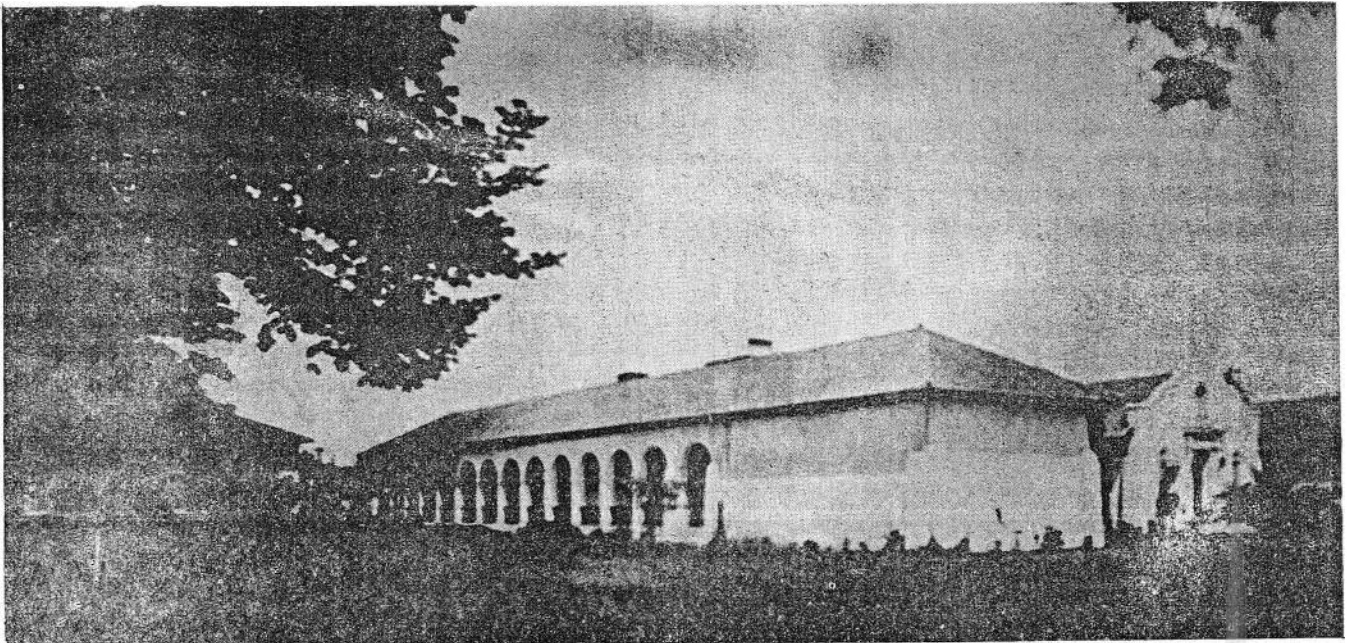


SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWS BULLETIN



SUTTER UNION HIGH SCHOOL 1927

VOL. I, NO. 8.

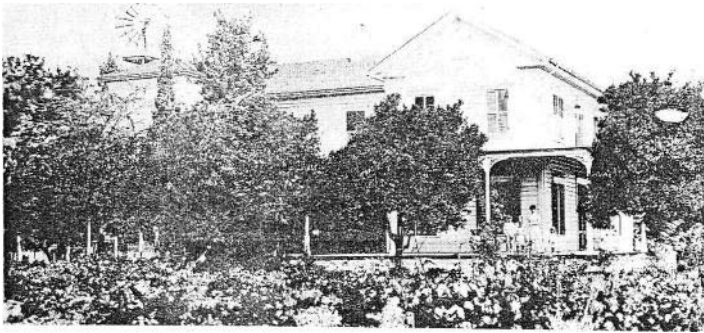
YUBA CITY CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 1957

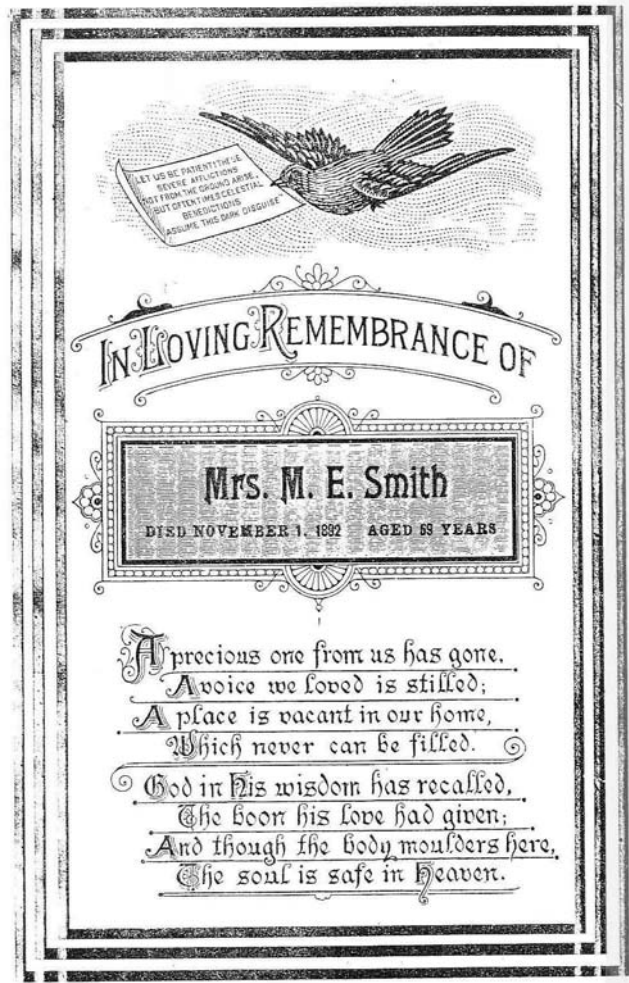
ANNUAL MEETING
SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JANUARY 29, 1957 - 7:30 P.M.
CHAMBERS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUSINESS MEETING
PROGRAM
CHAIRMAN: RANDOLPH SCHNABEL
SPEAKER: T. D. URBAHNS



MRS. ELIZABETH THORP SMITH



The Lang Home 1910
Originally was the home of Mrs. Thorp
Smith



People on the Porch

Mrs. Arthur Coats, Yuba City - tall girl. Mrs. Will Rich, Arboga, Cal., immediately to right of Mrs. Coats behind Alexis Lange, next tall figure. Mrs. Francis Laney is small child to left of Mrs. Coats

MY PIONEER MOTHER

Written by Phoebe A. Norton, and presented to the N.D.G.W. of Sutter,
Sutter County, California, May 1st, 1929

Mary Elizabeth Donaldson was born in the little village of Parkman, Geauga County, Ohio, November 20, 1832. She was a descendent of Irish parents, Thomas and Phoebe Donaldson who had crossed the ocean from Ireland.

The second of nine children, the oldest of whom died, she experienced the hardships of pioneering days in Ohio, when people had to clear a spot in the woods for a place to build a log hut, to be used as their home, out of the trees they had cut down for the clearing.

After helping her parents in every way possible in the great game of living, she was, at the age of twenty-five years, married to Arthur Thorpe, a near neighbor's son. Mr. Thorpe had previous to the marriage made a trip to California returning to Ohio for his bride.

One month after marriage, they started on their three month's journey to California, going to New York, there taking a vessel and coming by way of the Isthmus. They crossed the Isthmus via the Nicaragua River, and came by vessel up the West Coast of California to San Francisco. This vessel called the "Golden Gate" sank off the shores of Lower California on its return trip South.

Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe went from San Francisco to Grass Valley, then to San Juan, remaining at each place only a short time; then came to Sutter County.

Their home was only a cabin on the hillside near the road which now leads from the East end of Long Bridge to West Butte.

While here two children were born to them, Rachel Amelia, born July 8, 1858, and Jennie born December 11, 1859.

The town of Marysville, at this time in its infancy, was their nearest trading post. As the ox team was the only means of travel, it took three days to make the journey from their home and back. Thus having a few pounds of butter or a few dozen eggs for market, was a serious problem, especially in the warm season of the year.

In the Fall of 1860, while at work building one of the rock wall fences which still stand today, Mr. Thorpe fell. A large rock which he had in his arms at the time, struck him in the right side, causing an abscessed liver from which he died during the winter, leaving his wife (my mother) alone in a cabin on a hillside with two baby girls, the youngest of which was less than a year old.

A camp of three hundred Indians were her nearest neighbors, located on the water's edge of what was called the Tule, and just North of where the Long Bridge now is; and in plain sight of her cabin home.

These Indians were travelers, going into the high mountains in the summer time, always returning to this camping place for the winter, coming early in the Fall to gather acorns for their Winter's bread.

They were very fond of my mother and her husband. They called him "Arthur Boy", and her "The White Squaw", and the children "The White Squaw's Papooses". The oldest little girl, later Mrs. Rachel Pottle of Sutter County, was very attractive to these Indians because she had blue eyes and red hair, and the parents had to watch very carefully for fear they might steal her. They would fashion dolls out of wood for the children and before my mother realized it, they were talking together a long of their own making, which no one could understand but themselves.

During one Winter an epidemic broke out among the Indian babies which threatened to be very serious. Having gained useful knowledge from her Irish mother, the White Squaw knew how to both doctor and nurse the Indian babies, averting a tragedy, and at the same time, creating a bond of friendship which endeared her to these Indians in a marked degree.

After Mr. Thorpe's death if she was in need of help in any way, she would go to the Indians. They never failed her, and she never felt afraid of them but once, and that was of one Indian alone who was either drunk or crazy.

There was no cultivated fruit at this time, but there was plenty of wild black berries growing along the water's edge on the opposite side from her home. When she wanted to gather some to dry - (canning was not popular at this early date) - she would fix up her two babies, early in the morning, take several biscuits with her and go down to the water's edge. She would give an Indian a couple of her biscuits and he would row her across the waters to where the berries were plentiful. After filling her buckets with berries she would use the remaining biscuits to hire another Indian to row her back. They were very fond of what they called "White Squaw bread". When they were going through any of their Indian ceremonies they never bothered her, but many were the times she was a silent witness to their "Indian Dance" which was always at night and lasted well toward and sometimes after midnight. They would build a huge bonfire and the braves would dress themselves up in their war costumes and paints, making themselves just as dangerous and hideous looking as possible. Flourishing their tomahawks, they would circle around this bonfire singing a weird song, the words of which were "Hoony ha-hoony ha-hoony ha ha ha." They would keep this up for hours in a most doleful way, but strange to say my mother never felt afraid of them, although it must have caused her to feel very lonely.

She and her husband often talked to these Indians about the Bible and tried to explain to them our plan of salvation. They always listened very attentively and respectfully and would ask questions as well as they could in their limited knowledge of the English language. But when their "Arthur Boy" died, they thought it a terrible thing that my mother was preparing to have his body put in the ground. They asked her, "How would the Great Spirit know where to find him?" They were very insistent about wanting to build a funeral pyre, a way they had of burning the body, thus liberating the spirit so that it might go to the Happy Hunting Grounds" as they believed. My mother finally had to be very firm with them about the matter. They sorrowed very much and many attended the laying away of their "Arthur Boy" in the old cemetery at the East end of Long Bridge.

The extreme hardships of pioneering days and two baby girls to provide for, made it impossible for my mother to carry on alone; so after a year of struggling, suffering and sadness, she disposed of her property, selling the land to the late Frederick Tarke, and it is until this day known as "Thorpe's Valley" a part of the Tarke estate lying near the little town of West Butte. The limited amount of personal property was

sold to the late Frederick Hoke, whose estate lies near the same town. She then was married to Gilbert N. Smith of the "Old Camp Bethel" fame of East Butte, who had been a close friend of her deceased husband. To them were born two children, Stephen W. Smith of San Jose, and Phoebe A. Norton of Sutter. In this home she lived and worked with the same brave pioneering spirit until November 1st, 1892. Surrounded by those she loved, and for whom she had worked and lived, she answered the call of her Master and passed to her reward. Her body rests by the side of her second husband in the cemetery at Sutter.

THE OLD CAMP BETHEL

"Bethel" meaning a house of God was a place where the people of God met for a period of worship.

Sutter County and the Sutter Buttes can boast of such a historical landmark.

The first place where such a meeting was held in Sutter County was in what is known as the Moxley Canyon, on the East side of the Buttes, and the place is now owned by J. J. McPherrin and son Elwood E. McPherrin. An old abandoned well and a pile of brick, the wreck of a bake oven, for many years marked the place.

But this was not the place which was in after years so widely known as The Old Camp Bethel." At a date conjectured to be as early as 1861 or 1862, the late Gilbert N. Smith who owned a large acreage at East Butte, had a few acres of dense oak grove - an ideal place to worship God.

He offered to lease this oak grove to the churches to be used as a Camp Bethel. The time of the lease was to be for ninety-nine years, without money or price, and the only stipulation made was, that when the churches ceased to use it as a place for worship, the land was to revert to the owner. The offer was accepted in the name of the North and South Methodist Churches.

The Bethel proper consisted of a pyramidal roof about 100 feet square, supported by pillars. The underneath was supplied with plain board seats, that would seat more than a thousand people. The floor was the earth, but before each meeting the ground was covered with clean straw - hauled in from the grain fields. This Bethel was financed by donations from the people of the community.

During the Fall months the North and South Methodist Churches would each hold a series of evangelistic services of three weeks duration. Many families would come and camp for the entire three weeks. The program for each day's services was - first an early prayer meeting then preaching

services at eleven o'clock, three o'clock and again in the evening. But Sunday was always considered the big day when the attendance often numbered many over a thousand. People would come from great distance, bringing picnic lunches and remain for the entire day's services.

Noted ministers from all over the State would come to offer their help, not thinking of or expecting a money recompense. Everything was free.

How interesting would be a record, which would reveal the beneficial results, both spiritually and socially, of these old time "Camp Meetings."

But as the years passed by the popularity of these meetings began to diminish. The numbers of family campers became smaller and smaller each year, and the Sunday attendance decreased, until finally the three week's series of meetings were discontinued.

Then for many years a special Sunday would be set apart by each church for an all day's meeting. In the early eighties this custom also became unpopular and was abandoned.

Then according to the contract the land reverted to its owner. The pyramidal roof was allowed to remain until the decay of passing years leveled it to the ground. The land was cleared of its oak groves and was used for grain planting.

Today nothing remains to mark the place of "The Old Camp Bethel" but it is indelibly stamped as a pleasant memory in the minds of all those who were so fortunate as to have attended the religious services held there.

HISTORY OF LADIES IMPROVEMENT CLUB OF SUTTER
(Written and compiled by Mrs. W. H. McPherrin)

In the year 1901 the men of Sutter built a hall issuing stock at \$100 per share to pay for material and labor. For seven years they made no effort to purchase seats, light or improve the hall in any way and as this was the only hall in the community it really became a hardship to hold entertainments or any function for the community loaned chairs and the breakages became so great this method of seating was stopped.

In the year 1908 the first commencement of Sutter Union High School was to be held in this hall and as chairs had been hired from Marysville, a distance of nine miles and the only transportation those days was a team and wagon, this was quite a handicap. This is when the women of Sutter came forward.

In the latter part of April 1908, Miss Ella Moody sent out word to every lady in Sutter to meet at the home of Mrs. E. W. Hauck to try to formulate some plan for chairs for the said hall. They were not very enthusiastic and less than twenty women attended this meeting but those who did were staunch, energetic and progressive, namely:

Miss Ella Moody (deceased), Mrs. D. J. McLean (deceased), Mrs. E. S. Norton (deceased), Mrs. E. S. Wadsworth, Mrs. Bert Ullrey, Mrs. George Straub (deceased), Mrs. Annie Summy (deceased), Mrs. G. W. Hill, Mrs. J. J. McPherrin, Mrs. E. W. Hauck (deceased), Miss Rose McLaughlin, Miss Mabel Campbell, Mrs. W. H. McPherrin

On May 6, 1908 our club was organized and officers elected. Constitution and by-laws drafted. Initiation of 100 per member and dues 60¢ per year was voted on (these charges held until 1921 when our initiation was raised to 25¢ per member and dues \$1.00 per year). Meetings were held every Tuesday afternoon. We discussed plans to get chairs and decided to borrow money to buy 350 chairs. Mr. Griffith advanced the money and the club paid him by the sale of homemade ice cream and cake at the exercises of Sutter Union High School in June 1908. In August of the same year three efficient women joined us. We had the same trouble in borrowing a piano as chairs, only a little more so, and so our motto is "where there's a will there's a way", we cast about for some means to purchase a piano. Three members, one as coach and the other two as part of the cast of characters, put on a drama, "The Missouri Girl", which was a howling success. This play was put on in Sutter, Meridian, Live Oak and Yuba City and the proceeds more than paid for the piano. We owned the chairs, lamps, and piano and thought it a good idea to own part, if not all of the hall, as we wished our work to be rewarded. Some of the member's husbands held stock in the hall, and by a little love pat or two we succeeded in obtaining 219 shares in less than two months, and at the end of four, we had collected 428. This was a good starter as there were only 863 certificates issued. We could not own these shares unless being incorporated, and the men had let their corporation tax become delinquent, so it cost us one hundred and ten dollars to pay back taxes and be on a legal basis.

Our meetings were held in the basement of one member's home, and this was getting inadequate for our membership was growing. We decided to meet in the hall. It was not a very desirable place for our meeting, so we decided to make it so. In 1911, we had the hall plastered, costing around \$300.00. Gave a play to cover cost.

In 1912 gave \$50 toward new S.U.H.S. campus . In 1913 we ceiled, floored and improved basement of said hall, costing \$329.00. Chairs, dishes, etc., costing \$200.00. After putting a new floor in this hall we held a grand ball to dedicate said floor and this was a huge success financially.

During the years gone by we did a great deal of cemetery improvement installing a gas engine, painting tank house, fencing and acquiring more land to enlarge the same.

We also started a club library at the cost of \$193.75. Had some nice books that were read by our members. Gave 30 volumes to our soldier boys and 44 volumes to the Weimar Sanitorium.

We joined the State Federation of Women's Clubs in March 1921. Sent two delegates to convention held in Corning same year. Last work to be done on the hall was to shingle south half of roof and south side tinting the plaster and painting the woodwork inside.

A notable fact, our first President, Miss Moody, was elected in 1908 and served as president until her death in July 1919. Other members who held offices were Mrs. E. S. Norton who acted as Treasurer for seven years, and Mrs. W. H. McPherrin who served as secretary for 12 years.

At the time this history was written we had an enrollment of 54, and our meetings were held the first Tuesday in each month and our entertainment by a social committee picked by the President.

A PROTEST AND AN EXPLANATION
Letter of Protest
by
John A. Sutter

The following letter by John A. Sutter to the editors of the Sandwich Island Gazette April 6, 1839, was copied from that paper by Mrs. Francis Laney while she was doing research on Sutter in the archives of the Library of Hawaii, at Honolulu.

Gentlemen:

Do me the favor to receive into your Gazette the correction of a little error which I have seen in the Hawaiian Spectator, Volume II, Number 2, in an article communicated by Reverend H. Bingham, viz: "The upper mission returned to the United States to procure aid and was attacked, wounded, and robbed by a party of Sioux, headed by a Frenchman."

As I was formerly an officer of the Swiss guard under French service, I consider it my duty to defend the honor of the French Nation; hence I am compelled to correct the accusation that "a party of Sioux had been commanded by a Frenchman"

Mr. Gray arrived at the rendezvous in the mountains which took place in the valley of the Green River. He was accompanied by four young men of the tribe of Flatheads, by a Nez Perce, and a half caste

boy. The intention of the young men was to barter horses for cows on their arrival at the Missouri. The party was augmented at the rendezvous by (name blurred) and an Iroquois. Mr. Gray, believing himself sufficiently protected in the continuance of his journey, could not be prevailed upon to delay for a few days for a company that was preparing to go to St. Louis, and, notwithstanding the information and advice which had been given him by men of experience, Mr. Gray was so imprudent as to persist in his departure and to expose his little party to the greatest of dangers.

Everyone who had the least idea of traveling in the mountains might easily foresee that their horses could not escape being noticed by the savages.

A small party, being previously forewarned, might almost at all times avoid meeting the savages by hiding themselves during the day and traveling at night, and by taking different directions, etc.

The party arrived without any opposition at the River Platte on the frontier of the Sioux and Pawnee Territory, where they were attacked, defeated, and robbed by a war party of the Sioux, commanded by the son of a Sioux woman and Da Chene, the interpreter of Mr. Sardpie; consequently the Sioux party was not commanded by a Frenchman but by a three fourths Indian. At this attack the four Flatheads, the young Nez Perce (the son of a chief), and the Iroquoian (the father of a family) were killed. Mr. Gray received a wound on the head but was able to save himself with the rest of the party.

Mr. Gray lost eighteen horses; the others belonged to the young men who accompanied him. The chief of the robbers invited Mr. Gray, very lac-
onically, to return the next year with a similar tropp of good horses. The loss of the young men caused a great sensation among the Flatheads and the Nez Perces, but happily, through the mediation of a Mr. Pamberan, governor of Fort Walla Walla, the affair was amicably settled.

Please Accept, Gentlemen My Sincere Respects
J. A. Suter (Spelled with one "t")

PROJECTS FOR THE CONFERENCE

by

Rockwell D. Hunt
President Emeritus

The conference of California Societies is well launched upon what should be a distinguished career of usefulness to the commonwealth. Its foundations are well and securely laid. But, though a young Hercules, it is still in its infancy: to reach its true goals will require the guidance of leaders of imagination, initiative, and wisdom, as well as a spirit of cooperation on the part of all its members.

As I take a dip into the future I think I see, in clear outline, certain worthy objectives to be striven for, certain projects to be undertaken. These I crave the privilege of outlining. First of all, the membership of the Conference must be enlarged. The conference must be a real federation of the historical societies of the state. By implication and interpretation it should rightly include numerous other organizations with historical interests, such as museums, libraries, and Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, as well as numerous historical-minded individuals. But the federation will always remain essentially the Conference of California Historical Societies.

Secondly, the Conference should seek close and sympathetic relationship with such kindred organizations as the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, founded more than half a century ago, of more academic character, and the parent American Historical Association itself, as well as typical state and regional historical societies.

Third, the Conference should accept as a responsibility and embrace as a privilege the function of interesting, instructing, and stimulating its constituent member societies, particularly the newer and less-advantaged members that need encouragement and inspiration. Many ways of doing this will suggest themselves.

Fourth, increasingly the Conference headquarters should serve as a central repository for the publications of constituent members and affiliated organizations. For this an excellent beginning has been made at the College of the Pacific in the California History and Western Americana Room. In the not-distant future an interested individual should be able to find here a comprehensive number of local society publications, properly filed and catalogued - the repository should be the central clearing house of the Conference.

Fifth, an important, continuing objective should be the locating and marking of historic sites. This is so obvious that mere mention is sufficient to place the subject in its proper category.

Sixth, the question of legal incorporation of the Conference of California Historical Societies is worthy of most careful consideration. Before actual incorporation is accomplished preliminary considerations should be thoroughly discussed and sufficient time allowed to arrive at mature decisions, looking well to the future of the Conference and the welfare of the state. I anticipate no difficulty in finding the necessary professional legal talent within the membership of the federation itself.

Seventh, the Conference as a whole, acting on the findings and recommendations of its properly qualified officers and other agencies, should be in a position to recommend, from time to time, acts of legislation in harmony with its main purposes, such as the restoration and preservation of worthy landmarks and the wise conservation and use of our great natural and historical resources.

Eighth, it becomes clearly logical that with the multiplication of functions and objectives the time is not far distant when the Conference should have a regularly employed salaried executive secretary, or director, located at the permanent headquarters, a person possessing high qualifications and particularly fitted for the special position. Such a position would possess vast potentiality.

Ninth, the Conference will be well advised to explore with care an expanded and expanding plan of publication of critically edited bulletins, monographs, and perhaps other forms of historical documents and materials. As a prerequisite to such a program, as in that involved in the preceding item, there must be provision for necessary funds. No assignable limit may be set to the number and magnitude of future activities, provided there is adequate financial underwriting, and pre-supposing a competent and enthusiastic personnel.

These nine projects, herein set forth in bare outline, constitute a very large assignment. Still others will doubtless occur to interested members. They are offered as a great challenge of the beckoning future to an organization that possesses real enthusiasm and a world of promise.

Notes on the Conference

Many members of the Conference will remember the delightful talk given at the annual meeting in Columbia by Mrs. May Perry about her work as curator of the Placer County Historical Society Museum. A visit to Auburn and the museum this summer confirmed what everyone knew. Mrs. Perry has a wonderful museum largely because of her ingenuity. When passing through Auburn, drive out to the Fair Grounds and see what can be done with a small financial budget and a large amount of imagination and hard work.

Those members of the Conference who are especially interested in historical railroads will enjoy Short Line Junction by Jack R. Wagner and published by the Academy Library Guild of Fresno.

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With the retirement of our beloved president, Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt, to the status of president emeritus after two years of inspirational leadership, it seems appropriate to print this beautiful tribute to him by conference member Stuart Gibbons of Stockton.

"MR. CALIFORNIA"

From fertile valleys and lofty peaks
He comes to me and gently speaks
Of days gone by since forty nine
That brought to us from every clime
Men of wisdom, might and vision
Whose lives with ardor and decision
Have given to us this treasure great
Evidenced through our golden state.

O--ye grand and noble man
Like our Sequoias there you stand.
Across the plains and round the horn
Your forebears came "ere you were born"
Your life, your deeds, your writings, too,
Have earned the title given you.
We are proud indeed to be your friend
Whose love and reverence shall never end
And from mountain top to ocean blue
Your life will be forever true.

You well deserve this tribute paid
"Mr. California"--from every nook and glade.
And the standards now that are well set
Will ever inspire men to work and get.
And glorious will the day to come
Be forever, by one who has won
The honor, the fame, delight and joy
Dreamed of since he was a little boy.
And as the sun sets in the west
And true men are tried by this great test
They will honor and adore
All you did--forever more.

ARE YOU VIEWING? "THERE IS A TELLING",
Presented by Chico State College, Sunday Evenings - 5:30 to 6 P.M.
Channel 12