

The bus leaves from the Sutter County Memorial Museum at 9:00 a.m. and returns at approximately 1:00 p.m. There is no lunch stop but a rest break is scheduled.

This is a four-hour narrated tour, covering approximately 60 miles as we circumnavigate the Sutter Buttes. **Donald Burtis and Randy Schnabel** will be our guides and will explain many historical points of interest.

**Reservations and advance payment are required.**

The trip is \$10 per person and is limited to 40 participants. Please complete the enclosed event registration form or call the numbers below for information.\*

Cancellation must be by April 4. If weather conditions prevent the trip, participants will be notified by telephone, and refunds and/or rescheduling arranged.

***\*For information, call***

**Phyllis Smith (671-3261), Dorothea Reische (674-8106) or the Museum (822-7141)**

# Annual Meeting of the Sutter County Historical Society

## Buffet Luncheon

Tri-tip steak, baked potato, green salad, garlic bread and coffee

Saturday, April 21, 11:45 a.m.

West Sutter Veterans Building  
4<sup>th</sup> & Bridge Streets, Meridian

.....

We have an exciting program planned! Our topics:

**Judith Barr Fairbanks Essay Contest Winners**

**History of Railroads of Sutter County and  
History and Restoration of the  
Meridian Northern Electric Railroad Depot**

Our speakers are **Mr. and Mrs. Mark Slattery**, who live in the depot and have spent several years restoring it.

Following the program you are invited to walk one block to the depot to have a look for yourself.

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The luncheon is \$12 per person.

**Reservations and advance payment are required.**

Please complete the enclosed event registration form or call Dorothy Ettl (673-3412) or the Museum (822-7141) for information.

### Schedule

11:45 a.m. Doors open  
12:00 noon Buffet Luncheon  
1:00 p.m. Program

This luncheon, like all Historical Society functions, is open to the public - so bring your friends and family!

# Ben L. Drescher

by  
Lillian Scheiber

Benjamin Leonard Drescher was born in Nicolaus, California in 1874. Ben had a twin brother who died in infancy. Ben said, "the best one died." Ben was the youngest son of Philip E. Drescher and Regina Vahle Drescher. The elder Drescher came to Nicolaus in 1849. It is told that Ben's father and another man came by horseback across the plains.

Ben's mother, Miss Vahle, came to Nicolaus with her parents in 1848. When Miss Vahle came to New York from Germany with her parents, their ship was going around the horn (South America) and her family chose to get off at Panama.

It was Ben's mother's chore to take the lunches to the men who were cutting a path through the jungle. One day on her way to take the lunches, a huge snake, the size of a stove-pipe, raised up in front of her. She ran back and never took the lunches again.

The Dreschers lived down by the feather river next to Drescher road, later called Highway 99. The road extended about one mile to the east. Mr. Nicolaus Algier, for whom Nicolaus was named, asked Mr. Drescher, who was a surveyor, to survey his land. Mr. Algier gave Mr. Drescher a parcel of land for his work.

Mr. Drescher gave each of his sons a parcel of land. To Carl, who lost an eye in an accident, he gave the home place, which was 60 acres. To

Phil he gave the land across the road, which was 38 acres. To Ben he gave the land farthest to the east, with the big oak trees. It contained 33 acres. Because Ben had no river frontage to his property, his father gave him a strip of land down by the river, about seven acres. The house where the family lived was two houses pushed together with a walkway between them. Mr. Drescher liked to sit there and catch the breeze. The house burned many years later.

When Ben's mother came to California there were no levees on the Feather River. When a ship went by, you could only see the smoke stack, because the channel was so deep.

Ben brought dirt up from the southwest corner of his farm to make a mound to build his barn on. He built his barn first. Later, Ben started to build his house on ground level. First he poured cement for the foundation. It stood several years before he started his house. Ben was building his house with the intention of getting married and having children.

Miss Alice Carroll was Ben's sweetheart. She taught school at the Nicolaus Grammar School. She was offered a position as Superintendent of Sutter County Schools, and then moved to Yuba City. Miss Carroll came back to visit Ben and to take him for rides in her car. Ben never owned a car. They remained friends all through the years.

When Ben built his home, he planned for a second floor with an area large enough for three bedrooms. There are six rooms on the first floor. One is a small room on the southeast corner which Ben wanted for a music room. He said he had two places for his piano; the other was to be on the west side of the house. Ben built two high windows there, so the light would be good. Ben played the piano and the bass fiddle, which he played in John Scheiber's Swiss orchestra. Ben's brother Phil played the violin.

Ben said he built the house twelve feet above ground level, because if the Feather River ever overflowed it would have to go over the levee at Verona before it would come into his home. He was right. During the 1955 flood, a little water lapped in the back door. I hadn't closed the door tight when I left with the children. It didn't do any damage, but the basement was full of water. A pine tree floated in and all the furnishings swirled around. We later had a bonfire of all the items that were ruined by the flood waters.

Ben built a chimney from the ground up which passed through the northeast corner of the dining room, and on up through the roof. Ben allowed space for a staircase to the second floor. However, it would have to go up through the space where the chimney was, hence the stairs were never built.

On the back porch there are stairs on the east side to go down into the basement, which is very handy. There are a few stairs which go down into the basement from the outdoors.

There is a small building covering the entrance.

In the basement of Ben's house, there was some furniture. There were two beds, one of mahogany which was shorter and narrower than a standard bed, and one of maple.

Upstairs was a beautiful old oak rocker, with horse hair cushions and lion heads carved on the arms. Ben told me his mother ordered it from New York. It came around the horn to San Francisco, and up the Sacramento River, then up the Feather River to Nicolaus.

There was also a lunch chair with a headrest and curved back. It was swept away in the 1955 flood.

Ben had a birdseye maple bed which he slept in. Carl, my husband, gave it to his folks to use. It also was washed away in the flood.

Ben did not finish the floors. There is hardwood in the living room, dining room, small music room, and the hall. The floor had to be sanded, sealed and varnished.

The windows in the back porch were small. Later they were taken out and replaced with a larger window, which makes it a very cheerful room.

Ben built his house with No. 1 wood without knots. In other words, finished wood. He picked out each board at the Diamond Match Co. in East Nicolaus. Ben built his house alone, but when it came to the finish work, he hired a professional carpenter.

The frames around the windows and doors are 4" wide. The baseboard is 8" wide. A beautiful molding is all around the woodwork. The walls are lathe and plaster, which is ¾" thick.

The outside of the house is covered with cedar siding. The original roof was wood shingles. The house was never painted. You could not see it from the river road. It took on the color of the earth. Carl, my husband, asked Ben why he didn't finish it. He said, "I lost my nip."

Every night with a lantern, Ben and his brother Phil, who lived about a half mile to the west on Drescher road, walked to Nicolaus to the "Bridge House," a tavern, to watch the local boys play cards. They stood behind the players, never playing themselves. Ben always said "me and Phil" when he spoke of his brother.

After Carl Scheiber and I were married we went out to see Ben. Carl asked Ben if he could buy his home and farm. Ben was sitting on a sawhorse in back of his house. Ben said he would have to think about it. It took Ben a year to say yes. Ben said he would sell under one condition - that we would not cut down the big oak tree. The tree was magnificent. Ben estimated it to be 600 years old. The tree is taller than the electric high towers. The limbs spread 158 feet. Since then, many limbs have fallen off. It is a skeleton of its great beauty. The base of the tree is over 30 feet. The limbs were larger than most trees.

Carl took Ben up to Nicolaus to see Ben's niece, Thomasine Sivers. She lived in the big square house on the corner of Nicolaus' main street and Marcum Road.

Carl asked Thomasine if he could buy her home and farm. She said yes, she would sell. Ben moved into Thomasine's home and Carl and I

moved into Ben's home on October 2, 1940.

In Nicolaus where Ben had gone to live, there was a plank across the ditch to the road. On the plank was listed the different prices to take people, horses, cows, sheep and pigs across the feather river on a ferry. The plank washed away in the '55 flood.

In later years after Carl and I moved out to Ben's home, Carl and Ben would go duck hunting. There was a pond where Ben took out ground to build the mound for his barn. It was a perfect place for ducks to land. Ducks landed, Carl and Ben went duck hunting. Ben was crawling up to them. Carl said, "Why don't you shoot?" Ben said, "I'm lining them up." Ben had a double-barreled shotgun. He wanted to get two with one shot.

Ben was always welcome to come back to his home. Ben told me he loved wild blackberry pie. He said he didn't like a poor pie. Ben went over to the river bottom and picked the berries, and I made him his pie.

The following are stories that tell readers more about Ben:

After our children were born, Ben used to come out to baby-sit. We had a young girl living with us. She watched the children outdoors at play. When we went out, we asked Ben to come out. Ben would stay overnight. It worked out very well.

When Hedy, our daughter, was older she used to sit around Ben's neck and comb his hair. Ben took out his pocket knife and told the boys he would cut off their ears if they weren't good.

Carl used to go up to Nicolaus to

check on Ben. Ben had a stroke affecting one hand. The next day, Carl went again. Carl found Ben sitting in his chair. He had died of a stroke.

Ben was seventy-seven years old when he died May 15, 1951. Ben died

not knowing Miss Carroll also had died. They had been sweethearts for fifty years.

We have taken good care of Ben's house and farm. I'm sure he would be proud.

Ben kept a journal of important events in his dictionary. He signed his name on the fly leaf - Benj. L. Drescher, 1906

- Grasshopper and army worm spray: arsenate of lead, 2 pounds paste or one pound dry to fifty gallons of water.
- The warehouse at Nic. blew down, second time, Mar 10, 1901
- High water at Nicolaus, Feb. 22, 1901, 32 ft. 8 in.
- High water at Nicolaus, Mar 31, 1901, 33ft. 4 in.
- March 1903 levee broke in two places in Dist. No 2
- High water, Feb. 17, 1904, 29 feet, 10 in.
- High water, Feb. 25, 1904, 33 ft., 8 in.
- High water, Mar. 20, 1904, 33 ft., 8 in.
- Carl's baby died Oct. 27, 1905
- Bought a steel boat Jan 1909, for \$32.00
- Chas Engasser died Dec. 2, 1905
- E.J. Wessing died Feb. 19, 1912
- Jim Leary died Feb 22, 1912
- Al Wagoner died April 18, 1908
- Mrs. Christian died Aug. 6, 1909
- Thomasine married Apr. 22, 1908
- Phil - Mother and Frank Vahle went to Yuba City May 1911
- Phil and Mother made second trip to Yuba City, Aug 6, 1911
- Sydney Hauptman born Nov. 14, 1909
- Albert Peter born Dec. 27, 1908
- Bill May married Nov. 10, 1909
- Doris Schwartz died Mar 17, 1912
- Claus Storm died Mar 7, 1912
- Bill Parker died Mar 7, 1912
- Claus Peter died Jan 3, 1913
- Geo. Engasser died Jan 3, 1913
- Coldest weather since 1888 - Jan 6, 1913 - 18 degrees above zero
- Snow storm from south, Jan 8, 1913
- Alice Carroll met with accident at Oak Park, Dec. 24, 1924
- Mrs. Tom Pierce died Jan 1930, cremated in San Francisco
- June 1911, Dred[ge] Thor commenced work in Reclamation Dist. 1001, between two warehouses at Nicolaus.
- Bill Miller drowned June 22, 1913
- Frannie visited at Nic. April 17, 1914
- Frannie made second visit at Nic. April 25, 1914
- Grafting wax for 4 lbs. risin, 1 lb. beeswax, 1 pt. linseed oil
- World fair opens at SF. Feb 20, 1915
- P.A. Anderson died Wed., March 3, 1915
- Dredge Hercules destroyed by fire May 1, 1915

- Mrs. Minden died March 27, 1916
- John Scheiber passed citizen examination June 28, 1916
- Alice Carroll birthday October 7
- Dredge Trojan does repair work on levee above Nic and below Nic May 1916
- First pile driver for Nicolaus Bridge Mon, Aug 27, 1918 by Clintor Com.
- Hobart Heiken & Miss Hazel Holmes were married Sat June the 30<sup>th</sup>, 1917
- Albert Peter and Kate Schneider married July 11, 1918 at Sac.
- Sept. 12, 1918, men between ages of 18-21 and 31 and 45 inclusive have to register for selective draft.
- Germany accepts the allies armistice terms, Nov 11, 1918
- Nicolaus Bridge opened to the public, May 7, 1919
- During fall of 1919 millions of leaf aphids eggs deposited on oak leaves
- Nov. 26-27, 1919, terrific north wind
- Wessing Bros. store at Nic. burned Mon. Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919
- Jim North finished harvesting barley Aug 23, 1920
- Pette Gottsch died Sept. 10, 1920, buried in Sacramento
- Dredge Thor worked above Nic and Dredge Mars below Nic. in year 1921
- Mother returned home from Woodland. Nov. 10, 1921
- Ida Engasser died Sat, Nov. 5, 1921 buried in Fairview Cem.
- One inch of snow fell at Nic. Jan 29, 1922
- A.J. Zimmerman died Feb. 13, 1922 buried in Fairview Cem.
- Mrs. Claus Peters died Feb 15, 1922, buried in Fairview Cem.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> bond election in Rec. Distrt 1001, Feb 25, 1922
- Prune trees planted west of building spot March 1, 1922
- Lou Worley married Dec 21, 1922 at Marysville
- BLD first experience on grand jury, Dec. 27, 1922
- TCH Drescher died Oct. 25, 1923 buried in Nicolaus Cemetery
- Aileen Finch died Nov. 25, 1923
- Tom Dwyer died Nov. 5, 1923
- Alice Carroll accompanied by BLD visited schools on Sac. River, Nov 22/23, 1923
- Morning of Jan 1, 1924, mercury stood at 19 degrees above zero
- Light fall of sleet and snow Jan 2, 1924. Fell during night
- Marty Miller died Jan 22, 1924
- Mother died Oct. 4, 1924 age 88
- Mrs. P.C. Drescher died June 5, 1925, age 68
- B. Redfield died June 27, 1926 age 74
- Trustee election of Rec District No 1001
- BL Drescher - 1.007.448 votes
- Finch - 998.585 votes
- FE Fitzpatrick - 1046.240 votes
- GA Wessing - 987.727 votes
- Bed of Feather River dug for several days in July 1931
- BLD, Fitzpatrick - DU Finch met in Natomas office Jan 26, 1932

- Mrs. Carroll died Jan 9, 1932
- Tillie Scheiber & Steve Dettling married Oct. 1, 1932
- Mrs. P.E. Drescher Jr. died Oct 16, 1932
- Mrs. C.H. Drescher died April 22, 1933 age 62
- Mrs. T.O. Arens died April 26, 1933, age 62
- Mrs. Regina Peter died July 13, 1934 age 78
- Mrs. Adam Krieg died June 18, 1935
- Dan Morrison died Dec. 4, 1936
- T.J. Mulvany died Dec. 30, 1936, age 89 years
- Dec. 11, 1937 highest water in river at Nicolaus ever known 24 feet 6/10
- E.F. Grider died Mar 13, 1938
- Dredge canal work done 1914
- Mrs. J.B. Thompson died Nov. 21, 1940
- Japanese gov. sudden attack on the USN at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, Dec. 7, 1941
- Snow storm at Nicolaus, Mar 14, 1942
- Levee broke at H. Vittens in Dist. 1001 Jan 1943
- BLD rent on Vahle town property, 14.62, 1927
- BLD rent on Vahle town property, 17.28, 1928
- BLD rent on Vahle town property, 16.56, 1929
- BLD rent on Vahle town property, 17.45, 1930
- Geo. T. Howlett died Nov. 28, 1942
- Mrs. Sarah Holmes Coleman died Wed. 7, 1943

Ben's memoirs did not mention when he started building his house. The closest remark about grafting wax was in 1914. I imagine he built his home before he planted his trees.

Things Ben left for me:

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Canvas duck decoys  | 9. Carriage lantern                |
| 2. Double barreled shotgun   | 10. Weights to stop horse          |
| 3. Old flag with 46 stars that flew over Washington D.C. for one day | 11. Money belt                     |
| 4. Many old books  | 12. Lantern                        |
| 5. Old oak rocking chair   | 13. Violin and case - small violin |
| 6. Two old beds  | 14. Old Sutter Co. map 1872        |
| 7. Old lathe   | 15. Silver clothes brush           |
| 8. Blue milk glass, salt & pepper shakers                            | 16. Silver soup ladle              |
|  | 17. Lead ladle                     |

## **Board of Directors' Meetings**

Meetings are held the first Tuesday in January, April, July and October. Please contact one of the Directors for time and place. These meetings are open to all members.

## **Membership (General) Meetings**

Meetings are held the third Tuesday of January, April, July and October. Time, place and program are announced in the Bulletin, the Museum Muse News, and in the Appeal Democrat. The annual meeting is the April meeting, which this year will break with tradition and be held on **Saturday afternoon, April 21 in Meridian.**

## **Dual Membership**

Remember as a member of the Society you are also a member of the Community Memorial Museum. You are invited and encouraged to attend all the meetings and events of both.

## **Volunteers**

You are welcome to volunteer to assist in any events sponsored by the Historical Society and/or the Community Museum. The Museum also needs volunteers to keep the front desk staffed. If you have any time you could spare, please contact the Museum at 822-7141 for details about volunteering.

## **All Are Welcome!!**

All Historical Society meetings and events are open to the public. Please invite your family, friends and neighbors to be a part of the Society. Membership is open to all who are interested.

## **Sutter County Historical Society Officers Directory**

President	John Reische	674-8106
Vice President	Audrey Breeding	695-2965
Secretary	Constance Cary	671-6652
Treasurer	Dorothy Ettl	673-3412
Newsletter Editors		
	Sharyl Simmons	743-3741
	Phyllis Smith	671-3261

# Coming Events

## February

- Our Photo Album: Yesterday in the Yuba-Sutter Area*  
Continues at the museum
- 14 Love's Messenger –see insert for details  
Valentine Gift Bags delivered
- 27 Dave Rubiales speaks about local history – Museum - 7:00 p.m.

## March

- In This Land* traveling exhibit – details in Muse News
- 3 Brian Bibby program on Buttes and the Maidu – Museum - 7:00 p.m.
- 18 **Hike in the Buttes – 9:00 a.m. – see details inside bulletin**
- 20 Kevin Starr, California State Librarian – Museum – details in Muse News
- 30 *Our Photo Album: Yesterday in the Yuba-Sutter Area* closes

## April

- 7 **Hike in the Buttes – 9:00 a.m. – see details inside bulletin**
- 7 **Bus Trip Around the Buttes – 9:00 a.m. – see details inside bulletin**
- 21 **Sutter County Historical Society Annual Meeting Luncheon**  
Meridian – 11:45 a.m. doors open