

# SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWS BULLETIN

VOL. 2 No. 5

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA

APRIL 19, 1960



PONY EXPRESS CENTENNIAL  
1860-1960

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SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEETING  
April 19, 1960 at 8 P.M.  
Chambers of the Board of Supervisors  
Sutter County Office Building  
President - W. A. Greene, Jr.  
Program Chairman - Randolph Schnabel

PROGRAM

Dear Sirs:

The Sutter County Historical Society is interested in preserving the data and history of the county and making it available for posterity. We are sponsoring a program at which Mr. Gordon Waldear of the Bonanza Associates, Inc., creators of historical motion pictures of California, will speak and present the "Story of Burlingame" at the regular meeting of the Society April 19th, 1960 at 8 P.M. in the Supervisor's Chambers, Sutter County Office Building.

The Bonanza Associates, Inc., is a commercial organization that specializes in developing motion pictures from old photographs and snapshots. The final production depicts the history of the region in which it is made. The "Story of Burlingame" will serve as a pattern for us to follow in presenting our own history of Sutter County.

We would appreciate your organization's having a representative at our meeting. We feel that so much history is escaping us that every effort should be made to preserve what is now available for future generations.

We urge your cooperation in this matter by sending a delegate to this meeting. Should you want other information contact William A. Greene, President of the society, at Sherwood 2-1732, or Mr. Randolph Schnabel, Program Chairman, at Sherwood 2-2309.

Sincerely,

W. A. GREENE  
President  
Sutter County Historical Society

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FAR INTO THE NIGHT

"Day in and day out, through fair weather and foul,  
Nothing interrupted the steady stream of pony express  
riders as they carried the mail across the western  
wilderness. Swollen streams were taken in stride."

from Pageant of the Pioneers  
by Clarence S. Jackson

PONY EXPRESS WILL RIDE AGAIN  
JULY - 1960

ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI to SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

PONY EXPRESS CENTENNIAL

Most of the daring riders of the famous mail-carrying service which began April 3, 1860 between St. Joseph, Mo., and Sacramento, California, were very young men - many of them in their teens, according to a U.S. Post Office Department bulletin.

An advertisement published in San Francisco in 1860 for Pony Express riders, stated: "Wanted - young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred. Wages \$25 a week..."

## Pony Express Centennial - continued

Young men entering Pony Express Service, operated by the famous transportation firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, were given a Bible.

"I hereby swear, before the Great and Living God, that during my engagement and while I am an employe of Russell, Majors & Waddell, I will under no circumstances, use profane language; that I will drink no intoxicating liquors; that I will not quarrel or fight with any employe of the firm, and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and so direct all my acts as to win the confidence of my employers. So help me God."

The youthful Pony Express riders consistently outran Indian pursuers while carrying the mails through the wilderness, often through blinding snows and howling storms, and in extremes of heat and cold. Only one Pony Express rider was lost to the Indians.

Johnnie Frey or "Fey," according to some writers, is credited by some accounts of being the first Pony Express rider to leave St. Joseph on April 3, 1860. He was little more than a boy when he entered the Express service. He was a native Missourian, weighing less than 125 pounds. An early account states:

"Though small in stature, he was every inch a man. His run was from St. Joseph to Seneca, Kansas, about 80 miles, which he covered in an average of 12½ miles an hour, including all stops." He later entered the Union Army, and was killed in 1863 in a hand-to-hand fight in which he was credited with killing five assailants before he was killed himself.

William "Bill" James, a native of Virginia was credited at 18 with being one of the best of the Pony Express riders over a route in Nevada through some of the most savage Indian country.

According to Alexander Majors of the Russell, Majors & Waddell firm, in a book published in 1893, "Seventy Years on the Frontier," William F. "Bill" Cody was a Pony Express rider, in his early teens when he entered the famous mail service. Cody is credited with many notable feats, including a ride aggregating 384 miles without any real rest period, which is referred to by some authorities as probably the longest continuous performance of its kind - not only in the annals of the Pony Express, but in any other courier service in history.

None of the Pony Express lads had an opportunity to grow old in the Service. In October, 1861, the cross-country telegraph was completed and the Pony Express was terminated. Despite its short life, it was credited with many important contributions, including the fact that it helped to keep East and West joined during the early crucial days of the Civil War.

Many pageants, celebrations and other activities memorializing the Pony Express are planned for this 1960 Centennial Year.

As a part of Centennial Year celebrations, the Post Office Department will issue a new Pony Express commemorative stamp July 19 at Sacramento, together with a new commemorative stamped envelope at St. Joseph, Mo.

The National Pony Express Centennial Association plans to re-enact the Pony Express runs, starting out - just as the Pony Express did approximately 100 years ago - from both St. Joseph and Sacramento, on July 19.

The re-enactments are expected to require about nine days each for both the eastward and westward runs. The original Pony Express runs, across the 1966 miles original route, required an average of about 10 days, although it frequently took less time. Lincoln's inaugural address in 1861, for example, was carried by the Pony Express in less than eight days.

The eight States through which the Pony Express ran are Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and California.

In addition to the two commemorative stamps noted above, there will be many special cancellations authorized for towns through which the Pony Express ran.

FOOTNOTE TO THE BOGA GRANT

by Earl Ramey

The reader of this item will comprehend it more readily if he will refer to an account of the "Boga Grant" which appeared in this bulletin for July 1958. This is really a footnote to that article. It has been delayed because the letter which is quoted below has been published since the original article appeared.

This letter is one of the "Larkin Papers" which are being edited by George P. Hammond and published by the University of California Press. They are being released one volume at a time; and the letter which follows is found on page 269 of volume number VI which came off the press in 1959.-

Monterey  
August 11th 1847

Capt. J.A. Sutter  
Dear Sir

What with traveling, building &c. I have had but little time of late for correspondence. Your letter respecting the forty dollar boating I have received. If your first letter or order to Mr. McKinstry had mentioned it was for bread we should have understood it. The French miller Don Carlos has to pay it, but I will see to it as my own business.

As per your request I have sent to Mess. Ward & Smith a mill saw for you. I really hope this mill will prove successful. A part from the benefit to you, it will be of much service to your neighborhood.

I have purchased from Don Carlos Flugge his Rancho, joining yours. His papers beginning with your information in his favor, up to the approval of the General Assembly are all perfect and without condition. I want to contract with you to put up a house on it of adobies or of wood & have it done by November. Say a house worth \$300. You will oblige me, and save me much trouble by giving immediate orders to have it built any shake or manner you see fit & hire it out at a nominal or cheap rent to any one. This business please do without any further orders from me or further reference.

If you can contract with some person to build a house on the tract, worth from 300\$ to 500\$ by all November, I will give them one mile of the land, either the upper or lower mile, or half mile on the river & three miles back, providing their choice does not take in the large Rancherias. Your particular and immediate attention will much oblige me. If by any means you cannot do this, send this letter to Mr. John Williams, that he may have it done, taking this letter for his authority to do it. Yet for many reasons I hope you will do it. Very Respectfully Your Obdt. Svt.

Thomas O. Larkin

There are several features in this letter which have implied interest and significance for us. Larkin refers to Flugge's papers as being "all perfect and without condition" thereby verifying a contention stressed in the original article that Flugge had handled his grant in a legal and businesslike manner very rare in those times. In referring to "your information in his favor" Larkin refers to Sutter's function as guardian of the frontier. An applicant for a grant of land in the Sacramento valley had to secure Sutter's recommendation and certification that the land was available.

Next, the fact that Larkin wanted a house on the Boga Grant indicates that he was taking a genuine interest in his investment and not merely a speculative interest of an absentee holder. Of course, he was obviously playing safe in an attempt to hold his title. Mexican law had required that the holder of a grant settle families on the land. In 1847 it was clear that the United States had defeated Mexico in the war even though the war was not yet officially ended. While most persons believed that the United States would keep possession of California, it was not certain. So the grant

Boga Grant - continued

holders in 1847 were faced with the possibility of having to fulfill the requirements of Mexican law. And in the event that the United States should keep California they knew that the validity of titles might depend upon the observance of Mexican law while Mexican law was in effect.

Now the price he was willing to pay for the house is of interest. By a "mile of land" he meant a square mile or a section of 640 acres. He was willing to give 640 acres of river bottom land for a house worth \$300 holding the best land at less than fifty cents per acre. Or, if the builder wished, he could take 320 acres on the river and 640 acres two and three miles back - 960 acres for a \$300 house.

This alternative proposition indicates an error on the part of Larkin. He did not own the land three miles back from the river because Flugge's grant called specifically for a tract one league wide and five leagues long bounded on the east by the Feather River. In English speaking countries the league was taken loosely to be three miles; but in Mexico the league was 2.6 miles.

One gets a better idea of the relative value of the land at that time by being reminded that had the builder taken the "lower" mile he would have received that extremely choice land beginning a half mile north of Lomo. And had he taken the "upper" mile he would have received part of what is now the valuable Ord Ranch east of Gridley.

Of significance further is the limitation of choice which Larkin set by his words "providing their choice does not take in the large Rancherias". These rancherias were the villages of the Boga Indians located on the west bank of the Feather about opposite the mouth of the Honcut and just north of the present Sutter-Butte county line. This concession to the Indians was in keeping with Larkin's policy of maintaining friendly relations with the natives. And this policy was practical as well as decent because in 1847 no work of any consequences could be undertaken without Indian labor; and only friendly Indians were good laborers. In short, even as late as 1847 Larkin was yet contemplating his enterprises from the point of view of Mexican California.

We can be pretty certain that Sutter did not arrange for the building of the house as Larkin requested. Sutter had too many troubles of his own. John Williams whom Larkin refers to was at the time making similar but more extensive improvements on Larkin's "Children's Rancho" west of the Sacramento River in Colusa county which land had been granted in the name of Larkin's California born children.

It is also doubtful that Williams gave any attention to the Boga grant; but we might get more information about this question in later volumes of the Larkin Papers.

THIS AND THAT  
from  
The Sutter County Banner and Farmer  
March 22, 1918

CLOCKS TO BE SET FORWARD ONE  
HOUR ON 31ST INST.

On the 31st inst all the clocks will be set forward one hour to conform to the Daylight Saving law just signed by President Wilson. The new system will cause no inconvenience after the first day. On that day one will get up an hour earlier than usual and business will begin an hour earlier. Under the new system there will be an hour more of daylight at the end of the day. This, it has been computed, will save millions of dollars in lights and expenses.

## This and That - continued

Sutter County Banner

April 23, 1870

### Travel

Travel to Colusa - there must be something very attractive at Colusa just now, or else people are traveling merely because the fare is extremely low. The stages -mail line and opposition - pass daily loaded down to the guards with passengers.

### California and Oregon Railroad

The grading on this road, it is expected, will now be completed at the rate of a mile per day - 800 Chinamen having been added to the working force. It is now thought that the locomotive will reach Chico about the last of this month (April).

### Railroad Business

The California Pacific Railroad seems to have been doing a good business this last week. Besides a goodly number of passengers, the trains have taken down quite a large number of cattle and sheep, and an indefinite quantity of grain and wool. The cow-catcher occasionally dispatches an animal. One was tossed off the track Thursday morning with broken horns and a leg.

### Railroad Tickets

Tickets for San Francisco and all intermediate points on the Vallejo Railroad route, can be obtained from Messrs. Marcuse and Bro, of this place, and passengers can take passage from here as well as Marysville - this being a station for that purpose as well as for freight.

### The Great Monopoly - April 30, 1870

A city ordinance of Sacramento makes it a fineable offense for "runners" of rival routes to enter the depot of Central Pacific Railroad for the purpose of soliciting passengers. Recently two passengers arrived by the Central whose baggage had, through a mistake, been checked to Sacramento when their destination was San Francisco. On learning this fact one of them remarked rather angrily that he would go by the Vallejo route. He inquired of a drayman who happened to be standing near the way to the Vallejo depot and received the information. For this act of courtesy the drayman was arrested by a special policeman whose duty is to prevent violations of the ordinance referred to and fined \$10. Being unable to pay the fine, he was sent to jail, and will there have to remain for 5 days for a mere act of common politeness to two strangers.

### Vallejo Railroad - April 30, 1870

The business on this road seems to be rapidly increasing. The passenger cars are generally full and from six to a dozen freight cars are daily required to take down stock, grain, etc. and bring up mdse. and lumber from below. There are rumors afloat that there is some probability of the road passing into the possession of the all-engulfing Central Pacific.

We should regret to see such a project consummated, as it would preclude all hope of building of a railroad over the Sierras by the way of the Feather River and Beckworth Pass - a route infinitely better and safer than the "ladder route" as now established.

Excursion Tickets - August 13, 1870. The California Pacific Railroad (via Vallejo) will issue excursion tickets to San Francisco and return for \$5 to be good from 10th to 15th inclusive. There is yet an opportunity for those who desire to visit the Bay, to avail themselves of this liberal reduction in the price of passage.

### Marysville and Colusa Stage

The U.S. Mail line of stages leaves the Western House daily from Marysville for Colusa, at 7 o'clock A.M. and 2:30 P.M. Returning leaves Colusa daily for Marysville at 5 A.M. and 3 P.M.

PROGRAM

Sixth Annual Meeting of  
Conference of California Historical Societies  
June 23, 24, 25, 1960 - Padre Hotel, Bakersfield

General Program Chairman: Miss Ruth Mahood, Director of the Los Angeles County Museum

Local Arrangements Chairman: Mrs. Eva Granados, Kern County Museum,  
3801 Chester Avenue, Bakersfield, California

Thursday, June 23 1960

4:00 - 6:00 P.M. REGISTRATION

8:00 P.M. "Implements Used by the Local Tribe" Illustrated lecture,  
Mrs. Gilbert, full-blooded Yokut descendant  
Meeting of the Board of Directors - Director's Room

Friday, June

24 9:00 - 9:15

A.M. Greetings and announcements - Dr. Frank Stanger,  
President of the Conference of California Historical Societies  
presiding.  
Museum Keynote Talk, Richard Bailey, Kern County Museum Curator.

9:35 - 10:45 A.M.

Panel No. 1 - "Problems of the Historical Society Museum"  
"Physical Facilities and Organization" -- Carl S. Dentzel,  
Director Southwest Museum, Los Angeles

9:35

"The Collections?? -- their Acquisition, Documentation,  
Preservation and Care -- G. F. MacMullen Director, Serra Museum,  
San Diego

"The Interpretation" -- Jack Dyson, Assistant Historian, California  
Division of Beaches and Parks

1:00 - 12:10 P.M.

Panel No. 2 - "Cataloguing and Storing Historical Material."  
"Historical Objects" -- Frieda K. Fall, Registrar, Los Angeles  
County Museum  
"Archives" -- Dr. Wm. N. Davis, Jr., Historian State Archives,  
Sacramento

"Photographs and Books" -- Allan R. Ottley, California  
Section Librarian, California State Library, Sacramento

12:30 - 2:00 P.M.

Luncheon - Speaker: W. W. Robinson

2:00 - 3:20 P.M.

Panel No. 3 - "Exhibitions of the Historical Society Museum".  
"Installation Techniques and Materials" -- Robert E. Wade  
Head Preparator, Los Angeles County Museum  
"The Changing Exhibition" -- W. Edwin Gledhill, Director Santa  
Barbara Museum

"The Specialized Exhibition" -- Irene Simpson, Director of Wells  
Fargo History Room, San Francisco

"Organization and Installation of the NEW MUSEUM Exhibition" --  
Mrs. Louisiana Dart, San Luis Obispo County Museum.

"The Extension Service Exhibition" -- Colonel Lawrence B. Bixby,  
Riverside Municipal Museum

3:30 P.M.

Escorted Tour of the Pioneer Village and Historic Exhibits, Kern  
County Museum

7:00 P.M.

Annual Banquet, Dr. Frank Stanger, President of the Conference of  
California Historical Societies, presiding. Auction of Historical  
Items: Glen Dawson. Speaker: Dr. Donald Cutter, Associate Professor  
of History, University of Southern California -- "Science Comes  
to California - The Malaspina Expedition."

Program - continued

Saturday, June 25

9:00 - 9:15 A.M.

Announcements, etc., Dr. Frank Stanger, presiding

9:15 - 10:00 A.M.

"Heritage House" - Slide talk - Mrs. B. Forsythe

10:20 - 12:00 A.M.

Panel No. 4 - "The Junior Historical Society"

"The Junior Historical Society in Action" --

Miss Ivy Loeber

"San Bernardino Junior Historical Society" - Dr. Gerald A. Smith,

Director San Bernardino County Museum

"The Importance of the Junior Historical Society" --

Mrs. Buena Stone, Klamath Falls, Oregon

"The Senior High School Historical Museum Workshop"

Dr. John Baur, History Instructor, Los Angeles County Museum

1:30 P.M.

"Kern County" - film in color; "Old Bakersfield Buildings" - slides

Annual Business Meeting, Dr. Frank Stanger, presiding

(These are the highlights of the Annual Meeting. Miss Mahood promises a full and detailed program in the June California Historian. However, she urges all societies to make plans now to send a large delegation to the meeting.)