



SUTTER'S FORT

STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT



JOHN AUGUSTUS SUTTER

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DIVISION OF BEACHES AND PARKS
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

SUTTER'S FORT

STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT

Compiled by
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SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

The Cover Portrait: John Augustus Sutter. From an oil painting owned by Mr. H. K. Douglas Peachy, Los Angeles. (Courtesy Mr. Peachy and the Los Angeles County Museum.)



Birds-eye view of Sutter's Fort Historical Monument, from the southwest, showing the central building, the southeast bastion, and the main entrance at 27th and L Streets, Sacramento

FOREWORD

It was to John Augustus Sutter's stronghold, founded under the Mexican flag, that many covered wagon pioneers made their way from 1841 on. Here were men and events responsible for the finding of that first bit of precious ore in the tailrace of the sawmill which Sutter and James Wilson Marshall were constructing at Coloma. Here came the first wave of gold seekers, and the first storekeepers, blacksmiths, and other tradesmen to outfit them for the mines. Sutter's eldest son ordered the first survey of the City of Sacramento in the latter part of 1848. And the elder Sutter became a member of the first Constitutional Convention in 1849 which prepared the way for admission of California as the thirty-first State.

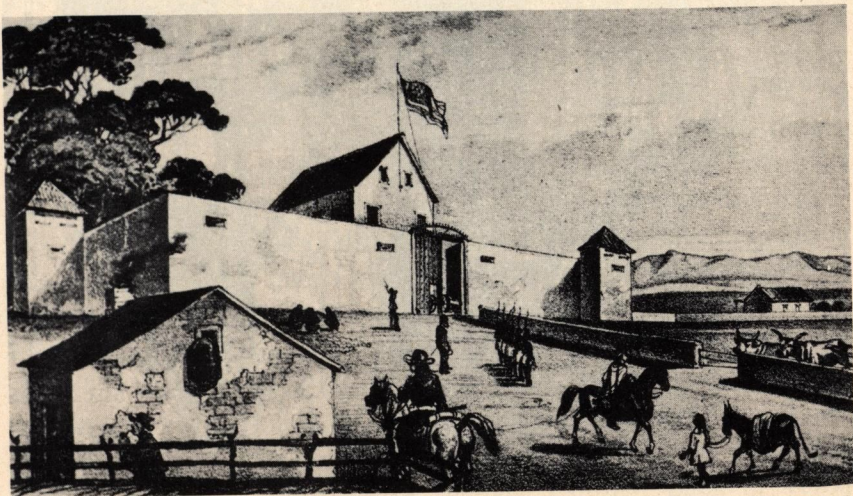
The reconstructed fort, owned and maintained by the State of California, is now a museum of California's early days, where may be seen objects of many kinds used by the settlers in building the empire envisioned by Sutter and his fellow pioneers.

THE STORY OF SUTTER AND HIS FORT

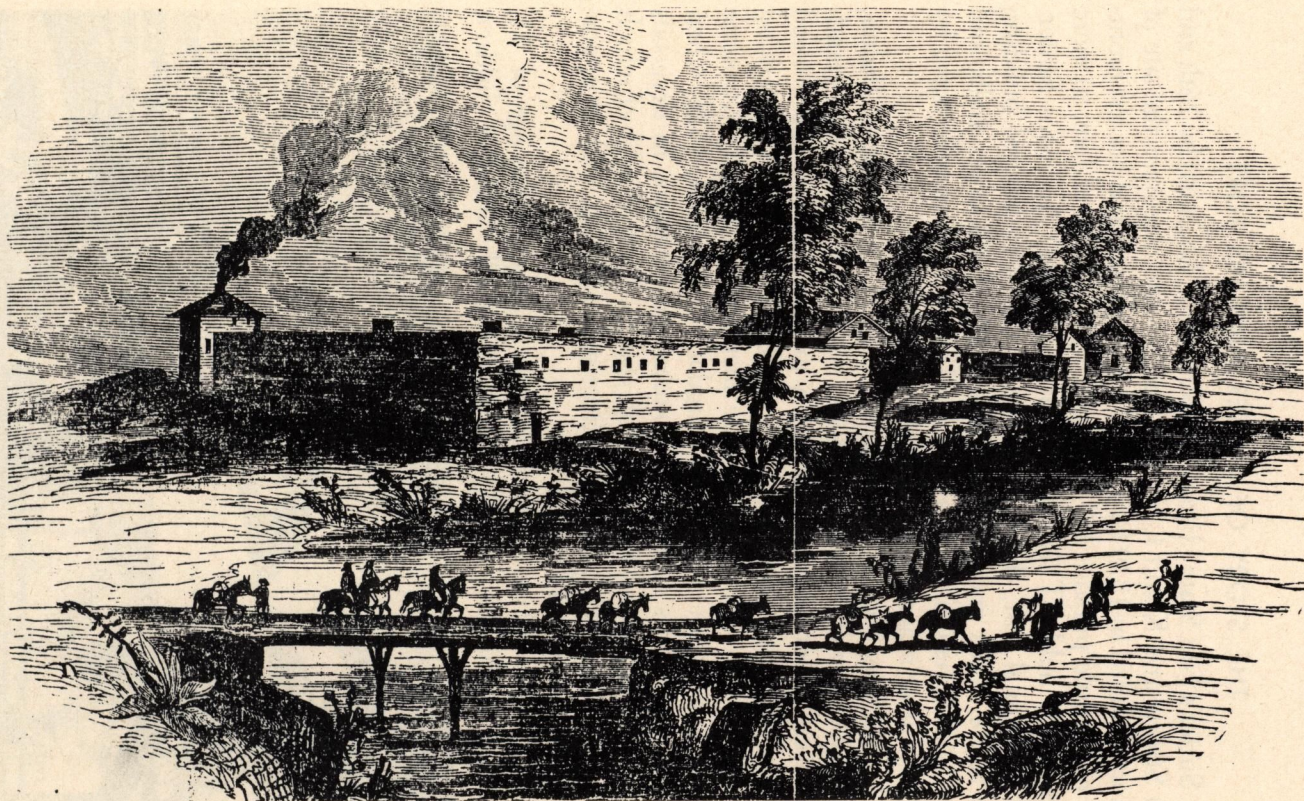
Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument, bounded by 26th and 28th Streets and K and L Streets, Sacramento, occupies the site of the fort founded in 1839 by a Swiss whose prosaic and not too profitable mercantile pursuits led him, as if by the hand of fate, to more adventurous fields. This was Johann (or John) Augustus Sutter. Of his original fort, there remains the two-story central building with adobe walls and oak floor joists. The fort's outer walls and rooms, which had disappeared by the 1860's, were reconstructed by the State after it acquired the property in 1890.

Sutter was born on February 15, 1803, in Kandern, Baden, Germany, a few miles from the Swiss border. His father and grandfather were paper-makers. In his early manhood he was apprenticed to a firm of printers and booksellers in Basle. Later, while clerking in a draper's shop in Aarburg, he met his future wife, Annette Dübeld. They were married in Burgdorf, October 24, 1826, when Sutter was 23. His subsequent commercial ventures, in drygoods and other lines, proved unsuccessful, and the New World, of which he had heard and read, became increasingly alluring, with its opportunities for fame and fortune.

Hoping to improve his prospects, Sutter, at the age of 31, embarked for America in 1834, leaving his wife and five children



Sutter's Fort about 1847, from a lithograph of a drawing by Lt. J. W. Revere, U.S.N.



Sutter's Fort, from a woodcut published in Gleason's Pictorial, Boston, 1851. This is probably meant for a view from the north-east. In Sutter's time a slough ran along the north wall. Early drawings of the fort vary considerably in details.

(one of whom died after his departure). He was not to see his family again until 15 years had passed.

Sutter Comes West

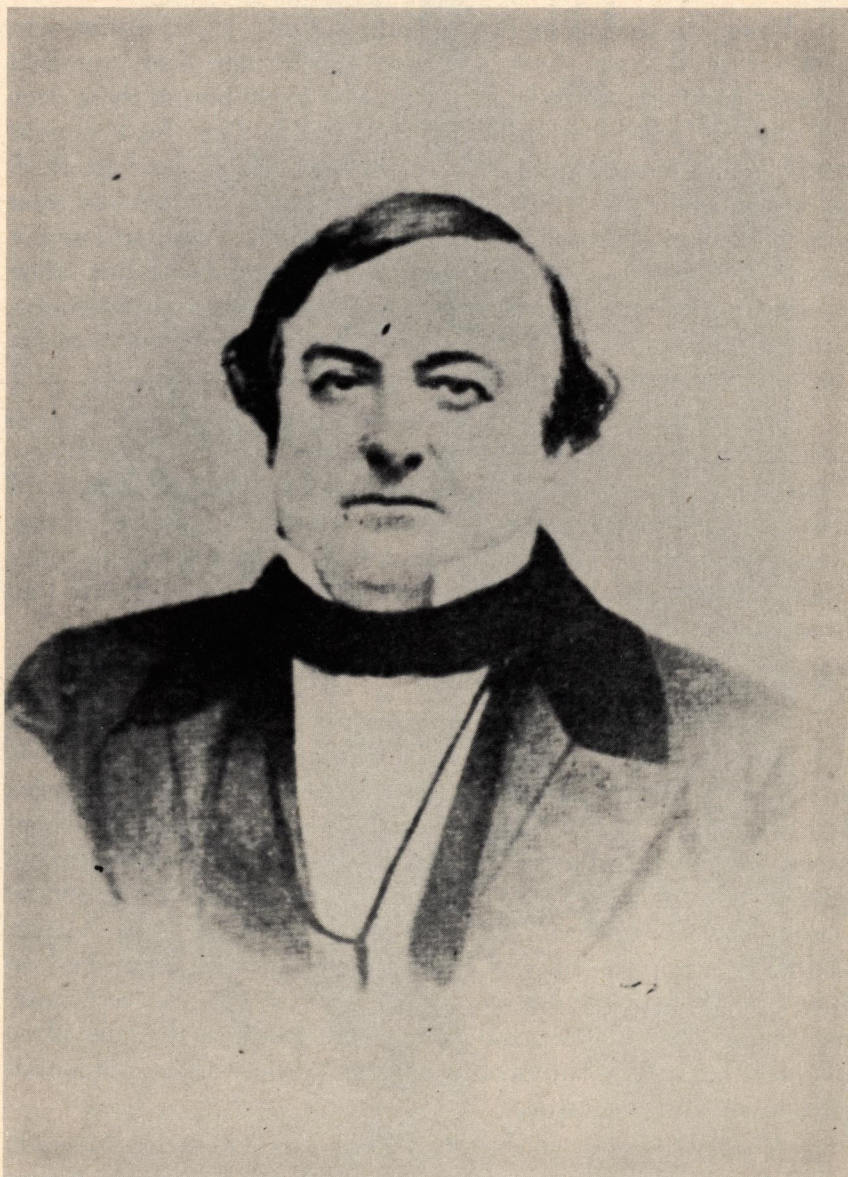
Upon his arrival in New York in July, 1834, Sutter was attracted to Missouri, then a frontier state where were numbers of Swiss and German emigrants. One who knew him in those days said that he "wanted to strike out" and that he had "his eyes constantly on various projects of an adventurous character." In 1835 he joined a party of Santa Fe traders. A similar venture the next year was followed by a period of storekeeping in Westport (now a part of Kansas City). Not satisfied with the results of this latest mercantile endeavor, Sutter left on April 1, 1838, with the intention of attaching himself to some caravan of fur traders en route to the Rocky Mountains or the Pacific Coast.

He found such a caravan sponsored by the American Fur Company and accompanied it to Fort Laramie on the North Platte River. From there, with some companions, Sutter went to Fort Hall (Idaho), and on to Fort Walla Walla and The Dalles. The party pressed ahead to the Willamette Mission, in Oregon, and in October reached Fort Vancouver, Pacific headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company.

California via Hawaii and Alaska

It seems to have been Sutter's intention to proceed southward to California, but he was advised not to attempt it, as the season was late and the Indians hostile. Instead, he sailed on the Hudson's Bay ship "Columbia" for the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands, where he landed at Honolulu on December 9, 1838. No ship was leaving soon for California. Eventually Sutter sailed as supercargo on the trading ship "Clementine" to the Russian colony at Sitka, Alaska; and thence to Yerba Buena (San Francisco), where he arrived on July 1, 1839. Mexican officials ordered the "Clementine" to Monterey, official port of entry, and Sutter went ashore at the later place two days later, with letters of introduction from various influential persons met on his travels.

After conferring at the headquarters of Governor Alvarado about the possibilities of establishing himself in the country, Sutter returned to Yerba Buena. He visited General Vallejo, in command of Mexican forces at Sonoma, and continued to Fort Ross, the Russian colony on the coast of Sonoma County. Back in Yerba



Juan B. Alvarado, Mexican governor of California, who in 1841 granted Sutter New Helvetia—76 square miles of land

Buena once more, the energetic Sutter prepared to go up the Sacramento River in quest of the empire of which he was now dreaming. He chartered the schooner "Isabella" from the firm of Spear & Hinckley, and two smaller vessels. These were loaded with provisions, tools, seeds, guns and powder, and on August 1, 1839, Sutter, in a four-oared pinnace manned by Kanakas who had come from Honolulu, led his little fleet up the bay and into the Sacramento. The captain of the "Isabella" was William Heath Davis, later the author of "Seventy-five Years in California," one of the important source books of California history.

Leaving the Sacramento and sailing a short distance up the American, Sutter landed at a point approximately where the foot of 28th Street now is—a mile or so from the knoll on which he would in time erect his fort. The date of his landing, as given on the official marker, is August 12, 1839, but one of Sutter's biographers states that it was the 13th or 14th.

The Fort Is Built

Davis and some of Sutter's party returned to Yerba Buena, but a dozen or so persons remained with him, including some Kanakas (two of them women). A tent and some huts of brush and reeds provided shelter. In time a more permanent structure of adobe, or mud bricks mixed with straw and dried in the sun, was built, largely with Indian labor, for Sutter proved adept at handling the natives, and employed them to care for his stock, and fields, and perform various household and other duties.

Sutter built his fort to protect his territory from Indians or others who might covet his lands and stock. It was also a trading post. It was a private project. His first real military title, military commander of the northern frontier, was bestowed by Governor Micheltorena in 1844.

Early descriptions of the fort vary in details. Sutter later recalled: "I built one large building and surrounded it with walls 18 feet high and bastions. The walls enclosed about five acres. They were of adobe blocks about two and one-half feet thick, bastions five feet thick, and under the bastions the prisons. I then erected other buildings, bakery, mill, blanket factory, all inside. A tannery was built on the spot where I had first landed. . . . There were several other outhouses for vaqueros, etc. . . . Four years were occupied in building the fort. . . ."



Sutter's Fort in the 1850's, looking southwest. From a drawing in The Society of California Pioneers, San Francisco. The floral gardens (not a part of the fort) were near 28th and K Streets.

Before its completion, Dufflot de Mofras, a French traveler, visited the fort in 1841. "The fort of New Helvetia," he wrote, "adjoins a small stream whose steep sides form a natural defense." (This was the slough which ran along the north wall). ". . . The corners are flanked by square bastions two stories high. . . . Equipment consists of 16 or 18 small cannon, carronades of various sizes purchased from ships, and two fine bronze field pieces procured . . . from the Russians. Sutter possesses in addition . . . enough guns and rifles to arm 60 or 80 men. . . . Active watches, including guards and a night patrol, have been organized. . . . New Helvetia houses at the present time 30 white men, including Germans, Swiss, Canadians, Americans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen. . . ."

A young Swedish scholar came to Sutter's Fort in 1843 and reported his impressions: "It is protected by a wall 10 feet high. . . . Twenty-four pieces of cannon, of different sizes, can be brought to defend the walls. Against the walls on the inside are erected the storehouses of the establishment; also, a distillery to make spirits from the wheat and grapes, together with shops for coopers, blacksmiths, saddlers, granaries, and huts for laborers. At the gate way is always stationed a servant, armed as a sentinel. I arrived . . . in the morning, just as the people were being assembled for labor by the discordant notes of a Mexican drum. I found Captain Sutter busily employed in distributing orders for the day. He received me with great hospitality. . . . The magical sound of the drum had gathered together several hundred Indians, who flocked to their morning meal, preparatory to the labors of the day, reaping wheat. The morning meal over, they filed off to the field in a kind of military order, armed with a sickle and hook."

It was observed that breakfast for Sutter and his guests and others "was served up in an outhouse adjoining the kitchen. It consisted of wholesome cornbread, eggs, ham, an excellent piece of venison, and coffee. In the rear of the fort is a large pond, the borders of which are planted with willows and other trees. This pond furnishes water for domestic use, and for irrigating the garden. . . . In the front of the fort there are enclosures for horses and cattle, and places to deposit corn and wheat. . . ."

Pierson B. Reading, a Sutter employee, who became one of Shasta County's most prominent pioneers, saw the fort in November, 1843. "It is the largest and best fortified fort in California. The walls encompass an area of about 400 feet square, and are built of sun-dried bricks. They are about three feet thick, 15 feet high,

and defended by several large cannon planted in reversed bastions. . . ." In one corner of the yard was a gristmill, and there were also shops for carpenters and shoemakers.

Bryant's Vivid Description

One of the best contemporary accounts of the fort is that of Edwin Bryant, who came overland in 1846, when the American conquest of California was under way, and who afterwards wrote a book, "What I Saw in California," which was published in 1848. "Riding up to the front gate, I saw two Indian sentinels pacing to and fro before it, and several Americans, or *foreigners*, (as all who are not Californians by birth are here called), sitting in the gateway, dressed in buckskin pantaloons and blue sailors' shirts, with white stars worked on the collars. I inquired if Captain Sutter was in the fort. A very small man, with a peculiarly sharp red face and a most voluble tongue, gave the response. He was probably a corporal. He said, in substance, that perhaps I was not aware of the great changes which had recently taken place in California—that the fort belonged to the United States, and that Captain Sutter, although he was in the fort, had no control over it. . . .

"The fort is a parallelogram, about 500 feet in length and 150 feet in breadth. . . . The main building, or residence, stands near the center of the area, or court, enclosed by the walls. A row of shops, storerooms, and barracks are enclosed within, and line the walls on every side. . . . The principal gates on the east and south are . . . defended by heavy artillery, through portholes pierced in the walls. At this time the fort is manned by about 50 well-disciplined Indians, and 10 or 12 white men, all under the pay of the United States. . . . The garrison is under the command of Mr. Kern, the artist of Captain Fremont's exploring expedition.

"The number of laboring Indians employed by Captain Sutter during the seasons of sowing and harvest, is from two to three hundred. Some of these are clothed in shirts and blankets, but a large portion of them are entirely naked. They are paid so much per day for their labor, in such articles of merchandise as they may select from the store. Cotton cloth and handkerchiefs are what they most freely purchase. Common brown cotton cloth sells at one dollar per yard. A tin coin issued by Captain Sutter circulates among them, upon which is stamped the number of days that the holder

has labored. These stamps indicate the value in merchandise to which the laborer or holder is entitled. . . .

"The laboring or field Indians about the fort are fed upon the offal of slaughtered animals, and upon the bran sifted from the ground wheat. This is boiled in large iron kettles. It is then placed in wooden troughs standing in the court, around which the several messes seat themselves and scoop out with their hands this poor fodder. . . .

"The wheat crop of Captain Sutter, the present year (1846) is about eight thousand bushels. . . . The average yield to the acre Captain S. estimated at twenty-five bushels. In favorable seasons this yield is doubled. The wheat fields of Captain S. are secured against the cattle and horses by ditches.

"Wheat is selling at the fort at two dollars and fifty cents per fanega, rather more than two bushels English measure. . . . Unbolted flour sells at eight dollars per one hundred pounds.



Bastion or blockhouse at Fort Ross. Russia abandoned this colony in 1841 and Sutter purchased the buildings and equipment. Some of the supplies, etc., were brought to Sutter's Fort.

"I saw near the fort a small patch of hemp, which had been sown as an experiment, in the spring, and had not been irrigated. I never saw a ranker growth of hemp in Kentucky. Vegetables of several kinds appeared to be abundant, and in perfection. . . .

"Captain Sutter's dining-room and his table furniture do not present a very luxurious appearance. The room is unfurnished, with the exception of a common deal table standing in the centre, and some benches, which are substitutes for chairs. The table, when spread, presented a correspondingly primitive simplicity of aspect and of viands. The first course consisted of good soup, served to each guest, in a china bowl, with silver spoons. The bowls, after they had been used for this purpose, were taken away and cleaned by the Indian servant, and were afterwards used as tumblers or goblets, from which we drank our water. The next course consisted of two dishes of meat, one roasted and one fried, and both highly seasoned with onions. Bread, cheese, butter, and melons constituted the dessert. . . ."

The Changing Political Scene

Sutter became a naturalized Mexican citizen August 29, 1840 (in order to qualify for a land grant), and on June 18, 1841, received from Governor Alvarado title to 11 leagues which had been surveyed by Jean Jacques Vioget of Yerba Buena. The grant, which Sutter named New Helvetia (after his homeland), extended to the Buttes beyond the present City of Marysville, and contained 48,827 acres—about 76 square miles. (This grant was finally approved by the U. S. courts June 5, 1865).

In the fall of 1841 Sutter bought Fort Ross (now a State Historical Monument), and other Russian holdings in that area for \$30,000, to be paid in produce and coin within four years. The deal brought him some needed supplies, but otherwise proved a burdensome investment. The Russians had abandoned their colony as unprofitable, but with their withdrawal the influx of Americans began to alarm Mexican authorities in California.

The first emigrants found their way to Sutter's Fort in the early forties. Lieutenant John Charles Fremont and his guide, Kit Carson, arrived with their exploring party in March, 1844. (He was to re-enter the picture shortly in connection with the acquisition of California by the United States.)

As the pre-gold rush emigrants arrived in ever-increasing numbers, Sutter furnished many of them with shelter and supplies, or

put them to work. Old diaries and letters written by men and women who were here in Sutter's time often tell of his generosity and hospitality.

In 1845 Sutter joined Micheltorena, then Governor, in an effort to quell insurgents. Following the battle of Cahuenga on February 19th, against the Alvarado-Castro forces, Sutter was held captive in Los Angeles by the victors. Released, he returned to his fort in April. His late adventures had resulted in another land grant, the Sobrante, from Micheltorena, but this was declared invalid by the Supreme Court in 1858.

Then, in June, 1846, an impatient band of men from "the States" captured Sonoma and proclaimed the California or Bear Flag Republic. General Vallejo, his brother, and several others were taken prisoners to Sutter's Fort, although Sutter apparently was not directly involved in this episode. (John Bidwell, who wrote about his early California experiences in after years, says that "the prisoners were placed in Sutter's parlor—a large room in the south-west corner of the second story of the two-story adobe house—which had but one door and this was now guarded by a sentinel. . . .")



Detail from a diorama showing the arrival of Lt. John C. Fremont, Kit Carson and party at the fort in 1844.

Though obligated to Mexico, Sutter was friendly to Americans. For a time he was under the suspicion of both sides. The American Flag was raised over Sutter's Fort about July 11, 1846, and Fremont's men were temporarily in charge of the fort, as we have seen, when Edwin Bryant arrived about two months later.

As the year 1846 drew toward a close, first relief for the tragic Donner Party of emigrants, which was short of food and about to be trapped in the snow near the summit of the Sierra Nevada at Donner Lake, was sent from Sutter's Fort. Survivors were brought to the fort the following spring.

The Discovery of Gold in 1848

Gold had been found in California prior to 1848, but it was the discovery of the gleaming metal at Sutter's Sawmill in that year which touched off the great gold rush and hastened California's entry into the Union.

For some time, Sutter had felt the need of a better source of lumber, and several expeditions went out in search of a suitable location for a sawmill. A spot was picked on the south fork of the American River, about 50 miles from the fort, in a valley surrounded by pine-clad hills, where the town of Coloma, El Dorado County, was to become established.

A contract, drawn up in August, 1847, by John Bidwell, one of Sutter's clerks, provided terms of partnership between Sutter and James Wilson Marshall for the construction and operation of the sawmill. Marshall, then in his late thirties, was a native of New Jersey—a wheelwright and handyman who became interested in spiritualism. Building of the mill got under way, with the aid of some of the ex-members of the Mormon Battalion, some Indians, and others, and the Peter Wimmer family. Mrs. Wimmer was to cook for the men. Marshall was the boss and Wimmer supervised the Indians digging the race.

In January, 1848, it was found that the tailrace was not deep enough for the water to properly work the mill wheel. More digging loosened the earth and rocks, and the swift water was allowed to sluice the tailrace at night. On or about January 24th, Marshall, while inspecting the results, saw something on the bedrock in the shallow water which excited his curiosity. This was some 200 feet from the west end of the mill. Picking up the object he wondered if it might be gold. It was a thin flake, but malleable when pounded between two rocks. He found some more bits, which he placed in

the crown of his old white hat. Walking up to the men employed at the mill, he said, "Boys, I believe I have found a gold mine." The metal was bitten, pounded, heated and tested with lye. The workmen found some flakes or scales. On January 28th, Marshall arrived at Sutter's Fort, showed his gold to Sutter, and further tests were made. The two men planned to keep the discovery a secret until the sawmill was finished, but it leaked out. Jacob Wittmer, for instance, heard of the gold while on a trip to Coloma with one of Sutter's teams; and when he returned to the fort, with some specimens, offered them to Samuel Brannan's partner in a store, in exchange for brandy. When Sutter confirmed the gold's worth to the doubtful storekeeper, the news spread swiftly.

There are numerous versions of the gold discovery and there have been various claimants to the title of discoverer. Arguments over the date of discovery and the whereabouts of the first piece



James Marshall, in Sutter's office, shows the gold he had discovered at their sawmill at Coloma. Sutter ponders over the significance of the discovery.



Sutter's Sawmill at Coloma, where gold was discovered in the tailrace in 1848. From an engraving.

of gold picked up in the tailrace, also are recurrent. A flake of gold sent to Washington, D. C., in 1848, by Captain Folsom, and described by him as Marshall's first piece, is now in the Smithsonian Institution.

As the result of the excavations at Coloma in 1947 by state and federal experts in cooperation with the State Park Commission, the original tailrace of Sutter's Mill was uncovered, as well as parts of the mill itself. The evidence shows that the mill was 60 feet long and 20 feet wide. The height of the first floor above the foundation was 18 feet; height of the roof peak above foundation, 37.5 feet; and above the floor, 19.5 feet. In front of the mill was the undershot waterwheel, details unknown, but possibly 12 feet in diameter. The straight saw was moved by a crank attached to the hub of the waterwheel. The crank moved a vertical wooden eccentric arm (the "pitman") up and down. The top of this arm was attached by a movable hinge ("pitman iron") to the lower end of the saw. What is believed to be the original pitman iron from Sutter's Mill is now in Sutter's Fort Historical Museum. (The Gold Discovery Site at Coloma is now a state park.)

Gold Rush Excitement

When word of the gold discovery at Sutter's Sawmill reached the East, accompanied by enticing samples of "dust" and nuggets, excitement knew no bounds. All sorts of tales were current—some true, some exaggerated—of the wealth to be had in California. Typical was a communication from Monterey dated August 29, 1848, published in a New York newspaper: ". . . People are running over the country and picking it (gold) out of the earth here and there, just as 1,000 hogs, let loose in a forest, would root up groundnuts. Some get eight or ten ounces a day, and the least active one or two. They make the most who employ the wild Indians . . .; his profits are a dollar a minute. The old Indians know nothing of its value. . . . And white men themselves often give an ounce of it, which is worth at our mint \$18 or more, for a bottle of brandy, a bottle of soda powders, or a plug of tobacco. . . . I know seven men who worked seven weeks and two days . . . on Feather River; they employed . . . 50 Indians, and got out 275 pounds of pure gold. I know the men, and have seen the gold. . . . I know 10 other men who worked 10 days in company, employed no Indians, and averaged . . . \$1,500 each . . . I know another man who got out of a basin in a rock, not larger than a washbowl, 2½ pounds of gold in 15 minutes. . . ."

This naturally fired enthusiasm and the press fanned the blaze. "Bakers keep their ovens hot," said Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, "night and day, turning out immense quantities of ship-bread without supplying the demand; the provision stores of all kinds are besieged by orders. Manufacturers of rubber goods, rifles, pistols, bowie-knives, etc., can scarcely supply the demand." One historian tells how "all sorts of labor-saving machines were invented to facilitate the separation of the gold from gravel and soil. Patented machines, cranks, pumps, overshot wheel attachments, engines, dredges for river beds supposed to be full of gold, and even diving bells, were made and sold. Everything needful in the land of gold, or what sellers could make the buyers believe would be needed, sold freely at high prices."

The seaport towns were especially busy. "Everything in the shape of hull and masts was overhauled and made ready for sea. Steamships, clippers, schooners and brigs sprang from the stocks as if by the magician's wand, and the wharves were alive with . . . workers. The streets were thronged with hurrying, bustling purchasers, most of them conspicuous in traveling attire of significant aspect, rough loose coats and blanket robes meeting high hunting



Mining at Coloma, about 1850-51.—From an ambrotype.

boots, and shaded by huge felt hats of sombre color. . . ." Individuals and mining companies came by way of Cape Horn, or took shorter routes across Panama, Nicaragua or Mexico. During the winter of 1849 and the spring of 1850, some 250 vessels sailed for California from eastern ports alone. The time of average passage was about four months.

The "Forty-niners" came overland, too, on foot or mounted, in dusty wagon columns, crawling over the plains, fording rivers, climbing or descending mountain passes. The starting point was usually on the Missouri River, at St. Joseph or Independence. Indians, cholera, and the perils of the desert added to their hardships. But on they came, entering California by several routes and, once here, heading for the diggings. Mining camps dotted the watercourses, or wherever gold was to be found. Thus grew Coloma, Placerville, Mormon Island, Shasta, Whiskey Town, Horsetown, Port Wine, Auburn, Long Bar, Downieville, Sonora, Columbia, Marysville, Volcano, Jackson, Yankee Jims, Ophir, Last Chance, Ground Hog's Glory and other places, many of them now ghost towns of the golden past.

The historian Bancroft estimated that the white population of California at the close of 1849 was approximately 100,000. By 1852 the estimate was 255,000. The estimated gold production for 1848 was \$10,000,000; for 1849, \$40,000,000; for 1850, \$50,000,000, and for 1853, \$65,000,000, when it began to decline. But for the average miner, it has been said that his profits were often little more than a dollar a day. Many turned to other lines of occupation, and thus helped to build the commerce of the State on an ever broadening foundation.

The great gold rush admittedly brought some disadvantages to society; but, on the other hand, it brought enduring good, stimulated trade and industries throughout the world, and advanced the United States a half-century in its commercial and political interests on the Pacific.

The Fort's Last Days

When news of the gold discovery at the sawmill spread, merchants and others rented space at Sutter's Fort for stores, saloons, blacksmith shops, and boarding houses. Miners, teamsters, mechanics, and adventurers came and went through the gates.

So strong was the desire to make California fortunes quickly that unscrupulous men, sometimes posing as Sutter's friends, caused



Sutter's home at Hock Farm, on the Feather River near Marysville. The cannons are saluting a passing steamboat.

the easy-going Swiss to complain bitterly of being swindled out of his land and other property. Squatters, ignoring his claims, added to his troubles. His debts were piling up, and in an effort to thwart creditors and swindlers, Sutter was advised to transfer his holdings to his eldest son, John A. Sutter, Jr., who had come from Switzerland in the summer of 1848. For a time, Peter H. Burnett, later California's first Governor, was young Sutter's land agent.

The elder Sutter had laid out the town of Sutterville (where Land Park Zoo is now located). In December, 1848, the survey of Sacramento City was made by Captain William H. Warner, U.S.A., on orders of the younger Sutter, and for a while the father and son represented rival communities. Then Sacramento pulled ahead, business developed swiftly on the riverfront, and the firms at Sutter's Fort moved downtown. By the end of 1849 the fort property was in other hands.

Sutter was a member of the Monterey convention which drew up the State Constitution in 1849. In January, 1850, he was joined by Mrs. Sutter, his daughter Eliza and his sons Emil Victor and William Alphonse, whom he had left in Switzerland in 1834. John A. Sutter, Jr. left California in 1850 for Mexico, where he was married, and became U. S. Consul at Acapulco. Eliza subsequently moved to Mexico with her second husband, Dr. Franz



Mades Hotel in Washington, D. C., where Sutter died on June 18, 1880

Link. Emil Sutter became a notary public and official of a savings association in San Francisco, and died in Europe. Alphonse, after adventures in Central America in the Walker filibustering campaign, died in Nevada City, California, in 1863. He left a widow and a son.

Sutter took his family to Hock Farm, on the Feather River near Marysville. He had saved this property from his crumbling empire and lived there until his home burned June 21, 1865, when



This photo of Sutter was taken at his home in Lititz, Pa., in 1877, or about three years before his death at the age of 77.—Courtesy C. E. Grosh.

many valuable records and historical objects were lost. The California Legislature had voted him \$15,000 as a pension in 1864, to be paid at the rate of \$250 monthly for five years.

Sutter Leaves California

At the end of 1865 Sutter and his wife went to Washington, D. C., where he endeavored to obtain reimbursement from Congress. Many felt that he was entitled to this, because of his unselfish aid to emigrants, his services as a builder of the State of California and his losses through adverse decisions affecting his land grants. About 1871 he settled in the Moravian town of Lititz, Pennsylvania. The people there were congenial to his Old World background, and the medicinal springs would be, he thought, beneficial to his health. And there were good schools for his grandchildren.

The spotlight turned on him for a day in 1876 when he presided on Swiss Day at the Centennial in Philadelphia. His public appearances were becoming fewer and fewer as age, ill health and discouragement took their toll. Although he was not destitute, he was comparatively so, when one remembers the potential millions which had been his.

Congress adjourned June 16, 1880, without passing a bill which would have given him \$50,000. Two days later, on June 18th, he died in his room at the Mades Hotel near the Capitol. He was buried at Lititz in a secluded corner of the Moravian Brotherhood's Cemetery, as was his wife, who succumbed on January 19, 1881.

Thus, wrote a biographer, "passed away the last great romanticist and the last great colonial pioneer of America."



"Sutter's Bedroom," in Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument



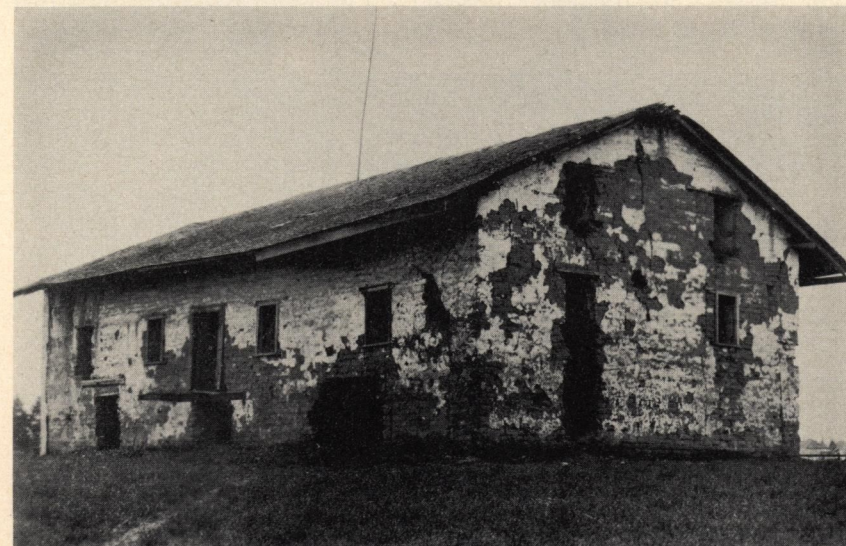
"Peter Slater's Saloon," as reproduced in Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument

RECONSTRUCTION OF SUTTER'S FORT

Some time during the eighties a movement was started to preserve what was left of Sutter's Fort—the central building—and if possible to reconstruct the outer walls. A detailed descriptive report with a diagram of the ground plan of the original fort, as it was about the time of the gold discovery, was published in "*Themis*," a Sacramento periodical. A summary of this report, to which has been added information from other sources, follows:

The central building, with its basement, upper floor and attic, was used by Sutter for storage, offices, living quarters, and business of various kinds connected with the commerce and politics of the fort, the conquest of California and the gold rush. It was also used as a hospital. Many well-known persons were entertained in this building. General William T. Sherman's "Memoirs" tell of a Fourth of July banquet after the gold discovery, attended by Sutter, Col. Mason (the military governor), Captain Folsom and others. By the time the last toast was drunk, the party was a merry one.

The central building walls are 2½ feet thick. "The middle wall extends to the peak of the roof surmounted by a 6" x 6" scantling



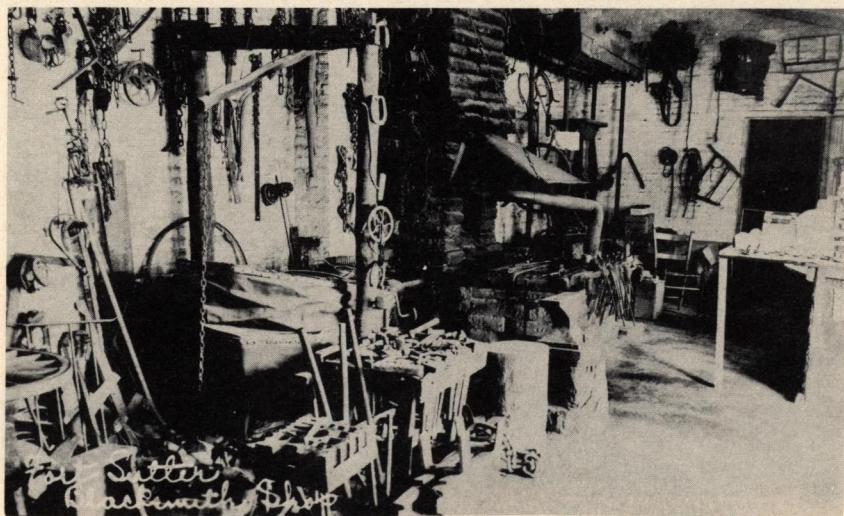
The central building was all that remained of the original fort when this view was taken in 1888

set cornerwise in the wall on which rest the rafters. These were all in place as early as 1843. The shingles are of sugar pine." (Tile was used in place of shingles when the fort was reconstructed.) "The building measures 63-9/12' by 35 feet. . . . The basement is 6' and 9/12' high."

The southeast bastion was 20' x 20' on the outside, 10' x 10' inside, with walls five feet thick for the lower story and 3 feet for the upper. The rooms of both stories were eight feet in the clear. The lower room was used by Sutter as a prison for incorrigibles. Guns mounted in this bastion prior to 1844 were said to have been removed in 1846 and mounted on carriages in the yard.

The northwest bastion was 30' x 35' outside, with walls of the lower story five feet thick and of the upper, three feet. The joists supporting the floor of the upper story were of oak, whipsawed, and the flooring was of pine. The roofs of both bastions were flat, "covered with earth, Mexican style, with an additional roof covered with shingles." The guns in this bastion were removed in 1846 and in 1847 the floor of the second story was removed. Thereafter the room was used as a storage place for hay.

A building on the north wall, used as a distillery about 1843-46, was 60' by 25', and two stories high. Sutter is said to have discontinued the distillery when he found that he could not keep the product from his Indian laborers or soldiers. As reconstructed, this building now has one story, and is used as an art gallery and exhibit room.



Blacksmith Shop, in Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument

Adjoining the distillery on the east was a tool house for implements used in distilling. This site is now a part of the curator's offices, which extend into the lower rooms of the Kyburz Annex adjoining and at the rear of the central building. The upper room of the Kyburz Annex now contains costumes worn by early California settlers. Samuel Kyburz, like Sutter, was a Swiss. He was employed by Sutter, and also operated a boarding house at the fort. When the fort was reconstructed by the State, the Kyburz Annex was built in its present location, with two stories, but there is no indication of such an annex in any known pictures of the fort made about Sutter's time.

At the southwest corner of the fort was a blacksmith shop and coal bin. This was probably the place where the iron parts for the sawmill which Sutter and James Marshall erected at Coloma, were forged. In the gold rush, the fort blacksmiths were kept busy attending to the wants of miners and teamsters. An old-time blacksmith shop has been reproduced on this spot.

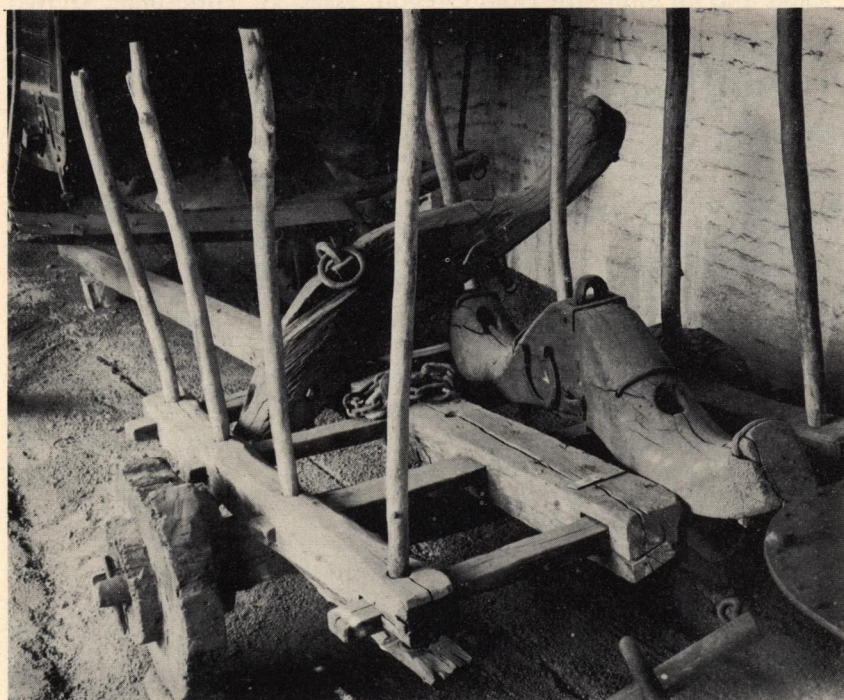
In an open space along the north wall of the fort, just west of the distillery, occurred the fatal quarrel between Charles E. Pickett and an emigrant from Oregon, Isaac W. Alderman, known



"Sutter's Kitchen," in Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument

as "White Horse." This was in 1848. Pickett, a storekeeper, writer of reform pamphlets, and "philosopher," claimed the right to use this space when "White Horse" attempted to fence it in. In the ensuing argument, weapons were brandished and Pickett shot his antagonist. Pickett was tried for murder. Samuel Brannan, an arrival of 1846, who had a store at the fort and became one of California's noted pioneers, was elected judge. A jury of eight, including Sutter, was chosen. Pickett pleaded his own case (self-defense) and Brannan acted as judge advocate. Pickett insisted that he was an American citizen and had the right to bear arms. Brannan decided that Pickett's pistol and knife would be returned to him and they were placed on the table during the trial. Also on the table was a plentiful supply of brandy for the use of judge, jury and spectators. The first jury disagreed and in a new trial Pickett was acquitted.

Generally speaking, the rooms around the fort were 17 feet wide and of various lengths. They were used as living quarters, stores, shops, etc. Sutter's bedroom, kitchen and office, as reproduced, will be found just west of the main gate. A bronze marker,



The oxcart and yokes shown here are typical of transportation in California in Sutter's time

put up by E-Clampus Vitus members in 1926, says that Marshall here disclosed to Sutter on January 28, 1848, his discovery of gold four days before. But this historic incident may have taken place in the central building, where Sutter had quarters at least part of the time he lived at the fort.

As the flow of people through the fort gates increased with the coming of more emigrants and miners, rooms were altered to suit the needs of tenants. It would be difficult to fix the locations of all, who at one time or another, lived or transacted business at Sutter's Fort.

Outside the north wall was a slough which supplied the fort with water. There was also a well within the enclosure. The reminiscences of one pioneer, Benjamin F. Bonney, who came in 1845, state that the well was near the center, and close by was a big oven where bread was baked. Sutter operated one of California's earliest flour mills.

The Fort Is Rebuilt and Becomes a Museum

The fort passed out of Sutter's hands shortly after the discovery of gold and the subdivided property changed ownership from time to time. By the late fifties not much was left of the fort except the central building. This deserted, weatherbeaten structure presented a forlorn appearance in the 1880's, when a movement to preserve it got under way. In 1888, Sacramento Parlor No. 3 and Sunset Parlor No. 26, Native Sons of the Golden West, interested the Grand Parlor in a project to save the famous old landmark. The sum of \$20,000 was raised to purchase the property in 1890. The trustees donated it to the State and the Legislature agreed to accept, reconstruct and maintain the fort. Funds were voted for this purpose.

Actual reconstruction began in 1891. About that time several workmen panned some of the dirt near the east gate and recovered a quantity of gold dust which had been dropped by miners or swept from gambling rooms and stores on the premises. Doubtless this was some of the first gold panned after Marshall's discovery. One of the workmen had a charm or medal made from the gold he found and it may be seen today in a case in the museum gallery.

"Is the fort today just as it was originally?" This question is frequently asked by visitors. The answer is that it occupies the same site, and, broadly speaking, gives a good idea of the layout of the original fort. There is a story that the corners of the fort, which

had disappeared, were relocated in 1872 when an enterprising attorney had a case in which it was necessary to find the southwest angle. He knew that Ephraim Fairchild had formerly operated a blacksmith shop in that corner of the fort and had kept his coal there. By digging until he came to coal dust, the attorney was able to find the inner angle of the fort and the other line was established by adding the thickness of the wall.

After the restoration the fort grounds were planted with lawns, trees, shrubs and flowers. Two little lakes and a rustic bridge have replaced the slough on the north side. The Native Daughters of the Golden West have contributed trees and shrubs, and the park-like grounds, with the time-mellowed walls of the fort and the many historical exhibits, make this monument one of the most delightful and interesting spots in Sacramento.

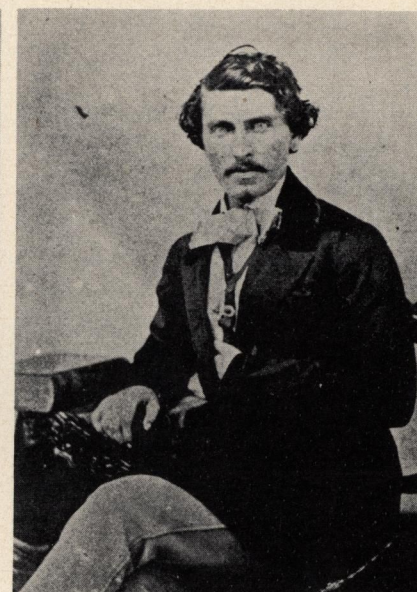
When it was decided to convert the reconstructed fort into a museum, there was at first no definite policy regarding the scope and display of objects. In 1926 the State secured the services of its first curator, the late Harry C. Peterson, and asked him to survey the fort's needs and to set a policy. He recommended that the museum reflect the California period from 1839, when Sutter came, to 1869, when the Gold Spike completed the transcontinental railroad; and that "the buildings, interior and exterior, be handled in such manner as will best retain and impart the romantic atmosphere of the 'Days of Forty-nine'."

The curatorial staff is always glad to consider authentic and interesting objects of the forties, fifties and sixties which would be suitable for the fort collection of firearms, clothing, household furnishings, tools, daguerreotypes, photographs, diaries, letters, mining equipment, stagecoaches, fire engines, wagons and carts, tools, hair wreaths, music boxes, trunks, strong boxes, printing presses, etc. Approximately 8,000 objects are listed in the museum's records, but relatively few are exhibited at a time. Loans are occasionally accepted, but outright gifts are preferred. They must be without restrictions.

Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument is open daily except Thanksgiving and Christmas, from 10 to 4, October through March, and 10 to 5, April through September. The Sunday hours are 10 to 5 throughout the year. Admission is free. Picnicking or lunching is not permitted anywhere on the grounds or in the buildings. The fort is administered as part of the State Park System under the Division of Beaches and Parks, Department of Natural Resources.



Emil Victor Sutter, second son of Sutter, who came to California in 1850



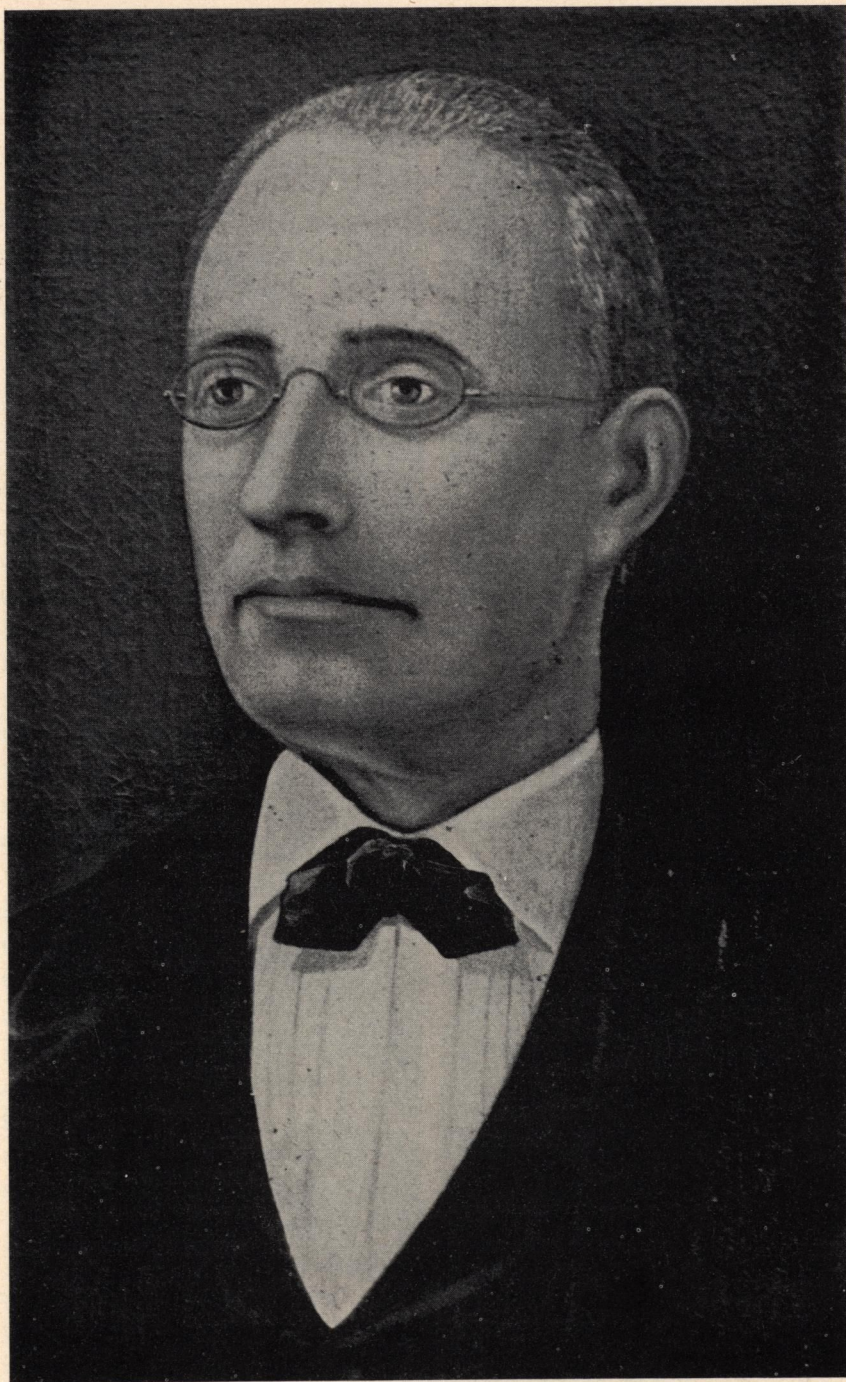
Alphonse Wilhelm Sutter, youngest son of Sutter, who died in 1863



Sutter in uniform. He was military commander of the northern frontier under the Mexican regime. In 1853 the State Legislature gave him the honorary title of Major-General of the California Militia. He was commonly called "Captain," but this was a courtesy title.



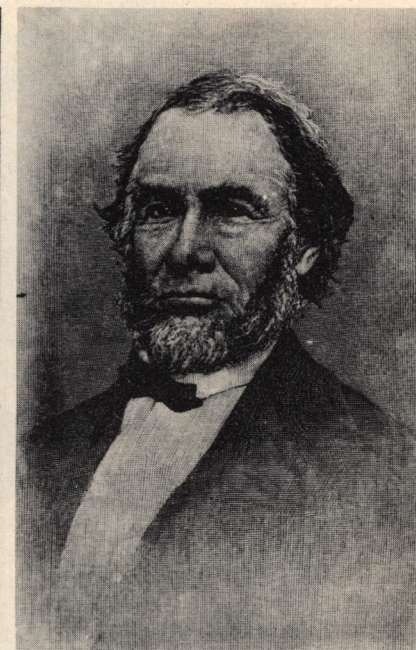
Anna Dübel Sutter, wife of the founder of the fort. She arrived in California from Switzerland in 1850.



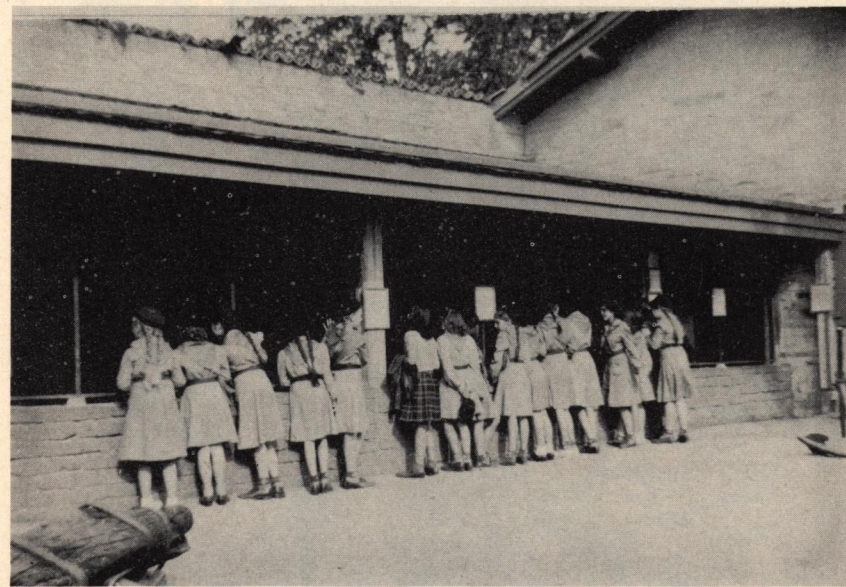
John A. Sutter, Jr., eldest son of Sutter and the founder of Sacramento. From a painting in Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument.



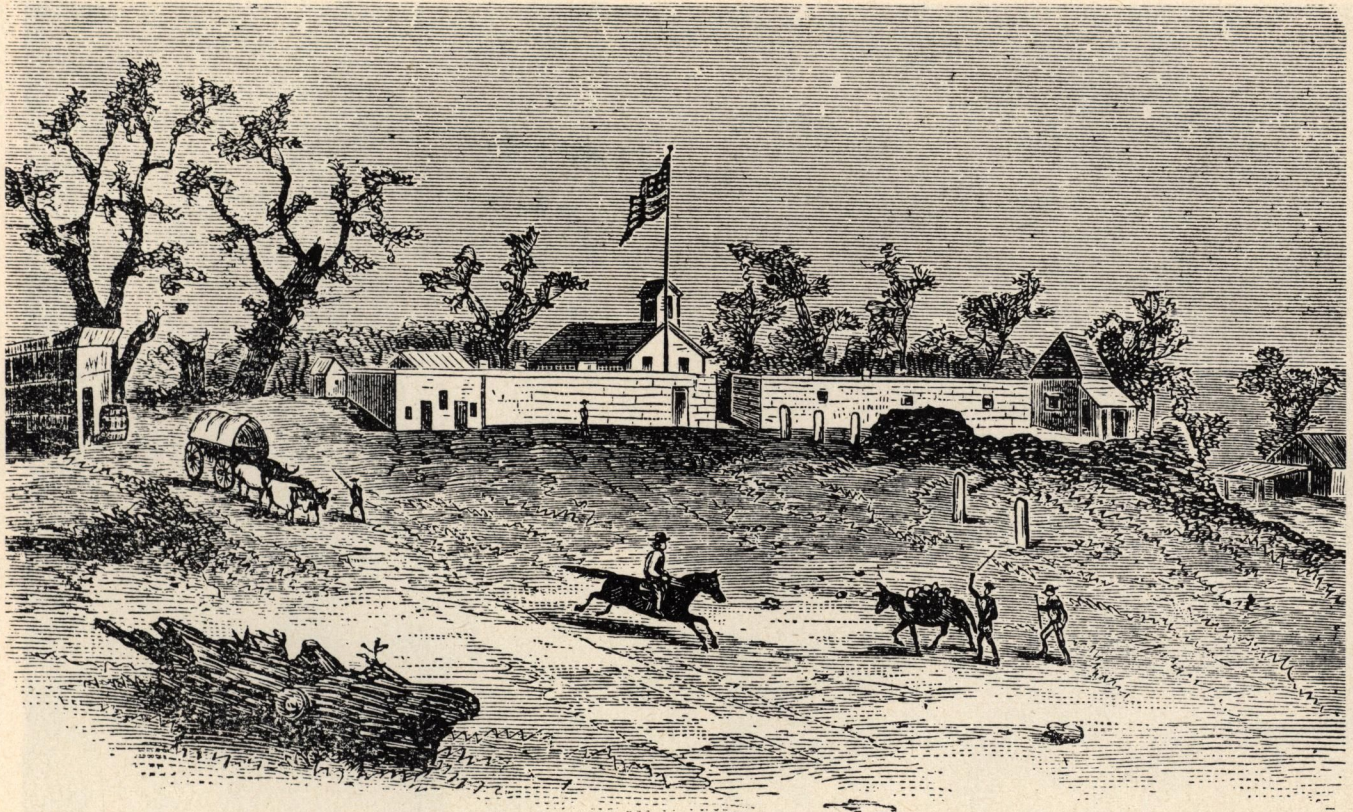
A senorita inspects the historic firebell during a centennial program at Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument



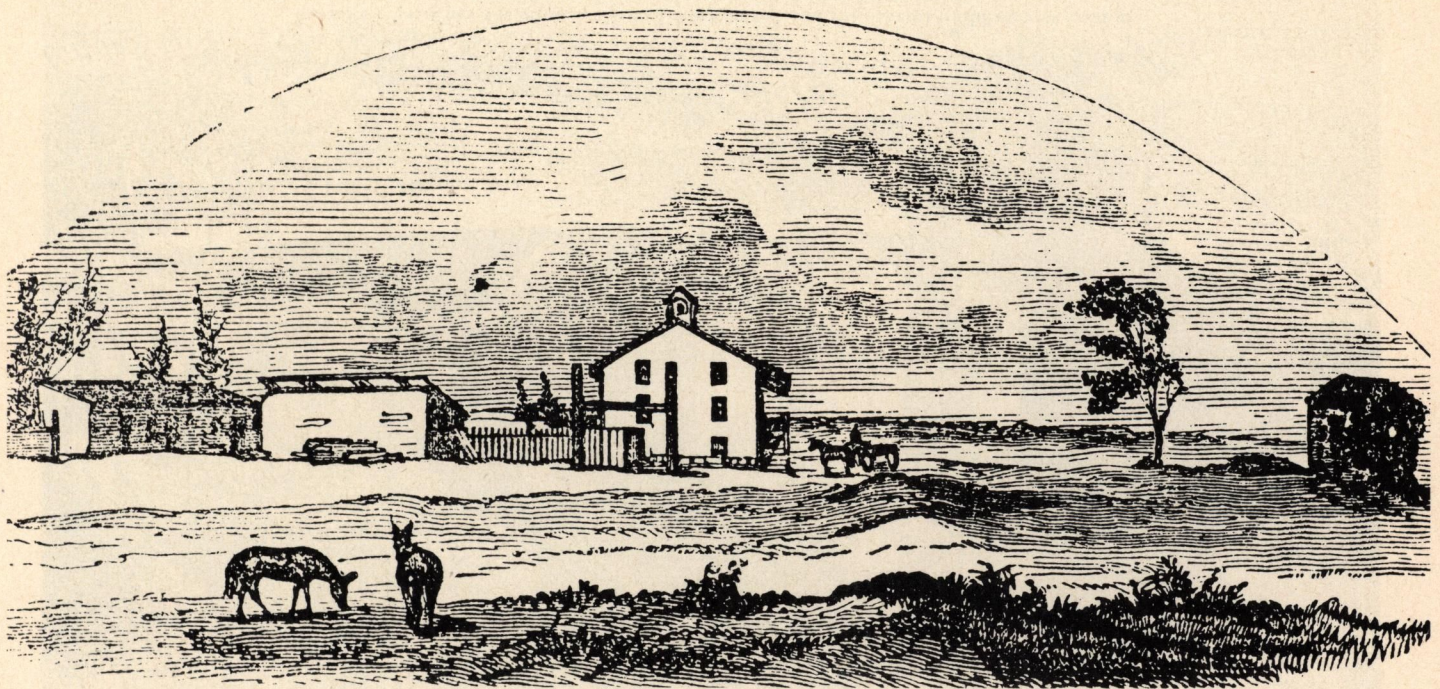
James Wilson Marshall, who brought the first gold to Sutter's Fort from the mill race at Coloma, where it had been discovered a few days before



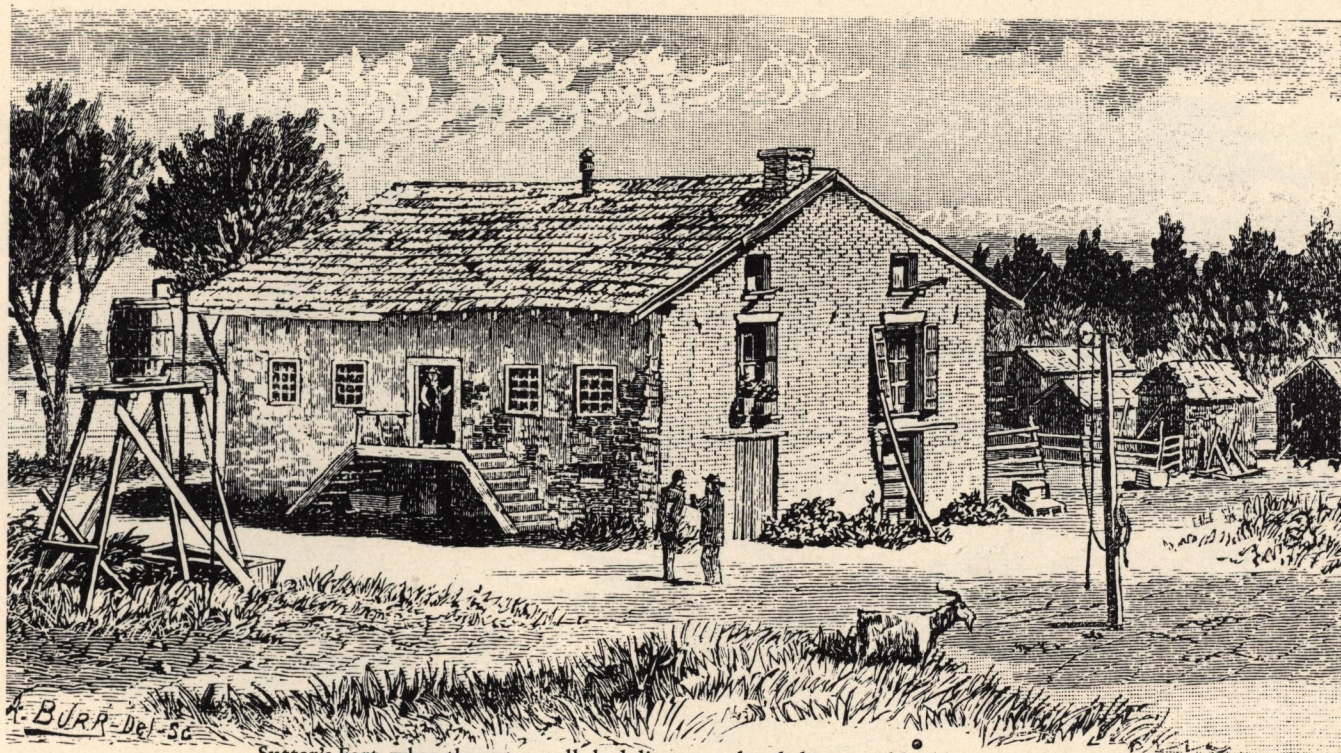
A group of Girl Scouts enjoying the exhibits at Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument. Many school classes and other groups study the collections.



Sutter's Fort in 1849. One of many woodcut versions.



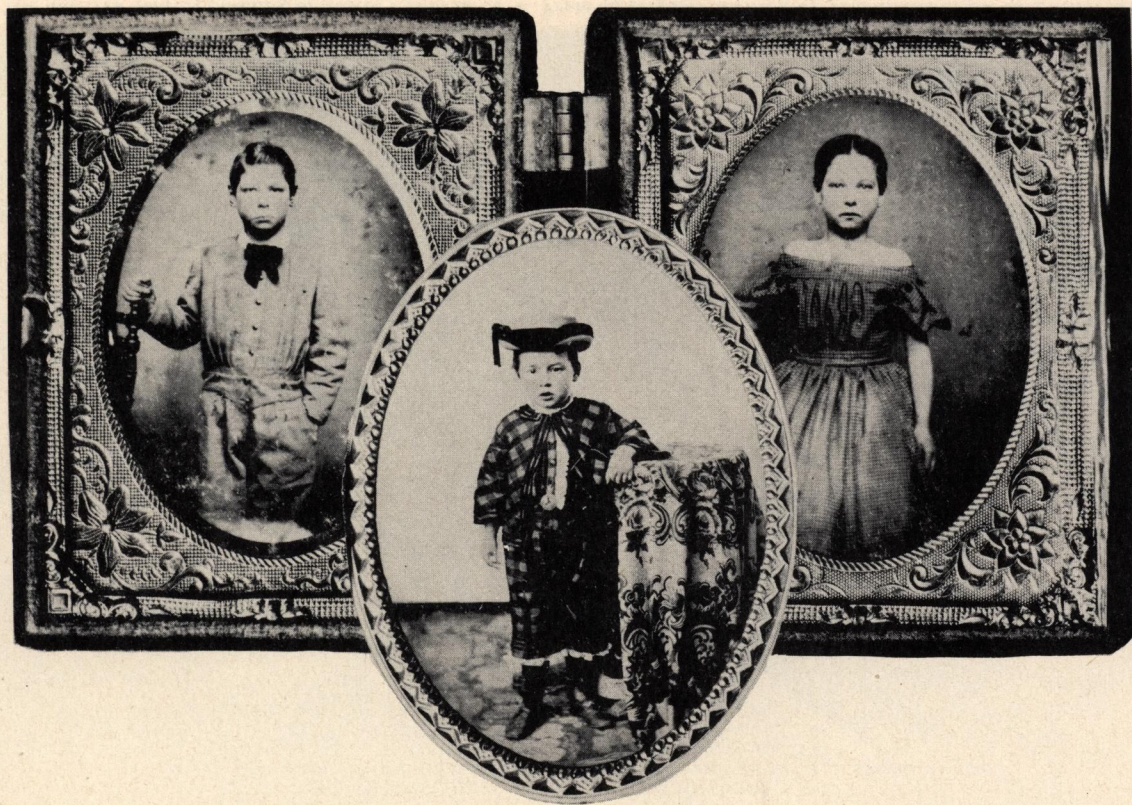
Sutter's Fort in 1858, when the outer walls had disappeared. From a woodcut in the California Pictorial Almanac, 1859.



Sutter's Fort, when the outer walls had disappeared and the central building was used as a private house. From a wood engraving published in 1882.



The deserted central building of Sutter's Fort in 1876. From an original drawing by E. Eastman in the fort collection.



Three daguerreotypes in the collection at Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument.
Hundreds of portraits of early settlers are in its files.

EXHIBITS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

HAY PRESS: Just inside main gate. This great device was built of wood in 1868, in Plumas County, and its huge oak screw, once turned by horse or mule power, excites comment.

FIRE BELL TOWER: Just inside main gate. It formerly was on top of Young America No. 6, fire station on 10th Street, between I and J Streets, and was erected in the fifties. The bell welcomed the first Pony Express rider in 1860; tolled for the death of President Lincoln; and celebrated the driving of the Gold Spike completing the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

NEWSPAPER ROOM: Old Washington hand press, type cases, scarce specimens of California newspapers, and portraits of early editors. (The "Placer Times," Sacramento's first newspaper, was printed at the fort in 1849.)

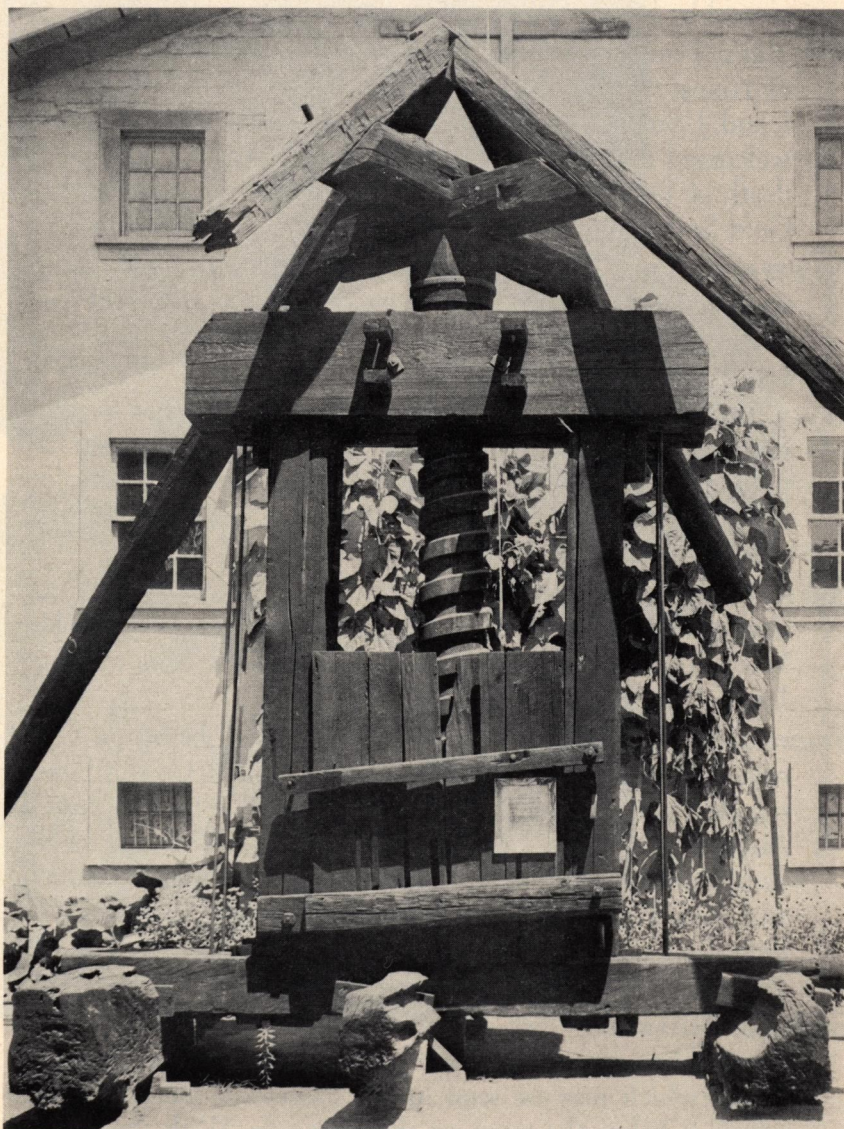
PETER SLATER'S SALOON: On this site Slater sold liquor to thirsty pioneers and before that, James Wilson Marshall is said to have used the space for a woodworking shop. The restored saloon is typical of the period it represents, with its crude bar, rustic chairs and tables, and old jugs and bottles.

NATIVE SONS' AND DAUGHTERS' ROOM: Contains objects of early days collected by the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West. The site was formerly occupied by the store of Priest, Lee & Co., in 1848.

STAGECOACHES, FIRE ENGINES, ETC.: These will be found under cover on either side of the central building. The Concord stages traveled many a dusty mile between such mining camps as Auburn, Placerville, Yankee Jim's, Iowa Hill, Downieville, Rough and Ready, Bidwell Bar, Sonora, Columbia, Marysville and Port Wine. Also on display are ox yokes, an ox cart, a great freight wagon of mining days, and an old hearse from Volcano, Amador County.

CENTRAL BUILDING: Part of the original fort, this is of special interest because of its thick adobe walls and the great oak beams which may be seen in the basement, the entrance to which is below the steps on the west side. With the Kyburz Annex and basement, the central building contains five large

rooms filled with objects which the pioneers used in their domestic, commercial and social life. Here are things relating to Sutter, Fremont, James Marshall, Kit Carson; saddles, carpet bags, musical instruments, costumes, branding irons, dishes and glassware, Chinese miners, etc. Skis used by the celebrated Snowshoe Thompson in the fifties to carry the mail from Placerville to Genoa, Nevada, will be seen in the basement.



Hay baler, made in Plumas County in the 1860's

PIONEER GALLERY: Here are portraits of Californians who came west before 1869. There are also displays which are changed periodically, and which are designed to interpret some phase of California or the fort's history.



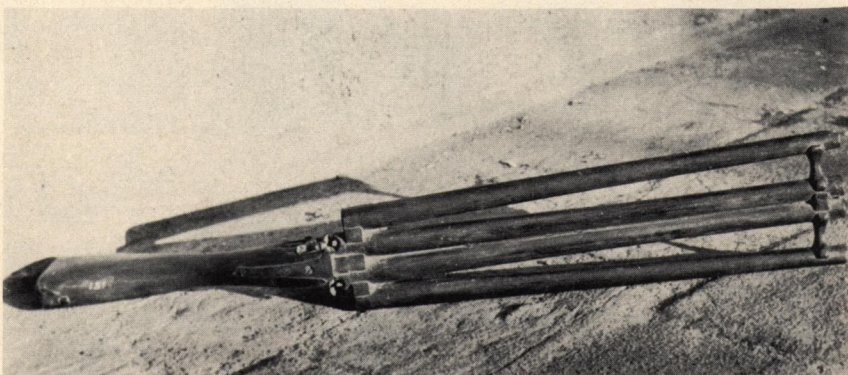
This tiny wooden doll survived the Donner Party's hardships in the winter of 1846-47, and may now be seen in one of the most important exhibits in Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument

FREMONT-KIT CARSON DIORAMA: A feature of the gallery is this three-dimensional scene done to scale and depicting an historic incident in the story of Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument. This was the arrival of Lt. John C. Fremont and his guide, Kit Carson, in March, 1844. With members of their exploring party, mounted on tired horses, they are shown being welcomed at the main gate by Sutter. This beautifully modelled diorama is the work of the late Jo Mora, widely-known artist-sculptor of Pebble Beach, California.

WEST END ROOMS: This series of rooms, connected by a corridor, displays household furnishings, hair wreaths, melodeons, music boxes, etc., and firearms. The Donner Party exhibit is noteworthy, containing as it does many items of unquestioned authenticity relating to the tragic party of emigrants caught in the mountains in the winter of 1846-47. Included is material from the Patty Reed Lewis estate, the Charles F. McGlashan collection, and the Capt. Charles Davis collection.

BLACKSMITH SHOP: Located on the site of one in operation at the time of the gold discovery. Here may be seen old tools, a forge, great bellows, and the sooty objects that collect in old blacksmith shops.

SUTTER'S QUARTERS: Three connecting rooms, just west of the main gate, represent the bedroom, kitchen and office of Sutter. It was in such surroundings as these that Marshall displayed the first gold which he brought from Sutter's sawmill at Coloma. Life-size figures of Sutter and Marshall, the former pondering over the significance of the gold in his hand, will be found in Sutter's office.



One of the most popular items in the firearms collection at Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument is this four-barreled "goose gun"

MUSEUM OFFICES: Persons having business with the staff of Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument will find the curator's offices at the rear of the central building, and adjoining the art gallery. Here are kept the museum records, the files of pictures and documents relating to California pioneers and historical places and events. This material may be perused by students, historians, journalists and the public generally, subject to museum rules.

MATERIAL NOT ON DISPLAY: Such material, for the most part, is available for inspection by qualified persons when arrangements are made at the curator's office.

SUTTER PLAQUE, OTHER MARKERS: On the south end of the central building is Taliabue's portrait in bas-relief of John A. Sutter. This was put up in 1939 to commemorate the centennial of the arrival of Sutter in 1839. The inscription follows:

This memorial erected by the Native Sons and Native Daughters of the Golden West in honor of the first Alcalde of New Helvetia; Captain in the regular Mexican Army; good Samaritan to the pioneers; one under whose regime gold was discovered; benefactor of the Great State of California—

GENERAL JOHN A. SUTTER

Fort restored as a result of movement inaugurated by Native Sons of the Golden West, the funds being originally provided by the order, the State of California and individuals. August 12, 1939.

Also on the south end are three bronze tablets:

To the memory of

GENERAL JOHN A. SUTTER

Of Swiss origin who on August 12, 1839, founded New Helvetia which became California's capital city of Sacramento. This plaque has been presented by the Government of Switzerland May 30, 1939.

Dedicated to the memory of

JOHN AUGUSTUS SUTTER

By the citizens of Lititz, Pennsylvania, in which city he spent his latter years and is buried in the Moravian Cemetery. August 12, 1939.

Dedicated by friends in memory of

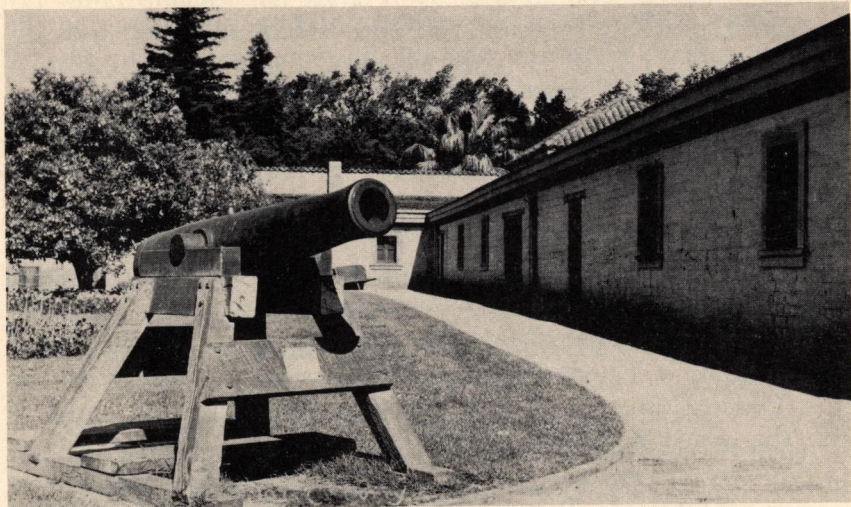
HARRY CLAUDE PETERSON

Curator 1926-1941

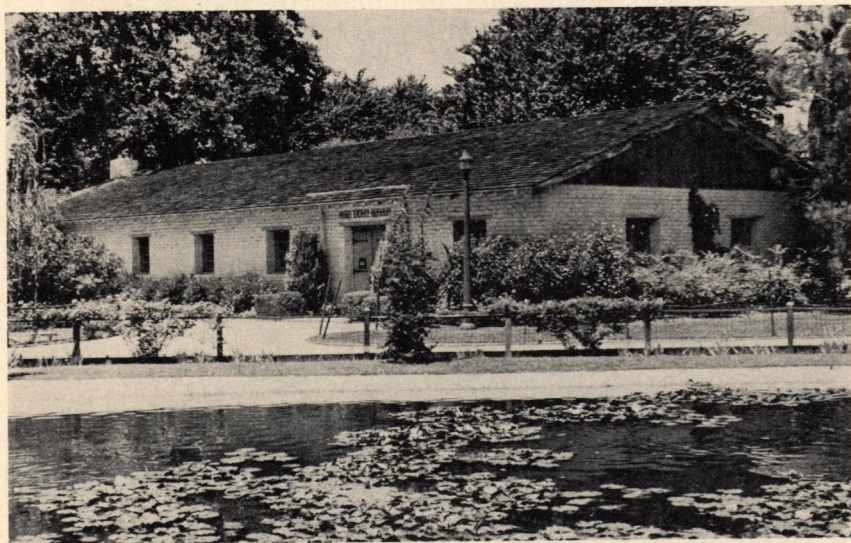
Born August 11, 1876

Died January 23, 1941

STATE INDIAN MUSEUM: On the fort grounds outside the walls, fronting on K Street. Artifacts, etc., of the California Indian.



One of the old cannon at Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument



The State Indian Museum is on the fort grounds, with the main entrance on K Street



This costumed group might have come from Sutter's native land. Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument is the scene of many historical programs.

BOOKS ABOUT SUTTER AND HIS FORT

If you would know more of the fort's history, and of the events, some tragic, some humorous, which happened here, we suggest the following books for your pleasure and information. They, and many others relating to Sutter's era in California, may be obtained from your public library or bookstore.

Sutter, the Man and His Empire, by James Peter Zollinger

Sutter of California, by Julian Dana

Sutter's Own Story, by Erwin G. Gudde

Additional copies of this booklet may be purchased for 25 cents at the curator's office, Sutter's Fort State Historical Monument, Sacramento 16, California. Enclose 3 cents for postage.



"The End of the Line." This old Concord stagecoach used to haul passengers and gold dust in the Mother Lode region. Gone are the gay paint and the crack of the whip. Now it is a ghost of the glamorous past.—From a drawing by T. Giavis.



THE RECORDS OF HISTORY

De Witt Bishop