



1931

The history of Sutter's Fort, 1839-1931

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THE
HISTORY OF SUTTER'S FORT
1839-1931

By
Herbert D. Gwinn

May 15, 1931

A Thesis
Submitted to the Department of History
College of the Pacific

In partial fulfillment
of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

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DATED: *June 2, 1931*

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INTRODUCTION

Of all the stories and articles written about Captain J.A. Sutter in recent years, not one of them has adequately covered the history of his famous Fort. To the layman the fort itself may seem unimportant, but when we stop to consider that it was an outpost of civilization penetrating the wilderness of Central California, offering shelter to those who pioneered before us, we must confess that its existence was necessary to protect and usher into full City-hood, the infant Sacramento, then known as New Helvetia.

After the gold rush, Sutter lost his fortunes and returned to the east to spend the remaining years of his life in trying to recover his losses through court procedures. He died without recovering his property, but his name lived on as one who had pioneered in California.

The Native Sons of the Golden West and other organizations decided that the site of this old fort at Sacramento should be purchased, and the fort restored to its original condition. This was done and the finished project is now one of the show places of Sacramento. But it is only a restoration, and it never can supplant the original in historical lore.

The fort was established by its owner as an outpost in the wilderness, and was doubtless the scene of many events of early California History. Not only that, but being a fairly well armed fort at the time, it played its part in deciding the course of history in the early days of California.

Since the fort was worthy of restoration, why should not its history be preserved? Thus was determined the subject of this thesis.

Unearthing the history of the old fort was an interesting research. There were no great number of living old-timers who could describe the fort accurately as they had seen it prior to 1849. Written descriptions of any detail were very rare, and even these were in some cases, not very accurate.

Bancroft was the only historian of the latter part of the nineteenth century who saw the ultimate historical value in collecting narratives, reminiscences, manuscripts, etc., from early California pioneers. Thus Bancroft's collection was used as the chief source of material for this thesis.

There were a few early books, written by visitors to California in the early days. Fortunately Bancroft had accumulated copies of these in his collection.

For more recent historical accounts of the fort, and particularly the restoration; the newspaper and magazine files of the California State Library are unexcelled.

The work was begun by carefully searching through

Bancroft's six volumes of California History, noting the sources of his material. The next step was to examine Bancroft's original sources. These were found in the Bancroft Library at the University of California.

Many sources were found treating with Sutter's life and adventures but very few of these dealt directly with the fort. Since the subject of this thesis was not to include the life of Captain Sutter, all sources (after careful examination) that did not refer to the fort were necessarily discarded.

Having gleaned enough sources to agree generally upon the early appearance of the fort, the next step was to record the more important events that had occurred there and to describe the daily routine, etc. Material on this was more plentiful. Nearly every narrative consulted spoke in glowing terms of Sutter's methods of operation at the fort. The record of important events was found among the reports of various scientific and military expeditions. Fremont's report was particularly valuable in this respect as well as "A Transcript of Edward M. Kern's Letters." (Kern was in command of the fort during the American Conquest of California.)

The descriptions of the fort presented herein are the only ones that agree in general. Others were so vague or unreliable that they were valueless in constructing an ac-

curate picture of the old fort. Sketches and paintings of the fort in the early days were found to be imaginative and inaccurate in many cases, in comparison with the written descriptions. Details were sometimes sacrificed to make a better sketch or drawing.

The drawings and sketches presented herein are for comparison, and are as exact as the writer was able to copy them. I have endeavored in copying the originals to pay particular attention to detail.

The material for the chapter entitled "Fort Sutter Today," was secured through personal observations and by measuring and photographing the fort. It is merely a summary of the reconstructed fort, inserted for comparison with contemporary descriptions of the original structure.

This work is intended solely as a history of the fort. Anecdotes and personal quotations have been employed only where they would serve to better illustrate a point.

CHAPTER I
THE BUILDING OF THE FORT

Sutter arrived in California in 1839 with the idea of establishing himself somewhere within the interior of that country. It has been thought that Sutter had in a remote recess of his mind a plan for the formulating of an empire when he had secured possession of a strip of territory in California. Although Sutter failed to found an empire of his own, he, nevertheless, contributed indirectly to the development of a restless nation.

Before Sutter could set up an establishment it was necessary to consult the proper authorities in California. Accordingly, Sutter set out for Monterey to interview Alvarado, who was then Governor of the Department of Alta California.¹ Upon Sutter's arrival in Monterey, he lost no time in explaining the object of his visit to Alvarado. Sutter asked Alvarado for permission to found a colony for his little band of followers somewhere within the interior of California. Alvarado was favorably impressed with this plan and advised Sutter to become a Mexican citizen. According to Mexican law at that time, it would be one year

¹ Hittell, History of California, II, 282.

from the date of application for citizenship before the naturalization papers were granted. In the meantime, while Sutter was awaiting his papers, Alvarado suggested that Sutter make a journey inland, select a suitable tract of land for his operations, and file a claim for it.¹

Sutter received a letter of introduction to General Vallejo, who, at that time, was located at Sonoma. After visiting with Vallejo, Sutter went to Fort Ross, the Russian establishment in California. Both Vallejo and Rotchef, who was the manager of the Russian-American Fur Company at Fort Ross, advised Sutter to settle somewhere in the Suisun or Napa Valleys.²

Sutter, however, had other plans. His idea was to locate a trading post as far as possible from the interference of Mexican officials. Therefore, he had decided to locate upon the bank of the Sacramento River, as far inland as possible. Sutter had hopes of making peace with the Indians of that region so that he could secure their services. He dreamed of carrying on an Indian project, by which the natives would receive some instruction in useful things and in turn repay him with their labor.

In vision, this establishment would be a trading post for trappers and a possible rendezvous for the lawless bands, which infested Central California at that time. By

¹—Bancroft, History of California, IV, 129.

² Ibid, 130.

offering shelter to these bands, Sutter hoped to secure them as allies in time of need.¹

Thus having made up his mind to this extent, Sutter returned to Yerba Buena (now San Francisco) to outfit himself for his inland venture. Since he was not possessed of extensive funds, he was obliged to supply himself on credit. This practice later placed him in several embarrassing situations with some of the Californians.²

When Sutter was finally ready to depart from Yerba Buena, his outfit consisted of two schooners, the "Isabel" and the "Nicholas" and a four-oared boat or pinnace. Two pieces of artillery and a small assortment of other weapons made up the entire armament of Sutter's expedition. A fair amount of provisions and a few cattle were also added to the list of necessary supplies. The fleet was placed in the command of William Heath Davis.³ The balance of the crew was made up of eight Kanakas (native Hawaiians) and five white men, three of whom were mechanics.⁴

The expedition left Yerba Buena on August 9, 1839. They lost some time in trying to locate the mouth of the Sacramento River. The voyage occupied about eight or nine days. Every evening, camp was pitched on the banks and Sutter made

¹ Bancroft, History of California, IV, 131.

² Harcourt, Sutter-Sunol Correspondence.

³ Davis, Sixty Years in California, 17.

⁴ Sutter, "Diary," San Francisco Argonaut.

excursions into the surrounding country, searching for a suitable site.¹ Sutter nearly gave up in despair before he finally found a spot to his liking. Hours spent in exploring miles of winding channels and creeks which join the Sacramento River were enough to discourage anyone.² The men began to grumble. Some of the party were in favor of turning back, but Sutter pushed on until he reached his goal. On August 17, 1839, the little fleet dropped anchor in the Sacramento River, near the banks upon which now stands the City of Sacramento.³

The sight which met their eyes was anything but comforting. On the shore stood several hundred Indians. The expedition expected an attack, but none came. A few of the natives rowed to the ships in canoes made of tules. Sutter addressed the Indians in Spanish in the hopes of finding some Mission Indians among them. His hopes were rewarded when a few answered back in that language.⁴

Thus assured that they would be safe from immediate attack, the party weighed anchor and entered the mouth of the American River. A landing was made on the south bank of that stream, tents were pitched and the supplies from the vessels were brought ashore as rapidly as pos-

¹ Davis, Sixty Years in California, 17.

² Bancroft, History of California, IV, 133.

³ Davis, Sixty Years in California, 18.

⁴ Sutter, Personal Reminiscences, 35.

sible.¹ Sutter immediately mounted his brass cannon in such a manner as to defend the camp favorably should an unexpected attack occur.²

The next morning the ships prepared to return to Yerba Buena. As they were moving away, Sutter gave them a parting salute of nine guns. The effect was rather startling to the natives, who, upon hearing the shots, surrounded the camp to determine the source of the unusual noise. Birds, wolves and coyotes in the adjacent woods, contributed their jumbled choruses to the disturbance. Deer and elk were running about, pausing every now and then to listen as if trying to determine whether the noise meant bodily harm for them.

Davis, in his *Sixty Years in California*, p. 19, describes exceedingly well the significance of the salute fired by Sutter:

Standing on the deck of the Isabel, I witnessed this remarkable sight, which filled me with astonishment and admiration, and made an indelible impression on my mind. This salute was the first echo of civilization in the primitive wilderness so soon to be populated, and developed into an agricultural and commercial center. We returned the salute with nine cheers from the schooners, the vessels flying the American colors. The cheers were heartily responded to by the little garrison, and thus we parted company.

¹ Davis, *Sixty Years in California*, 18.

² Bancroft, *History of California*, IV, 131.

The first few days were comparatively peaceful with no outward signs of any possible trouble with the Indians. One evening after the occupants of the camp had retired, the Indians tried to attack. They came in their own stealthy manner. They might have accomplished their purpose and murdered the sleeping occupants of the tents, but for the interference of a large, savage bull-dog which belonged to Sutter.

The bull-dog, being by nature a light sleeper, awoke, charged the nearest Indian and fastened his teeth in the native's leg. The screams of the luckless Indian awoke the rest of the camp. Sutter persuaded the dog to release his grip upon the savage and assisted the Indian into his tent. He proved to be a mission Indian and understood Spanish fairly well. Sutter gave him medical attention and then warned him against plotting further attacks. After that the colonizers experienced no further difficulty from that particular band of Indians.¹

The next few days were spent in removing the camp to the highest ground possible. The site selected was the place where the present fort is now located.² Timber was cut and hewn. Two wooden house frames were erected. These frames the kanakas covered with tules, after the manner of their own native huts in the Sandwich Islands.

¹ Sutter, "Diary," San Francisco Argonaut.

² Ibid.

By skillful diplomacy Sutter managed to secure the services of ten Indians whom he immediately put to work manufacturing adobe bricks. A substantial dwelling was made from the adobe bricks and a quantity of hand-sawed lumber. This house was one story high, 40 feet long and contained three rooms; a blacksmith shop, a kitchen, and a private room for Sutter.¹

During the winter of 1839-40, a fire destroyed the wooden and adobe building. This necessitated the building of another dwelling. The second dwelling was built near the first and this time it was built with the intention of incorporating it with the fort proper. Thus the actual work was commenced upon the fort itself, in the year of 1840.

In the spring of that year, Sutter sent several of his men up the American River for a distance of twenty-five miles to cut pine timber. This was rafted down and then sawed into lumber for the fort. The white men taught the Indians how to use the whipsaw so the work progressed a little more rapidly than otherwise. Besides pine timber, a large quantity of the nearby oaks were felled and cut into lumber.²

Even then, Sutter could not secure enough lumber for his fort and he was forced to buy more on credit from Don Antonio Sunol, as a letter from Sutter to Sunol dated April 30, 1841, clearly intimates. In this letter, Sutter

¹ Sutter, Personal Reminiscences, 37

² ibid., 48.

expresses his joy over the fact that Sunol can let him have six thousand feet of lumber and he states that he wishes the consignment delivered by the fifteenth of May.¹

That Sutter was in desperate need of lumber there is no doubt, since a note sent to Sunol a few days later by Sutter, inquires if six hundred feet of the original order could be sent immediately to New Helvetia, (Sutter's name for his colony.)²

If the lumber for the fort was hard to secure the hardy pioneers had one consolation, the adobe bricks for the walls of the fort were easily obtained. All one had to do was to mix the native soil with water to form a thick sticky mass, add a little straw to hold the finished product together, mold the mass into bricks or blocks, two and one-half feet thick, and then set them in the sun to dry. Because of the difficulties mentioned, especially the lumber problem, the building of the fort occupied about four years.³

While the construction of the fort was in progress, Sutter had a magnificent stroke of luck which added impetus to the construction and furnished him with large quantities of building materials and other supplies.

About the time that Sutter was beginning his colony of New Helvetia, the Russians were seeking to secure more ter-

¹ Sutter-Sunol Correspondence, 4.

² Ibid, 5.

³ Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

ritory from the Mexicans, particularly to the south of Fort Ross and Bodega. In 1839, Rotchef, Governor of the Russian Colony, petitioned the Mexican Government for the right to erect a warehouse at Yerba Buena. This concession was not granted.¹

The Mexican Government was beginning to reverse its old policy of making liberal grants to foreign interests. The influx of people from the United States (although very small at this time) probably gave the California authorities reason for alarm. Since a state of war was possible at any time between the United States and Mexico, every immigrant from the States could only be regarded as a potential enemy.

Then too, they thought that if the Russians realized the futility of further attempts at expansion in California, they would abandon their holdings and improvements, leaving the valuable settlement in the possession of the Californians.²

But the Russians were not so easily discouraged. The representative of the Russian holdings endeavored to find a suitable buyer. He approached the Hudson Bay Company, but without success. Next he offered it to Vallejo for \$30,000. Vallejo was obliged to lay the matter before his government, with the result that no decision was ever made.

¹ Thompson, The Russian Settlement in California, 10.

² Ibid, 13.

As a last resort, the representative of the company offered the Russian holdings to Sutter. Accordingly, Sutter received a visit from Alexander Rotchef on the evening of September 4, 1841 and that gentleman offered to sell to Sutter the entire Russian holdings at Ross and Bodega for the reasonable sum of \$30,000. The proposition impressed Sutter favorably, so the next few days he spent in visiting the Russian establishment. At an informal dinner on board the ship, Helena, Sutter closed the bargain.¹

The formal contract was signed by Kostromitinoff and Sutter in the office of the Sub-prefect at Yerba Buena, on December 13, 1840. By the terms of this contract, Sutter was to give \$30,000, payable in installments annually.² A brief inventory of Sutter's purchase would serve better to illustrate what a splendid bargain Sutter had made:

A square fort of logs about 1088 feet in circumference, 12 feet in height and equipped with two bastions. Within the walls there were two houses of squared logs, one 36 x 58 feet and the other 24 x 48 feet. There were also the officers' quarters, 22 x 60 feet and the barracks 24 x 66 feet. In addition were the jail, chapel, kitchen and three warehouses.

Outside of the fort were the following: a blacksmith shop, a bakery, a carpenter's shop, two mills for grinding,

¹ Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

² Thompson, The Russian Settlement in California, 13.

three threshing floors, a well, stables and twenty-four houses with orchards attached.

At Bodega, a warehouse 30 x 60 feet and three small houses. The purchase also included the Kostromitinoff, Khebnikof and Jorges Ranchos and the schooner Constantine, which Sutter renamed the Sacramento.¹

Other articles which were easily moved and could be used immediately were: Two thousand head of cattle, five hundred horses, forty cannon, one hundred muskets and a miscellaneous assortment of curious weapons. There were carts, plows, and other rude farming implements of Russian manufacture.²

The work of removing the articles and buildings from Ross and Bodega, was handled by John Bidwell, whom Sutter had employed as a clerk at New Helvetia. The moving of the buildings and equipment from Ross and Bodega required two years.³

It will be interesting to note that among the many things removed from Fort Ross, was an old cannon which had quite a history. Judge J. H. Mc Kune, in his article which appeared in the Themis, October 5, 1889, states:

The piece was cast by the Russian Government at their foundry at St. Petersburg in 1804. It is forty

¹ Thompson, The Russian Settlement in California, 14.

² Bidwell, California 1841-48, 83.

³ Sutter, Personal Reminiscences, 83.

inches long, three and one-half inches in the bore, cast with two handles so that it was easily carried by two men. The chamber runs to a point at the vent and a half pound of powder is necessary for the charge.

The gun first saw service in the battle of Austerlitz, when Napoleon defeated the Austro-Russian forces.¹ Afterwards it was presented by the Czar to the Russian-American Company, from whence Sutter secured possession of it. Sutter mounted it in the south east bastion of his fort. This gun was among those used by Sutter to fire a salute to the American flag which was hoisted over his fort at sunrise, July 11, 1846.² During the American Conquest of California, Stockton used the gun as a field piece in his advance from San Pedro to Los Angeles. The weapon was then transferred to Colonel Mason's command, who returned it to Captain Sutter after the treaty of Guadaloupe Hidalgo. Later Sutter presented it to the California Pioneers in San Francisco and the gun was lost when the great fire and earthquake of 1906 swept that city.

The bringing of the armament from Fort Ross to his establishment at New Helvetia brought forth threats and criticism from the Mexican officials, who greatly feared the prospects of having a strongly fortified position in the middle of their country, so far away from their im-

¹ Gregory, History of Sonoma County, 26.

² See Appendix, 91.

mediate jurisdiction.¹

Sutter viewed the whole affair with contempt. When he heard threats coming from the Mexican officials and criticisms in regards to his movements, he was frequently heard voicing his contempt for Mexican criticism. In fact, Sutter was known to have written a letter to a friend in which he stated that if any attempt were made on the part of the Californians to interfere with his plans, or if threats continued, that he (Sutter) was not only able to defend himself, but to go and chastise the Californians as well.²

There is no doubt that the real cause of the Mexican fear of a private fortress in their midst was the fact that their own fortifications were in a sorry plight. An incident which occurred in Yerba Buena at that time, will serve to illustrate the point.

An American man-of-war entered the bay on a friendly mission. The American commander asked the Mexican officer in charge of the fort at Yerba Buena if he would return a salute if given one. The commander stated that he would but that the American captain would have to wait a few moments while he purchased some powder in town. He returned without the powder and was obliged to borrow some from the American. Then the poor fellow had to spend an hour or two trying to clean up an old rusty cannon so that a salute could be fired.

¹ Bidwell, California 1841-48, 83.

² Ibid, 83.

After much persuasion, the gun was finally induced to go off. Thus the honor of Mexico was upheld, but its credit was slightly strained as remuneration for the powder was never made.¹

It has been stated in reviewing the military strength of California under the Mexican regime, that the entire force consisted of three hundred and nineteen Indian soldiers, forty-seven rusty cannon and no ammunition, with the possibility of raising about six or seven hundred volunteers.² Probably this statement is somewhat exaggerated, since the Mexicans made an attempt to resist the American Conquest of California; but on the other hand there is a great deal of truth in it.

The fort, when completed by Sutter, consisted of an adobe wall, 3 feet thick, 18 feet high, enclosing a rectangular space of about 500 by 150 feet. On the southeast and northwest corners were projecting bastions, containing cannons in the upper stories which commanded the gateways in the center of each side, except the western. The walls, at intervals, were pierced with loopholes. Guns were mounted at the main entrance, on the south side and elsewhere. The north side was protected by a deep ravine. There was an inner wall and the intermediate space was roofed over and divided into a number of rooms and shops. There

¹ Hastings, Emigrant's Guide, 105.

² Ibid, 105.

were other detached buildings of adobe and wood. Some of the wooden buildings had been moved from Fort Ross.¹

¹ Bancroft, History of California, IV, 227-228.

CHAPTER II

CONTEMPORARY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FORT

Contemporary descriptions of the fort, for the most part, agree as to the general area enclosed by the fort, the height of the walls and the armament. But since these descriptions were written by men who visited the fort over a period of ten years, from its construction to its occupation by the "forty-niners," there are bound to be noticeable differences in detailed descriptions.

Two reasons have been discovered for this: First, some of the visitors were not interested enough to make exacting observations. A general description suited their purposes, so that is what they wrote. Secondly, over a period of ten years, with the increase of occupants and the increase of manufacturing and the establishment of supply stores, the interior of the fort was bound to be altered. New buildings were erected, old ones were remodeled, so that the interior was constantly changing. Consequently an exacting observer, visiting the fort in 1844, just after its completion, would see an entirely different sight from the one presented to a visitor in 1849.

Sutter, in his *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 49, describes

his fort thus:

The walls were eighteen feet high, three feet thick and enclosed about five acres. They were constructed of adobe blocks, two and one-half feet thick. The bastions were five feet thick. The prisons were under them.

Inside the walls were erected several buildings. There were barracks for the soldiers, other dwellings and workshops. There was a bakery, a mill, blanket factory and distillery.

Sutter was very proud of his living quarters, for he goes on to state:

In my parlor, I had very ancient furniture made by the Russians at Fort Ross, the first made in California. It was very clumsy and made of laurel. Yet, it was better than the chairs in many rich men's homes of that period. Often have I gone into the home of a well-to-do owner of large herds of cattle and have been offered a bullocks' head to sit on as a chair.

John Bidwell arrived at Sutter's Fort just after Sutter had completed the purchase of the Russian settlement. So favorably was Sutter impressed with the young man that he employed him as clerk and placed Bidwell in complete command of removing the equipment from Ross and Bodega. Bidwell remained in Sutter's employ only a short time. He left before the fort was completed and does not mention a detailed description of the completed fort in his account. He enters in the building of the fort chiefly because he was responsible for the removal of the equipment from Ross and Bodega. Bidwell mentions the fact that some forty pieces of cannon

were brought to the fort, but not all of them were mounted. Most of them were housed in the various storerooms and never used.¹

Don Antonio Sunol gives a brief general description of the fort while he was acting as a witness during the various court proceedings arising from Sutter's land claims. Sunol stated that the fort was built of adobes and was about five hundred varas square, with artillery mounted on the walls.²

Hastings, in his *Emigrants' Guide*, p.102, makes this statement:

New Helvetia is located on the south side of the American River about one mile from the south bank. It is one hundred miles east by north from Yerba Buena at a latitude 38° 45' 42" north.

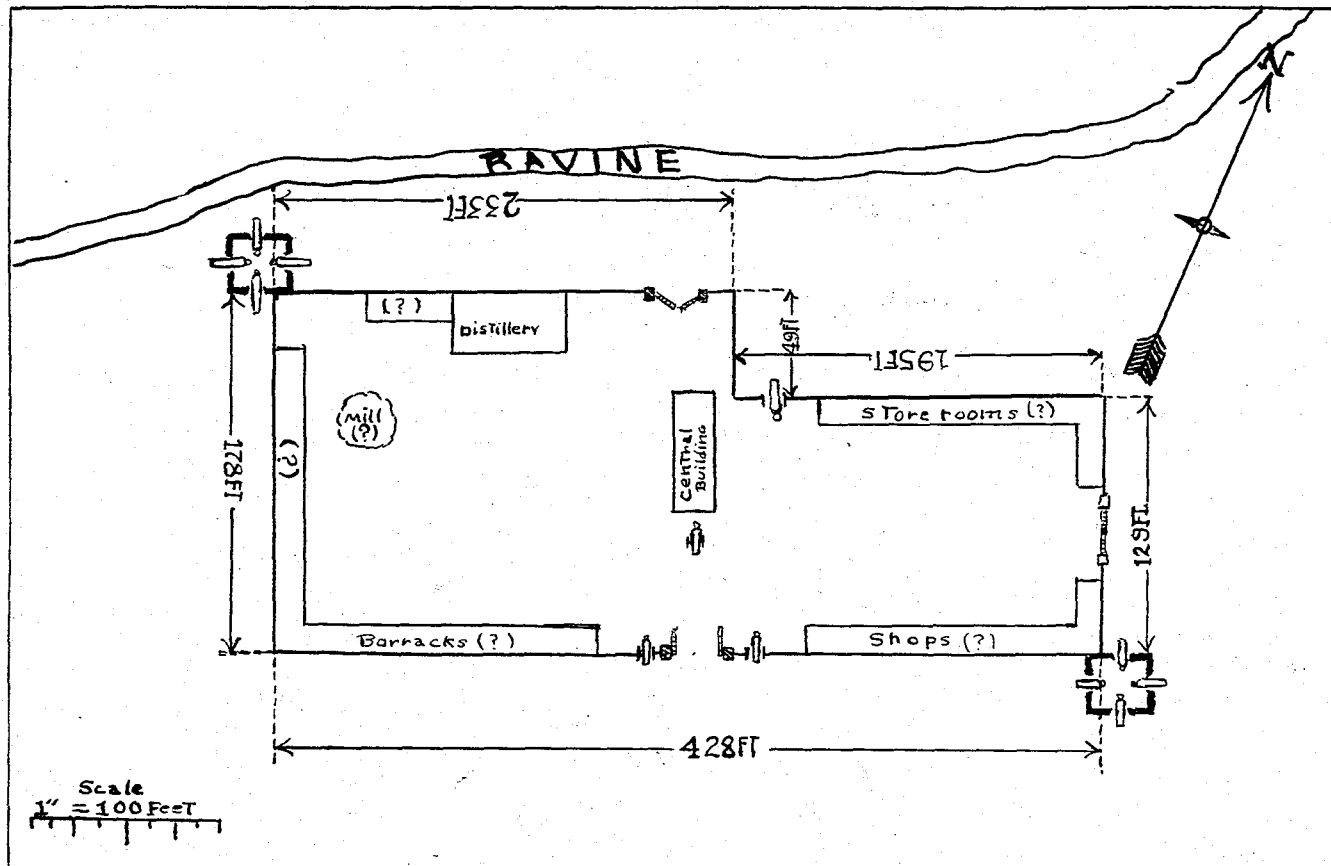
The fort, in form is a sexangular oblong, its greatest width 178 feet, two hundred and thirty-three feet of its length being 178 feet wide, and the residue but 129 feet wide.

It is enclosed by permanent adobe walls, which are 18 feet high and 3 feet thick. There are bastions at the corners, the walls of which are 5 feet thick. The fort is entered by three large swinging gates, one of which is on the north, another on the south side, and the third at the east end.

The first of these, is entirely inaccessible from without, because of a deep and impassible ravine, which extends the whole length of the fort on the north; on each side of the second,

¹ Bidwell, California 1841-48, 82, 83.

² Sutter Claim, Sacramento Union, May 26, 1855.



Ground Plan of Fort Sutter 1844
 Reproduced from description given in Hastings Emigrant Guide

is a platform, upon each of which, a nine-pounder is planted; and the third is completely commanded by one of the bastions.

There are two bastions, each of which has four guns, two nine-pounders, and two six-pounders; and in all there are twelve guns, of different caliber. The inner buildings of this fort, consists of a large and commodious residence, for various officers in the connection with which, is a large kitchen, a dining-room, two large parlors, the necessary offices, shops, and lodging apartments.

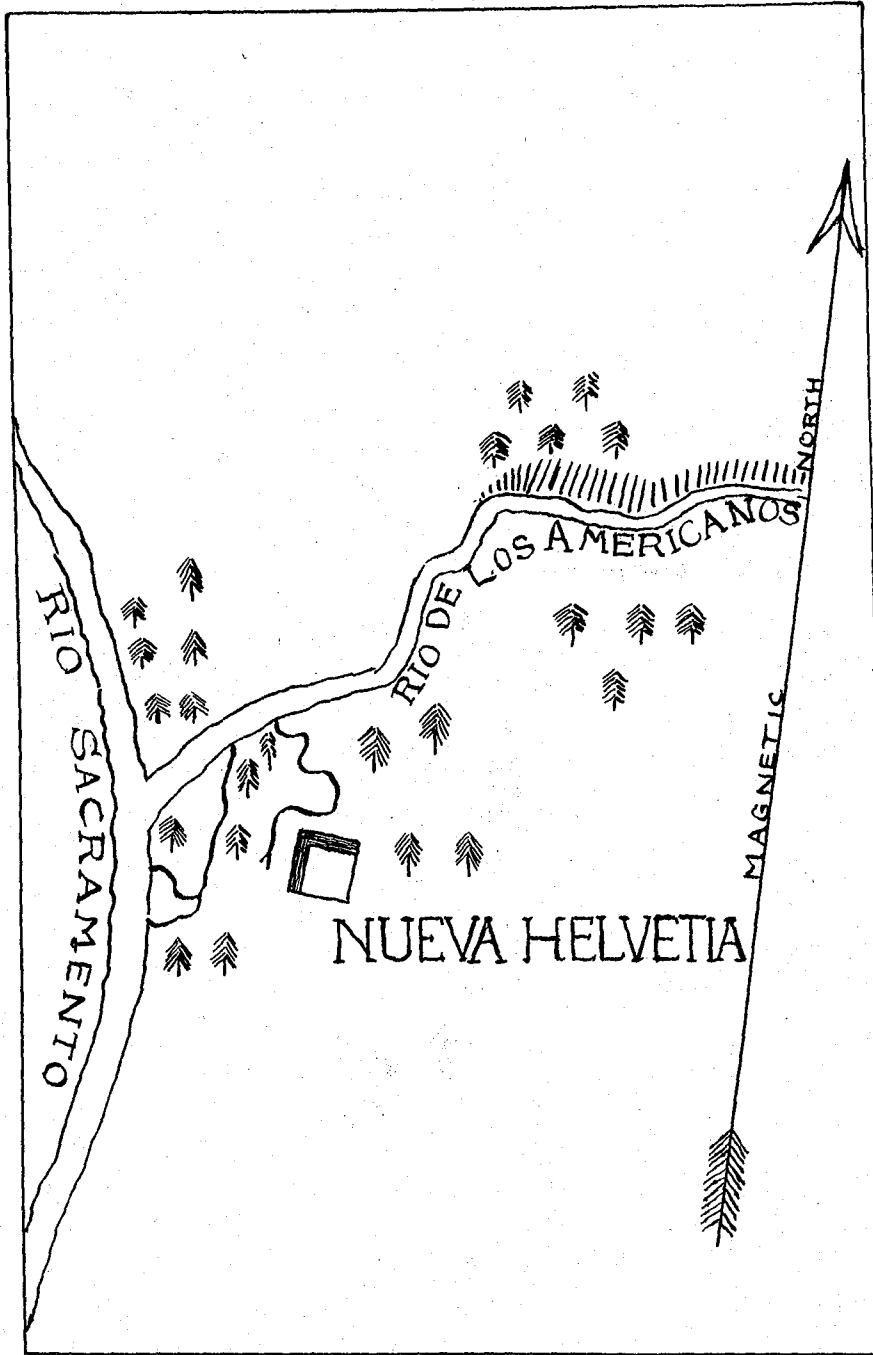
Besides these, there is also a distillery, a horse-mill and a magazine, together with barracks for the accommodations of at least one thousand soldiers.

Mofras, in his *Exploration Du Territoire De L'Oregon des Californies*, pp. 458, 459, 460, has this to say of Sutter's Settlement:

The fort of New Helvetia¹ is bounded, to the north by a small brook of which the steep banks contribute to the defense. The enclosure is protected by a wall 5 feet thick, constructed of bricks baked in the sun and supported by great pieces of timber. Each face of the quadrilateral has an extent of 100 meters with two levels; the four levels are pierced with embrasures and an outer gallery surmounts all the wall.

The armament is composed of sixteen to eighteen short cannon and caronades of iron of different calibres, brought from the vessels. There are two excellent field pieces of bronze with caissons, which the Russians have given to Mr. Sutter.

¹ See Appendix for the French.



FREMONT'S MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF NEW HELVETIA
This Map reproduced from the lithographic copy facing p.246 in Fremont's Report

The latter has in addition, sufficient muskets and long rifled carbines to equip sixty to eighty men without including the pistols and cutting weapons.

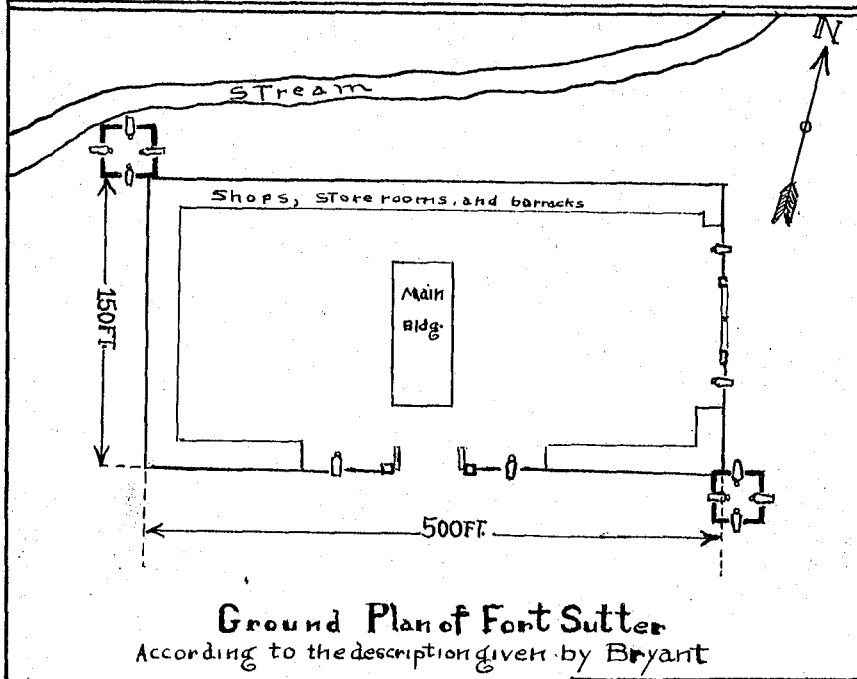
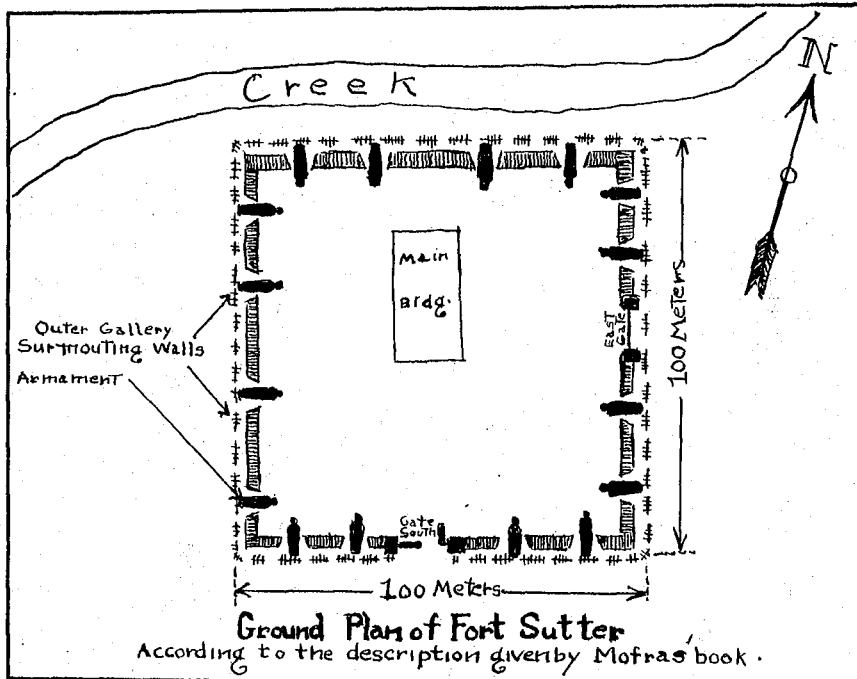
The ammunition is good and in sufficient quantity; an active watch, both of guards and night patrols are organized in a military fashion. All these precautions are necessary, for during the early period of the establishment, the Indians made several attempts to assassinate Mr. Sutter, who came out victor in the engagements he had with them.

Now Mr. Sutter is at peace with the Indians, a hundred of whom work for him. They are fed and receive two reals worth of merchandise per day, such as pieces of glass, necklaces, handkerchiefs, fabrics and other articles.

At New Helvetia, there are thirty white men, Germans, Swiss, Canadians, English, French, and Americans. Almost all of them are occupied at cutting wood, at the forges, and at carpentry. Some are divided into groups and scour the valley and rivers to hunt the beaver.

Fremont, in his Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to Oregon and Northern California in the Year 1843-44, p. 246, gives this picture of Sutter's Fort:

The fort is a quadrangular adobe structure, mounting twelve pieces of artillery (two of them brass) and capable of admitting a garrison of a thousand men, this, at present, consists of forty Indians in uniform, one of whom was always found on duty at the gate. As might be expected, the pieces are not in very good order. The whites in the employment of Captain Sutter, American, French, and German, amount perhaps, to thirty men.



The inner wall is formed into buildings comprising the common quarters; with blacksmith and other workshops; the dwelling house, and other buildings occupying more of the center of the area.

It is built upon a pond-like stream, at times a running creek communicating with the Rio de los Americanos, which enters the Sacramento River about two miles below.

Mr. Edwin Bryant, in his book, *What I Saw in California*, p. 267, states briefly:

The fort is a parallelogram, about 500 feet in length and 150 feet in breadth. The walls are constructed of adobe, or sun dried bricks. The main buildings, or residence, stands near the center of the area, or court, enclosed by the walls.

A row of shops, store-rooms, and barracks are enclosed within, and line the walls on every side. Bastions project from the angles, the ordnance mounted in which sweep the walls. The principal gates on the east and south are also defended by heavy artillery, through portholes pierced in the walls.

Mr. Samuel C. Upham, in his *Notes of a Voyage to California in 1849-50*, p. 319, gives a description of the fort as it was in 1849 in the form of a sketch.¹

It will be noticed in this illustration that there are apparently only two main buildings within the interior of the fort. One is the central, or headquarters building and the other, judging from its position in relation to reliable ground plans of the fort, is evidently the distillery. The

¹ Copy of Upham's sketch on the following page.

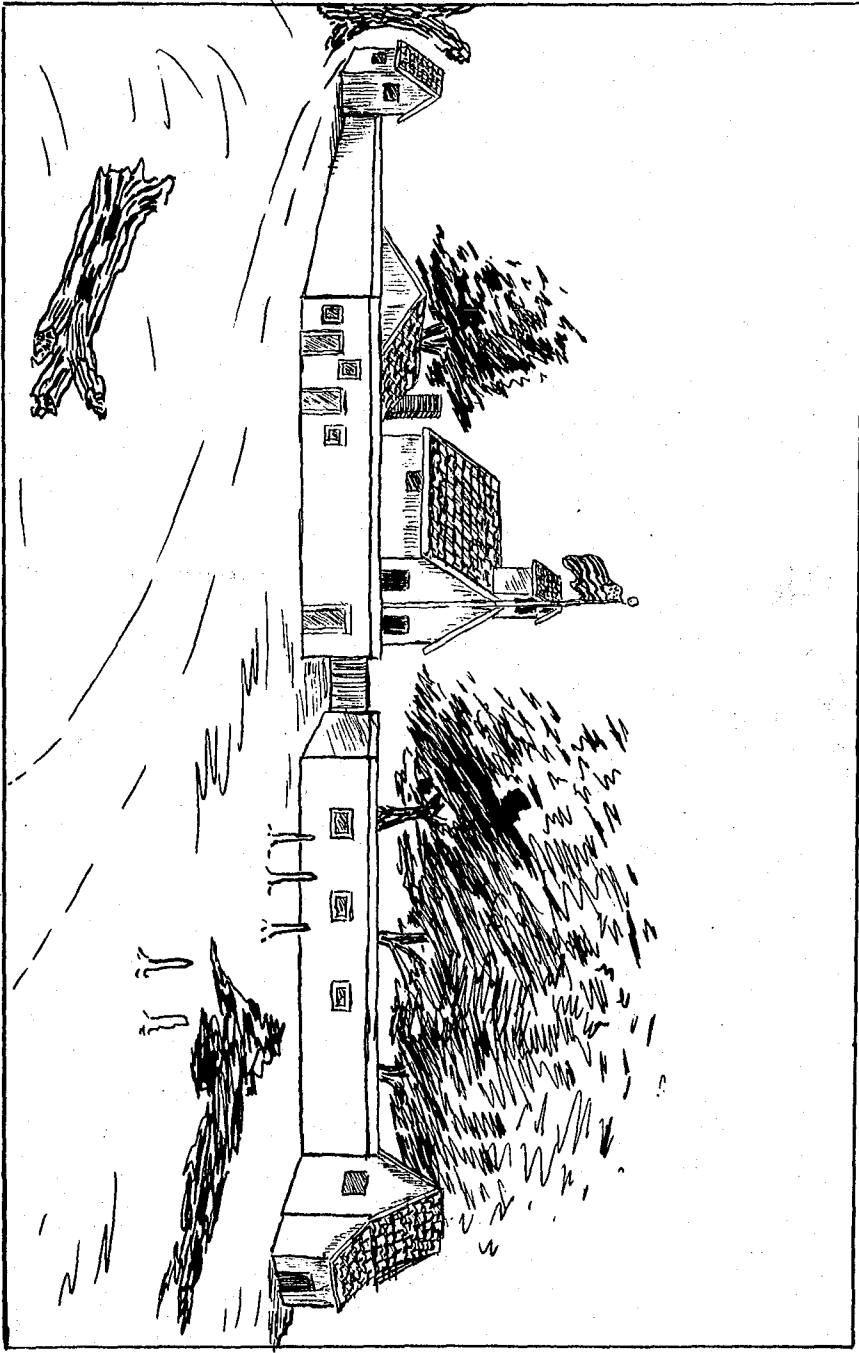
central building is depicted all out of proportion to other contemporary descriptions of it. Also, it does not tally with the central building as it stands today. The picture shows the central building surmounted by a belfry or cupola. There is only one other painting of the fort that depicts the central structure with a cupola.¹

The wall, presented in the foreground of the picture, faces the south. It contains one of the main entrances, but it is too narrow for the entrance on that side described elsewhere. Besides that, the same wall is pierced with three loopholes, three windows, and three small doorways. The southeast bastion has a shed-like extension that is not mentioned or pictured by other contemporaries. The dimensions of the enclosure, in relation to the buildings is entirely too small. There were changes taking place within the interior of the fort from year to year, but not quite as flagrant as those shown in Mr. Upham's illustration.

There is a painting of Sutter's Fort, which hangs in the California Department of the State Library, that depicts the fort as it was in 1846. A man by the name of Valencia painted the work from sketches left to him by his father, who worked for Sutter at that period.² This painting shows not only the fort, but also the stock corral,

¹ This picture of Sutter's Fort was painted on an old window screen which hung on the old Orleans Hotel, 2nd Street, Sacramento. The screen is now on exhibition in the Sutter Fort Museum in the Central Building.

² See the following page for a copy of this painting.



Fort Sutter 1849

Reproduction from Upham's "Notes of a Voyage to California - 1849-1850"

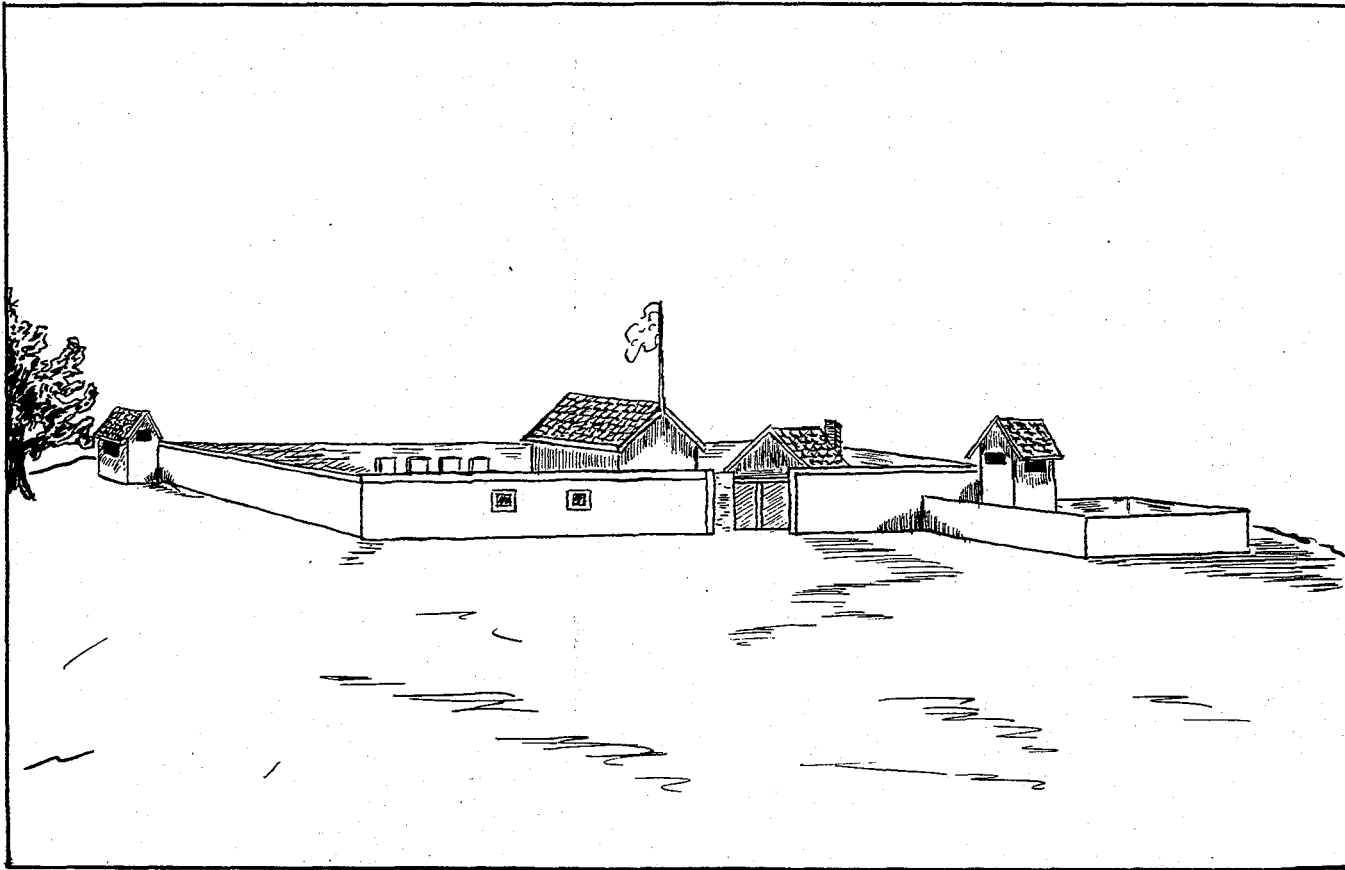
located on the south east ends of the wall and entirely surrounding the bastion at that corner. The central building and wall are correct in proportion and tally with the verbal descriptions given elsewhere. But there is a creek or small slough in the foreground of this picture which, according to other contemporary descriptions, would be considered misplaced.

The creek is supposed to be on the north side of the fort. This shows it on the south side. However, that fact may be explained by noting that Sutter's Fort was built upon a slight rise and perhaps the surrounding land was somewhat swampy owing to the creek on the north side and its close proximity to the Sacramento and American Rivers.

T. J. Schoonover, in his *Life and Times of General J. A. Sutter*, p. 13, has inserted a sketch of Sutter's Fort which is evidently a copy of Valencia's painting, with the exception that the creek is omitted and two loop holes in the south wall substituted instead.¹

There is an early print of the fort as it looked in 1847, hanging in the Fort Museum at present. This is identical with Valencia's painting, with the exception of the creek (which in this case is located where it should be) and in addition Samuel Brannan's Store, which stood a few feet from the east gate.

¹ See the following page for a copy of this sketch by Schoonover.



Fort Sutter 1847

Reproduction from Schoonover's Life and Times of General John A. Sutter



Sutter's Fort 1846
(from the painting by Valencia)

A Camp at Sacramento 1849
(from an early Daguerreotype)



There is another painting in the Fort Museum by Calvin, which illustrates the fort in 1849. But this picture is identical in every way with the print mentioned above, and probably is a copy of it.

Of all the pictures and paintings, Valencia's painting was probably the most accurate since it agrees in major details with written descriptions. Even among the written descriptions by contemporaries, there are minor disagreements, but in general, the comparisons are similar.

With the exception of Mofras, they nearly all state that the walls are 18 feet high and three feet thick. In the various accounts the armament is given from ten to eighteen cannon. This may be explained by the fact that the armament was dismounted from time to time so that the armament was not consistent in number; from 1844 to 1848 the number of pieces in actual working order was bound to vary somewhat.¹

They all state that the fort was equipped with two bastions and that it was bounded on the north by a deep ravine which afforded protection to the entrance on that side. There were three gates, located on the north, south, and east. The dimensions of the fort (not including the corral) were about 500 by 150 feet. Hastings gives very exact figures for the dimensions. He was either shrewd at guessing or else, for reasons of his own, preferred to

¹ "Description of Sutter's Fort", Themis, Nov. 23, 1889.

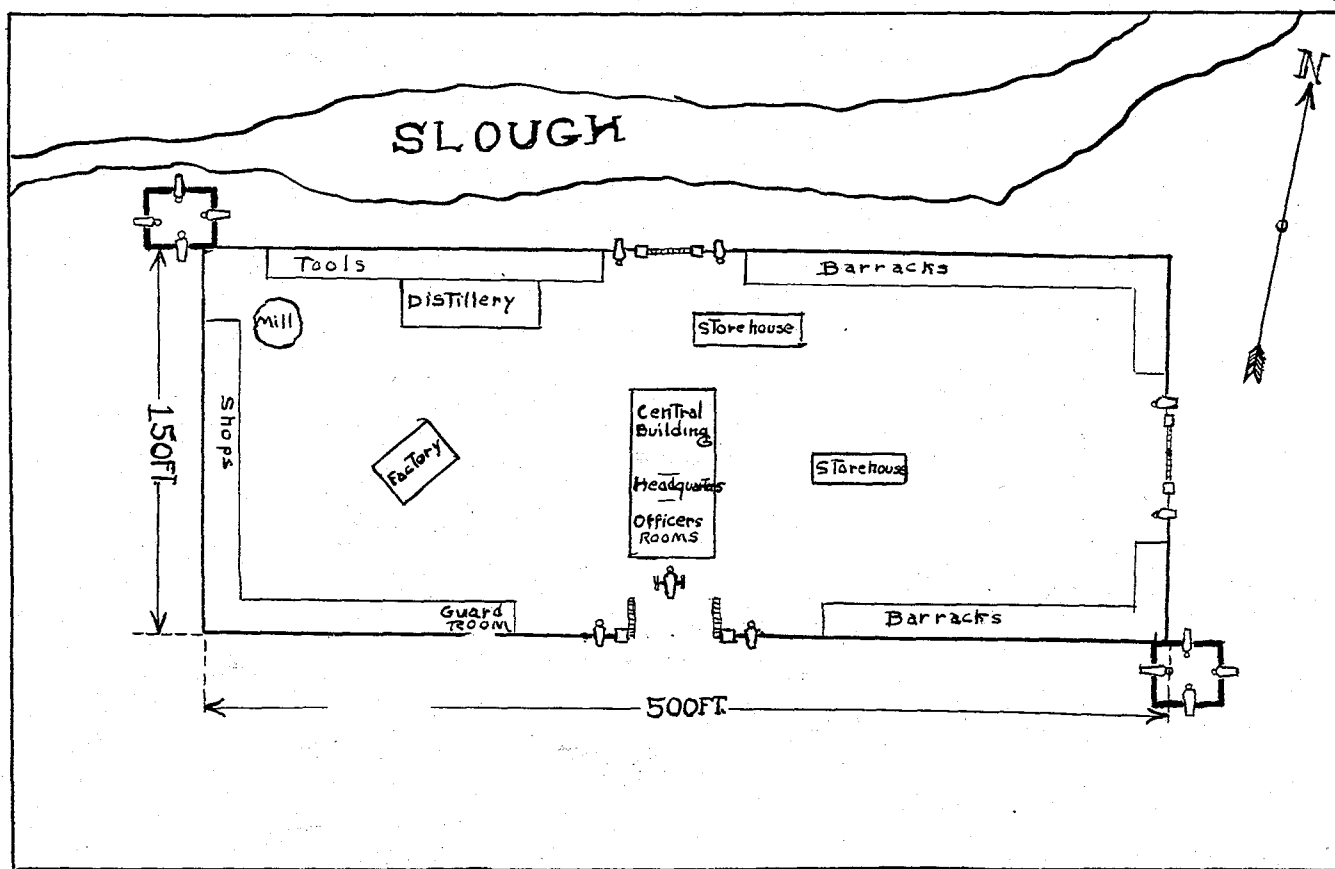
measure the walls rather than speculate upon their dimensions.

There was an inner wall, and the intervening space was roofed over to form shops and living quarters. Detached buildings consisted of the original central building described by Sutter, and a few which were removed from Fort Ross.

On the following page, a diagram of the ground plan has been drawn, based upon the general points of agreement among the contemporary authorities who have been quoted at the opening of this chapter.

The only outstanding differences among the above descriptions are:

Mofras states that the walls were 5 feet thick and that an outer gallery surmounts the wall. In addition, he states that each side of the walls is 100 meters in extent, which would make the fort in the form of a square rather than a rectangle as describes by others. Just why Mofras' description should not agree with the other contemporaries is unexplainable. Mofras was upon a scientific expedition, and one would be inclined to think that he would be more accurate in observing. Yet, since his book was not published until after his return to France, he may have forgotten exactly how the fort did look. Perhaps he did not make a very accurate observation in the first place, merely intending to employ a brief general description in his work.



Ground Plan of Fort Sutter as it probably looked when it was completed in 1844. The arrangement & location of the interior bldgs. is not exact. They merely indicate the general appearance of the interior, with the buildings from Ft. Ross in position.

Since Sutter, Hastings, Fremont and Bryant tally so closely in comparison with Mofras, there is reason to doubt the reliability of some of the statements made by Mofras in describing Fort Sutter.

At any rate, they are the only ones who describe the fort as it was in any detail at all. As a rule, the other contemporaries were content to praise Mr. Sutter's hospitality, observe the extent of his holdings and note carefully his wealth; but for some reason or other they said very little about the fort beyond mentioning that he had a wonderful establishment.

CHAPTER III

DAILY LIFE AT THE FORT

The life and scenes presented daily at Fort Sutter during its best years, (1844-48) were truly interesting and thrilling to a visitor of those times.

Perhaps Fort Sutter could be compared with a large sea-port where the natives of the world rub elbows, and where the means of obtaining a living were numerous and varied. The comparison is justifiable, in as much as the population of Sutter's Fort was composed of representatives from several nationalities. The tasks were many, and there was an atmosphere of bustling and scrambling which hovered over the establishment, which tended to become more intensified whenever an expedition arrived in need of supplies, or upon the coming of immigrant parties, or whenever it became necessary to dispatch soldiers against the Indians of that region who had made themselves obnoxious at times with their repeated horse-stealing raids and occasional massacres of lonely travelers or settlers.

Perhaps the most unique thing about the daily routine of the fort was Sutter's Labor and Military System. The mixed population of the fort was divided into really three

classes of laborers. There were those who were immigrants and who hoped to have homes of their own in the new country in a short time. These were classed as temporary workers. They worked for Sutter in exchange for supplies to enable them to go and establish themselves in some other locality. Chief among this class were the Mormons. They built a flour mill for Sutter, located on the American River about six miles from the fort. They also aided in the erection of his famous saw-mill where gold was discovered by Marshall.¹

The permanent settlers formed a second class of workers. These were immigrants who settled in or around the fort. Some of them had small farms near Suttersville, (a small town near the fort which Sutter had laid out). Others were mechanics, carpenters and blacksmiths, who were in charge of the various shops inside the fort and taught the Indians something of their trades.²

The third class was composed entirely of Indians. In this group there were no outstanding mechanics or artisans. For the most part, they were employed around the fort as rough laborers or assistants to the various tradesmen, or else they were employed in large numbers to harvest the crops.

During harvesting time, Sutter employed between two and three hundred Indians. They were very crudely dressed.

¹ Bancroft, History of California, VI, 15.

² Ibid, 13.

Some wore shirts and blankets, while others were more briefly attired. Their wages were paid in merchandise from day to day. For their convenience Sutter issued tin coins, upon which were stamped the number of days the laborer had worked. These were presented by the owner at the fort store in exchange for goods.¹ The Indians were very partial to cotton cloth and handkerchiefs. Ordinary brown cotton cloth retailed for a dollar a yard at that time.² The Indians were fed on rations of beef, bread and wheat-mush, or flour-mush. The bill-of-fare for the other occupants of the fort consisted of roast beef and vegetables. Acorns were sometimes substituted for coffee when there was a shortage of that article. Sutter claimed that the substitution was hard to distinguish from genuine coffee.³

Sutter's private quarters were located in the main, or central building. In front of this structure there was a small square, in the center of which was located a post, surmounted by a bell, and at one side, there was a brass cannon used chiefly for firing salutes.⁴

Sutter's actual military force consisted of about twelve to fifteen men (Indians) composing both infantry and cavalry. There was a guard posted every night. Sutter equipped him

¹ Bryant, What I Saw in California, 268.

² Ibid, 267.

³ Sutter, Personal Reminiscences, 77.

⁴ Bancroft, History of California, VI, 13.

with a half-hour glass, and whenever the sand in the glass ran out, the guard would strike the bell in the square and cry out, "All is well"!¹ The bell was always rung at day-break the year around, for all workers to arise and set about their tasks. Sunday, however, was the day of rest. No work was done, but there was no particular attention paid to religion. Sutter's Indian boys were obliged to appear well washed and neatly clad every Sunday morning for drill. Their uniforms consisted of blue drill pantaloons, and white cotton shirts; red handkerchiefs tied around their heads completed the costume. After drill was over they had leave for the balance of the day and they usually left the fort to visit with their relatives.² The adult soldiers had regular uniforms of blue or green cloth, with red trimmings. These Sutter had procured from the Russians.³ During working days, the interior of the fort presented a scene of bustling activity. Carpenters were busy sawing and fitting lumber for the various buildings needed at the fort. The blacksmith's forge was ever occupied. There were horses to be shod and tires to be reset upon wagon wheels.⁴ Many a dilapidated wagon found ready repair in the wagon shop.

Soon mechanics began to arrive from the states. They

¹ Sutter, Personal Reminiscences, 75.

² Ibid, 77.

³ Ibid, 78.

⁴ Bancroft, History of California, 13.

were employed in manufacturing plows and other agricultural implements of American pattern. The necessary iron, steel, and tools were made available by the Russian purchase.¹ A blanket factory was erected in order to utilize the wool from the large flocks of sheep owned by Sutter.² At one corner of the fort stood a make-shift flour mill, erected by Sutter to provide flour for his bill-of-fare and for that rarest of all delicacies in the early days, bread. In construction the mill was relatively simple. A large stone was placed upon the ground, with the top surface leveled off, and polished after a fashion. Another stone of the same pattern was placed on the first. Attached to the top stone was a long arm or sweep, to which were attached one to twelve mules or horses, depending of course upon the amount of power desired to grind a given quantity of grain.³

The other, and perhaps the most popular factory in the fort, was the distillery. There were large quantities of wild grapes in the vicinity of the fort, so Sutter seized the opportunity to convert these grapes into an exhilarating beverage. To do this, he erected his distillery and turned out high wines and brandy. The process was fairly profitable one in as much as Sutter paid off the greater part of his debts, which were numerous, in the form of manufactured

¹ Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

² Ibid.

³ Schoonover, Life and Times of General John A. Sutter, 28.

products.¹

But since most paying enterprises have some draw-backs, the distillery, while profitable, was no exception to the rule. Sutter employed Indian labor in this business and they acquired a liking for liquors, particularly for the high wines. Since Indians, as a rule, never use liquors of any sort with temperance, Sutter, in order to get the maximum efficiency out of them, was obliged to discontinue making the high wines.² There is an anecdote told which illustrates very well the fondness that Sutter's Indians had for liquor.

On a certain occasion, Sutter asked the following question of a young squaw, who worked in his blanket factory:

"Anita, if you could have three choices and all you want of each, what would you chose?"

"Vino," (Wine) replied Anita.

"What would you select for the second?"

"A lover", replied the girl.

"And what would you take for your third and last choice?"

"A little more vino."³

Leisure time, as might be expected in those wild, raw, days was spent in pursuits not calculated to improve one's mental equipment, or develop one's talent along useful or cultural lines. Amusements were three-fold, drinking, (usually to excess) gambling, and feasting.

The California Star of January 22, 1848, printed the following social item:

¹ Schoonover, Life and Times of General John A. Sutter, 29.

² Ibid, 29.

³ Ibid, 29-30.

New Year was celebrated at Sutter's Fort by the firing of guns, the riding of horses and much drinking. On Christmas Day, the disbanded members of the California Battalion became drunk as a result of too many egg noggs.

Gambling was prevalent among both whites and Indians; but perhaps the Indians, on an average, were more prone to gamble than their white brothers. The Indians at the fort were known to part with their clothing, wages, or any other possessions very frequently, as a result of a game of chance.

The Indians had their own particular form of gambling. All those desiring to play seated themselves cross-legged on the ground in a circle. They divided themselves into two parties, each having its two champions or expert players. A ball, or small block of wood, or some other article, was placed in the hands of the players on one side, who passed it from hand to hand with such skill and speed that it was almost impossible to detect the changes. After a minute or two, the players in possession of the ball or object, would make a certain motion with their hands. The antagonists were then to guess in which hand the ball was located. If the guess was wrong, it counted one in favor of the playing party, if the guess was right, it counted one in favor of the guessing party and the ball was transferred to them. Score was kept by means of a number of sticks. During the process of the game, a continued grunting was kept up, accompanied by the rhythmic swaying of their bodies. The side with the highest score was paid by the losers, with

merchandise, cloths, trinkets, and money.¹

Sutter, in his Personal Reminiscences, pp. 193-198, describes a dinner that he gave thus:

On the fourth of July, 1848, I gave a great dinner and invited the chief men in that vicinity to join in the celebration of the day, Governor Mason and General Sherman, Captain Folsom and others had just made a trip to the mines and returning stopped at the fort.

They were alone as they had been deserted by their escort. I invited them to rest with me over the fourth and join in the celebration of the day.

The day began with the hoisting of flags and the firing of cannons. It was a universal holiday. There was no work done. There were quite a number of women there, about four, who were good cooks, Mrs. Montgomery was one, so was Mrs. Lehigh, Mrs. McDowell and another.

The table was laid in my old armory hall. Dinner was served in the afternoon. Sitting at the table were invited guests only. My hired men never came to my table. They lived in their own homes, got their own rations and did their own cooking.

The dinner panned out well. The table was well spread. I had recently had a chance to purchase from a French vessel a supply of good sauterne, brandy, and other things. The captain brought it up to me from the bay in a launch. We had beef, game, fowl, and all the substantial and luxuries of frontier life.

This was the first Fourth of July in California under the American Flag and all were so glad. Everybody rejoiced at it thinking now to have a good government and a quick settling

¹ Bryant, What I Saw in California, 268.

up of the country. Toasts were proposed and healths were drunk.

"Philosopher" Pickett was orator of the day. All ate and drank freely and meat and drink exercised their usual effect. Sherman, in his book, says I was tight, but I was no more "tight" than he was. Men cannot drink liquor without feeling it and it is not for any officers to partake of hospitality such as I freely gave, drink, as they usually drink, and then in a flippant remark accuse their host of drunkenness.

Sherman should be ashamed of such words, and I think he is, for when I wrote to him about it, he took it all back, making some lame excuse in doing so.

The population of the fort was varied, consisting for the most part of Americans who had emigrated from the states. Among these were the mechanics and settlers. There were trappers of several nationalities, French-Canadians, Americans, and English. There were Mexican Vaqueros who attended Sutter's herds of cattle. About fifty Indians were retained at the fort as Sutter's soldiers. Added to these nationalities there was a sprinkling of negroes and Kanakas.¹

A report given by Sutter in December 1847, fixes the population of the fort and immediate vicinity at 21,873. Two-hundred and eighty-nine of these were whites, sixteen were half-breeds, Hawaiians and Negroes, four hundred and seventy-nine were tame Indians and the balance was composed of Californians and Indians not employed by Sutter.²

¹ Bancroft, History of California, Vi, 14.

² Ibid, 14.

CHAPTER IV
THE PURPOSES OF THE FORT

Sutter's Fort was important as an outpost in the wilderness, a resting place where weary immigrants could repair their wagons, rest themselves and their stock. Its trading advantages made it popular with the early trappers, and every scientific or military party that ventured inland in the early days headed for Sutter's Fort and used that place as their temporary headquarters for the duration of their visit.

The fort was also used for military purposes. The only real military expedition that was sent from the fort while Sutter was in possession was to aid Governor Micheltorena during the revolt of the Californians. According to Sutter the reason for Governor Micheltorena's unpopularity was that he favored American emigration to California; the ones who opposed Micheltorena claimed that he brought a battalion of criminals with him from Mexico and that their behavior was unbearable for the Californians.¹ At any rate, Sutter made a proposition to Micheltorena offering to aid him with all the forces under his command in exchange for

¹ Bancroft, History of California, IV, 456-457.

a liberal land grant.¹ Evidently they reached an agreement of some kind for on January 1, 1845, Sutter marched to join Micheltorena at Salinas with the force and equipment including two hundred and twenty men, one hundred foreigners of mixed nationalities, one hundred Indians, and a brass field piece.²

Sutter's activities were terminated after one month and a half of service. On February 20, the battle of Cahuenga occurred. It raged all day without a drop of blood lost on either side, but Sutter was surrounded by a company of rebelling Californians and taken prisoner.³

When brought before Castro and Alvarado, Sutter stated that he had only performed his duty as a Mexican citizen by upholding the government in power, consequently he had aided Micheltorena. His explanation was satisfactory and he was paroled. After a few weeks he was allowed to return to New Helvetia and resume his duties there.⁴

So ended Sutter's first and last official military expedition. Although it did not actually have a direct connection with Fort Sutter affairs, it was made possible only because the fort had served as a perfect outfitting station. Had he not been so equipped through the medium of his fort

¹ Bancroft, History of California, IV, 477.

² Ibid, IV, 485-486.

³ Ibid, IV, 503-508.

⁴ Ibid, IV, 508-516.

it is doubtful if Sutter could have attempted the expedition.

Indian troubles occurred off and on during the active period of the fort's history. As we have noted, Indian troubles began as soon as the establishment was founded. In the spring of 1840, Sutter relates that there were some minor Indian troubles.¹ But since minor Indian troubles were expected, they were accepted by those pioneers as part of their daily routine, consequently only the more serious of the uprisings received any notice whatever.

In the summer of 1846, the occupants of the Sacramento valley were alarmed at the report that a large band of Walla-Walla Indians from Oregon were about to make a raid. But their fears proved groundless since it was merely a friendly visit by the Walla Walla Chief, who wanted to secure trading privileges and to talk over an incident which occurred at the fort in the winter of 1844-45.²

In that winter the Indians came down from the north to trade for cattle at the fort. Among the party were Chief Yellow Serpent and his son, Elijah. Elijah was a mission Indian, but evidently he had forgotten the ten commandments, since he quarreled with one of his companions in front of the fort and killed him. Among the "wild" horses which the natives wished to trade for cattle, were several mules, one of which bore a brand. A man by the name of Grove Cook

¹ Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

² Bancroft, History of California, V, 30.

who was at the fort at the time, claimed the animal and tried to seize him. Elijah immediately raised his rifle and threatened Cook. Sutter then proposed that the Chief step inside and talk the matter over. While they were in conference a quarrel broke out between Cook and Elijah. During the argument that ensued, Cook shot and killed the young native. The Indians immediately departed for the north without waiting to trade.¹ Small wonder then, at the alarm of the inmates of the fort when they heard during the following summer that Yellow Serpent and a band one thousand strong were headed in the direction of New Helvetia. However, they merely made a few trades and then departed as peacefully as they came.

During the month of June, 1846, the Mokelumne Indians began to create a disturbance. Their offense was chiefly horse stealing, but when the deaths of a few settlers were reported in connection with their raids, Sutter took immediate action. Choosing a few men, Sutter met them on the banks of the Calaveras River. A brief skirmish ensued, and the Indians fled. They led Sutter and his band a merry chase through the brush and tules, and after several hours pursuit, Sutter was obliged to return to the fort.²

Upon another occasion, when the Mokelumnes became too troublesome, Kit Carson, who happened to be at the fort at the time, led a small party against them and defeated them.

¹ Bancroft, History of California, V, 300-301.

² Sutter "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

Raphero was their chief and the defeat apparently made him more eager to harass than to desist. Sutter claimed that the Californians had incited the Mokelumnes to give him trouble, because they were jealous of him and his possessions and that they wished to secure them for their own.¹

It was not long after this, before Raphero got into trouble again. He quarreled with his brother-in-law and killed him. Sutter, who had been appointed Alcalde for the Northern District of California, immediately brought him to the fort for trial. Raphero tried to excuse himself on the ground that he held a lieutenant's commission from the Mexican Government and that he had killed his brother-in-law because he was a horse-thief. Sufficient proof of Raphero's statement was wanting, so that worthy was executed without further adieu, and his scalp nailed over the main gateway of Fort Sutter as a warning to other wayward Indians.²

Perhaps Raphero may have had some understanding with the Mexican Government. Even if he had proved his point it is rather doubtful whether he would have escaped execution. His peers considered him a menace to the peace of the valley and firmly believing in the old saying, "that the only good Indian was a dead one". So they would have found some excuse to execute him.

Other and more important events were soon to demand the

¹ Schoenover, Life and Times of General John A. Sutter, 31.

² Ibid, 31-36.

entire attention of the inhabitants of the fort. A few months after the Indian trouble, the Bear Flag Revolution (an unnecessary prelude to the American Conquest) broke forth. That such a thing occurred was not entirely surprising to the Mexican officials. Some months before, Jose Castro, the Military Commander of California, had issued the following proclamation:¹

The Citizen Jose Castro, Lieut. Col. of the Mexican Army and Commander-in-chief of the Dept. of California.

Fellow Citizens: A band of robbers, commanded by a Captain of the U.S. Army, J. C. Fremont, have, without respect to the laws and authorities of the Department, daringly introduced themselves into the country and disobeyed the orders both of your Commander-in-chief and of the Prefect of the District, by which, he was required to march, forthwith, out of the limits of our Territory; and without answering their letters he remains encamped at the farm "Natividad" from which he sallies forth committing depredations, and making scandalous skirmishes.

In the name of our country, I invite you to place yourselves under my immediate orders at headquarters, where we will prepare to lance the ulcer which (should it not be done) would destroy your liberties and independence for which you ought always to sacrifice yourselves, as will your friend and fellow citizen.

Headquarters at "San Juan",

Signed: Jose Castro.

March 8, 1846

¹ A Transcript of the Fort Sutter Papers, Edward M. Kern's Letters, M. S. 8.

This would seemingly involve Fremont in the affair, but his official position in the United States Army forbade him to commit any outward acts of aggression against the Californian Government, unless war was declared between the United States and Mexico.

The revolution itself was the work of a few men, chiefly Americans, who were anxious to wrest California from Mexico. Dr. Semple and William Ide were involved in the movement. Just what their motives were is uncertain. Their probable motives have been discussed and treated very admirably by historians,¹ so it will not be necessary to go into great detail about it here. It will be sufficient to note those events and movements which are involved in the history of Fort Sutter during that period.

On the morning of June 14, 1846, a motley crowd, including Dr. Semple and William Ide, surprised the sleeping Mexican Garrison at Sonoma and demanded that Vallejo, who was in command of the Mexican forces there, surrender. That worthy was prone to parley with the Americans, but after some discussion, in company with several others, he was made a prisoner and taken to Fremont's Camp.²

The first news Sutter had of the revolution was brought to him by Merritt and Kit Carson who arrived at the fort on June 16 with the story that Sonoma had been occupied by the

¹ Royce, Josiah, California, II, has treated the Bear Flag Movement exceptionally well.

² Ibid, 60.

Americans and that the revolution was on in full swing.¹ In the evening of that day, the Sonoma prisoners, Vallejo, his brother Salvador, M. Prudon and Mr. Leese arrived at the fort in company with Fremont. Fremont turned them over to Sutter with instructions to hold them prisoners.

Sutter, however, bore his compulsory guests no ill-will. They were his personal friends and not his enemies, so he was disposed to treat his prisoners kindly. They were allowed the full run of the fort and were well fed. Fremont was not pleased when he noticed Sutter's treatment of the prisoners. Fremont and Sutter had never been on exceedingly friendly terms, and when he saw that the prisoners were allowed so much freedom, he evidently viewed Sutter with suspicion. To make their imprisonment more effective, he chided Sutter about the matter, and ordered the prisoners to be locked up.²

Having disposed of the prisoners, Fremont could do nothing more until war between the United States and Mexico was declared; then he could use his forces to a decided advantage in California. In the meantime, he retired to his camp on the American River to await the news of war.

During the evening of July 10, 1846, a courier brought the desired tidings. War existed between the United States and Mexico and Commodore Sloat had already begun operations

¹ Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

² Ibid.

in Monterey Bay. The messenger also brought an American Flag which was raised over Sutter's Fort the following morning.

Sutter in his Personal Reminiscences, pp. 150-151, describes the flag raising ceremony thus:

When Lieut. Rivere of the Navy under Commodore Montgomery raised the American Flag at Sonoma, he sent me one. It was brought by a courier who arrived in the night. At Sunrise next morning, I hoisted it over my fort, and began firing guns. The firing continued until nearly all the glass in the fort was broken.

The Sonoma prisoners, not knowing what to make of it, greatly wondered. When I went and told them, "Now," said I, "We are under the protection of this great flag, and will not be henceforth afraid to talk to one another. Fremont is a tyrant!" Glad to escape anarchy, they rejoiced with me.

The raising of the United States Flag at Sonoma and Fort Sutter ended the brief existence of the California Republic. More than that, when the Stars and Stripes floated from the flag staff in the yard of old Fort Sutter, it signified the planting of an American outpost in California. California was roused from her state of lethargy and the new blood of a progressive nation was injected into her veins.

With the American occupation of California, Lieutenant Kern was placed in command at Fort Sutter. His appointment as First Lieutenant in the California Battalion, with orders to report to Fremont for active duty by Commander-in-chief R. F. Stockton, virtually amounted to his official assignment

as the American Commander of Sutter's Fort.¹

Sutter, however, maintained that he was still in supreme command of his fort,² but the very presence of Kern, a United States Army officer, renders Sutter's contention rather doubtful. Not only that, but Sutter was a Mexican citizen and to place him in full command of the fort would not have been a very strategic move on the part of the United States Navy officials in California.

The following excerpt from manuscript 27, A Transcript of the Fort Sutter Papers, may shed some light on the subject:

Lieutenant Kern:

You will be pleased to appoint one of the thirty men of your troop, to be lieutenant subject to the approval of the Commander of the District--Appoint two sergeants and two corporals. The lieutenant will be entitled to receive the pay of Lt. of Dragoons with the rations allowed not to exceed in all, however, fifty dollars (\$50) per month.

To this officer you will transfer the command, when Captain Fremont desires your departure from this country. When you will immediately report the intention of your removal to the Commander-in-chief or to the Commander of the Forces of the District at Yerba Buena.

I shall submit all that I have done to my commander, since my leaving here, for his approval and in the meantime, you will be pleased to carry out the orders I now

¹ A Transcript of the Fort Sutter Papers, From Edward M. Kern's Letters. M. S. 10. (See Appendix)

² Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

hand you.

Respectfully Sir
Yr. Obt. Serv't
J. S. Missroom
Lt. U.S.N.

Endorsed:
Orders from
Capt. Montgomery
Aug. 8, 1846.

That a lieutenant was appointed by kern according to the above orders, is known to be true since we note the following acknowledgement of the act:

U.S.Ship Portsmouth
yerba Buena
August 16, 1846.

Sir:

The appointment of Capt. Sutter as Lieutenant, on the terms mentioned in my letter of the 8th is approved, and will be continued until further orders. It is necessary however, that he take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America.¹

Bancroft states that it was E. J. Sutter, Sutter's son, who was appointed Lieutenant by kern.² But the acknowledgement from the U.S.S. Portsmouth, mentions Captain Sutter as being the newly appointed Lieutenant. Not only that, but the Lieutenant was to be second in command to kern, and it seems likely that John A. Sutter would be given preference over his son in that matter.

¹ A transcript of the Fort Sutter papers, From Edward M. Kern's Letters. M.S. 28.

² Bancroft, History of California, V, 298, Bancroft quotes the Monterey Californian for Sept. 5, 1846, as a basis for this assertion.

Attention is also called to the pay-roll of Fort Sutter, in which John A. Sutter is listed as lieutenant receiving pay from the United States Government. It is not likely that Kern would list John A. Sutter as Lieutenant if his son was serving in that capacity. The writer has found little evidence for Bancroft's assertions.

With the American occupation, the military efficiency of Fort Sutter was improved. The soldiers were paid regular salaries in addition to their rations. A glance at the roll of enlisted men for that period will illustrate that point.

Roll of the men comprising the garrison at Fort Sacramento, New Helvetia A(lta) C(alifornia) from Nov. 9, 1846 to March 9, 1847.

Names of present and absent officers and privates.	Rank	Entry Date of	Pay per mo.	To-bac-co	Pay due up to this date
1. John A. Sutter.	Lieut.	Nov. 9	\$ 50.00	.25	\$200.00
2. Olipio.....	Priv.	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
3. Celestino.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
4. Clements.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
5. Hannoah.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
6. Ajeas.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
7. Dashuma.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
8. Lula.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
9. Hieronimo.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
10. Yauti.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
11. Tokatchi.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
12. Natchumne.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
13. Yoiko.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
14. Osa.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
15. Huchsia.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
16. Sopne.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
17. Hugi she.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
18. Witash.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
19. Lesha.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
20. Nella.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
21. Wishe.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
22. Homo Bona.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
23. Augustine.....	"	" "	12.50	.25	49.75
24. Francisco.....	"	" "	6.00		24.00
25. Leander.....	"	" "	6.00		24.00

26.	Eleuterio.....Priv.	Nov. 9	\$ 6.00	24.00
27.	Juan.....	" "	6.00	24.00
28.	Pascacio.....	" "	6.00	24.00
29.	Carlos.....	" "	6.00	24.00
30.	Basilio.....	" "	6.00	24.00
31.	Pompeys.....	" "	6.00	24.00
32.	Andres.....	" "	6.00	24.00
33.	Bartolo.....	" "	6.00	24.00
34.	Putchi.....	" "	6.00	24.00
35.	Legala.....	" "	6.00	24.00
36.	Valentin.....	" "	6.00	24.00
37.	Nunt.....	" "	6.00	24.00
38.	Fabian.....	" "	6.00	24.00
39.	Augustin.....	" "	6.00	24.00
40.	Wokno.....	" "	6.00	24.00
41.	Dolokock.....	" "	6.00	24.00
42.	Dolobachse.....	" "	6.00	24.00
43.	Sixto.....	" "	6.00	24.00
44.	Desidero.....	" "	6.00	24.00
45.	Twon.....	" "	6.00	24.00
46.	Kilog.....	" "	6.00	24.00
47.	Gasto.....	" "	6.00	24.00
48.	Jose Marie.....	" "	6.00	24.00
49.	Hipolipito.....	" "	6.00	24.00
50.	Dolohuck.....	" "	6.00	24.00
51.	Bunse.....	" "	6.00	24.00

Edw. M. Kern
 Commg. Fort Sacramento
 Mrh. 31, 1847.¹

From the above list we can see that the garrison was composed of Indians, with a sprinkling of Mexicans. The drill sergeant certainly would have need of a very dexterous tongue to address any of these men by name.

Included in this are Sutter's original soldiers as indicated by his list given below:

List of 12 men
 Celestino
 Acheas
 Lesha Cavalry
 Hugishe
 Tokatihi
 Ose

¹ A Transcript of the Fort Sutter Papers, Edward M. Kern's Letters, M.S. 97.

Carlos
 Pompeyo
 Peseacio Infantry
 Basilio
 Juan
 Gasto

Sutter, March 8.¹

The second, and by far the greatest purpose served by the fort, was its use as a resting place for immigrants and as headquarters for various expeditions and visitors of note, who were interested in California.²

In order to note some of the important visitors of the time at the fort, a few excerpts from Sutter's "Diary" as printed in the San Francisco Argonaut are quoted:

Twenty-third, August 1841, Captain Ringold of Commodore Wilkes exploring squadron arrived at the embarcadero. A salute was fired by Sutter and the visitors were furnished with saddle horses and provisions.

On Oct. 18, 1841, a party from the above mentioned expedition arrived from Oregon and were well received.

March 6, 1842, Fremont and Kit Carson arrived. They were outfitted and immediately departed.²

(Fremont made Fort Sutter a point of supply. He established a camp on the American River and from there he made his explorations in California and Oregon. Upon one occasion his need was very desperate, judging from a letter written by Sutter to Larkin describing Fremont's situation.²)

¹ A Transcript of the Fort Sutter Papers, Edward M. Kern's Letters, M.S. 98.

² See Appendix.

Dec. 25, 1845, Capt. W.L. Hastings from the United States with eleven other men (including Dr. Semple) arrived. They stayed over the winter and some of them were employed by me.

(Since Hastings remained at the fort for the entire winter, it probably explains why he was able to give such an exacting description of the fort.)

Jan. 14, 1846, Capt. Leidesdorff, U.S. Vice Consul and Capt. Hinckley, Capt. of the port of San Francisco arrived for a visit.

There are notes made of other visitors who arrived at the fort, but, since they were of no particular importance, they should be omitted.

John Bidwell arrived in November of the year of 1841. In his California 1841-1848, pp. 84-85, he tells of his reception at the fort in the following words:

On arriving at Sutter's Fort in November, I remained there until my departure for Fort Ross. Many, in fact, most of our party found their way there.

Sutter received us in the most friendly manner and during all our stay treated us with the greatest hospitality. He even gave us some bread made from his seed wheat, a great favor and sacrifice. With that exception we lived just as he lived and all others, on meat alone.

On October 22, 1841, that noted guide and adventurer, Joel P. Walker arrived at Sutter's Fort from Oregon with his wife and five children. His wife was the first white American woman in Sacramento. His daughter Louisa was the first white child born in Oregon of American parents. (January 14, 1841)

Further mention of Walker in California is made with his connection with the Child's party which reached Sutter's Fort by a new route.¹

Perhaps the most widely mentioned of all the emigrant parties to California is the ill-fated Donner Party. It will not be necessary here to reiterate the events which led up to the tragical consequences suffered by members of that band. Their story had already been told and retold, both by surviving members of the party and by those who made a thorough investigation of their journey in later years. We are concerned here with the part Sutter played in the relief of the Donner Party. The first news that Sutter had of emigrants being snow-bound in the Sierras was brought to him by Stanton, a member of that party. After enduring severe hardships, he had made his way through the Sierras to the fort and told of the plight of the Donner Party. Sutter outfitted him with seven mules and two Indian boys for guides; five of the animals were loaded with flour and beef, the other two were used as mounts by the guides.² After many hardships, Stanton and the Indians reached the region of Truckee and the Lake in October. Snow was already falling.

Sutter, in his *Personal Reminiscences*, in speaking of this relief states that he sent out the best pack mules heavily laden in charge of two Indians when the party was

¹ Walker, Narrative, 11.

² Bancroft, History of California, V, 532.

first reported to him by Stanton. Two sections of the Donner Party having given up hope of Stanton returning with provisions, decided to push on. Both sections met Stanton returning with provisions but there was only enough to satisfy the needs of one section. The second group in desperation killed and ate the mules. When that proved insufficient, they killed and ate the two Indian boys.

In addition to the few volunteer parties, like the one led by Stanton, there were four organized relief expeditions sent out as rapidly as interest and money could be accumulated. The four organized relief parties which followed Sutter's emergency relief measures, were not sent out officially from Fort Sutter. Fort Sutter merely provided some of the supplies for the relief parties. Through the efforts of Kern and Sutter at New Helvetia, several volunteer parties were sent out.¹ In addition to this, the survivors rescued by the various parties, were brought to New Helvetia to recuperate.

As a trading post the fort was very profitable. Its very location was admirably suited for such purposes. Situated as it was only a mile or two from the navigable Sacramento River, it had excellent means of communication with Yerba Buena. Captain Sutter maintained regular river traffic with Yerba Buena by means of his sloop called "Amelia" which had several savages for its crew. In addition

¹ Bancroft, History of California, v, 538.

to this, during the busy season, two other vessels of Captain Sutter, made trips far up the Sacramento and even the San Joaquin Rivers.¹

Since money of any description was scarce, Sutter had been forced to outfit himself on credit. As time passed he was obliged to extend his credit more and more until he had piled up a considerable amount of debts.² Sutter had to rely upon articles of trade to pay his debts. He planned to use furs from his trapping ventures but for the first two years, owing to inexperience and the lack of good trappers, furs were hard to obtain. By 1842, results became better and a goodly supply of beaver skins were obtained during the season, enough at least, to make a substantial payment on his debts.³ His large herds of cattle and sheep furnished him with plenty of hides and wool which were commodities possessing good trading value. In addition, after 1842 his agricultural efforts began to yield him enough wheat so that he could use that article also as a medium of exchange. As a matter of fact, when Sutter made the Russian purchase, the installments were to be paid annually in large amounts of wheat.⁴

the wild grapes furnished the material for making

¹ Bancroft, History of California, VI, 15.

² Sutter-Sunol Correspondence.

³ Bancroft, History of California, IV, 228.

⁴ Bidwell, California 1841-48, 83.

brandy and his blanket factory was well supplied with wool from his flocks.

In summing up, the commodities of trade at Fort Sutter were, we find: brandy, blankets, wheat, furs, hides, and wool which were exchanged on debts ~~and~~ for supplies needed by the trappers and the post.

CHAPTER V
THE DECLINE OF FORT SUTTER

California in December 1847, presented a peaceful picture. It was the promised land. It was a land that had long slept under the inert rule of an unprogressive nation. In 1846 there was a sudden change of owners as we have observed. The new territory of the United States was on its way to a slow but steady settlement. Some day it would be another state in the Union.

Sutter had a new feeling of security. His holdings were no longer viewed with longing eyes by a jealous government, nor were there threats from petty tyrants or those who had once dreamed of making California a lone Republic. Yet if Sutter could have foretold the happenings of the next month, he might not have felt so secure. Since March 31, 1847, James Marshall had been superintending the erection of Sutter's saw-mill up on the American River.¹ The last bit of work on the mill race was completed in January and the water was turned into it. Shortly afterwards it was shut off and Marshall stepped into the ditch to examine the work. Some tiny particles were glittering

¹ Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

on a rock in the bottom of the race. Marshall stooped lower to examine them. They were gold!¹

The event had happened! The event that was to send thousands scrambling to California by every mode of transportation known in those times. From all over the world they came. Farmers, mechanics, military men deserting their branch of service, doctors, lawyers, teachers, ministers, gamblers, thieves, murderers, on they came in a huge avalanche that swept away all of Sutter's worldly goods and left him a poor man. The gold was there. Could one man stop that mixture of human emotions that was ready to sacrifice anything to wrest the precious metal from the hills?

"No", Sutter answered that question when he warned Marshall and his other employees to remain silent about the discovery. But as we have seen the news leaked out. By May 1848, the towns of California had greatly decreased in population. Every person who was free to travel bent his footsteps in the direction of Fort Sutter and thence to the mines. Alterations were made thick and fast upon Fort Sutter in order to accommodate the crowds. Samuel Kyburz established a hotel in the large central building of the fort.² Every available space within the fort was utilized to house provisions, miners tools, etc. Sheds and other buildings were erected as temporary lodgings to accommodate the rush.

¹ Chambers, California Pioneers: Sutter and Marshall, 9.

² Sutter, "Diary", San Francisco Argonaut.

In 1849, when the mobs from the States began to pour into California, Sutter's Fort became a veritable bazaar, and Sutter, unable to control the crowds and protect his property, gave up in despair and retired to his only refuge, Hock Farm, a large ranch which was located on the American River several miles from the fort. This ranch had been developed by Sutter from a part of his original Mexican grant.

Sutter, in his *Personal Reminiscences*, pp. 195-196, describes the situation in the following manner:

Some of the cannon at the fort were stolen and some I gave to the neighbors, that they might fire them on the Fourth of July. My property was all left exposed, and at the mercy of the rabble. When gold was discovered, my men all deserted me. I could not shut the gates of my fort and keep out the rabble. They would have broken them down.

The country swarmed with lawless men. Emigrants drove their stock into my yards and used my grain with impunity. Expostulation did no good. I was alone. There was no law. If one felt one's self insulted, he might shoot the offender. One man shot another, for a slight provocation in the fort under my very nose. "Philosopher" Pickett shot a very good man, who differed with him on some question.

The fort served as an outfitting point for the miners, until towns sprang up in the Sierras. After the first great wave spent itself, the fort gradually fell into disuse. It was used as a hospital after business had fallen off. A Baltimore doctor¹ was the resident physician and also the

¹ "Letter of Jeems Pipes of Pipesville", Daily Alta Californian, Feb. 6, 1871.

M. E. Clergyman, During this period a severe typhoid epidemic was in progress and the death rate was very rapid, consequently burial rites were of the simplest.

The author of the article "Jeems Pipes of Pipesville," Daily Alta Californian, describes one of these funerals at which he officiated as minister owing to the illness of the doctor-clergyman:

The morning was bright and balmy. The body had been placed in a rude, wooden, square box and lifted into an old wagon without springs. Into this conveyance jumped four persons, the driver, a colored man, Charley T-----s and myself, prayer book in hand.

We arrived at the spot completely covered with dust, and the heat intense, we proceeded to dig the grave. The ground was of that slippery sandy quality that it was with the greatest difficulty that a hole could be made. Still we persisted and ultimately succeeded in digging one of the proper depth. We then, with ropes crossed, managed to lower the coffin into the cavity. We stood around solemnly looking at the box containing all that was mortal of the poor stranger, and I commenced to read that splendid service the "Burial of the Dead". It had proceeded well enough; all attentively listening, until I came to the words, "Ashes to Ashes and Dust to Dust" when, in stooping down to sprinkle on the coffin some earth, my foot slipped and I fell into the grave; breaking in the lid, and for the moment, I thought that the dead man had got hold of my foot, for I could not get it out.

My companions ran off frightened, and I should probably have been suffocated had they not in a short time returned and dragged me out----probably the sickest looking "clergyman" they had ever witnessed.

In the latter part of 1849, a private family occupied

the central building of the fort. They had it fixed up quite comfortably. The walls were still up and the gate on the south side was used as the main entrance.¹

By 1851, the fort was beginning to decay. The trade was all gone and there was only one member of the private family left. No attempts were made to repair the place or protect it from the ravages of the floods.²

During the flood of 1861-62, G. W. Colby secured a franchise to build a toll bridge across Burn's slough on K Street in Sacramento, north of Sutter's Fort. The walls of the old fort were used for the purpose of filling in the slough and building approaches to the bridge.³

By 1871, the only indication that there ever had been a fort on the site of Sacramento, was the old central building, the oldest part of the fort. It had fallen into decay; all the windows had been broken, the roof was minus the majority of its shingles and it sagged badly. The cellars were damp as the result of the winter floods, and the stairs were rickety and unsafe.⁴

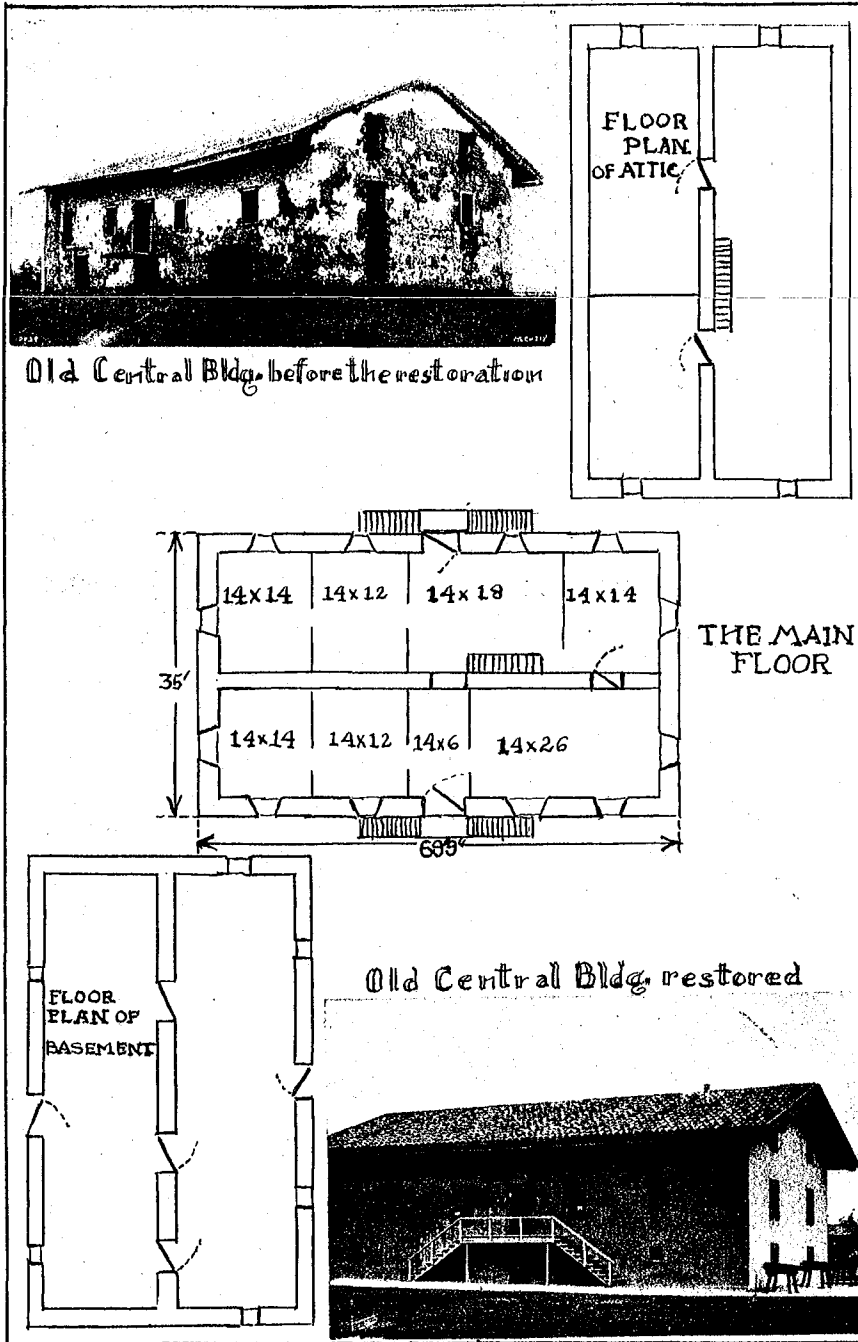
Thus passed into almost complete oblivion the only

¹ "Letter of Jeems Pipes of Pipesville," Daily Alta Californian.

² Ibid.

³ Pettit, "Sacramento's Early Days", Sacramento Daily Record-Union, March 24, 1893.

⁴ "Letter of Jeems Pipes of Pipesville", Daily Alta Californian.



Old Central Bldg. before the restoration

FLOOR PLAN OF ATTIC

THE MAIN FLOOR

FLOOR PLAN OF BASEMENT

Old Central Bldg. restored

THE OLD CENTRAL BUILDING

This is the only structure remaining that was once a part of the original Fort. The floor plans were copied from The HERALD, Nov. 30, 1889, p. 2. They are the original plans.

material manifestation of Sutter's attempt to found an empire, if that really was his plan. The fort had served its purpose; no longer was it needed by emigrants as a place to rest; many little towns in the Sierras were meeting that demand; neither was it needed as a military post. The region was comparatively quiet, for with the increase of white men, the red man was forced to recede into the background and behave himself.

The old central building was all that remained twenty years after the discovery of gold. By the newer ranks of the aspiring young citizens of Sacramento, it was regarded as an eyesore, a "white elephant" that should be removed. Yet for the founders of that city, it meant more than can ever be imagined. Sutter's Fort to them had been the "guardian spirit" of New Helvetia, the mother of Sacramento.

CHAPTER VI
THE RESTORATION OF THE FORT

Just where the idea for the restoration first originated is hard to determine. In 1886-87, C.E. Grunsky (a civil engineerⁱⁿ) became interested in the problem of reconstructing the fort. He made several water-color sketches of the remains of the fort and the adjacent slough.¹ The California Society of Pioneers and the Native Sons of the Golden West became vitally interested in the proposition. The Native Sons appointed a committee to negotiate the purchase of the Sutter Fort Property. This committee was composed of C.E. Grunsky, E.J. Gregory, F.D. Ryan, E.E. Gladdis, and Chas. Mc Allister.²

To secure possession of the property was not an easy task. As time went on, the property had changed hands a number of times. Benjamin Morrill, of Chicago, was the legal owner of the property at the time of its purchase by the Native Sons of the Golden West.³ But even before actual

¹ These sketches by Grunsky are on exhibition in the Sutter Fort Museum. They depict the old central building from various angles and accent its decay.

² Sacramento Union, Nov. 13, 1890.

³ Schoonover, Life and Times of General Sutter, 52.

possession of Fort Sutter could be secured, there were several legal procedures which temporarily delayed the actual purchase.

A man by the name of John Rider came forth with a claim upon the remains of the fort. Then there were several heirs to an estate which had another claim upon the fort. While none of the claims were pushed by those who held them, it made the purchasing of the property more difficult.¹ On November 12, 1890, John Rider gave the deed to the property to Benjamin Morrill. Morrill in turn gave the deed to the purchasing committee of the Native Sons. Both of these were immediately filed in the recorder's office at Sacramento, and the property passed into possession of the Native Sons of the Golden West.²

The purchase price of the Fort Sutter property was \$20,000. The amount of \$5000 was raised by subscriptions. Col. F.C. Crocker of Sacramento, contributed \$15,000 and Senator Stanford, upon hearing that all of the subscriptions had not been paid in full, gave \$250 to complete the balance of the purchase price so that there would be no further delay in the matter.³

It would be interesting to note one particular source of some of the contributions toward the purchase of Sutter's

¹ Sacramento Union, Thursday, Nov. 13, 1890.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Fort. The Sacramento Union of Thursday, Nov. 13, 1890,
printed the following items in its columns:

ABSENT PIONEERS TO THE FRONT

Among the receipts to the purchase fund may be mentioned one of \$100 cash recently forwarded by the Associated Forty-Niners of Boston through their Secretary, George G. Spurr, to President Lawson, of the Sacramento Society of Pioneers. Secretary Spurr who was here in '49, and whose father was buried at the old Fort, writes to President Lawson as follows:

Boston, Nov. 3, 1890.

Powell S. Lawson, Esq.

My Dear Sir:

On the principle that it were better to do good late than never do it at all, I have enclosed you at this late day a check payable to your order for \$100 as our mite toward preserving that venerable structure, Sutter's Fort, once the outpost of civilization, but now swallowed up by the march of improvements.

This sum is the result of a call upon our young society of genuine '49ers, possessing a membership of only 70. It is possible, I may be able to forward you something more by and by; but I dare not promise, as I find many of the men of old, who dug for gold too poor nowadays to carry out the best wishes of their own hearts.

In memory of old, when we dug for gold, way back in '49, I am, my dear Lawson,

Fraternally yours,
Geo. G. Spurr, Sec.,
69 Commercial Str.,
Boston, Mass.

The names of the donors, how they came and when they arrived in the country have a peculiar interest to us here, and cannot fail to awaken memories of the stirring events that were taking place while they were enroute to this

favorable spot.

Appearing in the Sacramento Union for Thursday, Nov. 13, 1890, were some of the Eastern contributors to the purchase fund of Fort Sutter. They came to California during the gold rush and later returned to their Eastern homes.

Henry L. Lawrence; Barque Lanark; Cape Horn, Sept. 1849..	\$25
Solomon S. Rowe; Barque Lanark; Cape Horn, Sept. 1849....	10
Edwin P. Worster; Barque Lanark; Cape Horn, Sept. 1849...	5
Samuel Cnow; Ship Mantic; Isthmus, July 1849.....	5
Grenville H. Child; Barque Carib; Cape Horn, Aug. 1849...	5
James H. Bennett; Barque Oxford; Cape Horn, Aug. 1849....	5
George G. Spurr; Ship Orpheus; Cape Horn, July 1849.....	5
Joseph Holmes; Ship Sweden; Cape Horn, Aug. 1849.....	5
Marshall Russell; Steamer Oregon; Isthmus, June 1849.....	5
William Whytal; St. Louis Trading Co., Overland, Sept. 1849	5
Henry M. Chase; Brig Forest; Cape Horn; July 1849.....	5
Mary Sinclair Davis (Mrs. Joseph Walker) Overland, Dec. 1843	2
Jotham Salisbury; Brig Sea Eagle; Cape Horn, June 1849...	2
Edwin Litchfield, Ship Sweden; Cape Horn, Sept. 1849.....	2
Benjamin F. Griggs; Brig Farranta; Cape Horn, Sept. 1849.	2
Newton S. Ingalls; Sandwich Islands, Dec. 1849.....	2
Eugene B. Athwill; Ship Sterling; Cape Horn, July 1849...	1
Isiah Graves; Ship Sterling; Cape Horn; July 1849....	1
Isaac B. Kirby; emigrant; Overland, Sept. 1847.....	1
Peter Cook; Barque Lanark; Cape Horn, Sept. 1849.....	1
Moses Brown; Barque Cy Cassian; Isthmus, Aug. 1849.....	1
Solomon Rhoads; through Mexico; July 1849.....	1

Having at last secured possession of the Fort Sutter property, the Native Sons deeded the property to the State of California, with the understanding that the legislature thereof would aid financially in the proposed reconstruction.¹ In the winter session of 1890-91, the California Legislature appropriated \$20,000 for the restoration of the fort. In 1892-93, the legislature made an additional appropriation of \$15,000 to complete the work.²

¹ Schoonover, Life and Times of General Sutter, 52.

² Ibid, 52.

The total cost of the reconstruction work amounted to \$55,879.90. Thirty-five thousand of this, as we have noted, was appropriated by the State Legislature. The balance was raised by subscriptions. The following is a complete list of the subscriptions received for the restoration and preservation of Sutter's Fort.

Parlors of the Native Sons and Native Daughters of the Golden West:

Sacramento Parlor.....	\$500.00
Najoqui "	10.00
Golden Fleece"	30.00
Redwood "	25.00
Stockton "	50.00
Benicia "	31.00
Plymouth "	20.00
San Diego "	25.00
Arrowhead "	24.00
Napa "	50.00
Lassen "	25.00
Highland "	17.00
Palo Alto "	20.00
Willows "	50.00
Santa Lucia "	15.75
Laurel "	11.60
Manzanita "	16.50
Ursual "	10.00
Dixon "	20.00
Mizpah "	10.00
N.S. and N.D. of the Golden West Sutter Fort Ball.....	195.55
Mrs. Leland Stanford.....	500.00
Col. D.M. Burns.....	250.00
Col. F.M. Crocker.....	1500.00
National Bank of D.O. Mills and Co.....	200.00
W.P. Coleman.....	100.00
Benjamin Morrill.....	2000.00
Sacramento Society.....	90.00
W.W. Coons.....	10.00
Hon. Leland Stanford.....	400.00
New England Society of Pioneers, Boston.....	100.00
New York Pioneers.....	50.00
E.E. Gaddis and others of Woodland.....	20.00
Whittier, Fuller and Co.....	50.00
J.G. Martine..... Sacramento.....	50.00
Col. E.R. Hamilton.....	50.00
A. Leonard and Son.....	10.00
A.S. Hopkins and Bro.....	10.00
B.F. Howard.....	10.00

H. Fisher.....	Sacramento.....	\$ 10.00
G.O. Emler.....	"	5.00
Gus Lavenson.....	"	5.00
J. Haub.....	"	5.00
A.C. Tufts.....	"	5.00
Mrs. H. Merwin.....	"	2.50
H. Laughton.....	"	1.00
M.F. Shaw.....	"	1.00
C.P. Nathan.....	"	1.00
S.J. Jackson.....	"50
Felix Tracy.....	"	5.00
P. Bohl.....	"	2.00
C.B. Strong.....	"	1.00
Anna Mc Connell.....	"	5.00
W.W. Bassett.....	"	5.00
J.W. Medley.....	"	2.50
W.H. Beatty.....	"	25.00
H.C. Megerle.....	"	5.00
A. Scheld.....	"	5.00
P. Newman.....	"	5.00
George Holbrook.....	"	2.50
W.D. Simmons.....	"	50.00
G.L. Comstock.....	"	10.00
A.A. Van Vorhies and Co..	"	10.00
Locke and Lavenson.....	"	25.00
F.R. Dray.....	"	10.00
George Mc Connell.....	"	8.00
Charles King.....	"	2.50
C.W. Reed.....	"	1.00
Weinstock, Lubin and Co..	"	100.00
Philip Scheld.....	"	100.00
A.A. Heilbron.....	"	50.00
L.L. Lewis.....	"	100.00
Hale Bros and Co.....	"	100.00
Jeff Wilcoxson.....	"	100.00
Dr. H.H. McLaughlin.....	San Francisco.....	5.00 ¹

Since the State was in possession of Fort Sutter property it was necessary to appoint trustees to look after it. The members of the original Board of Fort Sutter Trustees were:

F. D. Ryan-----President
 C. E. Grunsky-----Secretary
 E. E. Gregory-----Treasurer
 E. E. Gaddis

¹ Sacramento Daily Record-Union, Thursday July 9, 1891

C. E. Hollister¹

It was on the shoulders of this first board of trustees that the burden of reconstruction fell. Numerous plans were suggested as to just how Sutter's Fort was to be restored. Some wanted it built to look as it had originally. Others suggested that the old central building only should be repaired and used as a museum. Another plan was to build the fort as near as possible to the original and surround it with attractive gardens and lawns so as to provide a beauty spot for the city.

Grunsky drew the preliminary plans for the reconstruction and presented them at the meeting of the trustees on July 8, 1891. Whereupon that body passed the following resolution in regards to rebuilding the fort:

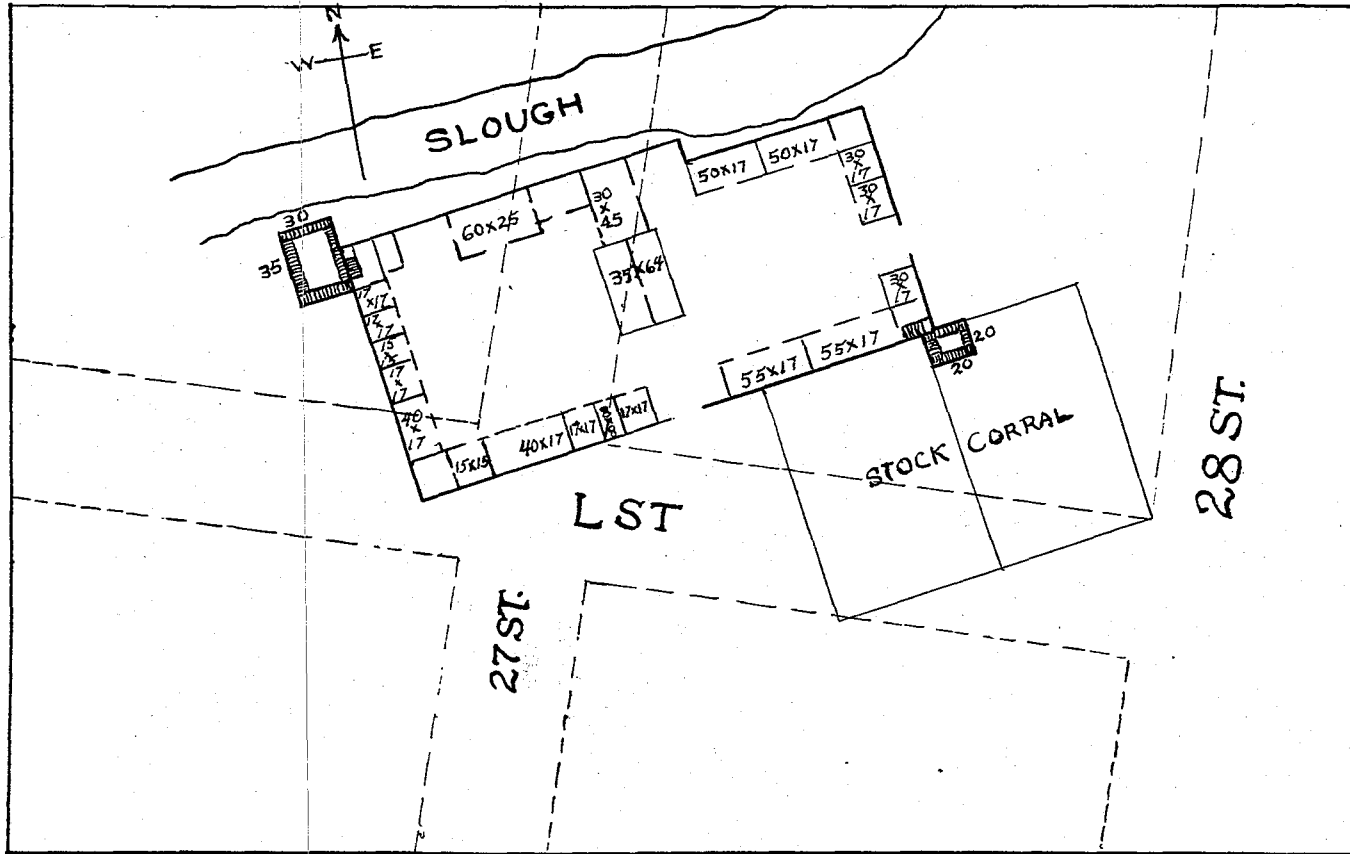
Resolved: That the general idea of improvement of the Sutter Fort property shall be the restoration of the central building now standing, and of such portions of the bastions, walls, and other structures as may be found to be feasible within the means at command.

The restoration to be carried out with durable material, cement-protected walls and tiled roofs on the structures.²

The reconstruction of Sutter's Fort was not an easy task. In the absence of concrete evidence concerning the dimensions of the fort, "old timers" and early narratives had to be consulted in order to obtain suitable descriptions

¹ Grunsky, Restoration of Sutter's Fort.

² Sacramento Daily Record-Union, Thursday, July 9, 1891.



GROUND PLAN OF SUTTER'S FORT IN 1849 (ACCORDING TO G.E. GRUNSKY'S DRAWING)
This drawing was reproduced from "THE EMIS", November 30, 1889 p.2. This plan served as a basis for the restoration work.

of it.

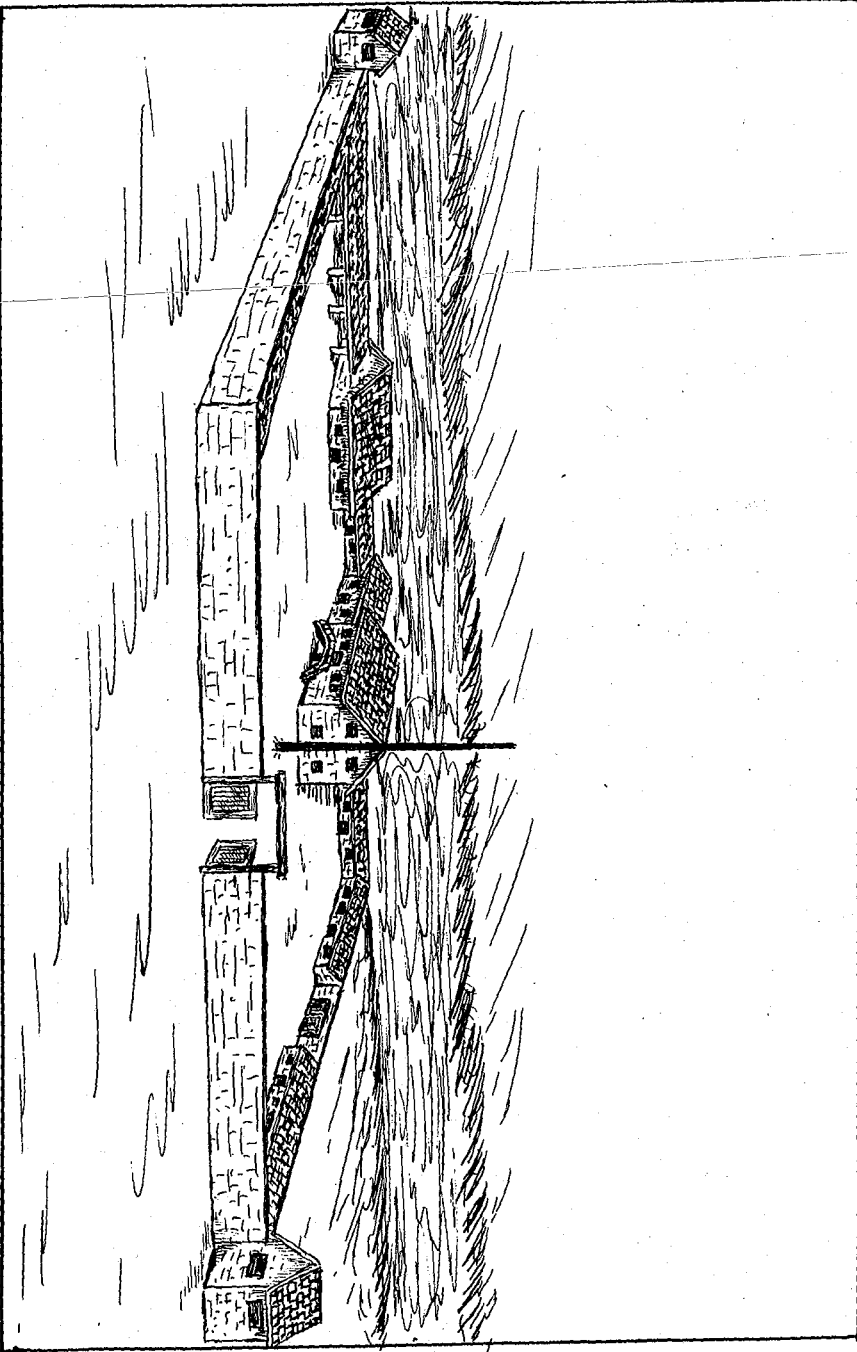
The appearance of the interior of Sutter's Fort was constantly changing over the ten years of its active existence, as has been noted in a preceding chapter.

Since the fort was last used to any extent in 1848-49 the remaining evidence would indicate in a small way its general proportion and outline in that year. Grunsky set about his task of reconstructing the fort in such manner that it would resemble the original as it appeared in 1848-49. Before the Native Sons had purchased the Fort Sutter property, Grunsky had made a drawing of the fort as it looked in the year 1849. The sketch was based upon his own research work.¹ The lines of the old walls were very ingeniously traced by Grunsky before he began actual reconstruction work. Even though the walls had been torn down in places and the remainder had succumbed to the elements, the foundation of the walls made a slight ridge in the ground. This was particularly noticeable along the line of the south wall, near the southeast corner of the fort and at the location of the northwest bastion.²

The southwest corner of the wall was determined by the fact that Sutter had a coal bin in that corner of the fort in 1849. Evidences of coal were found in the earth,

¹ Description of Sutter's Fort, Themis, Nov. 23, 1889.

² Grunsky, Restoration of Sutter's Fort.



BIRDSEYE VIEW OF SUTTER'S FORT IN 1849 (ACCORDING TO C. EGRUNSKY)
This sketch was reproduced from "THEMIS" November 25, 1889.

thus the southwest corner was established.¹

The ridges left by the crumbling walls of the bastions were noticeable. Thus three corners of the fort were fairly easily determined. The fourth corner was determined by measuring the distances of the three sides, comparing the measurements with descriptions and testimonials of "old timers" and then by the process of elimination of the distances given, decided the location of the fourth corner.²

The first thing that was done in the way of restoration was to repair and restore the old central building. The building was raised and a brick and cement foundation was put under it. The roof was repaired and braced from within to prevent a cave-in. Wherever it was necessary to repair the walls of the building adobe bricks were used. A large quantity of these bricks were manufactured from adobe and straw for that purpose.³ When the repairing was complete, the walls were given a coat of cement to preserve them. The remainder of the fort, one or two buildings and the walls, were constructed (with only one or two exceptions) out of ordinary bricks. For some reason or other, Grunsky and his architect, Scadler, in spite of testimonials of original sources, decided that the wall was not 18 feet in height, so they restored it to the height of only 14 feet.

¹ Description of Sutter's Fort, Themis, Nov. 23, 1889.

² Restoration Work on Sutter's Fort Begun, Sacramento Daily Record-Union, Wednesday, Sept. 2, 1891.

³ Grunsky, Restoration of Sutter's Fort.

Since shingle roofs did not last very long, unless constant repairing was done, it was decided to cover all the buildings with tiles. The next question was, where would they secure tiles? A committee was appointed, and in a very short time they produced the necessary number of tiles. They secured these articles by removing them from buildings around Monterey and elsewhere that had long outlived their usefulness.¹ There is no doubt that some of the tiles thus secured were older than the original fort itself.

After the reconstruction was finished, the fort resembled in general proportions and extent, the original structure.² The interior dimensions, locations of buildings, and general arrangement resembled the fort as it was in 1849.³

The improvement of the grounds upon which the restored structure stood, was undertaken by the Native Daughters of California. A few years after the restoration, they planted trees and flowers. At a later date, John McLaren, Superintendent of Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, furnished a landscape park plan for the grounds of Fort Sutter. This plan, in the main, has been carried out.⁴

¹ Grunsky, Restoration of Sutter's Fort.

² Chambers, California Pioneers: Sutter and Marshall, I

³ Grunsky, Restoration of Sutter's Fort.

⁴ Chambers, California Pioneers: Sutter and Marshall, I

CHAPTER VII
FORT SUTTER TODAY

In reviewing Fort Sutter at present, it would be well to examine some minor details of the restored fort which are not according to contemporary descriptions. Since the fort was reconstructed to resemble the original as it looked in 1849, we must put all earlier descriptions and sketches of the fort out of our minds.

For the most part, those who did not arrive in California prior to the gold rush, were not interested enough after they did arrive to notice the fort in detail. Gold was the cry of the day and in their mad rush they were unconsciously, yet constantly changing the appearance of the old fort.

Consequently as one wanders about the interior of the fort today, the whole atmosphere is that of the days of '49. The names upon the shops, the relics in the museum, the additional buildings announce to every visitor just as surely as if they spoke, "We are here as monuments to commemorate the great gold rush of '49!"

However, there are points made by earlier contemporaries that were not changed even by the '49ers.

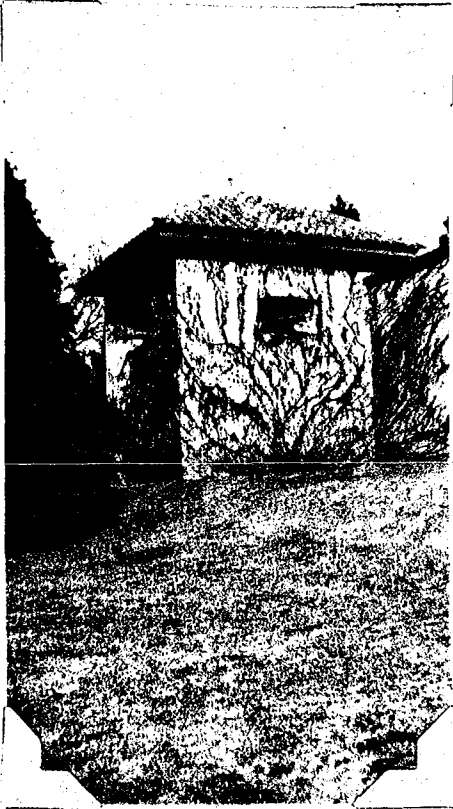
For instance, in Chapter II, we noticed that contemporaries described the height of the walls as 18 feet. Yet, for no reason at all, Grunsky's architect, decided that it was only 14 feet. The only conclusion one could possibly draw from this, is the fact that construction funds ran rather low during the restoration, so to cut down expenses the walls were built to 14 feet instead of 18 feet. Perhaps for the same reason, the wall was not built 3 feet thick as it was originally. The walls are only 30 inches thick at the present fort.

The bastions are of the proper dimensions and both have four wooden cannon mounted in their upper stories. Before 1849, the cannon had been removed from the bastions, and those rooms used as extra storing space.¹ However, as it was impossible to restore the original guns to the bastions, the wooden guns give the fort a military appearance from the outside, and are not at all undesirable.

Contemporaries, both writers and artists, mention that the walls of the fort were pierced with loop-holes for cannon. The only suggestion of these in the present walls, are two loop-holes about 11 feet high from the ground on either side of the south gate. Two more loop-holes are located the same distance from the ground on the southwest corner.

Lastly, the walls are constructed of bricks and not old adobes, and in addition are topped with tiles, something not

¹ "Description of Sutter's Fort," Themis, Nov. 23, 1889.



NORTHWEST BASTION
Showing south & west sides

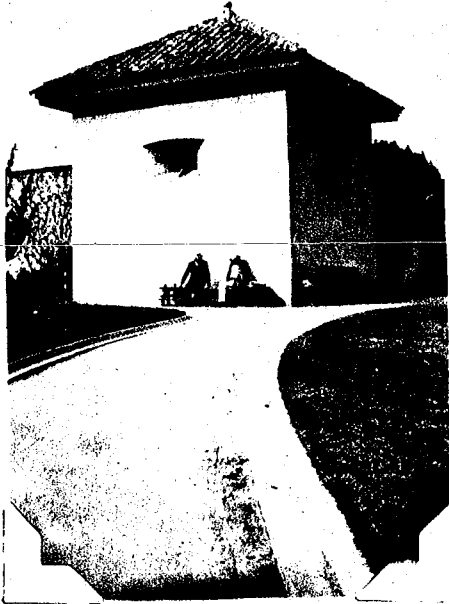
NORTHWEST BASTION

Showing the south side. Note how completely the artillery on this side of the bastion commands the west wall



SOUTHEAST BASTION

Showing South & East Sides with
The Woodert Artillery in position



SOUTHEAST BASTION

Showing North side. Note position
of the gun in relation to defence of
the East wall





SOUTHWEST CORNER
Showing loopholes for Cannon

**ENTRANCE TO THE
BASEMENT OF THE
CENTRAL BUILDING**

This photograph serves to illustrate
the thickness of the original adobe
walls



used in the early days of the fort.

In the interior of the fort there are three buildings. The original central building (in which is located the museum), the distillery, and the Kyburz Annex. (An addition to the central building, built by Kyburz in 1849 to accommodate more lodgers.) Around the walls are the shops, stores, warehouses and barracks, with a sign explaining their uses and occupants in 1849.

Since the central building is the only original part of the old fort, a brief description of it would be entirely in keeping with the subject.

With the exception of the foundation, the walls of this building are of adobe and are two and a half feet thick. The windows on the first floor are 47 inches wide, inside measurement, and 28 inches wide, exterior measurement. They were probably built fan-shaped so as to allow plenty of room for riflemen to manipulate their weapons in case of attack.¹

The main floor at present consists of two large rooms, each about 53 x 14 feet.² Formerly the floor was partitioned off into eight rooms, 14x14, 14x18, 14x12, and 14x14 on the east side. On the west the rooms were, from north to south respectively, 14x14, 14x12, 14x6 and 14x26.³

The basement was originally divided into two long

¹ Personal observations and measurements.

² Ibid.

³ "Description of Sutter's Fort", Themis, Nov. 23, 1889.

rooms, and it still remains so with the change of a door or two which makes but slight difference.

In regard to the original armament of the fort, those articles are very conspicuous by their absence. A placard inside of the fort states that the original armament of the fort was thirty-two guns, but it fails to tell whether they were all mounted or not. Contemporaries state that a large number of Captain Sutter's cannon were never mounted. They place the serviceable cannon at ten or twelve mounted guns, the rest were in the storerooms.

Under the mentioned placard there are displayed three cannon, purported to be some of the original that were mounted in the fort, and it is likely that they are, since they are in keeping with the early period of the fort.

One of them is evidently a naval gun, probably removed from some ship by Sutter when he was in need of armament.

Below is a detailed description of this gun:

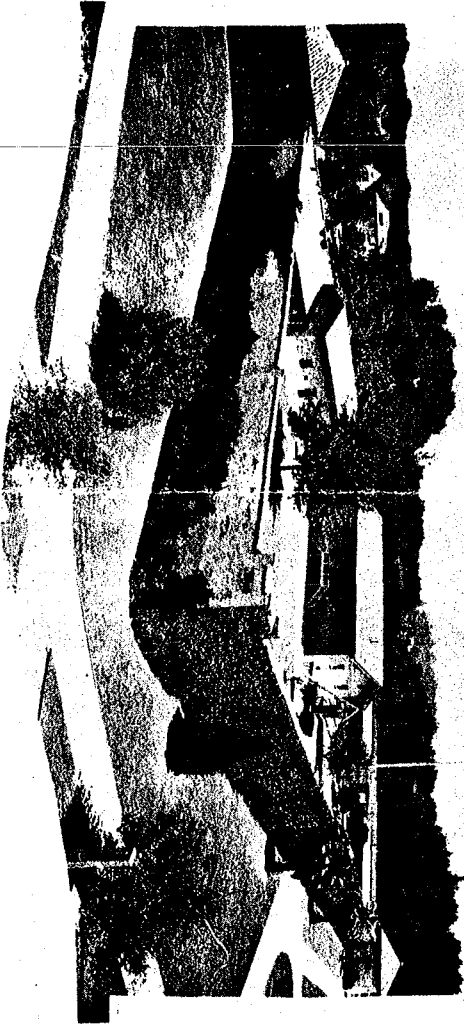
Total length.....	55 $\frac{1}{2}$	inches.
Circumference (breach).....	37 $\frac{1}{4}$	"
Circumference (muzzle).....	25 $\frac{1}{4}$	"
Bore.....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
Marks.....	C.A.&Co. Boston.	

The next gun was evidently a field piece of uncertain make. The following data only was available:

Total length.....	41	inches.
Circumference (breach).....	43 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
Circumference (muzzle).....	29 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
Bore.....	4	
Marks.....	None	

The remaining gun is evidently one of Russian design, probably one of those which Sutter obtained by his purchase

BIRDSEYE VIEW OF SUTTER'S FORT
(From the Southwest Corner)



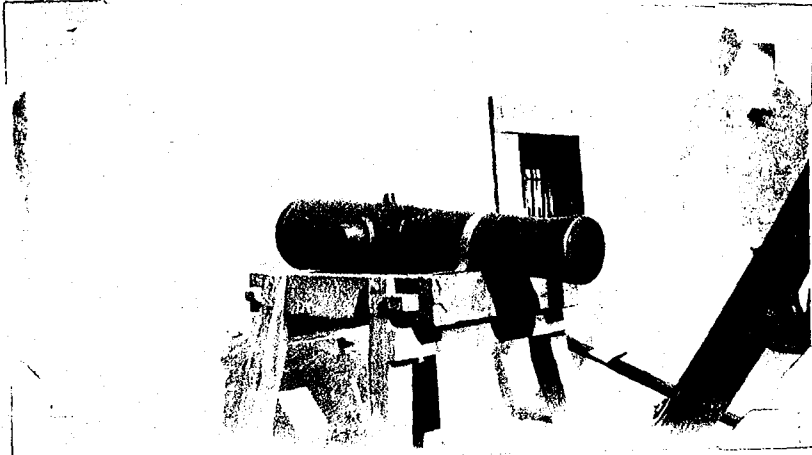
of Fort Ross. The dimensions are:

Total length.....	50	inches.
Circumference (breach).....	42	"
Circumference (muzzle).....	21 $\frac{1}{4}$	"
Bore.....	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	"
Marks.....	.Obliterated by rust.	

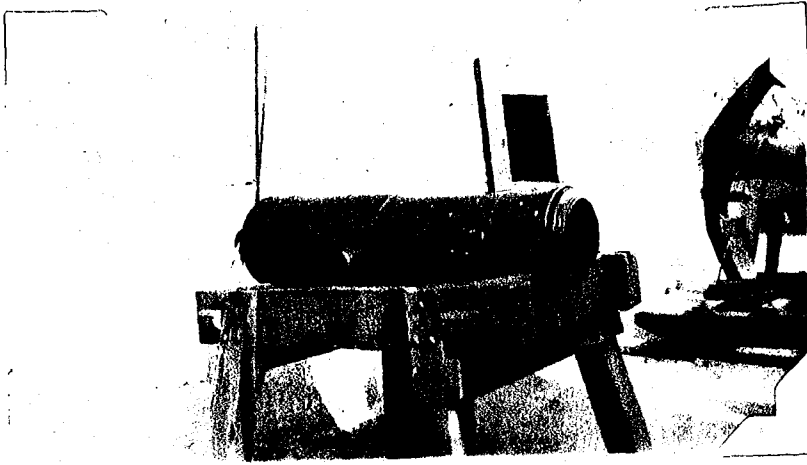
These are the only original cannon within the fort. The others located about the grounds of the fort were probably obtained from the United States Government after the Civil War. Two of them are placed on the outside of the east wall at either side of the gate. One was manufactured in 1863 and bears the mark "U.S." stamped on the breach. The other is another old United States field piece, manufactured in 1862.

In the center of a flower plot about 100 feet from the center of the south gate, outside the wall, there is a brass field piece made by the Revere Copper Co., in 1864. But there is another brass field piece, located outside the north west bastion, which is devoid of all identification marks except a "U.S." stamped on the breach. The gun, in pattern, resembles those employed by the United States in the Mexican War. It is possible that it may have been brought here during the Conquest of California by the United States forces, but in the absence of any explanatory placards, the origin and source of the gun must necessarily remain unknown.¹

¹ Descriptions of armament are from personal examination. See following pages for pictures of the described guns.

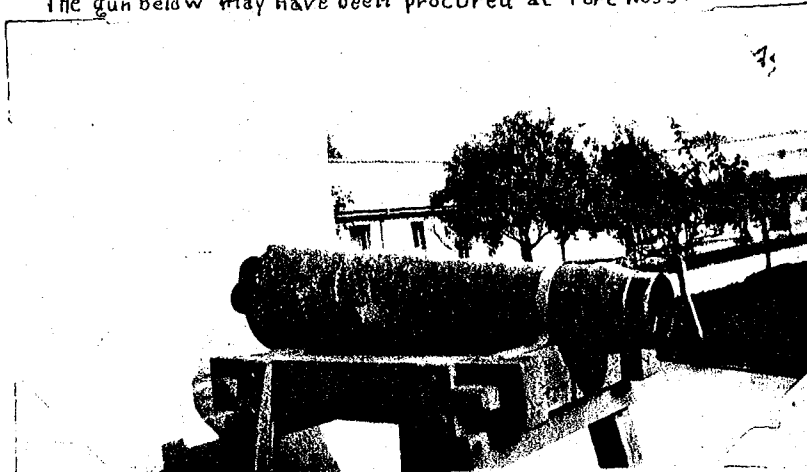


The above gun is marked: C.A. & CO., Boston. It is evidently a naval gun which Sutter took from some ship

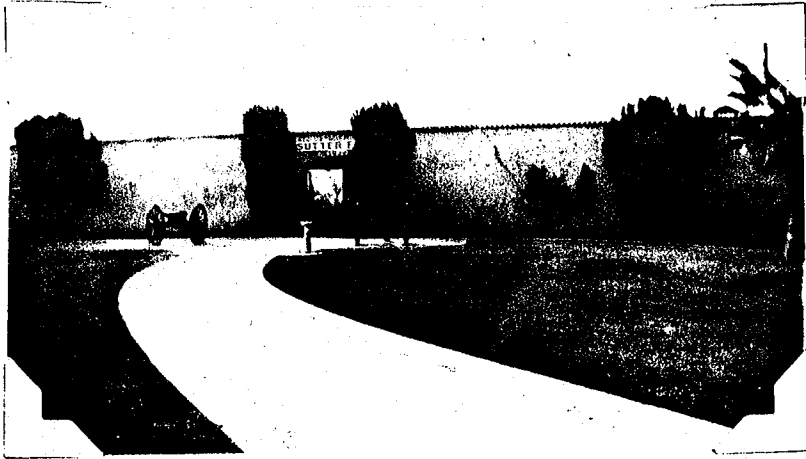


An unidentified field-piece. No visible markings

The gun below may have been procured at Fort Ross.



SOME OF THE ORIGINAL CANNON THAT WERE MOUNTED IN OLD FORT SUTTER



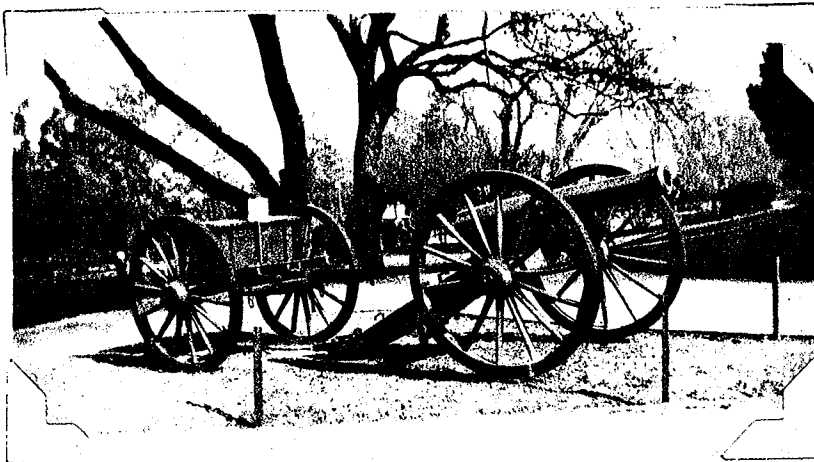
THE EAST GATE

The two cannon, by their markings, belong to the Civil War period



THE SOUTH GATE

The gun in the foreground was mfg. by The Revere Copper Co., in 1864



U.S. ARMY FIELD PIECE

Type used in the Mexican War. IT might have been brought to old Fort Sutter during the American Conquest of California

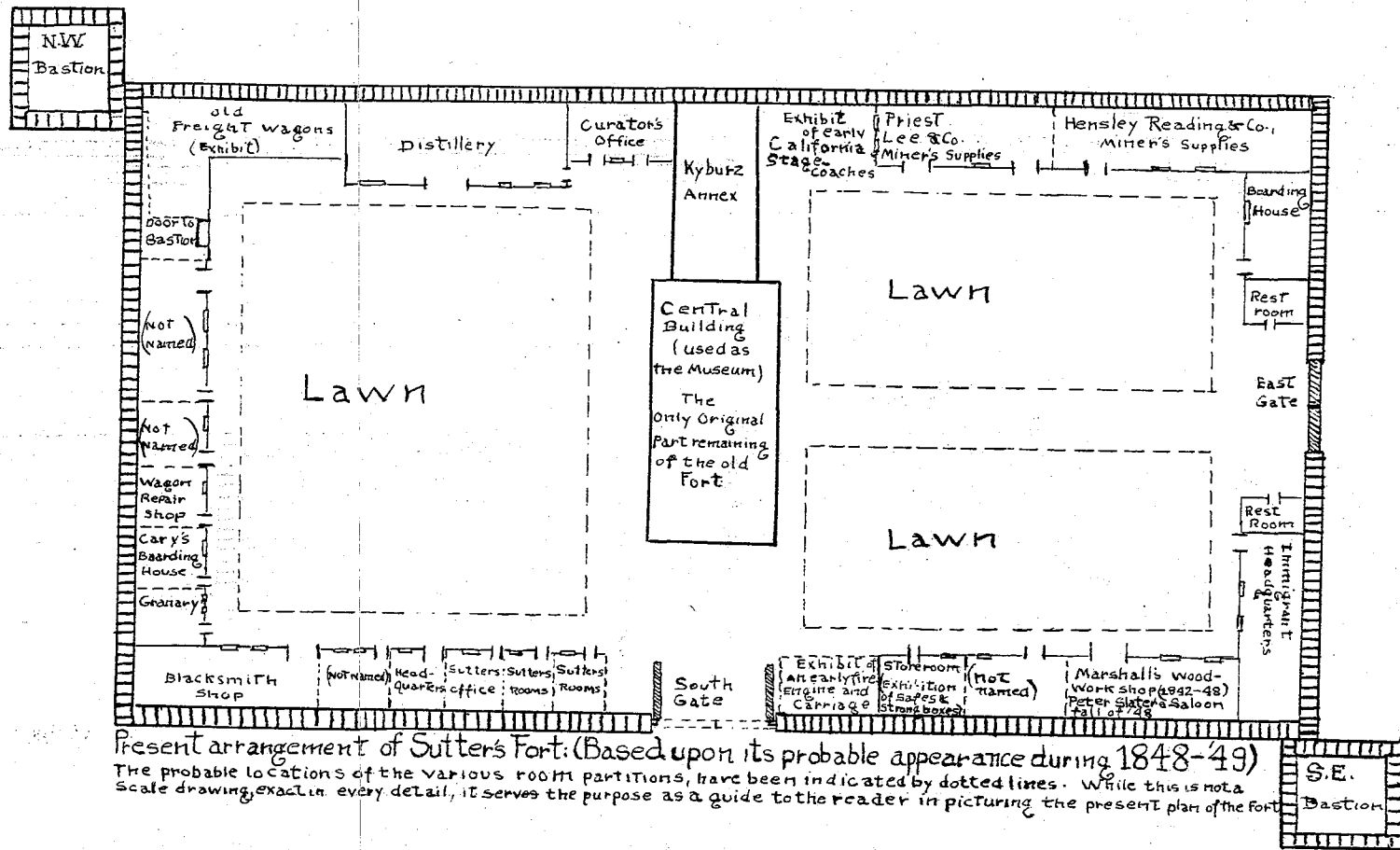
Since the grounds were intended to be attractive, they are, of course, not at all like they were in the early days. They are beautifully covered with magnificent green lawns, multicolored flower beds and stately trees.

The ravine, which was so steep on the north side of the walls that it was admirably suited for defense, has disappeared. In its place is a small pond inhabited by frogs, carp, mudhens, geese and various aquatic plants known to thrive in damp locations.

Neither is the location marshy or subjected to floods at certain periods of the year as formerly. There is no creek connecting with the American River. Many years of filling in, and raising the levees, gradually effaced the creek and the surrounding slough.

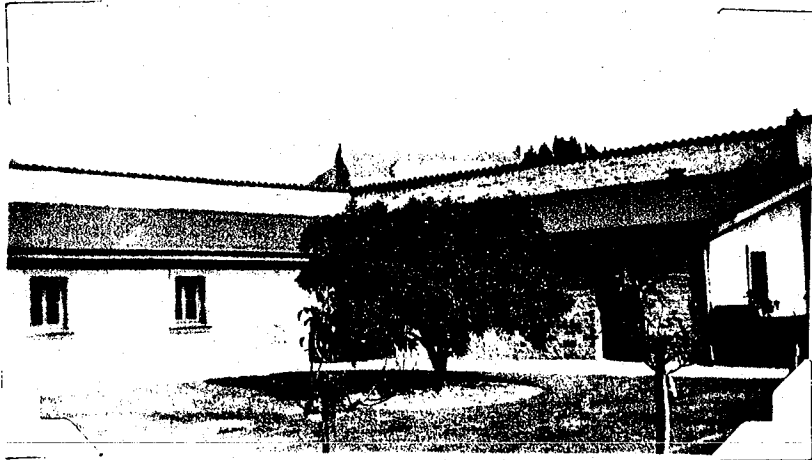
As one enters the south gate, turns to his left and begins a systematic tour of the fort, the following signs over the various rooms (in order of their appearance) meets one's eyes; Sutter's Room; Sutter's Offices; Headquarters; Unnamed empty room; Blacksmith Shop; South-west Corner; Granary; Cary's Boarding House; Wagon Repair Shop; Three empty rooms; The North-west Bastion; An exhibit of early day covered wagons and freight wagons; The distillery; Tool-house; Curators Office; Kyburz Annex; (which joins the rear of the central building to the north wall.)

The Kyburz Annex houses exhibits of early days, musical instruments and fine collection of early photographs, da-

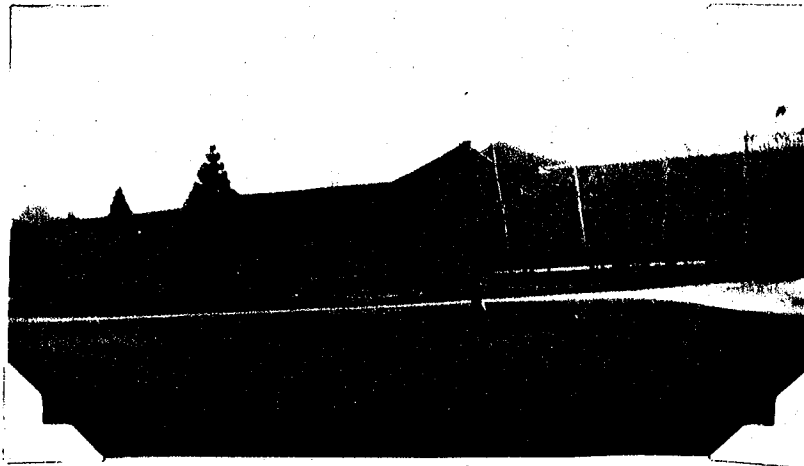


Present arrangement of Sutter's Fort: (Based upon its probable appearance during 1848-49)

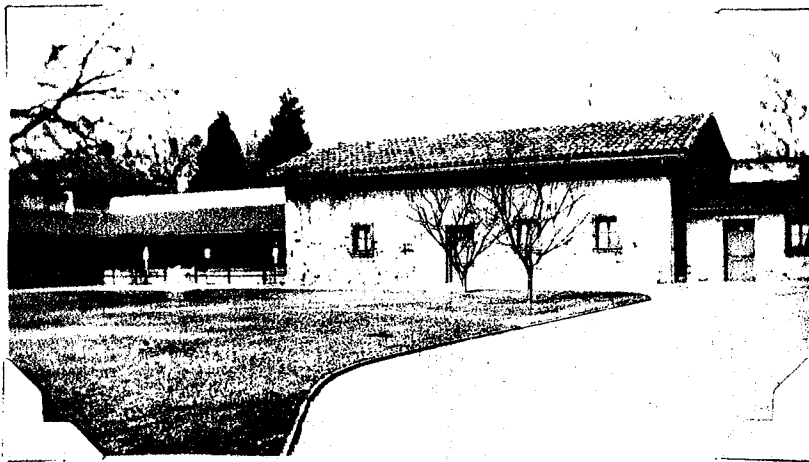
The probable locations of the various room partitions, have been indicated by dotted lines. While this is not a scale drawing, exact in every detail, it serves the purpose as a guide to the reader in picturing the present plan of the fort.



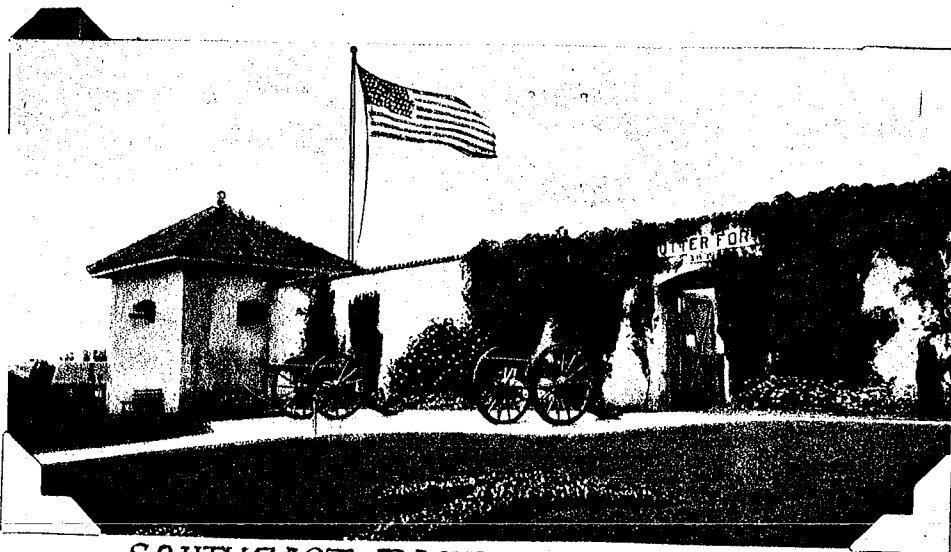
NORTHEAST CORNER (INTERIOR)



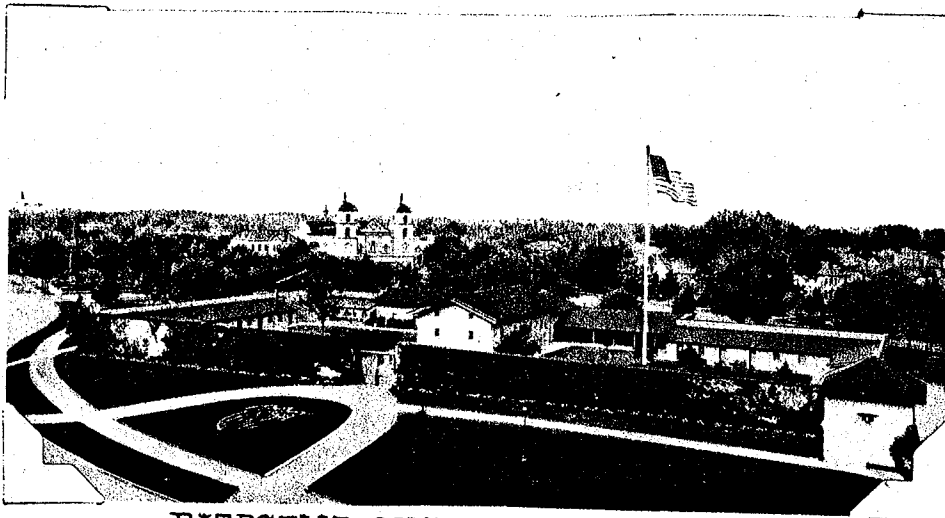
THE NORTH WALL (EXTERIOR)



THE DISTILLERY



SOUTHEAST BASTION & EAST GATE



BIRDSEYE VIEW OF THE FORT
(From the South Gate)

NORTHWEST BASTION & LAGOON



old safes and strong boxes used in handling the gold in the early days. Even iron shutters from the windows of old stores in the ghost towns of the Mother Lode Country have been brought down to swell the exhibit.

A small lean-to between the last room and the south gate houses an early day carriage and a fire engine of ancient origin. This in brief, is the present arrangement of the interior of Fort Sutter.

CHAPTER VIII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In briefly reviewing the principal facts presented in this thesis and assembling them so as to have the proper continuity, we may assume that the following summary of the "History of Sutter's Fort" is based upon the most authentic and accurate sources available.

In the early part of the summer of 1839, Sutter arrived in California for the purpose of securing a liberal land grant, building a trading post and acquiring a fortune from this commercial venture.

Sutter interviewed Alvarado, the Mexican Governor of California, about the matter, and was told to select his site for operations, file claim to it, and become a Mexican citizen. Sutter, acting upon this advice, decided to select a suitable tract of land within the interior of California for two reasons.

First, if his post was located so far inland it would be out of the way of interference and strict jurisdiction from Mexican officials. Secondly, an inland post would provide ample opportunity to cultivate the friendship of the Indians to such an extent that with little difficulty he

would be able to secure their labor in exchange for a little food and clothing. Thus, left unmolested, and with plenty of cheap labor, he would be able to establish a profitable trading post in a short time.

Sutter realized that some sort of protection was necessary for his possessions, so he decided that his trading post should be built in the form of a fort. The building of the fort occupied about four years, (1840-44). The materials at hand were employed. The walls were built of adobe bricks, strengthened with hand-sawed lumber. When the fort was partially complete, Sutter purchased the Russian holdings at Fort Ross and Bodega. In about two years, the equipment at the Russian Posts was installed at New Helvetia, Sutter's name for his colony.

When completed the fort consisted of an adobe wall 18 feet high and about 500 feet long by 150 feet wide. It was entered by three gates, one on the north, another on the east, and the third on the south. All three gates were protected by artillery mounted at loop-holes on either side of the three gates. The northern gate was also protected by the steep banks of the creek or slough which ran on that side of the fort.

In the north east and south west corners of the fort, there were bastions, with walls 5 feet thick and two stories high. The upper stories were used for armament, four guns being mounted in each, while the lower stories

were designed as prisons.

Shops, barracks, warehouses and stores, lined the walls on the interior of the fort. In the center of the area, stood a large two-story adobe building, together with several other wooden structures which had been removed from Fort Ross.

Sutter, carrying out his original plan, employed Indians at the fort. About fifty of the natives formed his original garrison, uniquely attired in a variety of home-made and Russian uniforms. A blanket factory, distillery, mill and nearby farms furnished occupations for three or four hundred more of the Indians.

With the arrival of emigrants from the states, Sutter employed a good many of them as carpenters, mechanics, and blacksmiths.

Sutter depended upon his wheat, wool, and brandy as the media of exchange in securing furs from the trappers who patronized his fort. His installments on the principal for the Russian possessions were paid for the most part in wheat.

It was only natural that an establishment such as Sutter's which made such wide contacts should have many nationalities within its walls. There were Irish, French, Swiss, Canadians, Germans, Indians, Kanakas, Mexicans and Negroes at the fort, to say nothing of the numerous Americans.

Amusements while crude, served the same purpose that amusements are designed for, and that was relaxation, a thing that was welcomed heartily as a temporary break from

the hardships and dangers of frontier life.

Actual military uses of the fort were limited. Sutter led only one organized expedition from the fort, and that was to aid Governor Micheltorena in putting down a revolution. Aside from that and a few encounters with the Indians the military activities of the fort were few until the Bear Flag Revolution, and the American Conquest. During the Bear Flag Revolution, the fort was used as a prison for the Sonoma captives.

With the opening of the war with Mexico, Fort Sutter was placed under an American Commander, Lieutenant Kern. It served as a base of supply for the American Army in California during the war.

The emigrants from the States found the fort an ideal place to rest and repair their broken wagons. Sutter's Fort was the ultimate goal of overland travelers to California, since it was the only early outpost of civilization in the interior of California, Captain Sutter's hospitable reputation was known far and wide, and any expedition, whatever its nature or business, if going into the interior of California, would make it a point to visit Sutter's Fort for a few days.

The discovery of gold added increased impetus to the business and activity at Sutter's Fort. For a year the fort was a scene of wild activity, and then business began to fall off as towns sprang up elsewhere. The scarcity of building materials and lodging quarters were problems that

did not daunt the "Forty-niners"; they simply appropriated everything at the fort for their own use, even forcing Sutter to retire to the seclusion of Hock Farm. After the departure of the emigrants, the fort was completely wrecked. It was used as a hospital during a typhoid epidemic in Sacramento. After that it was occupied a few years by a private family and then finally abandoned.

Wind, rain, flood, and a bridge contractor, gradually effaced the walls. By 1871, the old central building was the only visible remains of Fort Sutter, and it too was rapidly succumbing to the elements.

A sudden realization that Fort Sutter had played a prominent part in California History and that its memory was woven into the hearts of thousands, furnished the motive for the restoration movement.

The Native Sons and Daughters raised enough money by subscription to buy the old fort property and the one remaining building, which they in turn deeded to the State of California.

The legislature created a committee of five to act as trustees for the property. Money for the reconstruction work was raised partly by state appropriations and partly by popular subscriptions.

C. E. Grunsky, a civil engineer, who had shown early interest in the restoration of the fort, was put in charge of the work. The fort, when completely restored, while it is

not historically accurate in every detail, served its purpose; a monument to the memory of those who had helped build California into a mighty state.

A casual observer might, upon visiting the fort for the first time, form an opinion that the restoration of an old fort, which required the blocking of one street, and the withdrawal of a considerable amount of building space from public usage, was not only a flagrant waste of public money; but an idea born of those with "more money than brains."

To assume that the fort had little or no place in California History would be folly. It has had considerable bearing upon the course of history in this state. There are three reasons for this:

First, the location and formidable appearance of the fort exercised its effect upon Mexican and Indians alike. Located as it was on a small creek connecting with the American River, it commanded one of the best inland water routes into California from the coast. The commercial value of this water way alone was very great, since Sutter kept a trading schooner continually plying between the fort and Yerba Buena.

Since the fort was stronger than any of the Mexican presidios, Mexican officials were not anxious to interfere with Captain Sutter's business. The Indians in the immediate vicinity had experienced the wrath of Sutter upon several occasions when they had indulged in horse stealing, so during

the existence of the fort, they had gradually quieted down.

Secondly, the emigrants from the States regarded the fort as a God-send. The fort offered them protection from both the Indians and Mexican officials, the latter especially, since they did not look with favor upon American immigration. The early immigrants, for the most part, were seeking new homes, and Central California to them, was an ideal spot for taking up land claims, since the fort offered not only protection, but an opportunity to trade their products for supplies.

Lastly, the fort served as an admirable source of supply for Fremont's expedition. Fremont was in California obviously for the purpose of making geographic surveys for the United States. Several historians, however, have hinted that Fremont was under secret orders to remain in California and hold it in case of war between the United States and Mexico.

At any rate, whatever his purpose, the presence of Sutter's Fort enabled Fremont to pitch his camp on the American River, close to the fort, but far away from the eyes of suspicious Mexican officials. If the fort had not been there, Fremont would have had to locate near the coast towns in order to be well supplied, and at the same time every move he made would have been questioned by the Californian authorities.

The presence of a heavily armed fort in Central Cal-

ifornia, located near navigable waters, simplified matters for the United States Military authorities, when war was declared between the United States and Mexico. Almost immediately Sutter's Fort was placed under American command. The garrison was developed and increased and put on the army pay-roll. Communications with the naval forces operating around San Francisco Bay was possible by means of the river. Not only that, but Fort Sutter was the key to the military situation of Northern California. The Americans, by occupying the fort, at one stroke paralysed the military strength of the Mexicans, and cut their forces in two. With the seizure of the fort, practically all military conflicts ceased in Northern California, and the balance of the engagements occurred in the south.

With the coming of the "Forty-niners", the fort became the starting point for the gold trail, which led from Sacramento to Colma. Thus it was that Sacramento became the great supply base for all the miners of the Northern Mother Lode Country. With the building up of the city and the increase of stores and lodging houses, the fort fell into disuse, and finally into decay.

The fort, as it stands today, with the exception of the original adobes building within the walls, has no connection with the early history of California. The new walls serve two purposes: they symbolize and protect. They symbolize the importance and formidable appearance of the old fort

and they protect the one remaining building of the original structure.

In concluding we may say that Fort Sutter played its part in California History and that its restoration was justified to preserve the memory and significance of its past.

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APPENDIX

DATE OF FLAG RAISING AT SUTTER'S FORT

Judge J.H. McKune, in his article which appeared in *Themis*, October 5, 1889 stated that the American Flag was raised over Fort Sutter July 4, 1846.

The exact date of the flag raising is not known. On the night of the tenth of July, 1846, a courier came to Fremont's camp with the news of war between the United States and Mexico.

Sutter, in his *Personal Reminiscences*, claims that the same courier that brought the news of war to Fremont, also brought him an American Flag, which he (Sutter) raised over the fort the following morning. This would make the flag raising on the eleventh of July.

Bancroft takes the attitude of uncertainty about the flag raising, but thinks it was raised about July 11, or 12. At any rate, Judge McKune's date is too early. On the other hand it may have been a misspirt in *Themis*.

Sutter's Attitude toward the American Flag was more cordial than the feelings he held for the Bear Flag. In writin to his brother, Andrew, Sutter made the sarcastic remark that the "Bear" on the California Republic Flag,

resembled a hog more than a bear.¹ Perhaps Sutter felt that the hog represented more appropriately the actions and attitudes of the Revolutionists than the "Bear."

MOFRAS' DESCRIPTION OF FORT SUTTER IN FRENCH

De L'Oregon des Californies par M. Duflot de Mofras,
Arthur Bertrand, Editeur, Paris 1844.

Le fort de la Nouvelle Helvetie est adossé, au nord, a un petit ruisseau dont les bords escarpés concourent à la defense; L'enceinte est fermée par un mur de cinq pieds d'épaisseur, consruit en briques cuites au soleil, et soutenu par de grandes pièces de bois: chaque face du quadrilatère présente un développement de cent mètres, ayant deux étages; les quatre plans sont percés d'embrasures, et une galerie extérieure couronne toute la muraille. L'armement se compose, de seize à dix-huit canons courts, et caronades en fer de divers calibres, achetés à bord des navires, et de dux excellentes pièces de campagne en bronze, avec caissons, que les Russes ont cédées à M. Sutter. Ce dernier possède en outre assez de fusils et de longues carabines rayées (rifles) pur équiper soixante à quatre-vingts hommes, sans compter les pistolets et armes blanches. Ses munitions sont bonnes et en assez grande quantité; une surveillance active, et des gardes et rondes de nuit, sont organisées militairement. Toutes ces precautions sont nécessaires, car dans les premiers temps de l'établissement, les Indiens ont tenté plusieurs fois d'assassiner M. Sutter, qui est sorti vainqueur des engagements qu'il a eus avec eux.

Maintenant, M. Sutter est en paix avec les Indiens, dont une centaine environ travaillent chez lui. Ils sont nourris, et reçoivent par jour deux réaux en marchandises, telles que grains de verre, colliers, mouchoirs, étoffes et autres articles.

Il ya a la Nouvelle Helvétie, trente hommes blancs, Allemands, Suisses, Canadiens, Américains, Anglais et Français. Presque tons sont occupés aux coupes de bois, aux forges et à la charpente; quelques-uns parcourent, divisés en escouades, vallée et les rivières pur chasser le castor.

(Extract from pp. 458, 459, 460.)

¹ "A Page From the Past," Pacific Unitarian, Sept. 1917.

KERN'S APPOINTMENT
 (A Transcript of Fort Sutter Papers, M.S.10)

U.S. Frigate Congress
 Bay of Monterey
 July 25, 1846

Sir:

You are hereby appointed as First Lieutenant in the California Battalion, and will report to Major Fremont for duty.

Faithfully
 Yr. Obt. Servt.
 R. F. Stockton
 Commander-in-chief.

To Edward Kern
 First Lieut.
 California Battalion

FREMONT'S ARRIVAL AT FORT SUTTER

Fremont, in his Report of the Exploring Expedition, p. 247, describes his reception at Fort Sutter in the following manner:

An impetus was given to the active little population by our arrival, as we were in want of everything. Mules, horses, and cattle were to be collected; the horse-mill was at work day and night, to make sufficient flour; the blacksmith's shop was put in requisition for horse shoes and bridle bits; and pack saddles, ropes, and bridles, and all the other little equipments of the camp, were again to be provided.

SUTTER'S LETTER TO LARKIN DESCRIBING FREMONT'S PLIGHT

The contents of letter 73, written by Sutter to Larkin describes Fremont's plight thus:

New Helvetia, Mar. 8, 1844

Thos. O. Larkin, Esq.

Dear Sir:

I am not aware of the arrival of any commissioners on the part of the United States for establishing the boundary line. On the 6th inst. Lieut. J. C. Fremont of the United States Exploring expedition arrived here in distress having been forced to deviate from his course on account of deep snows loss of animals and want of provisions, he informed me of having left the Columbia River a short distance above Fort Vancouver, with the intention of crossing through the lower or southern part of Oregon Territory eastward, to the headwaters of the Arkansas River, but finding a succession of high mountains covered with snow, which, with the destitute condition of his company, forced him to abandon his route and strike for the settlements of California, refit, and cross the mountains farther to the south. On the morning of the 25th inst. He left here direct for the United States, his party consisting of twenty-five (25) men. The visit of this exploring expedition, I attribute entirely to accident.

For a month previous to their arrival the company had subsisted entirely upon horse and mule flesh. The starvation and fatigue they had endured rendered them truly deplorable objects. With these facts and the assurance of Lieut. Fremont I can be of no other than the above opinion.

I am very respectfully yours,

J. A. Sutter.