

# Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

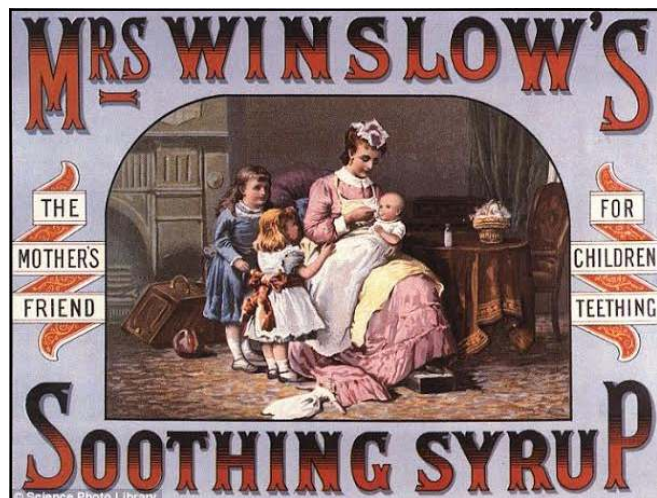
SEPT-OCT., 2016, VOL. 1-2

SCHS Presents

Eric Bradner: Drugs in the Old West

Tuesday, September 27, 7:00 PM (Social Time, 6:30)

Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building, 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento



Dice weren't the only things loaded in the old west. With the ready availability of drugs in the Victorian era, both legal and illegal, it's surprising we hear so little about the subject. But between freely-prescribing doctors, opium dens, loosely regulated pharmacies, and mail-order patent medicines loaded with addictive drugs, is it any wonder that many of the pioneers were under the influence?

The average drug addict of the 19th century was a white middle class woman, who bought her drugs legally, and may not have been aware she was even taking drugs. Until the Pure Food & Drug Act of 1906, there were almost no regulations!

Patent medicines led the way into the modern era of advertising and commerce. It was a golden era for promotional items, and advertising signs and banners

were abundant. Train passengers in the middle of nowhere could look out their windows to see "Use Hamlin's Wizard Oil for Aches and Pains" painted on the very rocks!

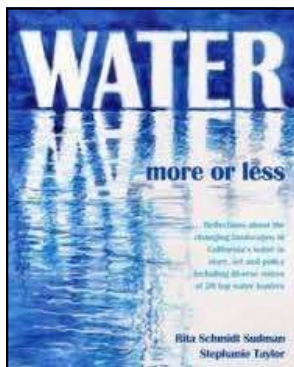
Mrs. Winslow, Lydia Pinkham, Dr. Kilmer and the like were household names. Moreover, they were often respected community leaders, employers, and philanthropists. Many were teetotalers and favored Prohibition, even as they peddled their alcoholic mixtures to other declared teetotalers. Join us as SCHS Treasurer and Old City Cemetery researcher Eric Bradner provides an uncut dose of history!

SCHS Presents

Rita Schmidt Sudman and Stephanie Taylor: *Water More or Less*

Tuesday, October 25, 7:00 PM (Social Time, 6:30)

Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building, 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento



California's water policy and use are changing in dramatic ways. Droughts, floods and water quality issues cast harsh light on how we use water in our lives, our agriculture and our environment. Although fighting over water is a tradition throughout California, nowhere are the lines of dispute more sharply drawn lately, then in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Most Californians and millions of acres of farmland rely on the Delta for all or part of their water supply.

In their new anthology *Water More or Less*, Journalist Rita Schmidt Sudman and artist/essayist Stephanie Taylor capture moments of these changes in paintings and words, portraying a slice of the daily lives of fishermen, farmers, biologists and others about the changing landscape of California's water. Twenty top water policy leaders add their diverse voices with personal essays written just for this book, and tell why they care so passionately about water.

Taylor, the region's most prolific historic muralist, and Sudman, former director and current senior advisor of the Water Education Foundation, will join SCHS Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> to provide intriguing insights on how we got to this point in our region and state's history. They will further propose options for solutions. A book-signing will follow this visually stimulating presentation. Guests are welcome.

## David Lubin

### Promoting Sacramento Valley Agriculture

By Maryellen Burns

After the Gold Rush boom turned to bust, Sacramento agriculture and commerce became the region's defining enterprises, attracting hundreds of Jews who left the persecution, poverty and pogroms of Eastern Europe to settle here.

In 1874, David Lubin, a Polish émigré whose family left Poland because of laws banning Jews from owning land or holding political office, drifted to California. He worked at odd jobs until he amassed sufficient funds to open the "very small and crude" Mechanics Store in Sacramento. A year or two later his half-brother, Harris Weinstock, and his sister, Jeanette Levy, joined the dry goods emporium, which soon became the largest mail order business on the West Coast. Over the years the newly named Weinstock, Lubin & Co. became a landmark department store chain, introducing progressive business and labor practices that rippled across the nation.



Photo: Keith Burns collection

Lubin soon became impatient and wanted to do more than just run the family department store. His interest in agriculture and the problems of farmers had already led him to create a new kind of overalls, a clod crusher and cultivator, and eight additional agricultural patents. He bought a ranch eighteen miles from Sacramento and started orchards and wheat farms, introducing European farming methods to the region. His success led him to help formulate the California Fruit Growers Association, a cooperative marketing group.

In the early 1880s, with Jewish immigrants arriving in America in massive numbers, Jewish leaders formed organizations to settle the newcomers on farms and assist them financially to pursue agriculture, rather than funnel them into cities where they might be marginalized in ghettos. Lubin and Harris decided to join the effort and offered space for ten families to begin a Jewish agricultural colony in what would become Orange Vale.

Moses Wahrhaftig took them up on their offer, settling his mother, his brother Peter and family on one of the plots. They had no experience as farmers. Moses was a printer, Peter a lawyer by trade, but soon each family was successful enough to purchase ten acres each. An invasion of locusts in 1891 destroyed Moses's farm and he quit to start a newspaper. Most of the other colonists failed then or in 1905 when a severe drought destroyed the citrus crop. Peter was determined to stay with it. He schooled himself in scientific and sustainable farming methods and with his son Solomon pur-

chased more land. They became respected orchardists, growing Tokay grapes, peaches, olives and other fruits, through at least the 1950s.

Lubin became director of the International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews in 1891, traveling and campaigning extensively later on behalf of tariff reform along with subsidies and protection for farmers. His son, Simon, helped him develop a proposal for an international chamber of agriculture. In 1896, David Lubin moved to Europe to found the International Institute of Agriculture to help farmers share knowledge, produce systematically, establish a cooperative system of rural credit, and have control over the marketing of their products. It is still a permanent part of the UN.

However, he remained committed to Orange Vale. In 1905 he advocated for a government postal service to directly connect farmers with consumers throughout the region. In 1914 a version of his postal initiative was adopted by Woodrow Wilson's administration, as a national effort to pick up farm fresh products—butter, eggs, poultry and vegetables—from rural farms and ship them to urban destinations in an effort to cheapen and improve the food supply. The Farm to Table postal movement lasted until 1920 and has been credited with helping to revolutionize not only mail order but the national highway system to help deliver the goods.

Maryellen Burns is collecting stories about the history of Jews in agriculture in the Sacramento Valley. Many more families settled in Orangevale, The Delta, the Foothills and Chico. She can be contacted at: [foodtalk@me.com](mailto:foodtalk@me.com) if you have a story or history to share.

### SCHS FALL OUTREACH

In addition to some of the events noted on page 4, SCHS will have a table at a number of community events, along with other area historical/preservation groups. Board members will chat with the public, offering books and membership information, hunting for the next interesting speaker. If you're attending one of the following, be sure to say hello.

#### California Extreme Precipitation Symposium

September 6, Hyatt Regency, 8:30-4:30

#### Preservation Sacramento Home Tour Merchants

Fair September 11, T St. Median at 39 to 48th, 10-4

#### Farm to Fork Festival

September 24, Capital Mall, 11-6

**NEW on Radio KFBK, 1530 AM**  
**SCHS Business History Showcase**

## John Sutter and the Development of California Agriculture

By Bill George

The foundations of California agriculture are rooted behind the white walls of Sutter's Fort. Before the Gold Rush, the Fort was one of the most important structures in California. The proprietor of the Fort was Johann Augustus Sutter, a Swiss adventurer who found his way through Mexican-controlled territory to what is today Sacramento. Sutter earned an enormous land grant from the Mexicans and created what he called "New Helvetia" a name designed to market his land holdings to pioneers from around the world.

William Tecumseh Sherman, the famous Civil War General, once said in a speech that the man most responsible for making California a part of the United States was John Sutter. And "it wasn't because Sutter was a great soldier fighting the Mexicans, it was because Sutter opened California to migration," says Sutter's Fort historian Steve Beck. "He envisioned an agricultural empire."

Much to the annoyance of the Mexican Government, Russia controlled Ft. Ross on the California coast. The Russians built it as an agricultural complex even though they relied on the fur trade to support it. Once the seal and the otter population had been eliminated through over-trapping, it became superfluous to the Russians to maintain it, because they could not grow wheat on the coast. But they had steel plows, threshing floors, winnowing machines and everything Sutter needed to make agriculture viable in the Sacramento valley. With his 1841 purchase of Ft. Ross for \$30,000 dollars, Sutter acquired everything he needed to expand his farms.

From 1840 to 1846 Sutter had the only gristmill in the Sacramento Valley. In the 1840s, Sutter became known throughout the world and the population in the area grew steadily. The gristmill was kept running 24 hours a day 7 days a week to feed the growing number of pioneers. Sutter worked hard to improve agricultural techniques and methods and he planted more and more fields all the time, with the idea of producing crops that could be shipped to Hawaii and all over the western United States.

The agricultural enterprise Sutter created amazed visitors for its scope and breath and its diversity. "He owned everything between Sacramento and Yuba City. Most of the wheat fields were in the north as well as a 300-acre garden that existed just to the north of the Fort. So people would have seen large fields of wheat, melon, potato, and a variety of other vegetables. Charles Kruse was here with Fremont's expedition in 1844 and he commented in his diary on how amazed he was at the variety of goods and produce that was available in March of 1844. "One of the things he was surprised to find was hot chocolate," Beck said.

By 1850 Sutter had established Hock Farm on the Feather River, a magnificent farm that caught the attention of thousands of people drawn to California for the Gold Rush. Here is a description from the Sacramento Transcript of April 25, 1850:



Local residents restoring the Sutter Hock Farm facade ca. 1927. Photo E. von Geldern, via Wikipedia

About eight miles below Yuba City, as you ascend Feather River, the residence of Capt. Sutter meets the view, and commands the admiration of the traveller. It is situated on a high and beautiful plain, which presents as far as the eye can reach a verdant and flowery landscape. The Hock Farm comprises about six hundred acres of this plain. Near the bank of the river, and close to a steamboat landing, stand the residence and out buildings of Capt. Sutter. Above and below these, are large gardens, which in their appearance at present give the best possible evidence that California is not altogether a barren, unproductive region, as is sometimes reported.

Already may be seen in his garden green peas in blossom, which give the best evidence of the good qualities of the soil, from their rank growth and healthy appearance. A large variety of vegetables are in a flourishing state, while his radishes, lettuce, onions, beets...

Sutter's efforts have earned him the honor of being called the father of California agriculture. "I would most definitely say that, and not only would I say that, but *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine*, published in the 1850s, commented regularly on Hock Farm," says historian Beck. It seems odd to us today, but many observers in the 1850s believed that a land so rich in gold could not support agriculture. Sutter showed that many crops could be raised in California. Long after the gold petered out, California agriculture continues to yield dividends, and today the state grows ten percent of the nation's food and more than 400 agricultural commodities. It's the golden harvest first sown by John Sutter over 175 years ago.

Bill George, an SCHS Board member, is the producer of four documentary films about California history, including *Beyond a Miracle, the Creation of California's Empire of Agriculture*.



John Sutter, image: Sutter's Fort SHP Teachers Guide



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**GOLDEN NUGGETS**



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 September to June

## OUT & ABOUT

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE & CONTACT
Sunday Sept. 11	10 AM-4 PM	<b>Preservation Sacramento Home Tour</b> This years self guided home tour spotlights the Elmhurst neighborhood between 39th & 48th Streets . Tour features the lovely Julia Morgan-designed house and includes Mediterranean, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman homes. Advance tix, \$30, day of sale \$35.	Preservation Sacramento P.O. Box 162140 Sacramento, CA 916-202-2815 <a href="http://PreservationSacramento.org">PreservationSacramento.org</a> for details on tour and advance tix purchase
Saturday Oct. 8	10 AM -4 PM	<b>A Thirst for History Archives Crawl</b> Gather stamps in passports and view treasures from dozens of archives and special collections libraries. Visit with archivists and members of historical organizations, go on special behind-the-scenes tours. Free.	California State Archives, 1020 O St. California State Library, 900 N St. Central Library, Sac Room, 808 I St. Center for Sacramento History, 505 Sequoia Pacific Blvd.
Fri - Sat Oct.14-15 Oct.21-22 Oct.28-29	6:30-9:00 PM Tours depart every half hour	<b>Annual Ghost Tours</b> Join the “ghosts” of early Sacramento on an eerie journey back in time! Hear tantalizing tales of how folks lived—and died—in our fair city. A Sacramento History Museum & Old Sac Living History program. Not suitable for ages under 9. No refunds or exchanges.	Sacramento History Museum 101 I Street, Old Sacramento 916-808-7059 <a href="http://sachistorymuseum.org/tours">http://sachistorymuseum.org/tours</a>
Sunday Nov. 6	1:00 -2:30 PM	<b>Genealogy: American Settlement Patterns</b> Popular lecturer and historian Kathryn Marshall will discuss the fascinating history of cluster and chain migration by New Englanders and others moving to the Mid-West, where they settled among transplanted cultures from Germany and the South.	Central Library West Meeting Room, 1st floor 828 I Street, Sacramento 916-264-2920 <a href="http://saclibrary.org">saclibrary.org</a>