SUTTERVILLE:

THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH

A TOWN SAFE FROM FLOODS

by

Ernest E. Lehr
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Joseph A. McGowan, Chair
Edward H. Howes

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

I. INTRODUCTION

For many years a two story, red brick building, popularly called the brewery, stood on Sutterville Road in Sacramento. Shortly before its destruction in 1955, the building was boarded up to prevent continued destruction by those who were coming in increasing numbers to visit the park and zoo just across the street. Curiosity as to the history of the building was unsatisfied because of a general lack of knowledge.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this paper to study the events which led to the establishment of this red brick building. Investigation has shown it was a part of the last serious attempt to build a city in that area. The object of this paper is to present the reasons for choosing this area for a town site, description of the efforts to build a town, explanation of the failure of the town, and a brief sketch
of the history of the brewery building that was on Sutterville Road.

III. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Earlier completion of this study, delayed because of military duty, possibly could have saved the brewery from destruction. Although some people did protest its destruction, there was no community feeling for the building, based on an understanding of the historical implications connected with it.

The name Sutterville was given to the town in this area but its application today to businesses and a school must surely be without real understanding of the heritage of this name. Sutterville, and reasons for its creation and failure, is vital to an understanding of the history of California's capital city, Sacramento. Sutterville's port problem is now a big project for Sacramento. Floods, in spite of levees, dams and claims on water, continue to be a threat. Suburban commercial growth has recently challenged downtown merchants; limited parking facilities may not be unrelated to Sutterville's poor harbor facilities.
IV. STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION

Efforts to build Sutterville were limited to two brief periods; one from 1846 to 1850, and the other in 1853. Events during these periods will be related in a chronological order with pertinent references to town building procedures, personal and community rivalries. The final chapter relates to buildings, enterprises or events since it ceased to exist as a community.

V. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RELATED STUDIES

Because of Sutter's fame it is natural that there would be many references to the town which he tried to establish. Since Sutterville was eclipsed by Sacramento, most references merely allude to the rivalry, particularly to the period in 1849. None of these brief commentaries adequately relate the efforts expended in behalf of this, the chosen city.

VI. SOURCES OF DATA

Much of the information for this paper came from letters now at the California State Library and at Sutter's Fort. Newspaper references and accounts by people later famous as being first Californians or '49'ers were also used extensively.
Reference has been made to deeds and maps on file at the Sacramento County Recorder's office.
CHAPTER II

SUTTERSVILLE IS FOUNDED

John A. Sutter, the founder of Suttersville, was among the early immigrants to California. He fled Switzerland because consequences of an unprofitable business threatened confinement in debtors' prison and Sutter was unwilling to submit to this harsh punishment. He New World life begins in St. Louis in 1834 where he enjoyed the company of other immigrants of similar ethnic heritage. For three years he was involved in trading caravans to Santa Fe where he first heard of the "magnificence" of California. Again a lack of sufficient profit caused him to seek new fields, this time in the land where he was to gain world renown.

Coming from Hawaii, Sutter first set foot on California soil at Yerba Buena, now San Francisco, but his California experiences officially began in 1839 at Monterey, the provincial capital. Juan Bautista Alvarado, the Mexican governor, maintained his office in that town and it was the only official port of entry into the province. Since Governor Alvarado was

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1 James P. Zollinger, Sutter, the Man and His Empire (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 11 ff.

favorably impressed with Sutter's letters of recommendation, he provided an hospitable welcome in a strange land.

Since Sutter intended to build a fortune more through agricultural than commercial activity he wanted a large tract of land. By Mexican law, Sutter had certain conditions to fulfill before he could receive a grant. First, he had to be a citizen which required a year's residence. A map and evidence of improvements would be required at the end of the second year to complete the requirements. Following the Governor's suggestion, Sutter signed a declaration of intention to become a Mexican citizen. Now he could travel inland, select a tract, and begin improvements.

Sutter's desire for a navigable river, fertile valley, and a good distance from any post of authority could be met in the Sacramento valley, according to information he had been able to pick up. A visit to Sonoma and Fort Ross convinced him he was on the right trail. Back at Yerba Buena he purchased the necessary items for his wilderness start and made arrangements for transportation.

On August 9, 1839, Sutter's party left Yerba Buena in two chartered schooners and a four-oared pinnace and proceeded across the Bay and up the Sacramento River. Near the present site of the city of Sacramento, Sutter's pinnace went ahead to hunt for a good location. After penetrating the mouth of
the American and Feather Rivers, Sutter returned to the other boats anchored just below the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers. On August 15, 1839, he directed the boats into the American River channel and proceeded to the head of navigation where he found a plain of thick grasses and high trees which appealed to him. He stepped ashore at a point now corresponding to the foot of Twenty-eighth Street, extended north, in the present city of Sacramento. The quest for his site had concluded.

In the summer of 1840, Sutter returned to Monterey where he appeared before David Spence, Monterey Justice of the Peace, and asserted that he was eligible for citizenship. The first legal requirement satisfied, Sutter could look forward to the following year when he would need a map to present with his request for land.

During the winter of 1840-1841, Jean Jacques Vioget, former Swiss drummer boy in Napoleon's army and now an engineer and navigator, was engaged by Sutter to make a survey and prepare the necessary maps. Vioget's equipment was homemade and inadequate. Sutter's forge made the measuring chain using links of one vara in length, or about thirty-three inches.

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3 J. N. Bowman, "The Boundaries of Sutterville." Unpublished manuscript. Cited information taken from "The Date of Sutter's Landfall at Sacramento, and the Date of the Erection of Sutter's Fort," an unpublished manuscript by the same author, and repeated in "The Boundaries of Sutterville."
The transit was a ship's compass with sights. Using a sextant, Vioget took four sun latitudes but, since he used an "horizon of molasses," the readings were in error. Two copies of the map were made.

On June 18, 1841, Sutter returned to Monterey to petition for the land grant. He asked for those lands as indicated on the Vioget map but specifically excepted those which were "inundated by the impulse and currents of the rivers." Governor Alvarado issued the grant of eleven leagues or 48,818 acres.

Having acquired ownership, Sutter returned to the task of making improvements on his property. His first adobe building, located in the immediate vicinity of his American River landfall, was supplanted as the center of activity by another building erected on higher ground, now the block bounded by K, L, Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Streets in present

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4 Sacramento Bee, September 25, 1954. Research for this article was done by Dr. J. N. Bowman, former historian for the California State Archives. Latitude of the gold ball on top of the capital dome is 38° 34' 37.331", but Vioget had erred in placing the Fort at 38° 45' 42". Usually a shallow trough of mercury would be used to show the horizon.

Sacramento. The high walls and bastions of adobe were completed in 1844, thereafter being known as Sutter's Fort. In 1841 Sutter had bought on credit the Russian American Fur Company establishment at Fort Ross and Bodega, California for thirty thousand dollars and in this way obtained horses, cattle, a launch and several cannons. These cannon were mounted and sentries posted, thus giving to the Fort at New Helvetia, as Sutter called it, a truly redoubtable character.

It was natural that the Fort became a point of entry for American immigrants coming overland across the Sierras. Governor Alvarado had commissioned Sutter to guard the northern frontier and to represent the Mexican government in providing security and protection for the inhabitants. But Sutter made the Fort live as an oasis of hospitality which shortly became legendary. Of this reception, Schmolder wrote in 1847, "even yet the tourists speak with thankful love."

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6 Bowman, loc. cit.; General John Bidwell, Echoes of the Past, An Account of the First Emigrant Train to California, Fremont in the Conquest of California, the Discovery of Gold and Early Reminiscences (Chico, California: Chico Advertiser, 1897), p. 95.

7 Dana, op. cit., pp. 407-410. This is an inventory of the purchase. Dana makes note of Sutter's love for cannons and says he was happiest when he could hear them booming in salute.

By 1845 immigrants had become so numerous a special settlement was needed to relieve pressures at the Fort. "The incessant noisy traffic of the Fort, the turmoil brought within its walls by the great throng of wintering immigrants, began to overtax his powers of endurance." On November 8, 1845, Sutter wrote to Thomas Larkin, United States Consul in Monterey, that a new city was to be founded after the rainy season was over. Victor Prudon of Sonoma was planning to build a hotel which would be a "good and profitable business" in the new city.

Sutter's plans for the new city were revealed in a letter to Pierson B. Reading on January 29, 1845:

Tomorrow we are surveying at least the town or City: but not close by the fort, just were the Sheepfarm or hogs farm is, the house there, will be in town. Capt. Hastings & Mr. Bidwell with some Assistants will Camp there below untill all is ready, we lay out for the present 200 lots, the banks of the river don't overflow there in front of the Hills between them is a small lake which will be of great service for making Atobs', and then afterwards can easily be filled up, every body like the Situation very well, and a number of Houses will be build the next Sommer, I have to built a large dwelling and Store house for Capt. Hastings, he pay me in goods for the whole at low prices to acommodate the inhabitants he will keep a full Store of such goods as we need the most here. Mr McDowell our good gunsmith, Mr Skinner and James Smith will establish public houses in the new City.

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9 Zollinger, op. cit., p. 190.

10 Letter of John Sutter to Thomas O. Larkin, November 8, 1845, in Sutter Collection, California State Library. Prudon was a Lt. Colonel in the Mexican forces and secretary to General Vallejo.
(her name will be Montezuma) the two family's Bonney and Mr Stanley etc. which intended to go on to Oregon altered their minds and will build houses in the town, likewise Leahy and a good many others, the next fall a number of Emigrants will move to Montezuma, No doubt in 2 or 3 years it will be a large place. I shall make you a present with a good lot.11

After the site was surveyed by John Bidwell12 and Lansford W. Hastings13 between January 28 and February 7,14 Sutter again wrote Reading as follows:

I build a Store and dwelling house for him (Hastings) in the New City, a good many begin to build after the rainy season is over, because I give a good many lots for Nothing to those who build immediately, it will be certainly a great relief for the Establishment here, when I think I will have a little easy time, other arrivals are coming, which interfere very often too much

11 Letter of John Sutter to P. B. Reading, January 29, 1846, in Reading Collection, California State Library. "Sic" has been omitted because of the number of errors in Sutter's letters. Reading came to California from New Jersey in 1843 and worked for Sutter until 1849 when he started his own ranch.

12 Bidwell, a 21 year old ex-school teacher, had led the first overland party to California from Missouri, arriving in 1841.

13 Hastings led several overland groups to California and strenuously encouraged Easterners to migrate to California.

with my business, the first thing will be in the new City, Store, Hotel, boarding house, Grog shop, Mechanicks etc, and a distance of about 5 miles from here, will make my establishment more agreeable, as at present.15

Originally, Montezuma, the proposed new 200-lot city, was to have been located near the sheep farm, approximately five miles from the Fort. However, by June 25, 1847, Sutter had changed the site to a mere three mile distance from the Fort and had also changed the name to the more appropriate Suttersville.

I wish you would take an interest in our town here 3 miles below the fort on the Sacramento River. (Suttersville) we have already a large brick yard in town a Ships Carpenter, Blacksmith etc, and a great many German Mechanics will build houses this fall, Messrs Reading, Hensley, Hastings, Bidwell etc all are interested in this town, and I am convinced that she will improve a great deal faster as your town of "Francisca."16

Reasons for Sutter's changed plans are not clear; however, Hastings had also planned a city along the Sacramento River and had called it Montezuma, the same name selected by

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15 Letter of John Sutter to P. B. Reading, February 8, 1846, in Reading Collection, California State Library. Sutter complained to Reading that it was discouraging to be "governed by the Rabel [sic]." If better people did not come it would be well to leave and "sometimes I wish myself again in the North of Scotland [sic]." See letters dated March 7 and 19 of Reading Collection.

16 Letter of John Sutter to Thomas Larkin, June 25, 1847, in Sutter Collection, California State Library. (This was probably Zins' brickyard.) By Francisca, Sutter referred to Benecia which was a project of Larking and Semple.
Sutter for his town. Hastings was described by Hubert Howe Bancroft, California historian and book collector, as "never without some grant scheme on hand, not overburdened with conscientious scruples, but never getting caught in anything very disreputable." When Hastings arrived in California in 1843 it is thought that he planned to set up a Pacific Republic with himself at its head or to have Texas and California unite as one. As secular agent of the Mormon Church he had been charged with selecting a site and starting a town for the people of this faith. In May, 1846, he laid claim to a square mile tract near the mouth of the Sacramento River, near present Collinsville, and built an adobe there. The uplands to the north were, and are yet, called the Montezuma Hills.


18 Dana, op. cit., pp. 140-141.


20 Indenture of Lansford W. Hastings, June 28, 1849, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library. This may be the original pre-emption claim which was never filed.
Exact location of the originally planned Montezuma is not clear. From the Sutter letters it is apparent that the first location five miles from the Fort at the sheep farm was changed to three miles and identified as being on the Sacramento River, and the name Montezuma changed to Suttersville. The relationship of the final location of Suttersville to the city of Sacramento is shown on the map on the following page. On March 20, 1849, George W. McKinstry, Jr., wrote Bidwell from Suttersville that Sutter was at the sheep farm on his way up from San Francisco, clearly indicating that the sheep farm was below Suttersville. This suggests that the site of the city was actually moved two miles closer to the fort.

Maps do not indicate that the townsite was moved. In 1848 Bidwell extended the 1846 survey but none of the plats seem to have survived. The earliest available plat of the city was done by C. W. Coote, a civil engineer hired by Sacramento city, in 1850 and filed in the Sacramento County Recorder’s office. Just how much, if any, of the Bidwell

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21 Letter of George McKinstry to John Bidwell, March 20, 1849, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library. McKinstry arrived October 19, 1846 and became general manager of New Helvetia.

22 Sacramento County Recorder’s Office, Book of Maps, Vol. I, Number 42, August 8, 1850.
Map showing location of Sutterville and Sacramento in *Sacramento Illustrated*, 1855
surveys Coote used is not known, but since his map was challenged only on a variation in numbering of blocks it is to be assumed that it was platted the same as the Bidwell maps. Subsequent property transactions reported later in this paper support the belief that there was no move of the site. It is not known why Sutter changed the name and distance.

Exact details of the early town plan are confused because of known limiting topographical features. The lake Sutter referred to between the river and the hills was at least a quarter of a mile wide. This lake is readily apparent in the view of Sutterville as shown on the following page. Sutter wrote that the 200 lots were secure from floods, meaning that they must have been located on the hills. However, maps indicate that the entire area from the Sacramento River back to the hills was platted into blocks, many of which were certainly located in the lake. It was vital that the proposed city have adequate river port facilities and the town would be seriously handicapped until the lake was either dredged to make a canal, bridged, or filled in. These topographical features are not apparent in the Schmolder or Coote maps in which parallel streets were uniformly laid out to form a large square,

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23 Letter of J. H. McKune to John Bidwell, January 31, 1885, in Sutter's Fort Collection. Block 2 had been placed at the river but Coote apparently numbered the blocks differently although they were drawn the same.
Sutterville in 1855 from Sacramento Illustrated. Note lake and plank road and Vance Building (brewery) on highland. Compare with snapshots, page 93.
or rectangle. Although the Schmolder map (cf., page 19) and the Coote map (cf., page 20) have obvious internal differences, the general plan is the same. Schmolder's description of Suttersville may not have been accurate but his analysis of town building is particularly pertinent. 24

Schmolder made several observations concerning the location of projected cities. The first requirement, as he saw it, was that the city be situated on the bank of an important river. Secondly, the bank itself should be such that with a minimum of effort an adequate place of little current and sufficient depth could be made to accommodate the expected traffic. Obviously, topography must be such that the customary rise of the river would not endanger improvements. Finally, not to be ignored is the surrounding countryside. As in Europe, the cultivating or productive capacity of the land governed the function of the town; these were the essential natural ingredients.

In laying out such communities the first street would be laid parallel to and at a proper distance from the river and would, in most cases, be called Front or Water Street. Its purpose was to conveniently accommodate business houses and warehouses engaged in importing and exporting. The second street of importance was the one which perpendicularly

24 Schmolder, op. cit., pp. 76-81.
Plan of Suttersville by Captain B. Schmolder, 1847.
Plat of Sutter (Sutterville) by C. W. Coote, 1850.
bisected this Water Street and served as an avenue by extend- ing to the interior. The remainder of the streets would be laid parallel to these, thus creating a series of squares or rectangles or blocks. Because of the cost of transportation and the value of the land near the river, the streets running parallel with the river and nearer to it were narrower in width than those located farther inland. Suttersville followed this pattern. The first three streets, called First, Second, and Third Streets, moving inland from Water Street, were only forty feet wide while the other streets were fifty feet wide.

With the exception of the bisector of Water Street, which was sixty feet wide, the rest of the streets were uniformly forty feet wide. Names for these latter streets were taken from topographical features or from the wish of the moment of the landowners. From north to south, these streets were named Chestnut, Church, Eliza (named for Sutter's daughter), Locust, Market, Oak, Pine, Green, and Cedar. Market Street, because of its central location, would be a business zone and also divide the town into halves.

Near the waterfront lots were more nearly square and smaller. The blocks, 135 feet long, were divided evenly into five lots of twenty-seven feet frontage each. Corner lots were more valuable since the sixty foot depth could also be divided into three lots of twenty by twenty-seven feet each.
It was almost essential that near-river lots be small because the price per frontage foot varied from one hundred to five hundred dollars. Beyond Fourth Street the blocks were enlarged to a hundred-foot depth, indicating that land value decreased as distance from the river increased. Naturally, Market and Water Streets would bring higher prices because of a more favorable commercial situation.

The next phase of town building concerns the manner in which such towns which had been drafted on paper become realities. Some towns, even though properly located and plotted according to the previously mentioned criteria, do not become great although they may have some fair measure of progress. Yet, still others will forever remain small. What is the reason for this difference? Simply, according to Schmolder, it is because at the founding of the town, or afterwards, the great lever -- money (Geld) -- was not at hand in large quantity.

Suttersville was planned to enable Sutter to devote his attention to his agricultural pursuits and to make possible commercial enterprises which would deal with the needs of the tourist and immigrant. There is no evidence that Sutter thought of his town as a speculative venture to make money. Establishment of businesses and increase in land value would be a relatively gradual process unless a large quantity of money would suddenly become readily available.
CHAPTER III

SUTTERVILLE HAS A RIVAL

Sutter was quite optimistic about his new town as the plans began to materialize in 1847. One George Zins had moved there to establish a brick yard, and in the first year thirty thousand brick from the first kiln were used to build "the first real brick structure in the country." The house was 18 x 35 feet and had a tile floor.\(^1\) Erection of a school was planned for 1848.\(^2\) By April of that year a doctor had located his office in Suttersville.\(^3\) Anticipating growth of the town, Bidwell extended his original survey to higher ground.\(^4\) On May 12, while Bidwell was surveying, Sutter wrote to his tailor in Monterey that, "This year they expect to build a good deal. Would you not also build on one of our lots?" His letter optimistically concluded that Suttersville would soon


\(^2\) Letter of John Sutter to H. W. Halleck, December 20, 1847, in Sutter Collection, California State Library.

\(^3\) New Helvetia Diary (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1939), p. 128.

be second only to San Francisco.\(^5\) On May 15, 1848, Sutter sent seventeen Indians to Suttersville to help build needed adobes.\(^6\) Another need was satisfied when, under the supervision of William Dunn, some Indians helped construct the Columbia Hotel, the "first public house in Sacramento County."\(^7\)

Some of this optimism of 1847 may have been based on the discovery of gold but in 1848 there was no concerted effort by immigrants to settle as yet in Suttersville. Visualizing a grand speculation, some of Sutter's friends did seek to secure choice lots for themselves. Bidwell was forced to hastily finish the map of Suttersville because of the continual disturbance caused by arrival of gold diggers at the Fort.

In the absence of official offices titles to lots probably were prepared by McKinstry and sales noted on an index to the

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5 Letter of John Sutter to J. F. Romie, May 12, 1848, in Sutter Collection, California State Library.

6 Diary, op. cit., p. 136. May 15, 1848.

7 Sacramento County Directory (Iowa: issued by Gustavus De Young of San Francisco, 1873). [This is a wall directory, 37 x 46 inches mounted on linen. Although printed in Iowa, it was evidently issued by the San Francisco Chronicle. It was removed from a barn at 2612 G Street and is now in the possession of James Bryson of Sacramento.]
map. Bidwell wanted titles to his own lots, had selected some lots for Hastings, and recommended still other to McKinstry.

Hastings owned even more of Suttersville than Sutter. Sutter apparently liked Hastings very much for, in addition to the promise to build for him, Sutter also had made him a gift of the entire north half of the projected city. If Sutter gave lots to Bidwell and McKinstry, and promised, gave, or sold lots to others, he could have had only a few lots left in the town which was planned for one square mile.

Since Hastings owned so much of Suttersville, he could see a handsome profit. From San Francisco he wrote McKinstry that the extension of the town should be "large, especially on paper." He also instructed McKinstry to sell no lots for less than fifty dollars. Any lots could be sold except those reserved for himself and which could be seen on the index accompanying the map.

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8 Letter of John Bidwell to George McKinstry, May 21, 1848, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library. For one dollar, on July 7, 1848, Bidwell got four lots, each 80 x 160 feet, in block 33; see Rockwell D. Hunt, John Bidwell, Prince of California Pioneers (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1942), p. 147.


10 Letter of Lansford Hastings to George McKinstry, May 20, 1848, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.
Although Hastings was eager to sell he apparently excluded one important prospective buyer. Sam Brannan also had led a party of Mormons to California but he refused to turn over to the Church the tithes he had collected. With this money Brannan opened a store at the Fort and then loaned Sutter money to finance the saw mill where Marshall discovered gold. Realizing the significance of the discovery of gold, Brannan went to Suttersville to select a site for a store and warehouse.

Apparently the lots he wanted were owned by Hastings who either refused to sell or would not state an acceptable price. Appropriation of the tithes, success with the store, and friendship with Sutter, or perhaps his own desire to open a store, might all be reasons why Hastings would not sell to Brannan. If Brannan was not acceptable in Suttersville, his only alternative was to return to the Fort.

At the Fort, Sam Brannan could see the effect of the gold discovery on the fortunes of his debtor. Sutter's dream of solvency was now being wrecked by unauthorized departure of his employees and damage and stripping of his property by men bound for the mines. However, Sutter was able to send for at least one member of his family in Switzerland. His

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12 Dana, loc. cit. May 7, 1848 was the date of entry in the Diary.

13 The Sacramento Bee, December 24, 1884.
need for a strong manager might be fulfilled by his eldest son August who was then twenty-two. If not, Sam Brannan would be standing by with a desire to bring about enough order from chaos to get back every last cent of his sixteen thousand dollar loan to Sutter. In addition to the Brannan debt, the Russian American Fur Company began pressing for payment of the Fort Ross and Bodega equipment.

When August finally stepped ashore at the Sutter Embarcadero on September 14, 1848, his father was away at the mines. Gold seekers and visitors, wanting to get as close to the Fort as possible by boat, by-passed Suttersville for landings at the Embarcadero located near the foot of K Street in present Sacramento. During his father's absence August had a good opportunity to become familiar with conditions at the Fort. The reunion of the father and son a week later was as affectionate and sincere as the meeting should have been.

Within a month after his arrival, August not only became manager but owner, too. To escape the threat of dispossession by the Russian American Fur Company, Sutter effected

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15 Ibid., p. 330. Zollinger felt that the father had purposely gone to the mines as there "burned in him a deep, primordial, and largely unconscious hatred against this fatal child." Zollinger, op. cit., p. 14.
the transfer of all his property to his son for sixty five thousand dollars.\textsuperscript{16} Although this procedure was illegal and purely a paper transaction, it was really not designed to escape debts but, as later developments confirmed, to merely make possible an additional delay until all creditors could be satisfied. Having set up a store in Suttersville,\textsuperscript{17} Sutter then left with Hastings for Coloma to set up the other branch of their "gold business."\textsuperscript{18}

Sam Brannan now came forward with a plan to help the young, inexperienced, and lonely August. Liquidation of the Sutter debts could be accomplished by laying out a new town and selling lots. As the winter of 1848 came on people were beginning to congregate in the area. Since the Fort could not handle the demand for supplies, new trading centers had to be established. However, the demand for land on which to erect trading establishments to supply transients and the army of miners in the hills had to fall on the Sutters for they owned everything around the Fort. The Embarcadero was the obvious place to lay out a town for lots were already in demand and


\textsuperscript{17} Hunt, \textit{loc. cit.} No other reference to this Suttersville store has been found.

\textsuperscript{18} Letter of Lansford Hastings to George McKinstry, June 1, 1848, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.
increasing demand would even raise the price and more than satisfy the Sutters' need for money. Brannan was positive that lots in the new town would be sold immediately and for good prices. Refusal to sell property would force traders to begin exercising well-known squatter tactics. 19

Any qualms August might have had were soon dispelled. Suttersville was rejected because it was just too far away from the Fort, because of the swamp in front of the highland, because it was located too far from the river, and "no one could disembark there [Suttersville] until a canal a mile long had been built," 20 to reach the high ground. High wages would prohibit such a project. Sutter reflected that "it was easy for Sam Brannan to win my son over to his favorite project of a city near the Fort." 21 August said, "Nobody would go to Sutterville and if I had not commenced selling lots at Sacramento everybody would have gone to squatting." 22

19 Zollinger, loc. cit.


21 Erwin G. Gudde, Sutter’s Own Story (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1936), p. 220

Subsequent Sacramento squatter riots substantiated this analysis. Only later did August realize that Brannan's name for the town, Sacramento City, might have been improved upon by Sutter, Sutter City, or New Helvetia to gain the father's support.23

Brannan's plan got off to a good start. A normally wet winter would have inundated the river front area under several feet of water before many lots could have been sold or establishments started. Newcomers were ignorant of the fact that the new town was being created on a temporarily dry swamp and that the usual flooding could certainly be expected in years to follow. Brannan hired and paid Captain W. H. Warner of the United States Topographical Engineers to do the survey.24 The town was laid out in two separate sections; one in the vicinity of the Fort, and the other at the Embarcadero with one or two streets leading from there to the Fort.25 The exact date for the beginning of this survey is not known. The California Star and California advertisement on December 2, 1848

23 Lienhard, loc. cit.


stated that lots would be sold as of the first of January, 1849. Allowing time for surveying and making of maps, it would appear that Sacramento's official birthday was a day in the first half of November, 1848.

Although his generosity seemed to be as liberal as his father's, August Sutter was able to pay off the debts with amazing speed. One can well imagine the consternation of those who had already purchased lots in Suttersville. In order to be fair, Sutter, Jr., proposed to exchange any lots in Suttersville for lots in Sacramento City and some exchanges were made. In addition, generous grants of ten square blocks for public purposes, later used as parks, encouraged a most favorable response to the project. Peter Burnett was hired on a 25 per cent commission to manage the sale of lots. Most of the demand for lots was near the Fort at first, and lots were sold for two hundred fifty dollars. It had become the "bustling, buzzing center for merchants, traders, miners, etc., and every available room was in demand." However, by the end of January, 1849, more sales were being made near the river front where lots were appropriately priced at five hundred dollars. This phenomenal recovery, coupled with the

26 Sutter, Jr., op. cit., pp. 93-94.

27 Bidwell, op. cit., p. 56.

generous gifts to the infant city, further spurred the already snowballing speculation. 29

Rivalry between the infant cities of Sacramento and Suttersville was not unique in the Sacramento River valley. As more people moved to the area and particularly to the mining region, it was necessary to establish supply points and lines of communication. Suttersville had been established to serve a basically agricultural community but Sacramento and the rest of the newly projected cities were designed to meet a real or anticipated need of the miners. Many cities bore the "character of mere speculations" and not "bona fide desires to build up a town." 30 For example, when Eliza, near present Marysville, was first opened speculators thronged to the site to celebrate because it would never be a town. 31 In a sense, not only was Sacramento a rival of Suttersville but so also were the following cities along the Sacramento River: Washington, across the river from Sacramento; Boston, at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers on the bank of the latter (now the site of the filtration plant); Norristown,

29 Zollinger, op. cit., p. 275.

30 Alta California [San Francisco], July 2, 1849. Emphasis in original.

about five miles up the American River on the south bank (now the site of the State College); a second Washington City, about twelve miles north of Sacramento; Springfield, on the east bank of the Sacramento River, three miles below the mouth of the Feather River; Nicolaus, on the Feather River just below the mouth of the Bear River; Vernon, on the east bank of the Feather River, at the confluence with the Sacramento River; Fremont, on the west bank of the Sacramento, opposite Vernon; Eliza, two miles below the present city of Marysville which was starting then, too. Down the Sacramento River were: Webster, nine miles below Sacramento; Suisun, half way to San Francisco; New York of the Pacific, at the southwest corner of Suisun Bay (now Pittsburg); and Benicia, at its present location at the northwest corner of Suisun Bay.32

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CHAPTER IV

EFFORTS TO BUILD SUTTERSVILLE FAIL

August ran into his first real trouble when George McDougal decided to avail himself of the seemingly characteristic Sutter generosity. McDougal had come from Indiana in 1848, and after serving a short time with Colonel Fremont and then spending some time in the mining region, he came to the Fort. George McDougal’s brother John became governor of California. Probably during midsummer, 1848, McDougal had obtained from Sutter lease of the ferry privilege on the Sacramento River just below Sutter Lake, site of the present day Southern Pacific depot and shops. He brought "an old hulk loaded with merchandise" to the foot of I Street and anchored it. With Judge Blackburn of Santa Cruz as his partner, he operated the first general merchandise store, McDougal & Co., at the Embarcadero.

Observing August's gifts of land to Sacramento City and his payments to creditors, McDougal now felt the time was opportune to put in his request. McDougal claimed that the lease gave him use of twelve hundred feet along the Sacramento River.

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River south from the Sutter Lake slough as part of rights to exclusive trade at that point. Careful examination of the lease failed to sustain this fantastic claim. Furthermore, August had just now (November, 1848) given the river bank area to the city for public use.

McDougal was so "disaffected toward the place" that he planned to destroy the embryonic city. Overestimating the importance of his store ship, he decided to ship his goods to Suttersville, believing this great loss would spell doom to Sacramento. First, however, it was necessary to obtain the desired frontage at Suttersville. McDougal was familiar with Sutter, Sr.'s temperament and was sure he could deal with Hastings, for Hastings' interests were at Suttersville too.

Meanwhile McKinstry was worried about the fate of Suttersville. Sometime in November or December, 1848, he had informed Hastings at Coloma of the efforts to build a new city. On December 20, he received a letter from Hastings which replied that the partnership with Sutter at Coloma would probably continue for the year as had been agreed. However, a talk with McKinstry would be fine at any time.

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2 John Frederick Morse, *The First History of Sacramento City, 1853* (Sacramento: Sacramento Book Collectors Club, 1945) p. 23.

3 Excerpts from the Memorial of the Society of California Pioneers to Major Jacob Rink Snyder, "Society of California Pioneers, Quarterly, VIII (1931) p. 213.

4 Morse, *loc. cit.*
was the "very best site on the river" and if the owners would act together for mutual benefit they could "safely bid defiance to all opposition." Hastings was willing to do even more than his part. It would be a "deplorable case" if Captain Sutter consented to the establishment of a rival city.5

McKinstry and McDougal made the trip to Coloma, probably in early January, 1849, to see Hastings and Sutter. Of the three hundred twenty acres Hastings held in Suttersville, McDougal now purchased alternate square blocks along the half mile frontage on the river and a quarter of a mile back. For this he paid Hastings four thousand dollars. McDougal's purchase began with block number two located at the river's edge. The bulk of the purchase was located in the lake or marsh.6

Having thus established their vested interest, the businessmen now told Sutter of the strange goings-on back at the Fort. Of what they said there is no record, but August could well imagine that events were probably related in such a way as to sow the seeds of discord between father and son.

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5 Letter of Lansford Hastings to George McKinstry, December 20, 1848, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

"... informing him [Sutter] of what I had done in an unfavorable light, misrepresenting everything and caluminating me in every way possible." Hastings could say in the presence of Sutter, Sr., that he would like to kill August, without being "esteemed any less for it" by the father.  

Why had not Sutter done something earlier to stop the Sacramento project? August either did not inform him of the project or he saw no harm in it. After McDougal and McKinstry made their protest Sutter was furious, later claiming that, "Had I not been snowed in at Coloma, Sacramento never, never, would have been built." This claim has frequently been accepted as the reason he took no steps to halt the Sacramento development. However, McKinstry and McDougal had just made the trip to Coloma from the Fort. Weather Bureau records since 1849 indicate this elevation would receive at most only a trace of snow.

In late January or early February, 1849, Sutter and his "friends" left Coloma for San Francisco, apparently to plan for Sutterville's future, and to buy necessary supplies for the businesses. In Sacramento Sutter was so angry that

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7 Sutter, Jr., op. cit., p. 92.
8 Ibid., p. 94.
he refused to see either his son or Peter Burnett and stayed with McDougal and his friends. 10

Result of the San Francisco meeting was a contract, between McDougal and Sutter, publicly known to have been obtained by a "mean, nefarious and rascally contrivance," 11 the terms of which affirmed that since McDougal had received "exclusive advantage" of trade and business done at the Embarcadero, trading establishments now erected in the new town laid off by his son had caused "great damage and injury." In restitution, Sutter now promised McDougal the half square mile to the south of Suttersville and further bound himself, his heirs, and his legal representatives to the fulfillment of this contract within twenty days under penalty of twenty thousand dollars. 12 However, for some unknown reason, McDougal was given the half square mile beginning one half mile north of Hastings' Suttersville tract. 13 McDougal also received land to the east of the town amounting to approximately sixteen

10 Sutter, Jr., op. cit., p. 96.

11 Ibid.

12 Contract of John Sutter to George McDougal, March 6, 1849, in Sutter Collection, California State Library.

hundred acres. Bidwell, Cordua, McKinstry, and Sutter shared interest in the area between Hastings' and McDougal's two tracts.

McKinstry wrote Bidwell on March 20, 1849, of the plans to go ahead with Suttersville and was sure that they would make a fortune from the Suttersville property. He explained that he "met old Capt. Sutter" while in San Francisco and made arrangements for the half mile river frontage above Hastings' tract. McKinstry and Theodore Cordua had gone into business together and purchased "about $80,000 [sic] worth of goods at very low prices." It is not known why letters were substituted for numbers. They bought a schooner which was filled with goods and had a building on board and were going to move Cordua's 30 x 50 foot building to the Suttersville site. McKinstry was planning to put up the buildings and begin business because the first wagons to the mines had left just the day before and spring business was ready to begin.


15 Cordua was German of Spanish descent. He came to California in 1842 and founded the town which was later to be known as Marysville.

16 One may suppose that "ae" was meant to mean "eighty," if interpretation was based upon phonetic sounding. If this is accepted, $80,000 could be considered a reasonable price for a shipload of goods.

17 Letter of George McKinstry to John Bidwell, March 20, 1849, in Sutter's Fort Collection.
lots would sell for one hundred dollars. Several families were reported moving to Suttersville in preference to Sacramento and lumber for necessary building was being procured in Oregon. Optimistically McKinstry closed the letter with, "I think with proper exertion we can make our 'piles' this summer."20

Advertisements in the Alta California and Placer Times not only indicate activity at Suttersville but show the means by which Suttersville was to be established as a more convenient destination than Sacramento. The March 22, 1849, Alta advertised the move of George McDougal & Co., from the Embarcadero to Suttersville. McDougal announced that one hundred men were needed to chop wood for the steamboat J. A. Sutter which would commence running between San Francisco and Suttersville on the first of July.21 Additional transportation would also be provided from Suttersville to San Francisco by the regular trips of the brigantine Hope.22 A hotel to accommodate arrivals was in operation and the storeship Thuli was docked.

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19 Again accepting "ae" to mean eighty, the later sale of these lots at one hundred dollars, with an original cost of eighty dollars, resulted in 25 per cent resale profit.


21 Alta California, March 22, 29; April 5, 12, 19, 26; May 10, 17, 24, 31; June 7, 21, 28; and July 2, 1849.

22 Ibid., March 22, 1849.
there for the reception of goods. Dr. T. Ames established his office in Suttersville and advertised during most of the year. As early as April 23, 1848 the name of the town had been shortened to the more easily written and pronounced Sutterville.

Since the new town promoters had improved the landing facility and the communication to it, it was now vital that purchases of supplies for the mines be made in Sutterville, for that would be the business life of the community. For reasons unknown, George McDougal and his daughter sailed for the East on April 26, 1849. McDougal & Co., was placed in the hands of George's brother John who had just come from the States. John McDougal, intent on accomplishing the next step of bringing business to Sutterville, "came out with immense placards, nearly equal to the recent express train elephant cards of McNulty & Co." John McDougal promised his

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23 Ibid. (same dates as in footnote 21).

24 Placer Times [Sacramento], May 5, 12, 19, 26; June 30; July 14, 21, 28; August 11; September 15, 22, 29; and November 3, 1849.

25 Memorandum of Henry Schoolcraft to Lansford Hastings, April 23, 1849, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

26 Alta California, April 26, 1849.

27 Morse, op. cit., p. 24.
goods would be sold at bargain prices. If this new low price plus freight cost could not secure enough customers, he would defy laws of the business world and sell his merchandise at cost.28

The Placer Times carried McDougal & Co. advertisements informing miners that eighty thousand pounds of canvass [sic] hams were being offered at thirty-two cents per pound, "CHEAPER THAN EVER."29 Five thousand two hundred bags of flour were priced at sixteen dollars per 200 pound bag. This price was expected to be lowered to ten or twelve dollars per bag.30

Probably at about this same time, in mid-May, John McDougal instituted the third phase of the effort to build Sutterville. Having attended to the harbor, communication, and prices, it was apparent that if leading merchants stayed in Sacramento Sutterville would be eclipsed. McDougal sent letters to these businessmen in an effort to induce them to move to Sutterville, offering two hundred free lots to each if he would accept the proposition. Although several authors say this was a clever scheme suggested by Brannan to McDougal,

28 Loc. cit.

29 Placer Times, May 19, June 26, and July 9, 1849.

30 Ibid., May 26, June 16, and July 9, 1849.
no proof to this effect could be found.

Summoned to the Fort, Sutter, Jr. and Henry A. Schoolcraft found Sutter, Sr. and Brannan discussing possibilities of the move. Brannan then exhibited to August a letter he had received from McDougal which offered him the great sum of two hundred lots should he remove "with his house, his store ship and with his influence, then very great, to Sutterville." Brannan also spoke of similar letters which had been received by Hensley, Reading & Co. and by Priest, Lee & Co. The problem was resting squarely on the shoulders of young Sutter because he was the undisputed owner of the land involved.

Since development of Sacramento instead of Sutterville was synonymous with the improved financial condition of the Sutter family, there was little choice. Sutter would have to bequeath to these leading merchants a sufficient amount of land to cause them to refuse the gift of McDougal & Co.

I swear solemnly I recollect as if it had been yesterday that my father at that moment made no objections whatever and in [sic] the contrary agreed with me, ... I have been blamed frequently, and I know I was to blame, to have acceded to these outrageous proposals so easily,

31 James A. Zollinger, Sutter, The Man and His Empire (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 277. Morse said the offer was for eighty lots and five hundred was extorted from Sutter, Jr.

32 Sutter, Jr., op. cit., p. 98. Schoolcraft was an ensign of the New York volunteers and became first Magistrate and Recorder for the District of Sacramento. He and Archibald Peachy later became Sutter, Sr.'s agents and greatly mismanaged land sales.

33 Ibid., p. 99.
Meanwhile leaders of Sutterville were developing dissensions. McKinstry's partner, Cordua, was not satisfied. Later he remembered that "I didn't like McKinstry's way of acting from the very beginning." He employed Gustav Berteau of Hamburg, Germany, at five hundred dollars per month to attend to his interest in the Sutterville stores. Berteau, however, resigned and McKinstry & Co. lost the goods by "careless trading and speculating." Cordua estimated his loss in the store and in the failure of Sutterville to be about fifty thousand dollars.36 If Berteau's duties were no more than just checking on McKinstry's business methods, it is no wonder that Cordua and McKinstry "fell out" and Berteau resigned.

McKinstry felt Cordua was to blame and complained to Bidwell that he had a large quantity of goods on hand and wanted them sold as soon as possible. Cordua had acted in bad faith and McKinstry told him that Bidwell had refused to have any part of the business. When McKinstry returned from a trip to the "Mokelomy" [sic], he found that Cordua had loaded the launch and dispatched it to his ranch on the Feather River, later the site of Marysville. It had stopped at the Embarcadero and McKinstry planned to go and hold it the next day, Monday. Yet he optimistically closed the letter of May 24, 1849 by writing they had the town "sure."37


37 Letter of George McKinstry to John Bidwell, May 24, 1849, in Sutter's Fort Collection.
Hastings' role in promoting Sutterville is definitely not above reproach. He has been accused of selling to his partners only the lots at the ends of the town and keeping the more valuable central area for himself. Since McDougal's purchase of alternate blocks only reached back from the river a quarter of a mile, it meant that the bulk of his purchase was in the swamp or lake between the river and the high ground. It is also thought that Hastings refused to sell his property at figures commensurate with the low prices which were being asked by his partners for their less desirable lots. 38

Since by May 24, 1849, dissensions and actions by Sacramento merchants had not been fully realized, McKinstry's optimism was not beyond reason. A contingent of United States soldiers had been ordered to the Sacramento valley and located in the Sutterville area. 39 During May, McKinstry and McDougal had hired Lt. Davidson of the United States Army to survey and map their part of Sutterville which extended one mile north of

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38 Sutter, Jr., op. cit., p. 25; Sacramento County Recorder's Office, Deeds Book, Vol. C, p. 79, November 20, 1849. Deed to Stevenson and Parker from McDougal for five thousand dollars covering three fifths of the alternate blocks one quarter mile back from the river, shows his increased profit.

39 Letter of H. W. Halleck to John Sutter, May 5, 1849, in Sutter Collection, California State Library.
The original square mile was now coupled with the mile to the north and the whole area named Sutter. The intense urban rivalry made for ready acceptance of the enlarged area as a part of Sutter. "Sutterville sounded paltry and insignificant. Plain 'Sutter,' to their taste, was much better."41

One of a series of paragraphs in the San Francisco Alta describing new towns springing up in the interior was this account of the town of Sutter, late Suttersville:

This town is beautifully situated upon the east bank of the Sacramento, within about two miles of Sutter's Fort, having a fine road leading therefrom direct to the mining region, and is some six miles nearer the mines by this road than any other embarcadero point upon the river. A direct road is also being made on the opposite side of the river, which will when completed, save 74 miles land travel to the mines. The locations upon the river bank for business purposes are never subject to overflow by the highest water known on the river, and the high ground back is the most desirable location for a residence on any point that can be selected upon the banks of the Sacramento. 42

In the same edition an advertisement by the McDougal & Co. offered further evidence of prosperity. It claimed there

40 Statement of George McKinstry to Lt. J. W. Davidson, June 16, 1849, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

41 Sacramento Daily Union, June 29, 1872, p. 8.

42 Alta California, July 2, 1849. To avoid confusion with members of the Sutter family, the name Sutterville will be used in reference to the town.
were many buildings and several large and successful business establishments in Sutter. "The prices of lots are considerably higher than original cost, and everything betokens an enterprising and advancing town." Special attention was called to the fact that a company of United States infantry was stationed there. However, the Alta countered such boasts by reporting the city of Sacramento as having two thousand inhabitants and two hundred houses. Lt. W. T. Sherman had just extended the survey of Sacramento to connect it with Davidson's survey of Sutter.

A more accurate evaluation of Sutterville is contained in the Alta of February 4, 1853 when its Sacramento correspondent wrote that in July, 1849, "there was more capital interested in the prosperity of Sutterville, more shipping laying at her levees, and the most formidable opposition ever known waged against us." Moreover, affidavits telling of impassible roads, winter floods of six feet, and general unhealthiness of Sacramento could not be disproved; the "attentive observer could distinguish the evidence of former overflows by natural marks on the barks of trees." Sutter could claim security from

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
winter floods but during the rainless summer months "scarcely any one [sic] could be made to believe such things possible." In addition, the "narrow and inadequate river bank" and a "slough of stagnant waters" combined to produce at Sutterville an "irresistible miasm," \(^{46}\) The inadequacy of the harbor was cited as the crucial factor. Buffum returned from the mines and observed that Sutterville was "perhaps the most eligible site for a commercial town in all Northern California," but omitted mention of a poor harbor, only claiming excellent roads to the placers, fine agricultural and wooded country and that there was a thriving business population in the city. \(^{47}\)

It was obvious by midsummer, 1849, that the preferred town was Sacramento. Sutterville's poor harbor was a greater disadvantage than elevated land secure from floods when there were no floods. Natural geographical differences of the two harbors seem to have been the determining factor. Even if Brannan had been able to purchase from Hastings a Sutterville site for his store so that the first business away from the Fort would have been at Sutterville, it cannot be said that Sacramento would never have come into being. By the gift of lots to Sacramento merchants, Sutterville's fate was sealed.

\(^{46}\) Morse, loc. cit.

CHAPTER V

SUTTERVILLE'S COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY CEASES

As the year 1849 brought more people to the mines, some travelers recorded their impressions of Sutterville. The bark Josephine, from Boston, had tied up at the river bank on June 30 because its owners had been enticed by the offer of thirty lots if they would unload at Sutterville rather than Sacramento. The bark's cannon was removed and thereafter was used to salute vessels passing the town and for extraordinary occasions.  

J. M. Letts reached Sutterville the last of July and, in addition to drawing a crude pencil sketch of the town, he described it as follows:

We all went ashore, and had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of one of the proprietors, with whom we walked a mile back from the town, to view "Capitol Hill," the anticipated site of the State House. Although we did not break ground for the cornerstone, we were among the first to know the precise spot. The town is situated four miles below Sacramento City, and three from the fort. It contained three houses, visible to the natural eye, but, to the eye of the worthy proprietor's imagination, it numbered many thousands. This had caused a very perceptible rise in the value of city lots.  

1 Alta California, July 2, 1849.

2 J. M. Letts, California Illustrated (New York: R. T. Young, 1853), p. 60; Alta California, November 1, 1849.

3 Loc. cit. Emphasis in the original.
In contrast, Sacramento seemed to be "confusion and dust" with about one hundred houses and tents and with the new arrival bringing his house with him. One ship, for example, brought thirteen prefabricated houses, "finished to glazing." Sacramento lots were already considered to be "commanding New York prices."\(^4\)

J. A. Morenhout, the French Consul at Monterey, visited the boom area about the first of September. He noted that Sutterville had only a score of buildings, forty to fifty tents and four hundred to five hundred inhabitants. Only six vessels, of from fifty to two hundred tons, were anchored in the port. He believed that, since the early growth had been so extraordinary, it would eventually result in a joining of Sacramento and Sutterville into one huge metropolis. However, at that time there were serious criticisms of the area, such as lack of roads to the interior during winter, high flood waters in the spring, and "an unhealthful condition from July to October."\(^5\) Morenhout thought that time would eventually solve these problems and the great city would extend from the American and Sacramento Rivers on the north and west to Sutterville and the Fort on the south and east.

Observations by Letts and Morenhout, while conflicting in detail, were nevertheless sufficiently close to point out

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 61.

the fact that construction in Sutterville was conspicuous by its paucity. A third opinion by Bayard Taylor would confirm the fact that Sutterville had very few buildings: "a town of some thirty houses, scattered along the bank for half a mile."6

By mid-September, 1849, the contest between Sutterville and Sacramento seemed to be swinging to the latter. Business at Sutterville appeared to be slipping. On August 18, the A. H. Barber & Company advertisement had announced the arrival of the Orbit from New York. The bark Turo was expected shortly.7 On August 25, the advertisement had reported the arrival of the Orbit and a bark containing a cargo of one hundred cooking stoves, thirty thousand pounds of fine Navy bread, and other items identified by the abbreviation "etc.". In the same paper James Hopkins was listed as a civil engineer with offices above the McDougal store.8

However, within a month merchants in Sutterville seemed to be liquidating. On September 15, the Barber Company announced a sale to close several mining concerns and the brig Orbit and its entire cargo. These things were to be sold at

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7 Placer Times, August 18, 1849.
8 Ibid., August 25, 1849.
lower prices than those in San Francisco. It is interesting to note that Edmund Hatfield had given a power of attorney to George McKinstry to "attend to his interest in the Orbit which was then in the Sacramento River." He sold the Orbit, probably September 21, for six thousand dollars. On September 29, the Barber Company announced the consignment of the Josephine and "two shiploads Touro and Architect" to McKinstry to be sold at a great bargain or in auction on the first of November. A September 22 power of attorney by James Britton and Amasa Brainerd of Sutterville to McKinstry had empowered him to make the sale. McKinstry may have been the only businessman left at Sutterville to liquidate these holdings. The McDougal store, a one and one half story building, and the storeship Thule were for rent, and all those who still owed the firm were to pay Joseph Bawden in Sacramento who was

9 Ibid., September 15, 1849.

10 Power of Attorney of Edmund Hatfield to George McKinstry, August 16, 1849, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

11 Notes of George McKinstry, not dated, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

12 Placer Times, September 29, 1849.

13 Power of Attorney of James Britton and Amasa Brainerd to George McKinstry, September 22, 1849, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.
liquidating the business. Even those who had been most interested in the town were leaving.

Hastings and McKinstry made a final effort to dispose of their lots. Meanwhile lots also went in public auction. "All those desiring good business locations and pleasant high and dry family residences, will do well to attend this sale." This auction, to begin at ten o'clock on December 15, was to continue until all lots were sold in a desperate effort by Hastings and McKinstry to dispose of one thousand lots in the town of Sutterville.

The only bright spots for Sutterville were announcements by Elisha McKinstry that he had opened a law office in Sutterville and one by M. Wells advertising produce for sale. Ten thousand pounds of squash and pumpkin, lots of corn and potatoes, fresh beef and a "general assortment of provisions" was now for sale. In all probability, the produce had been grown in the town or at least in the immediate vicinity.

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14 Placer Times, December 8, 1849.

15 Ibid., November 24; December 1, 8, 15, 1849.

16 Ibid., November 10, 17, 24, 1849.

17 Ibid., December 8, 15, 22, 29; January 5, 1850.
There was good reason that the Hastings and McKinstry advertisement described the lots as being "high and dry." Rain and snow of the 1849-1850 winter combined to create a raging river system which inundated Sacramento under several feet of water. As early as November the head of J Street already had water at door sill level. On December 10 the "deluge ran riot through the streets and carried houses from their foundations." No sooner was this storm over than another broke on January 8. By the next day the entire area a mile from the waterfront was under water except for a small plot at the site of the present day City Plaza. Rainfall totalled thirty-six inches for the rainy season of 1849-50. Communication with the interior from Sacramento was out because roads were impassible to wagons.

Sacramento now belatedly took steps to appraise the situation and plan for the future. C. W. Coote, a civil engineer, was employed to see how the land lay in relation to flooding, and on March 20, 1850 gave the city a complete report of a levee system.

Supporters of Sutterville, considering the flooding of Sacramento a golden opportunity, tried to revive their town.

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18 Letts, op. cit., pp. 129-133.
19 Alta California, January 18; March 20, 1850.
Bidwell, writing from San Jose on January 25, 1850, was sure that this would make Sutterville a town if anything would. Half the money needed for the levee system would make several canals to high ground in Sutterville and also fill in some of the "intermediate" ground. If several of the wealthiest and most influential Sacramento merchants could be convinced that this was the best and give it their whole support the movement could succeed, but otherwise Sutterville would be a complete failure. 20 McKinstry even thought of making Sutterville the county seat but Bidwell considered this out of the question. If the floods did not turn attention to Sutterville "nothing within our reach will do it." 21 At the end of February, Bidwell wrote McKinstry that Cordua was interested in furthering the place and that he, Bidwell, would give half of his interest to help make any improvements. 22

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20 Letter of John Bidwell to George McKinstry, January 25, 1850, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

21 Letter of George McKinstry to John Bidwell, February 16, 1850, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

22 Letter of John Bidwell to George McKinstry, February 25, 1850, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.
In May, 1850, Bidwell was making arrangements to return to the States but, before leaving, wrote to McKinstry from San Francisco that he had made an arrangement for Mr. H. E. Robinson to act for him. Action was to be had immediately and "advance if necessary small amount of funds—he will enlist others in the same enterprise. I will not lay out a dollar in money until I can be there myself." The floods had not effectively turned attention to Sutterville and the "golden opportunity" disappeared as fast as the Sacramento area dried.

Although Sutterville was not abandoned, there seem to be few items of interest concerning the town. In the election of 1850 only fifty-one votes were cast which gives some indication of the number of inhabitants in the town. Thomas Kerr's pencil sketch of the town shows about fifteen buildings but he wrote that Sutterville was "a half dozen houses, fast going to ruin." The decrease in land value and particularly Hastings' fortune is seen in a May advertisement by the sheriff to sell Hastings' property to satisfy a

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23 Letter of John Bidwell to George McKinstry, May 30, 1850, in McKinstry Collection, California State Library.

24 Transcript [Sacramento], June 4; October 11, 1850.

debt to Sam Brannan. The sale on June 20 was to involve seventeen whole blocks and from three to six lots in seven other blocks. That A. P. Pettit was now going to establish a brickyard in Sutterville was little consolation for a town which had had such great expectations. Highlighting the year 1850 in Sacramento was the squatter riot. To protect himself from squatters, Sutter began on May 5, 1849 to publish in the Placer Times a statement of the boundaries of his land. A riot between Sacramento property owners and squatters would have occurred in December but the flood fortunately "balanced accounts." In March, 1850, John Plumbe, a member of the squatter organization, discovered that the latitude in Sutter's Placer Times advertisement was above the American River which meant that all of his claim below the river was actually public domain. After a series of incidents and court cases failed to gain their cause, the squatters decided to use force and their army of fifteen men began a march through Sacramento. In the shooting which followed five persons

26 Placer Times, May 31, 1850.
27 Ibid.
28 Josiah Royce, "The Squatter Riot of '50 in Sacramento," The Overland Monthly, VI, Number 33 (September, 1885), pp. 225-
were killed and five were wounded. The Transcript carried a running account of the events concerning this problem and did much to keep the fight going. The riots challenged Sutter, Sr.'s title to the land below the American River and proved his son's reasoning correct when he concluded it was necessary to sell lots in Sacramento or forfeit to squatters.

From the fall of 1850 to the fall of 1852 there is little information on activity, if any, in Sutterville. When Sacramento county was divided into townships on February 21, 1851, Sutterville became the township of Sutter. The Whig party selected Hastings and J. B. Gates to be Sutter Township delegates to the state convention. In the election of September 6, 1851, the Whig candidates received a maximum of fourteen popular votes in Sutter township and the Democrats a maximum of thirty-eight votes which would be one more vote than was cast the preceding year. At the close of the year A. P. Pettit moved his brickyard to Sacramento, no doubt because of the greater demand in that city.

29 Ibid.
30 Transcript, February 25, 1851.
31 Union, August 12, 19, 20; September 6, 1851.
32 Ibid., December 27, 1851.
Sacramento fell victim to two great catastrophies in the winter of 1852-1853. On the second of November a great fire almost totally destroyed the city. Heroic efforts to rebuild the city by using brick instead of wood were soon diverted by the second catastrophe -- flood. The Sacramento levee, built following the flood of 1849-1850, was no match for waters which now filled the rivers. Buildings were flooded on December 19. Although the waters shortly subsided, precipitation continued, roads turned into quagmires, and supplies in the mining regions were soon depleted. Late winters in 1850 and 1851 had caused price reductions on supplies which had been stockpiled in anticipation of interrupted lines of communication.\footnote{Democratic State Journal [Sacramento], January 17, 1853.} Now miners were lightly stocked, expecting a similar price reduction. This was a situation which could result in another catastrophe -- starvation.

New Year's Eve was indeed a wet one. Continued rain and snow had caused another rise in the rivers and Sacramento residents were greeting each other from boats. Waters again quickly receded, even stranding many boats, but in places the mud in streets was three feet deep and remained as late as January 17. It is estimated that there were about one hundred
thousand people in the northern mines for whom Sacramento served as point of supply. It was vital that supplies continued to move to the hills even though wagons were bogged down.  

It was, indeed, fortunate to the ultimate development of Sacramento that the merchants reacted by seeking temporary quarters on high ground adjacent to the American River. It might have been that had they resorted to attempting a "temporary" stay in Sutterville a return to Sacramento might not have been effected. Steamships found no difficulty in navigating a few more miles up the American River to higher ground. Sacramento was rendered inaccessible from the mines, and factors now combined to bypass Sutterville. By January 5 it was evident that a new town would spring up on the west bank of the American River about four miles east of Sacramento in order to keep supplies moving to the mines.  

By January 10 the "tent city," or "town of tents," as it was later called, had grown so rapidly that the Journal suggested establishment of an express office at that point.  

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3 The Sacramento Daily Union, January 5, 1853.

4 Journal, January 10, 15, 1853.
The town was finally officially called Hoboken and newspapers began to devote several columns to advertisements by merchants who had established themselves or branch offices there. The Wells, Fargo and Company office was opened on January 12, and Page, Bacon & Co., bankers, had also arrived. Forty-five temporary structures had been erected; eating houses were doing a "smashing business." 

Squatters were encouraged to settle in the new town. The Journal stated that, "We are informed that lots are offered free to settlers who are guaranteed that all obstacles to navigation shall be removed." This was common knowledge by January 6 and certainly eliminated the problem of buying a lot to begin operations. Claims were hastily staked out, and by January 14 the demand had caused "squatters" to refuse as much as one hundred fifty dollars for their lots.

By January 16 Hoboken had grown to some two hundred canvas houses. Sunday visitors from Sacramento were impressed by the favorable location. From a distance, the ten-day-old city of Hoboken looked like a "clothes line of clean washed linen." Tents were located along the river bank for about

5 Union, January 12, 1853. 6 Journal, January 6, 1853.
7 Ibid.; Union, January 14, 1853.
8 Union, January 18, 1853.
half a mile, but only Main Street -- a few blocks long -- led away from the river to Sacramento. The only two frame buildings in the town had been built some time previously and had been called the "Four-Mile House" prior to 1853. The "Four-Mile House" became the Hoboken Hotel and was seemingly located at the center of activity. Advertisements indicated that a great variety of establishments were in business; approximately two-thirds of all Sacramento business houses were represented there. These were branches of the Sacramento stores which, with a "go-ahead-itiveness," had brought the goods out to the miners.\(^9\)

By January 22, a "misterious climate" gave things a "dull aspect."\(^10\) However, accounts of the business and social aspects suggest the adjective "dull" be replaced by ones such as jovial, exciting, rushing, and similar terms. For entertainment, Sacramentans took Sunday river excursions to Hoboken and Brighton. To enliven the trip there were speeches, songs, and a fight or two.\(^11\)

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\(^{9}\) *Journal*, January 17, 1853. See *Journal*, January 13, 20, and 22 for description of business at Hoboken. *The Sacramento Steamer Union* on March 1, 1853 had a picture of Hoboken.

\(^{10}\) *Union*, January 22, 1853. Emphasis in the original.

The city government must also be described along with these things of a lighter vein. An election was called for January 15 and Hoboken was divided into two wards for voting for a Mayor and a Harbor Master. Even the newspapers kept tongue-in-cheek when writing about this vote. Approximately seventeen hundred votes were cast. The *Journal*’s mathematics in recapitulation of votes was in obvious error, and the *Union* reported a "subordinate officer" had been declared elected by minority vote. It then called for another election and a coinciding pleasure cruise from Sacramento to assure its correct outcome.

Merchandise arriving in large volume was inevitably mixed up and caused confusion which, on occasion, resulted in incidents between claimants. Gambling incidents and challenges to "draw and defend" and other acts which an overindulgence of alcohol brought on must have made the day at Hoboken anything but dull.

Communication with the Sacramento Embarcadero was carried on by any kind of vessel that would float and could traverse the six miles under its own power or be "towed, rowed or

12 *Journal*, January 17, 1853.
13 *Union*, January 19, 1853.
14 *Journal*, January 15, 1853.
paddled." The "light draught" steamers, R. K. Page, Oakland, and Kennebec were the most prominent means of transportation but the packet G. Winter, "sailing steamer" SIQG, and the "ferryboat" Beta were also mentioned. Frequent trips were made between the two points with some of the larger vessels carrying about forty tons, generally making a trip a day.15

The level of commercial activity during the six week period of Hoboken's existence is reflected in the following statistics. It is estimated that five to six thousand tons of freight left Hoboken for the mines.16 The street was crowded with teams and "boxes, bales, barrels, and goods of all kinds" were being loaded on wagons which constantly left for the mines.17 Adams and Company reported that they purchased thirty thousand dollars of gold dust from January 7 to 12,18 and by January 26 had shipped approximately seventy-eight thousand dollars worth of gold.19 The Sacramento gold

15 Journal, January 6, 10, 12, 17, 24, 1853; Union, January 12, 1853.

16 Donald Robinson, "Hoboken and this is no Jokin'," Unpublished manuscript, Sacramento State College, 1956.

17 Union, January 18, 1853.

18 Journal, January 13, 1853.

19 Ibid., January 26, 1853.
shipment was $1,111,380.30 for the first half of January. 20

As early as January 21 the town seemed to have reached its maximum growth. On the next day, "the most valuable lots," 20 x 160 feet fronting on the river, were being sold at auction. 21 Although there were no signs of actual "decay," citizens were planning to hold a mass meeting to determine when to abandon the town. The American River had been receding rapidly and a drop of another foot or two would make it impossible to use the Hoboken docking facilities. 22 Would the merchants return to Sacramento?

Aggressive plans had been developed by people who hoped to take advantage of conditions brought about by the flood. William K. Weston, S. T. Weston, Robert H. Vance, and Henry Breed, all of San Francisco, had formed the Sutter Land Company to sell real estate and to make necessary improvements in the Sutterville site which would bring business and build the town. To overcome the bad port, a plank road seventeen hundred feet long and twenty feet wide, with a bridge, was to be built along Crystal Street from the levee back to the highlands and up the slope of high ground. The wharf at the river

20 Ibid., January 17, 1853.

21 Union, January 22, 1853.

22 Ibid., January 27, 1853.
was to be one hundred feet long and a ship was to be moved there to facilitate receipt of goods. Storehouses, the "length of the city front" and other buildings, costing altogether one hundred thousand dollars, were to be built to attract business. For this investment all property owners of Sutterville pledged to surrender to the company one half of the land if the stated improvements were completed within ninety days from January 27, 1853 when the contracts were signed.23 Again, the canal to make a port was rejected in favor of the road from the river to the high land.

Deeds in favor of the Sutter Land Company reveal ownership of several buildings in Sutterville. Excluded from the transfer, when it was to take place, was a house owned by James Brown,24 two houses owned by William Cline,25 and the house near the river where Hastings and his wife "now reside" and the "brick house upon the hill or highland."26 These were


the only buildings noted in the deeds but it is presumed that Andrew Carrothers also lived in Sutterville since he had crops growing there. His deed stated that if blocks 188 and 175 were occupied before his barley was harvested, a fence was to be placed around the area to secure the crops from "cattle running at large." Carrothers also reserved another eighty acres "until purchasers are there."27

During the first week in February, 1853, the Union and Journal carried on a heated debate as to the wisdom of the Sacramento and Sutterville locations. The Union began by publishing a series of articles, over the pseudonym Civis, which tried to establish Sacramento's dangerous position. Slight flooding could be expected each year but during other years there could be very serious flooding, as in the year 1849 and the current year. In order for the site to be safe a levee twelve to fourteen feet high with a one hundred foot base and sixty foot crown would have to be built. Even this might not be enough since people had little experience in the area to determine how great the floods might be. In contrast, Sutterville could be reached by wagons during all seasons of the year and was not subject to flooding. Further, none of the high Sacramento rents would be charged in Sutterville. If sufficient inducements were offered, the merchants might move to Sutterville.28


28 Union, February 1, 2, 3, 1853.
The Journal's rebuttal of these claims, using the pseudonym Truth, was less factual. The effort to build Sutterville was called a "rich idea," and readers were warned to "let the Sutterville speculation alone." In their enthusiasm, the Sutterville proponents had claimed that their site was one hundred fifty feet above the present levee, which was not true. There was no reason Sacramento could not be protected by levees; why abandon one hundred million dollars of real estate for some "Ararat of safety?"

Charles E. "Philosopher" Pickett revealed his authorship of the Civis articles by considering the Journal's view a personal attack. He was an eccentric lawyer who had traded at the Fort and then went to San Francisco where his writings concerning reforms or abuses usually caused him trouble. Through the Union, he rose in self-defense and lambasted "Truth" and the Journal. "All the averments and vulgar gratuitous abuse of this writer (Truth) being endorsed by the editors of the Journal, and also much other of the same sort, editorially belched forth from this foul mouthed sheet. . . ." He admitted having a small financial interest in Sutterville

29 Journal, February 2, 1853.
30 Ibid., February 5, 1853.
31 Union, February 5, 1853.
but could not understand why the *Journal* should try to stop a private citizen from attempting a speculation. The *Journal* editors were probably bribed to support Sacramento. 32 There appeared to be great interest in this issue.

The move from Hoboken soon took place. At the mass meeting of Hoboken merchants held February 6, Colonel Starr, chairman, called attention to the fact that "speculators from the town of Sutter had this evening arrived amongst us." 33 The audience, at Starr's suggestion, "responded warmly" to the statements that Hoboken and Sacramento were only temporarily separated and that the merchants would return to their "first and only love, Sacramento." 34 The Sutterville representatives had been "real hard at work" and had offered several firms five free lots if they would move to Sutterville. 35

The meeting had been called to decide upon a date to leave Hoboken but those present felt this to be a matter of individual preference so no one date was adopted. By February 19 the *Union* could report that, "Hoboken has had its day..." 36 The move had taken place and most business was again located at Sacramento.

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35 *Journal*, February 5, 1853.
36 *Union*, February 19, 1853.
Events surrounding the Hoboken episode point out the potential which might have flowered at Sutterville. Excitement had become intense and "the question which agitated every mind was, 'Shall it be Sutterville or Sacramento?'" Many residents of Hoboken passed by Sacramento and pitched their tents at Sutterville. 37

Early in the morning of February 14, 1853, a rumor swiftly circulated that "a powerful quantity of every species of lumber" lay on the levee at Sutterville and adjacent area. Reportedly, there was enough material to build an entire city. Sacramentans soon lined the road on the way to Sutterville to "behold the wonders." The Journal thought someone should be thanked for this amusing diversion since all that could be seen there were a couple of logs and other drift which had been hauled from the river and scattered on the bank. 38

Possible foundation for the rumor could have been the fact that the plank road from the levee to the highland along Salem Street was in the process of construction and by February 19 two hundred feet were reported completed. 39 The Free Trade was expected and carried on board seventy thousand feet of

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37 Ibid., June 29, 1872, p. 8.

38 Journal, February 14, 1853.

39 Alta, February 19, 1853.
lumber, possibly for the plank road. Streets of the town had been resurveyed to eighty foot width; the barque Agnes had been drifted from the Sacramento Embarcadero to the Sutterville dock.40 Apparently the wharf was completed.

The Journal countered these reports of progress with admonishments to stay away. San Francisco speculators were interested only in deceiving others into losing money; the "paper town" was a dishonorable affair. False facts published, rumors started, a little money raised, and all this while Sacramento residents were suffering with a flood.41

As with the first Sutterville, the men in charge began to disagree. A "reliable rumor" circulated that work on the various projects was suspended because the original proprietors and the new owners could not agree.42 Reason for the "burst up" was that the original owners wanted to retain corner lots as part of their half. Since these were the most valuable lots there was a stalemate, "a general emuete ensued."43 This was very much like the earlier Hastings and McDougal difficulty.

40 Union, February 18, 1853.
41 Journal, February 19, 1853.
42 Union, February 24, 1853.
43 Journal, February 25, 1853.
There is no doubt that the owners' enthusiasm led them to unfortunate predicaments. Their claim of one hundred fifty feet elevation had already been challenged. "Actors have so far overdone their parts as to create a feeling of indignation ..."44 by unauthorized statements "given out (privately, of course)"45 that several prominent San Francisco mercantile firms would move to Sutterville. They had reportedly bought lots on which to erect warehouses as part of a plan to sell in Sutterville at Bay prices. This indiscretion recoiled "with crashing force upon the heads of the visionary schemers."46

Toward the end of February both Sacramento papers joined in attacking the rival city. The Union had had an opportunity to see that the Hoboken interests were serious in returning to Sacramento and to expect to take away a portion of the trade of a city as well established as Sacramento would be extremely difficult. Some teams might visit Sutterville but they would be "like angels; few and far between." The Sutterville proponents would discover to their sorrow that invested capital cannot easily be swayed. Any who might be convinced would leave

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44 Union, February 28, 1853.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
Sutterville within a month and even insist that they had never been there. Sutterville efforts could only lead to greater exertion at the point where commerce had already focused.47

Apparently in jest, the Journal requested a map of the new city to determine if the "Whiskey Tent" and the "Pie and Cake Tent" were on the right lots.48 The Alta joined in on the fun. There was no comparison to Hoboken. The only tent at Sutterville was used by workmen on the bridge which was probably a part of the plank road. "The Sutterville wooden cross formed by the plank road and bridge must prove a heavy weight to bear." Would not a Chinese colony be better? If the proprietors could learn this language they could be the "magnates they aspire."49

If Vance, Breed and Weston did not get support it was not because they failed in their building efforts. On March 23, property owners conveyed one half of their Sutterville holdings to these San Franciscans since they had "faithfully and promptly performed to our entire satisfaction all the stipulations."50 By March 24 the twenty foot wide plank road

49 Alta, March 2, 23, 1853.
from the levee reached 2,030 feet inland. A ship was already at the wharf to receive goods. Pettit reestablished at Sutterville and was reported to be producing twenty thousand brick per day. A two hundred thousand brick kiln was almost ready for burning so there would soon be sufficient brick for the building of new stores.\textsuperscript{51} To fulfill their contract a forty thousand dollar brick hotel, two other brick buildings which cost twenty seven thousand dollars each, and a thirteen thousand dollar billiard saloon had been erected. R. H. Vance erected a brick building at a cost of twenty seven thousand dollars and it was occupied by Lockwood and Tilden of Sacramento and by S. T. Weston.\textsuperscript{52}

Reports of building and argument as to the relative merits of Sutterville had aroused interest. Scores of people visited the area and remarked about the "countless millions of wild flowers." A friend of the Union lamented that Sacramento, although also a beautiful location for a city, was being spoiled by closing of natural drains without building adequate sewage facilities. Sacramento sloughs and ponds covered the fine garden land. In ten years, he predicted, the problem would be solved since increased trade to both places would have but one result -- one large city.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Union}, March 24, 1853. \textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, June 29, 1872. \textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, March 26, 1853.
But the buoyant spring feelings of the visitors to Sutterville were sharply disturbed by grave discussions by owners as to the propriety of keeping corner lots and leasing others. Those who wanted to buy were greatly annoyed.

But for the conduct and bearing of Richard Perkins, placed there as agent for the company by H. A. Breed, the guiding spirit of the enterprise, more of the lots might have been sold. . . . But he was so arrogant and unaccommodating that many who wished to locate went away disgusted.

Applicants would not listen to answers such as these being made to their inquiries: "well, sir, these are our lots;" "well, sir, we own this property;" "if you don't like that lot you needn't take it;" "it is no use to talk, that is our price;" etc.54

April, 1853 brought events which seemed to resurrect Sutterville's hopes. The wisdom of Sutter's choice for a town was reemphasized in the first week of April when flooding again occurred. Sutterville was dry but all streets north of K Street in Sacramento were under water and the break in the Sutter levee caused flooding of the southern part of Sacramento.55 Exact location of the break is not known; it was on land owned by people interested in Sutterville "who probably

54 Ibid., June 29, 1872. Weston took lot 1, block 160; Vance took lot 3, block 161; and Breed took lot 3, block 148, lot 10, block 187, and the west half of block 534 which were mostly corner lots and choice lots. See Deeds Book, Vol. K, pp. 306 ff.

55 Ibid., April 2, 1853.
would have objected to its [repairs] being done.\textsuperscript{56} Although this flooding was not as serious as before, it was a timely reminder for the Sutterville cause.

During April and May the construction boom in Sutterville was based on Pettit's brick production. Tin roofs were proposed for ten brick buildings.\textsuperscript{57} By the end of May, six brick buildings, eight or ten frame houses, and twelve or fourteen tents were up and about half were occupied. Businesses consisted of "... two stocks of groceries, one clothing store, painters, barbers, baker, butchers, etc., and some 6 or 8 bars, all doing a fair business."\textsuperscript{58} This seems to have been the most promising period Sutterville had ever known. Movement between the boom area and Sacramento was facilitated by a "fast little steamer, Ranger,"\textsuperscript{59} which made six trips daily from J Street to Sutterville. The vessel could carry about twenty tons.

Significance of this progress brought about a joint meeting on May 22 of Sacramento merchants and Sutterville speculators who actually came to an agreement. Fifteen owners of

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., April 4, 1853.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Alta}, April 9, 1853; \textit{Union}, April 9, 1853. Six boys between 14 and 15 needed to help at Pettit's brickyard (April 8 \textit{Union}).

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Alta}, May 28, 1853.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
Sacramento firms were listed as desiring to open stores on lots which were donated by the Sutterville group. A committee of two was appointed to select fifteen of the best lots on Vermillion Street between Willow and Lake where these firms would locate by chance. Within three days merchants were to have necessary papers filled out to maintain their interest in the property. Within fifteen days they were required to erect a building and have a suitable stock or they would lose the donated lot.60

The May 30 Journal report of Sutterville's progress is much more conservative than the Union impression. There were only four or five one-story skeleton brick houses in process of construction. Neither goods nor Sacramento merchants' names were visible. There were a number of canvas houses, of which Passenaud had one. The hairdresser was quoted as "feeling something like a swung cat." Profits were light because there was no business but it was consoling to note that expenses, therefore, were also light. It would make a wonderful place for families and surely will be a favorite summer place.61

60 Union, May 23, 1853.

Six firms are known to have taken advantage of the offer and moved to Sutterville. Winn considered establishing a branch of his pastry and confectionary business in the "sand-hill suburb." But by June 5, the six firms were ready to return to Sacramento, their owners complaining that the firms which coaxed them to Sutterville were "interested in the first project of establishing the place and had acted selfishly in their persuasions." The last day of the contract period expired on Monday, June 6, and the rest of the merchants lost their interest through default. Those who had relocated prepared for the return and the ferry Beta was going to fetch the second and last load of merchandise on June 8, 1853.

Sam Brannan may have been a key figure in keeping the merchants from moving to Sutterville. Perkins had already discouraged many by his attitude. Brannan now assured the firms that rents in Sacramento, previously cited as being high, would now be "little more than nominal." If this is true, then Sam Brannan becomes probably the most important single factor in the failure of Sutterville.

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62 Union, May 28, 1853.  
63 Alta, June 5, 1853.  
64 Ibid., June 8, 9, 1853.  
65 Union, June 9, 1853.  
66 Ibid., June 29, 1872.
Sacramento had not been unaware of the serious challenge of Sutterville; even the Marysville Herald considered it a rival city. The Sacramento city council voted to fence the levee below Sacramento, the break probably having been repaired. The Journal reported the citizens of "Gasville" considered this to be a conspiracy to "mar the prospects" of Sutterville. "Gasville" was another of the Journal's ways of suggesting the rival city was one of false boasts and claims.

Reluctance of the Sacramento merchants to move to Sutterville spelled final doom to Sutterville hopes. The last reported event of any size for the city was the Independence Day celebration. L. W. Hastings gave an oration and the cannon was frequently fired and could be heard in Sacramento. In the evening a ball was given in one of the new brick buildings and the ladies and gentlemen enjoyed an evening of "dancing and social pleasure."

67 Journal, June 1, 1853. 68 Ibid., June 2, 1853.
CHAPTER VII

BOUNDARIES OF SUTTERVILLE

To determine the boundaries of Sutterville in relation to the present features of the area, it is necessary to superimpose the Coote map on a similar scale map of Sacramento. Since the brewery is the only landmark of Sutterville which has lasted to the present, it has been necessary to rely exclusively on its location as the common point of the maps.

The precise location of the brewery in old Sutterville is not known but it was built at the southeast corner of Willow and Crystal Streets. Crystal Street is known to have been close to the front of the building and parallel to it, but deeds do not indicate the distance it was set back.² Coote used magnetic bearings and placed a course of sixty-five degrees on his map at the corner of Main and Vine Streets. Course of the street in front of the brewery in later maps


adjusts to this magnetic bearing.\textsuperscript{3} It is, therefore, concluded that Crystal Street became that part of present Sutterville Road in front of the brewery. An outline of Coot\textsuperscript{e} map superimposed on a map of Sacramento is on the following page.

Subsequent surveys changed the course of Union Street, the north boundary of Sutterville, and thus changed many property lines. The triangle between Union Street and Y Street from the Sacramento River to Seventeenth Street extended was sold by Sutter to Sam Brannan.\textsuperscript{4} Brannan in turn sold this to other parties in ten acre tracts or farms as a result of a survey by H. Custer in late 1850 or early 1851.\textsuperscript{5} However, instead of running Union Street at S. 65\(^\circ\) 30\('\ E. magnetic, he ran it at S. 54\(^\circ\) 30\('\ E. true north or about S. 69\(^\circ\) E. magnetic. Y Street he also changed from S. 71 1/2\(^\circ\) E.


\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., Vol. F, p. 53; Vol. G, pp. 273, 280. These lots are in evidence as early as June 20, 1851 but they were undoubtedly platted much earlier.
Outline of Coote map of Sutter superimposed on map of Sacramento
instead of S. 72° E. This made about 5 degrees difference between the courses in the streets of the Coote and Custer surveys. This difference between the two lines is now of only historical interest. It will be noted that the courses of the present McClatchy Way, Adrian and Sherburn Avenues have been evidently determined by this Custer survey.

There also developed variation in numbering of blocks in maps. As early as January, 1885 J. H. McKune wrote Bidwell insisting that the original town of Sutterville differed from that appearing on the Coote map of 1850. He referred to the fact that the block number 2 was not located at the river as before. When McDougal bought his Sutterville interest from Hastings in 1849, his alternate block interest began with block two which was located at the river. Block two on the Coote map is the seventh block back from the river. Block


7 See Chapter II.

143 was located at the river by Davidson in 1849 and this is also true on the Coote map. Noted transfers of lots according to the Bidwell map from Hastings to his wife also seem to be valid according to the Coote map. With one exception, transfers were in a rectangle of blocks beginning with 130 at the corner of Water and Connecticut Streets and thereafter in sequence to the end of the five tiers at the northeast corner block numbered 194. It is highly probable that in the original town only the one and low two digit numbered blocks were changed. Blocks 1-48 on the Coote map might be the original area which was later expanded on three sides.

A portion of a ledger was found in the McKinstry Collection, which must pertain to numberings and lots on the Coote map above the original town. This may have been a portion, copy, or actually the index to which has been referred. Numbering of lots began with block 192 which had six lots, 50 by 100 feet, and was followed by the tier of blocks 215, 227, 239, 251, 274, 286, 298, 310, 322. These blocks had 12 lots, 60 by 120 feet. The series continued without break to the final tier beginning with block 201 and 202. As can be seen, the Coote map numbering follows this plan only to block number

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261 and then skips to block 333 which is in a remote area. It is apparent that the intervening blocks were contained on a missing page of the ledger. It is not known why this change should exist or why there was this irregularity in numbering on the Coote map. There is no evidence of a sale of lots or blocks in Sutterville which was not numbered on the Coote map.

Lot sales and transfers support the statements that then river front area was not as important as might be expected. Hastings transfers to his wife, probably to escape foreclosure for debts, were located in the high ground near the present Land Park Zoo.

Markings near the river on the Coote map probably indicate buildings in existence at the time of drawing. Blocks 194, 193, 191, 189, C, A, 156, 143, 130, 8, 9 all contain these markings. Lot 3 of Block 143 was sold by McDougal to Henry Vannep so the mark might indicate that this was his building.11

Blocks of the original town were 330 feet square with the exception of a north-south tier of blocks which were 480 by 320 feet. Streets were uniformly sixty feet wide except for Water, Main, and Vermillion which were eighty feet wide. Water Street because of its direction became the link to Sacramento and was later called Sutterville Road and then

11 Ibid., Vol. C, p. 532.
Riverside Boulevard. Willow Street was not written on the map at the same time as the other streets as can be seen from the printing. In the new Sutterville the blocks varied in size but most were 360 by 250 feet.
CHAPTER VIII

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF SUTTERVILLE

After 1853, much of the history of Sutterville is limited to a history of the Vance brick building and several other buildings rather than any reference to Sutterville as a town. It is not known how long the other brick buildings stood, for the Union commented in 1864 that there were "large, lonely and tenentless brick structures which still attest the wisdom of that speculation." ¹ One of the structures had been used by a Chinese doctor, and because of racial prejudice, this was not a particularly meritorious fact at that time. ²

THE BREWERY

For some unknown reason, the Vance Building was the only one which was occupied for a number of years and which finally became the only reminder of the Sutterville of the past. In August, 1861, Martin Arenz bought "one of the Vance's 1853 buildings" for fifteen hundred dollars and put on a roof and other improvements. It was described as a two story, 62 x 62 foot building, on a lot 160 x 180 feet. ³

¹ Union, September 27, 1864. ² Ibid. ³ Ibid., June 15, 1872; Sacramento County Recorder's Office, Deeds Book, Vol. 51, p. 569; November 13, 1868.
January 2, 1862, he advertised in the *Sacramento Bee*, that he was the proprietor of the Sutterville Brewery and could, with "new and improved" machinery supply a "SUPERIOR ARTICLE OF BEER."

By 1866 the brewery was reported to be producing seven hundred fifty barrels per year from seventy five thousand pounds of malt. Three men and a four horsepower engine were the working elements.\(^4\) A garden was cultivated on the west side and in some way becomes associated with the building. The words Brewery and Garden were painted in different colors, over each other, on the west side and were still faintly visible in 1952. Arenz sold the brewery and equipment and fenced garden to Mr. Lyman for seven thousand six hundred dollars on January, 1869.\(^5\)

The brewery prospered only a few more years. Lyman sold to N. F. Thielen and Fred Futterer for nine thousand dollars on March 27, 1873.\(^6\) In 1877 Futterer sold his share

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6. *Ibid.*, Vol. 70, p. 13, January 2, 1869. Price was $7,600 and included a garden to the west of the brewery which would have been off the lot.
to Thielen for five thousand five hundred dollars. It was about this time that a "whispering campaign" brought about the close of the business. It was rumored that slough water was being used to make the beer and one of the employees had committed suicide by drowning in one of the vats. Rival Sacramento breweries had no such problems. During this latter period the brewery had been called the Mountain View Saloon and on a clear day the guests and patrons could no doubt sit in the shade of the garden and enjoy their beer while they gazed over the eastern panorama of the majestic snow-capped Sierras.

When it was no longer used as a brewery, it was seldom occupied. On several occasions the building was used as a residence and at other times as the scene of a dance or party. Before its destruction, the building had been boarded up to protect it from the children who were coming in large numbers to the zoo located across the street, which was now called Sutterville Road. Irrespective of its uses, as late as 1905 the building was still called the "Vance Brick Building."

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7 Ibid., Vol. 83, p. 530, February 21, 1877.
8 Union, November 22, 1942, p. 24.
9 Ibid.
THE BREWERY

North Side

South Side

View from river
Cf. with view of Sutterville, page 84.
In March, 1860, it was reported that the old Sutter sawmill which had been built in 1853 was being replaced by a new tannery. In 1855 it was reported that the sawmill could produce fifty thousand feet of lumber per week. Operation of the tannery was scheduled to begin a few weeks after the date of the above report.

With the coming of the Civil War there came to Sutterville another military force. In October, 1861, W. W. Crouse gave a site to the government free of charge and soon Camp Union was established with about three hundred men. By the close of the decade the Camp had disappeared. Its soldiers were no doubt responsible for some of the success of the brewery; they also distinguished themselves by stealing poultry.

If Sutterville could not claim fame as a commercial city it could certainly boast of its success in entertaining and resting its visitors. In 1872 a bill was introduced into the Assembly calling for establishment of a toll road from Sacramento to the Hooker Ranch below Sutterville. The owners

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12 Ibid., June 7, 1853. 13 Ibid., March 16, 1860.
15 Union, October 17, 1861. 16 Bee, June 7, 1862.
17 Union, February 2, 1872.
had not a profit motive but wanted to give people a healthy drive with refreshments at the goal. Sutterville Lake, probably now Munger’s Lake, was then three and one half miles long and a quarter mile wide. It abounded in perch, pike, black bass and eels. The road was to be kept in repair by toll fees and plans included building a hotel like the San Francisco Cliff House. By June, the grading of the road was complete and water wagons were in operation to keep down the dust.18

SUGGESTED REVIVAL OF SUTTERVILLE

Natural elements again pointed out the advantages of Sutterville’s location. December, 1861 proved to be a wet month. Storms on December 6 and 26 were described as most terrible. On January 1, 1862 the levee near Sutterville was wearing away and the water was over the top, six to eight inches in some places. A repetition of the 1853 conditions occurred. Again there fell thirty-six inches of rain.19 Again the steamers went up the American River and a second Hoboken was in the making. Mitchville, one quarter mile above

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the Hoboken site, seemed to have the nod for this temporary distinction. 20

As had been done previously, a survey of the levee system was ordered. 21 The new survey began at a sycamore tree below Sutterville and encompassed the territory between that point and the American River. Another group of surveyors were interested in Sutterville as a terminus for a railroad to Folsom. 22 This plan was doomed, too, but support now came from a capable old friend.

The vitriolic "Philosopher" Pickett found the time ripe to lambast Sacramento legislative representatives. In April, 1862, he charged Sacramento would never be secure from floods. Sutterville and Knights Landing were the only two possible approaches to the highlands. Sutterville was the spot to erect a capital building. This was what the people really voted for because this was where the original town of Sacramento was laid off. The representatives were not to follow the "foolish and suicidal examples" by spending large sums to build public buildings on not only a swamp but

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20 Union, February 3, 1862.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., March 5, 1862.
also soil which could be swept away by the river. Sutterville had tertiary sandstone and was safe from the wear of the river. Certainly this was where everyone, "including the amphibious animals of the mud hole two miles above," was saying the whole population should be. The representatives apparently felt no such desire in the electorate and Pickett's suggestions fell on deaf ears.

By 1868 Sutterville had a population of at least ninety-two and the following occupations were being pursued there: brewer, farmers, milkman, surveyor, florist, millwright, peddler, shoemaker, fisherman, carpenter, teacher, gardener, broom maker, and saloon keeper. At least Sutterville had not completely vanished.

Sutterville was not forgotten. Shortly after the gold rush property owners became involved in lengthy and costly litigation to determine ownership of land. Sutterville was a contested site also and in 1872 it was the case of Ira B. French vs. Edwards et al that was to determine the new master or masters of the town which was gone but not forgotten.

23 Alta, April 3, 1862; Lawrence C. Powell, Philosopher Pickett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942), pp. 75-78.

Sutterville had arisen as a result of a particular need to accommodate new arrivals to the Sacramento valley. The site was chosen with care and groundwork laid for the city to grow. However, demand for convenience and expedience, coupled with Sutters' need for cash, created its successful rival, Sacramento. Neither fire nor flood could succeed in diverting the population to the site which had been selected for them. Sutterville temporarily returned to its former pastoral condition. The isolated Vance brick building, while it stood, was a monument both to Sutter's efforts to provide a suitable haven for emigrants and to the successful rival, Sacramento, which all but envelops the Sutterville area.

A century later Sutterville's topographical features again gave it meaning in providing homesites for the great twentieth century wave of people to California and the Sacramento area.
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