

Yankee Hill Historical Society Archives

www.yankeehillhistory.com

The archives on the Yankee Hill Historical Society web page were started in 2006 when the group wanted to create a newsletter with stories on our local history. We cover the history of the Highway 70 corridor between Pence and Pulga in Butte County, California. It was decided to create a spreadsheet of facts in chronological order on the topics we were researching. As we searched different sources for information, we added an entry into a spreadsheet about the fact and the source in date order. This was the beginning of the 150 page plus timeline that is now available on our web site. This process has been developed over a ten-year period.

Vital Resources for Researching Our Local History

1882 History of Butte County by Harry L. Wells – This book is the basis for much of the history that has been written about the county's history since it was first published in 1882. It is now available as a CD online. There is a 1918 update to this work by **George Mansfield** which adds information to the 1882 edition.

Oroville County Library – The library has numerous rolls of microfilm of the Butte County newspapers. They are available at several of the libraries in Butte County. However, the Oroville Branch has the most complete collection. They also have a reader/ printer that allows you to save a copy of a newspaper to a thumb drive. The library staff is very helpful in showing you how to use the system so don't be afraid to ask for help. Be prepared to spend several hours looking at newspapers; many of the old ads are very enlightening about our history. The newspapers are also available at the Meriam Library in Chico online from the 1850s through 1922; later copies are on microfilm. Again you can download the files to a thumb drive.

Butte County Recorder's Office – The new facility behind Home Depot in Oroville is beautiful and worth visiting. The archives are available online only at the facility or you can ask to see the original books at the help desk. There is usually an index book for each subject by name, which gives the Name, Date, Book Number and Page in another book. You can then look up an image for that entry in that book at a computer or ask for the actual book to see the original entry. Again the archival staff is very helpful so be sure to

have them introduce you to the system. It will save time and eliminate frustration (not all frustration) with learning the system.

The books available cover Land Patents, Homesteads, Land Deeds, Mining Deeds and various other subjects back to the early 1850s. Again the key is to use the index for each subject to find what you want.

Paradise Genealogical Society – This group of volunteers has devoted hours of their time to collecting and making available information on local family histories. They have a web page you can visit to check their hours of operation; most of the information available is better gathered by visiting their headquarters in Paradise.

Meriam Library, Chico State – The Meriam Library has many resources available to researchers. Some are online and others you have to visit the library to use. Special Collections at the library has original copies of documents and photos that can be viewed by request. Visit the Meriam Library web page.

ANCHR - Meriam Library Special Collections also sells books on local history published by ANCHR. ANCHR (Association for Northern California Historical Research) is an organization that helps future authors on local history with publishing their work. Visit their website at anchr.org

Local Museums and Historical Societies – Several of the local museums and historical societies are also collecting information about their particular area in Butte County's history. Butte County Museum in Oroville, Chico Museum in Chico, Forbestown Museum in Forbestown, Gold Nugget Museum in Paradise and Gridley Museum in Gridley are some examples of museums that offer various degrees of research capabilities for the history sleuth. These museums also offer displays on local history as well. Be sure to check the hours these museums are open before you visit as they all have different hours and days they are open; many have web pages.

Local History Buffs and Long Time Residents – It may take a little effort to find out who they are (asking the various museums is one way) but they have stories to tell that can be very informative. There is a lot of local history locked up in the minds of these people that is very interesting and leads to other discoveries when pursued. If you ask them, many will let you record the stories as they tell them.

We encourage everyone to record the stories your own parents and grandparents can tell you about your family's history. You can buy a small digital tape recorder specifically made for this purpose that fits in your pocket and will let you download the recording later directly to your computer. Most smart phones also offer recording capabilities and can take pictures for your own family archives!

Books on Specific Subjects You Are Researching – There are a number of books available on almost any facet of history; many of the museums mentioned above sell books specific to the local history. A word of caution, history is a running timeline and books are a snapshot in time so there is always more to the story, so keep an open mind! Things have a finite history; human relations are an evolution.

The Process of Developing the Archives

A notebook, a cell phone and a thumb drive were vital tools when collecting information. Later that information was entered into a computer spreadsheet.

The first step was noting references in the 1882 history about our area and adding them to the timeline. Then over time materials from the other sources were added to fill in the blanks. The timeline helped to coordinate the information gained from various sources over several months and years of research. Patterns started to form when reviewing the timeline that lead to further research. It soon became apparent the timeline was a vital part in recording the history of the area and it made writing articles for the newsletter much easier; in a sense the timeline was the heart of each article. Certain entries on the Timelines were highlighted in the article and some entries were considered less important and not mentioned in the story at all. All information collected was entered into the timeline or an Index; in many instances information was found that did not relate to the specific topic being researched but could be used at another time on another article. Recording information in date sequence and by topic or place facilitated gathering all the information together. It literally became quite an interesting journey and a puzzle that always needed more pieces.

The YHHS Online Archives

The Yankee Hill Historical Society Archives have been growing for 10 years, the process is driven by filling in the blanks in the timeline. Today there is as much information in the archives that has never been written about as there is information that has been covered

in our newsletters. Untold stories are hidden in our archives. Who would tell them and what would become of the information we already have? It had taken years to gather the information for the archives, making it available to others would save future researchers thousands of hours sitting in the libraries and at the other various sources we used in gathering research. There is more research to be done that may entail more hours in libraries but it should be in addition to what we have already collected, not a duplication of what we had already done. It became paramount that the archives need to be made available on line and then the stories hidden within can be researched at home by anyone. Our expectation is the archives will continue to grow as new research is added. Much of it may not be used immediately but it is available to everyone.

How to Use the Yankee Hill Historical Society Online Archives

The archives have been helpful in developing the stories for our newsletters but it also has become evident that the different sources of information each needed an index because of the sheer volume of information. The decision was made to make the process of using our archives follow the process of collecting information at other various sources. It was decided a searchable PDF file was the best way to create the indexes, just like we had done with the master timeline. At this time, we have the following categories below in the Archives. Noted in red are the timelines and Indexes in the sections where they are available. Each Index has a date at the top showing when it was last updated. Materials will be added to the Archives periodically in batches and the Index date will be changed accordingly for each section as it is updated.

The Newspaper Articles – Are in date order and have an **index** by subject and place.

Deaths and Funerals - Are in date order and have an **index** by subject and place. The newspaper articles are filed by date.

Births and Marriages - Are in date order and have an **index** by subject and place. The newspaper articles are filed by date.

The Land Deeds and Mining Claims – Are in date order with an **Index** which reference the person's name, similar to the index at the recorder's office. The book and page is also listed just like the recorder's office. The one difference is Land Patents, Homesteads and Land Deeds have been all listed in one index in our archives. The Mining Claims are separate.

Maps – Maps have been collected from various sources and added online to assist in research. As we add more maps online and it is needed an index will be provided.

Family Histories – We have a database of over 4,000 names of families and their descendants from this area. Currently we have 180 family trees we are working on. An example of several of these family files can be seen in the Family History Section. We will add more family files over time to the page. An index will be provided as the volume grows on line.

Reference Materials – This section in the archives has a sample of the reference materials in our archives. Some of these are copyrighted materials by others so we cannot make them available online. We will add more material not copyrighted over time.

Native American – This section contains files specifically about local native American history. There is a **timeline** specifically for this topic. The newspaper files are filed in the newspaper section along with the other articles. The rest of the materials are in the Native American Section.

Photographs – Are listed in an **index** by a unique photo number. The place and date are referenced in the index. The unique numbering system is because photos are added to the index on various subjects, people, place, etc. in random order and the dates are usually an approximate date.

For More Information About Timelines and Indexes Read

Utilizing Timelines and Indexes

On the Archives Main Page