

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL DINNER
GRACE METHODIST CHURCH
Walton Avenue, Barry District
JANUARY 15, 1963
7 P.M. MEYERS HALL

Program:

Speaker: Dr. Hector Lee
Dean of Instruction and
Professor of English
Sonoma State College

Topic: Folklore and its Relationship
to History

Dr. Lee is a well known story teller and
am sure we can persuade him to tell us a
good "hair-raising" story or two from his
extensive repertoire of folklore stories.
"The Story of the Hangings in Modoc County".

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING
October 22 - 1962

The meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order by President Arritt.

Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. Earl Ramey, Randolph Schnabel, James Barr, Bernice Gibson, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest M. Arritt.

The purpose of the meeting was to clean up outstanding business pertaining to the Symposium.

All bills which had been received by the secretary or treasurer were presented for approval of payment.

A motion was made by James Barr and seconded by Randolph Schnabel that all bills concerned with the symposium be paid by the treasurer as presented. Motion carried.

Florence Arritt reported for Nanne Brown (absent) on the sale of the note paper. Mrs. Brown was completely sold out and asked for authorization to have more printed. A motion was made by James Barr and seconded by Randolph Schnabel that Mrs. Brown be authorized to have printed as many as she thought could be sold of the same design on a 2/3 French note fold and 1/3 straight note paper basis. Motion carried.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.

Bernice B. Gibson
Secretary

SPECIAL ACCOUNT - SYMPOSIUM

10/15/62	Received Cash from R.A. Schnabel	\$144.75
10/18/62	Received cash from R.A. Schnabel	10.00
10/22/62	Received Cash from Bernice Gibson	1.00
10/22/62	Received cash from Florence Arritt	2.82
	Total	\$158.57 -

BILLS PAID

10/16/62	Methodist Ladies (45 Lunches 1.75)	\$ 78.75
10/16/62	Ida E. Doty (Supplies)	1.31
10/16/62	R. A. Schnabel (Supplies)	3.31
10/22/62	Thelma Clark (Supplies)	6.73
10/22/62	Bernice Gibson (Postage)	10.00
10/22/62	County of Sutter (Printing) -	24.91
10/22/62	Bremers (Supplies - Native Daughters)	5.18
10/22/62	Lola Case (Supplies)	2.82
10/24/62	Viola Weight (Decorations)	6.86
10/24/62	Jessica Bird (Publicity-Postage)	5.34
10/27/62	Anita Laney (Cash paid for typing)	8.00
11/3/62	Halls Stationery (Paper for Tours).	2.34
11/6/62	Valley Printing (Tickets for Tour)	8.32
11/8/62	Hanford Signs (Signs for Tour)	<u>23.92</u>
	Total	\$187.79
	Deficit	\$ 29.22

WAU-KEE-TAW
CHIEF OF THE YUBUS
by Earl Ramey

The subject of this paper is pretty certainly the earliest resident of Yuba City of whom we have any specific record. He was called Wau-Keetaw and was the last chief of the Yubu Indians who had their Rancheria on the west bank of the Feather River opposite the mouth of the Yuba. This tribe and rancheria were noted as early as 1841 by John A. Sutter, and he and others, used the name of the tribe Yubu, to designate the river but which. was later changed to Yuba.

Waukeetaw first became known by name to the public as a result of his prominence in the activities relative to the removal of the Yubua to a reservation in 1856. The Congress of the United States had established a system of reservations and farms for California Indians in 1853. The one nearest to this community (Sutter-Yuba) was the Nome Lackee reservation in Tehama county south-west of the town of Tehama. But not a great deal was done towards settling these reservations until 1855 when Colonel Thomas J. Henley was appointed Indian Agent for California.¹

The matter of removal of the Yubus was first brought to the attention of the community by a letter signed J.H.B. and printed in the Marysville Herald of May 19, 1855. The writer had just visited Nome Lackee where nearly 1000 Indians had already been gathered and where 1000 acres were under cultivation. He had high praise for Colonel Henley and his program for the welfare of the natives, especially the plan for schooling and technical training for the young. The writer urged the editor to do what he could to encourage the removal of the Yubus. And he warned that some interested persons were trying to influence the Indians to resist removal.

Later another letter signed E.M. and dated at Empire Ranch told how a sub-agent from Nome Lackee, Mr. S. P. Storms, who was able to speak the language of the Indians at the Ranch, had succeeded in persuading about a hundred of them to go to the reservation. This writer also praised Colonel Henley for the fine program he was carrying out. And a new item noted the fact that Mr. Storms had been working around Grass Valley persuading Indians of that region to go to Nome Lackee.² So the residents of Yuba-Sutter became interested in the proposition of removing the Yubus.

In the issue of November 1, 1855 the editor of the Herald brought the matter to the attention of his readers in an editorial in which he wrote; "The removal of these Indians (he had referred to them as Yuba City Indians) from their rancheria on the bank of the Yuba to the Nome Lackee reservation is in contemplation. The citizens of Yuba City and our own citizens should give every encouragement to this undertaking of Col. Henley, the Indian Agent. At the reservation they will be kept sober and taught to work... Here they are a diseased, vicious and drunken race. If they remain among us they will become extinct...They are worthy of a better lot."

Not until October 1856 when Mr. Storms made a visit to Marysville and Yuba City was any definite action taken. The sub-agent was sent to learn the wishes and opinions of the white residents and to note the condition of the Indians. After talking with a number of prominent persons he left with the impression that the residents favored removal.

In the news item giving an account of Mr. Storms' visit the editor described the Yubus as "miserable" with many sick and many intoxicated because "some white men continue to sell them liquor despite the law."³

Perhaps it ought to be explained here why the "Yuba City Indians" were of concern to the residents of Marysville. Cordua had found a tribe of Indians occupying the present site of Marysville when he arrived in 1842. But these Marysville Indians had been dispersed completely by the settlement of the city. Most of them had gone to the foothills, but some had joined the Yubus and other Sutter county tribes. As the Yubus deviated (by necessity) from their primitive economy and adjusted to the urban way of life, the small settlement of Yuba City was not adequate to their demands and contributions. So they would go across the river to Marysville hunting work as well as favors – gifts of food and clothing and even money. The white residents referred to them as "bummers" and suspected them of being guilty of numerous petty thefts. There was much sentiment in favor of their removal, although there is evidence that some of this desire for removal of the natives was the result of an uncomfortable embarrassment in the presence of the former owners of the land from which the white settlers had displaced these original owners without the traditional due process, a sacred principle of Anglo-Saxon culture.

As a preliminary preparation for the removal project the editor of the Herald had asked General Sutter to take a census of all Sutter County Indians. The General reported that on his farm the Hock tribe numbered ten men, seven women and three children. Of the Yokulmeys there were seven men, four women and one child. The Olash tribe had ten men, nine women, and one child. As for the Yubus he could only estimate them as numbering about one hundred. They were too much scattered on both sides of the river to be counted.⁴

Colonel Henley came to Marysville the last week of November 1856 to make plans for the removal. A general meeting was arranged to be held at the rancheria in Yuba City on November 24. Henley was accompanied to Yuba City by members of the press, city officials of Marysville and other interested citizens. There they were joined by certain residents of Yuba City and General Sutter of Hock Farm. The party went to the "council wigwam" of the Yubus where the Indians had also gathered.

There were members of the four tribes including Oitey, Chief of the Hocks, Oloi, Chief of the Olash and Waukeetaw of the Yubus. And the reporter noted that there were three "good looking Indian soldiers" who had served in General Sutter's army during the Civil War of 1845 when Governor Michelterreno was overthrown.

General Sutter first addressed the Indians in Spanish attempting to explain to them the purpose of the gat! ,ring. There is no doubt that the General was fluent in Spanish, but it is very doubtful that the Sutter County Indians understood Spanish any more readily than English. But following Sutter, Captain M. M. Dobbins of the Marysville Rifles spoke to them in their own dialect telling them of the advantages they would enjoy at Nome Lackee. Waukeetaw replied and spoke for his people. He said the Yubus were willing to go, but that they wanted to delay their departure one month so that they could hold two more dances and also have time to

eat up the provisions they had on hand. Colonel Henley agreed to the delay but insisted that it must be no more than one month.

The Colonel then addressed the white persons who were present. He predicted that certain "evilpersons" in the community would try to impede the removal by attempting to stir up resistance on the part of the Indians, He urged those present to do all they could to offset this obstruction.⁵ Just who these "evil persons" were we are not told. A few employers found the Indians a cheap source of common labor; and the liquor dealers who sold them intoxicants have already been referred to. But otherwise it is difficult to guess at the identity of any others who would have been interested enough to discourage removal excepting possibly a very few who might have sensed the moral phase of expelling the original owners from their humble homes. But these objectors would not likely have been classed as "evil."

In all of the later references to the Indians removed they are called Yubas. Whether or not any members of the other three Sutter county tribes were included we have no record. The name Yubu gave way to the modern version, Yuba.

Colonel Henley returned one month later and began to execute the removal. It is significant that the Marysville Herald gave very few details of the operation. It was noted that "about 50 Diggers" were arrested and held in the city jail until taken to Yuba City by Marysville police to be turned over to the Indian agent. All accounts up to this point would give the impression that the Indians were being persuaded to move and not forced: but in this case force was admittedly used. The news item gave no idea of how the Indians were to be moved to Nome Lackee. The editor was clearly ashamed of the procedure. He added to the short item "It seems hard to remove the poor creatures from the homes of their fathers..." But he repeated the description of "deplorable" conditions under which they were living and concluded "The city will be rid of a nuisance."

But fortunately, for our purpose, a reporter of the Sacramento Union considered these removal operations of sufficient interest to his readers to warrant a long column containing several details which were believed by the Marysville editor better left untold. As has already been stated, Nome Lackee was south-west of the town of Tehama. So Colonel Henley used the public river transportation to get his charges to Tehama from which place the trip to the reservation could be easily made by land. But he had to take them from Yuba City to Sacramento on one boat and from Sacramento on another boat up the Sacramento River to Tehama. Consequently, when the Cleopatra arrived in Sacramento from Marysville with sixty-six Indians aboard the event was news. And with the information which the reporter of the Union relayed to us we can now go back to Yuba City to complete the removal story.

When Colonel Henley arrived at the rancheria Waukeetaw told him that he and the Yubas had changed their minds about going away. They wanted to remain.

He admitted that he had agreed to go a month earlier but declared that now they were unwilling. Henley then tried again to persuade him that it was best that they go where they could have better care and proper food, pointing out that if they stayed in their present location they would die.

To this warning Waukeetaw was quoted as replying "Die here - good; go away and die - no good." He assured the Colonel that they "could die contentedly on their own stamping ground but not in any strange locality." When Henley saw that further persuasion was useless he told Waukeetaw that the "Great Chief" had given him orders to remove the tribe and that they must go. The Yuba Chief tried again to reply whereupon Henley became firm telling him not to argue further. Waukeetaw evidently recognized that he and his followers had no choice; so he began collecting his people and advising them to prepare for the journey.

Many of the men of the tribe refused to prepare and let it be known that they did not intend to go. And some of them moved across the river supposing that they would be out of reach of the Colonel and his assistants. It was at this point that the Marysville police helped the project by arresting and confining those Indians they could find in the city. These were held overnight and delivered to Henley the next morning in time to go aboard the Cleopatra.

There was unanimous resentment on the part of the Yubas at being forced to leave their homes; so they resolved to burn their pole and mud-houses and all of the supplies they had accumulated rather than allow tethers to appropriate them after they were gone. Colonel Henley tried to dissuade them from this action contending that the houses and food ought to be left for those numbers of the tribe who were not going at that time to the reservation; and he even offered to give them blankets for the food, which offer some accepted. But during the night many of them slipped away from the camp, where they were waiting to board the boat, and back to the rancheria where they set fire to the houses. The next morning they went aboard the Cleopatra bound for Sacramento the first leg of the journey.

The party arrived in Sacramento the afternoon of the same day and went ashore at the foot of I Street. They were bedded down in a freight shed beside the bank of the river. Fires were made on the bank where they prepared food which was purchased for them at the nearby stores. The following morning they boarded another boat for Tehama.

Of the sixty-six Yubas in the group there were thirty-six men, twenty women and ten children. The Union reporter obviously an alert journalist, noticed two facts which made him curious. There were no old men or old women; and there were no children over eight years of age. He asked Waukeetaw why there were no old persons or older children. But the only explanation he got from the Chief was the statement that "They all die."⁷

Waukeetaw's explanation of the absence of old persons was probably quite correct. But it is not a likely reason for the absence of children over eight. A more plausible explanation, but of which we have no direct evidence, is the Indian apprentice law which a few years later became a scandal in California. This law allowed the courts to bind Indian

children into service of a family, a condition which varied little from slavery. We know that some Indian children were so held in Marysville at the time.

Certainly all of the California Indians were not happy on the reservations. And the Yubas were not happy, we know, because during the five or six years following their removal most of them drifted back to Yuba and Sutter counties. A news item in January 1861 noted that most of the Yubas were back. And another item quoted a returned "Digger" as declaring that Waukeetaw had come back as far as Empire Ranch where he had been killed by some of the Empire Indians. But the item added that the bearer of this information could not speak English well enough to give any further details. The editor expressed regret to learn of the chief's death adding that "Waukeetaw has always been recognized as a sensible and good hearted man."⁸

A few days later the editor received the following letter:

"Empire Ranch, January 21, 1861

Sir---You make paper say me dead. Me no dead - me live.
My sister be dead - my sister muchee cry. Tell 'em make
paper say Wau-kee-taw no dead. My wife, Sue, got sick hand,
but Waukeetaw no dead.

Yours, good Injun
Wau-kee-taw"⁹

Obviously this letter had been written by some white person at the dictation of Waukeetaw. But it is doubtful that the attempted reproduction of the diction and accent is very accurate because of the habit of the time to follow stereotyped usages attributed to various groups. But there would not likely have been any reason to distort the information carried in the letter.

A few days later a delegation of five or six Indians called at the city police station in Marysville and asked to be taken to the "paper man" who had printed the news of Waukeetaw's death. The police took them to the office of the Democrat. The editor, John R. Ridge, who himself was a Cherokee Indian, had a long talk with the delegation "in broken English and broken Digger." The Yubas of Sutter county had heard of the death of Waukeetaw and had resolved to avenge his death. They had assembled, "painted up", secured arms, and made ready to go to Empire Ranch. But they wanted more details of the killing and had sent this delegation to try to verify the report because there was yet some doubt in their minds.

Ridge told them how he had first published the notice of the death on the strength of the rumor which he had heard, and also how he had received the letter supposed to be from Waukeetaw declaring that he was not dead. But he further assured them that he could not be certain that the letter was genuine. The Indians held a council and decided to send two runners to Empire Ranch to learn the truth of the matter. So Ridge wrote them a letter addressed to Mooney, or any other white man at the Ranch, explaining their mission and requesting good treatment for them.

Ridge wrote in the news item describing the visit by the delegation "The Diggers look savage and say that if it be true that Wau-kee-taw is killed, they will avenge his death".¹⁰

Two days later the runners were back in Marysville with the best evidence they could possibly have found; they brought Waukeetaw. He called on Ridge presenting the following letter:

"Empire Ranch, Jan. 24, '1861

Sir--The bearer of this is the renowned Indian Chief, Waukeetaw, whose death has been lately reported. He visits you for the purpose of refuting the late report; he is a good Indian and drinks no whiskey. The scarcity of beef is the only thing from which we feared he would die. Any favors extended to him will be duly appreciated by

Yours respectfully,

Thos. Mooney."

After printing this letter from Mooney Ridge added "Waukeetaw was warmly received by his Digger subjects in this city who were awaiting the news by the runners whom they had sent to inquire as to his death. They were much delighted to behold their beloved sovereign whom they had mourned as dead. The intimation given out in Mooney's letter in regard to beef we trust, will be duly noted by the friends of the distinguished Chief."¹¹

Waukeetaw found a new home down the river on Hock Farm where he lived nearly three years. But in August, 1863 there appeared the following notice in the Marysville Appeal:

"Notable Death.

A tall corpulent, pox-marked Digger...stalked into the Appeal sanctum yesterday and informed us in a solemn manner as follows: 'Me bluth'n law Waukeetaw, Captain Yuba, Ingins--he much a dead; Sacramento Ingin poison no good. By'm bye kill em'..."

"We ascertained that he is a Hock Farm Indian. He stuck to his story that the Chief of the Yubas was dead, poisoned by Sacramento Indians and claimed to be his brother-in-law. Waukeetaw was a 'good Ingin' and the sorry remnants of his tribe have been for many years the inoffensive, original bummers of this city and vicinity. Waukeetaw himself was a frequent visitor at the Appeal sanctum and always applied for a letter of recommendation and two bits to get beef whenever he went to a fandango of a neighboring tribe..."

"He was reported to be dead once before, and we still hope to learn that lie has not swallowed the poison intended for some miserable cur. We had a suspicion that coppery 'bluth'n law' was playing on our sympathies; nevertheless we gave him a bright new dime and charged him to go and buy a watermellon--not whiskey. And lie went."¹²

Some time later the death was given official notice in a Sacramento paper.

We have cited a witness who testified that Waukeetaw had not acquired the vice of drinking whiskey, the habit which was partially to blame for the lamentable condition of the California Indians. However, we have noted also that he was addicted to the consumption of beef, a habit which normally would not be classed as vicious. But in the month of August, especially in the year 1863 before refrigeration was available, fresh beef could become as toxic as cheap alcohol. And an indiscrete quantity

of spoiled beef could be fatal. So we can reasonably guess that some of his Indian friends from the Sacramento River served him beef and poisoned him but probably not intentionally.

Waukeetaw's sad and violent ending hardly bears out his philosophy which he was quoted as pronouncing "Die here --good."

REFERENCES

- 1 J. Ross Frown, The Indian Reservations
Sacramento Union, Aug. 29, 1861. Quoted from Harpers Magazine
 - 2 Marysville Herald, May 24; Oct. 27; Nov. 1, 1855
 - 3 Ibid., Oct. 14, 1856
 - 4 Ibid., Nov. 26, 1856
San Francisco Alta California, Nov. 27, 1856
 - 5 Herald, Nov. 25, 1856
 - 6 Ibid., Dec. 24, 1856
 - 7 Alta California, Dec. 26, 1856. This long account is
quoted from the Sacramento Union
 - 8 Marysville National Democrat, Jan. 18 and 19, 1861
 - 9 Ibid., Jan. 22, 1861
 - 10 Ibid., Jan. 24, 1861
 - 11 Ibid., Jan. 25, 1861
 - 12 Marysville Appeal, Aug. 6, 1863
 - 13 Sacramento Union, August 7, 1863.
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