

Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation

March Newsletter, 2025

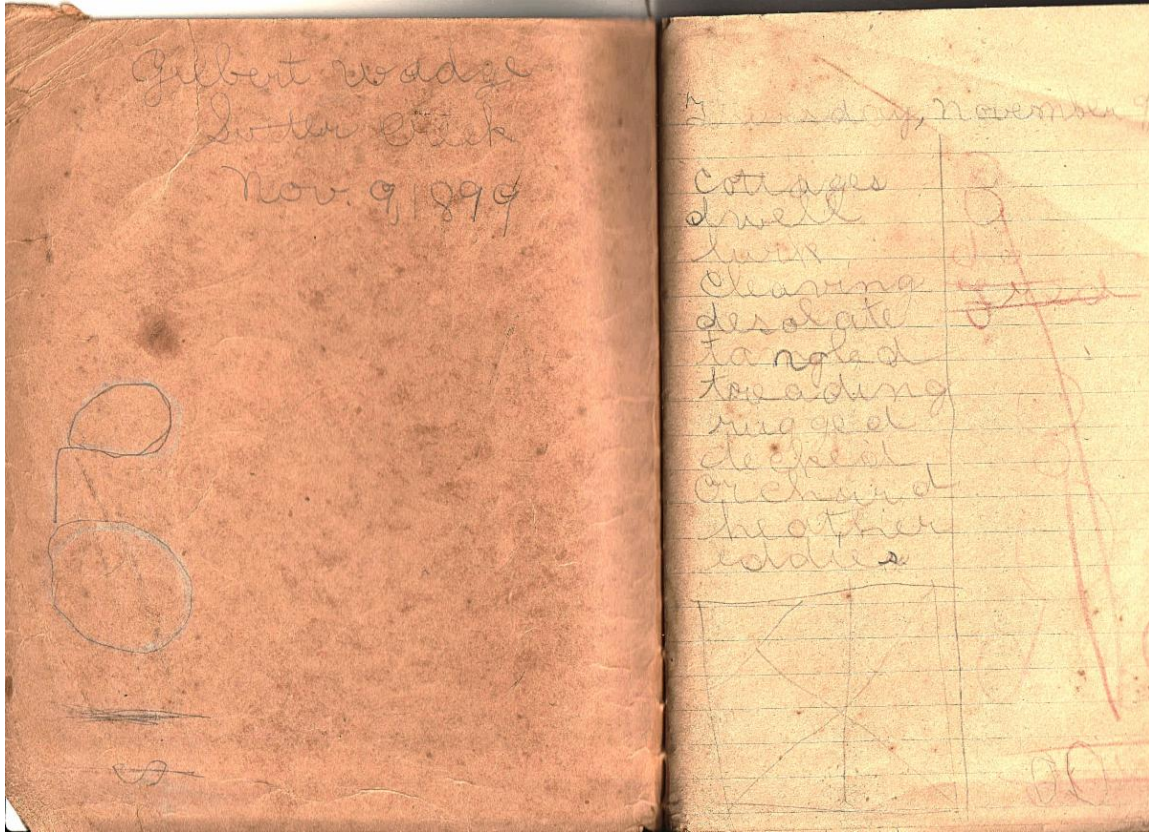
MORE THAN JUST A BIG HOLE IN THE GROUND Mining in Sutter Creek – Part 2 A Closer Look

Sometimes in researching information for the newsletter, a story pops up that just begs to be told. The title “More Than Just a Big Hole in the Ground” came to mind because these mines represented so much more than the almighty dollar. As important as dollars were in enticing miners to uproot and move themselves and their families halfway around the world to California’s Motherlode, there was no guarantee of success or even mere employment. The driving factor was simply the hope and possibility of wealth or at least the improvement of one’s lot in life.

A few months back my wife and I were walking through town when Aimee Peterson, who own The Antique Gardener on Main Street, called us over. She said she had something that might belong in the museum which was being assembled at the Historic Grammar School, and she would be happy to donate it.



It turned out to be a child's lesson book containing arithmetic problems, spelling lessons, creative writing, and word problem solving. The front cover shows a drawing of an elk. A hunting bag and Bowie knife are on pegs behind him and the letters "ELK" in flowery script below. At the top of the cover is written "Gilbert Wadge – Sutter Creek" in black ink. Inside the cover is dated Nov. 9, 1899. The book contains Gilbert's lessons from Nov. 9, 1899 through Jan. 8, 1900.



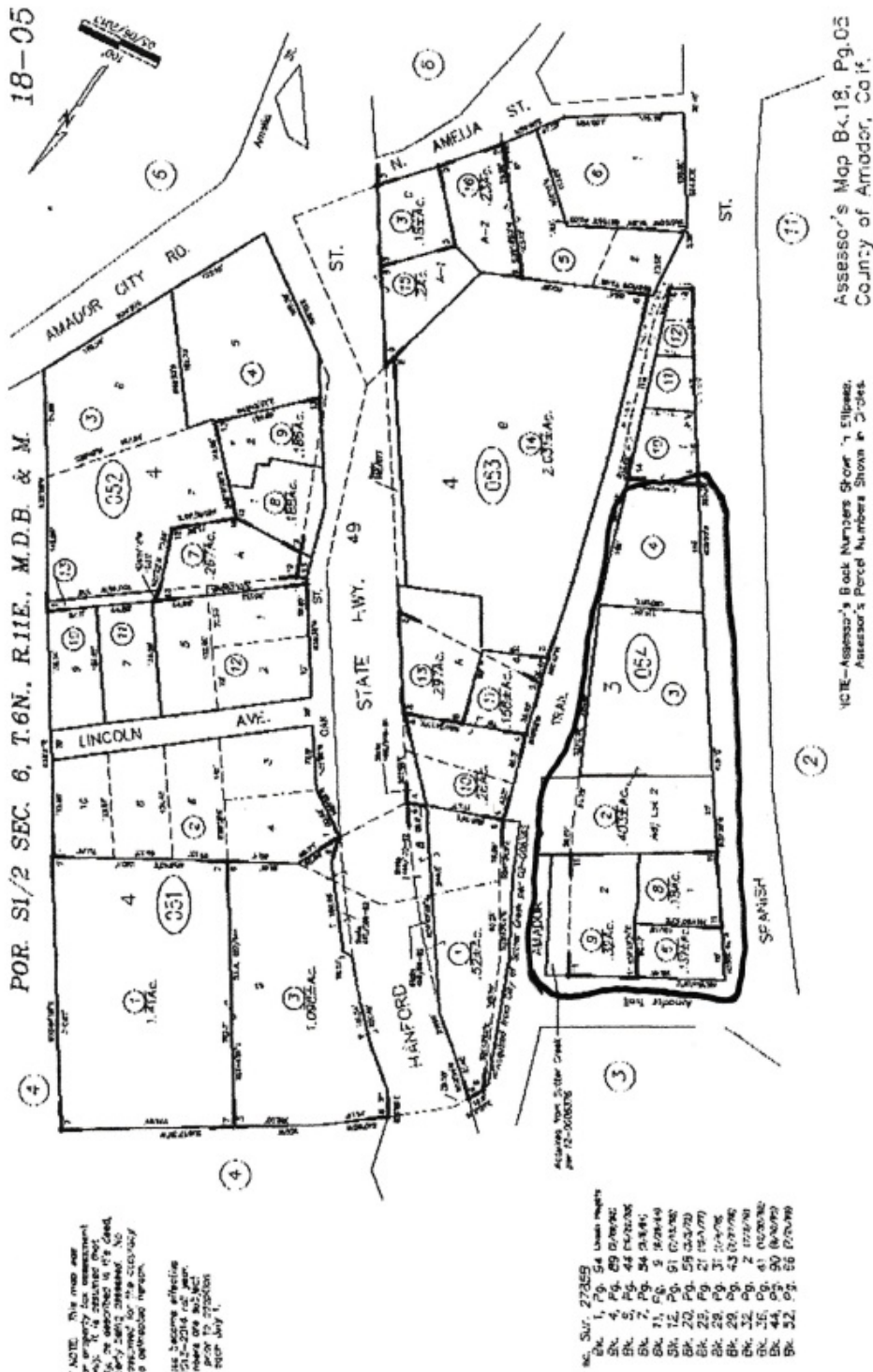
We gratefully accepted the book, but knowing nothing of Gilbert or the Wadge family, put it in the stack of "need to go through this stuff someday". ANY VOLUNTEERS OUT THERE? Well, coincidences happen and this is one of them.

When reviewing the draft for the newsletter of two months ago about mining in Sutter Creek, the name William Wadge jumped out. William was listed as the survivor of an accident at the Lincoln Mine in 1875.

"They found William Wadge and Antonio Robles almost dead from suffocation, and took them to the top. Wadge soon recovered and was taken home, while Robles suffered terribly for some hours, when he was removed, but died during the night. The most intense excitement now prevailed, and Superintendent Stewart, Foreman Horn, and others, commenced the work of getting to the remaining men below."

It turns out that this William is the father of our student, Gilbert, whose book was gifted by Aimee Peterson. A little investigation revealed that William Wadge and his future bride, Elizabeth Russell, were both born and raised in the tin mining district of Cornwall, England. They were likely answering the call for experienced miners during one of Australia's many gold rushes when they emigrated. They wound up in Kadina, South Australia, where they married in 1867. A descendant of the Wadge family has a letter from Elizabeth Wadge's parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Russell, extolling the virtues of California and Sutter Creek in particular. The Russell's encouraged a move and soon the newlyweds were on their way, arriving in Sutter Creek in 1868.

Possibly in anticipation of the arrival of their daughter, Elizabeth, and her new husband, William, the Russell's bought property from George Allen in 1868/1869.



That property is near the top of Spanish Street across from today's Amador High School. There two houses were built, both of which still exist. The upper house dates from 1869 – 1870 and is beautifully restored.



Kelli Davis and husband Matthew are the current owners and residents. Their enthusiasm for the heritage of their property made the writing of this newsletter possible. The lower house, also on Spanish Street closer to Amelia Street, may be slightly later. It is unclear which family lived in which house, or if they were traded back and forth. Seven children were born here to William and Elizabeth Wadge with six surviving to adulthood.



William Wadge died in 1899 at the age of 54, fairly old for a lifelong underground miner, and is buried in the Wadge family plot in Sutter Creek. Tragedy struck the family in 1902, again at the Lincoln Mine, when son Solomon Wadge and John Nelson were both killed in an explosion at the 1800 foot level.

Two Miners Instantly Killed.

Jackson.—Two miners, John Nelson and Solomon Wadge, were instantly killed at the Lincoln mine, Sutter Creek. In working a Burleigh drill in sinking a shaft at a depth of 1800 feet, the drill struck an unexploded charge left by a previous shift. The powder was exploded by concussion. Two other men were at the bottom of the shaft at the time, but they escaped because the skip at the bottom protected them from the explosion.

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Apparently, their drill struck an unexploded "missed hole". Solomon was 20 years old and is also buried in Sutter Creek. After the death of William (father) and Solomon (son), the family began to disperse.

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Mrs. Wm. Wadge still resides in the family home with her daughter and son-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. J. A. Delucchi. This homesite was selected by William Wadge and his bride when they came to Sutter Creek in 1868 from Australia; whither they had gone from England in 1866. Mrs. Wadge's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Russell had established themselves in Sutter Creek in 1867, and lived here for many years thereafter. Their deaths occurred in 1899 and 1900 respectively. The Russells sent such glowing reports from Sutter Creek to the young folks in Australia that they started for Sutter Creek, arriving in 1868. There eight children were born, five of whom survive. Mrs. D. V. Ramazzotti and Mrs. Delucchi live in Sutter Creek; the others in other California cities. Mr. Wadge died in 1901. At this writing, Mrs. Wadge is 82 years old, in excellent health, a woman of keen intellect and very active in church work.



- ① ELIZABETH (M)
- ② ELIZABETH (P)
- ③ DANIEL
RAMAZZOTTI
- ④ LUCY
- ⑤ ESTHER
- ⑥ RALPH SENIOR
- ⑦ MARGARET
- ⑧ GILBERT
- ⑨ POSSIBLY OLIVER?

8 ⁹ 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17



left to right

Front row.

1 Emma Boudreau

2 Margaret Cassilis

3 Andrew Belucchi Sheppard

4 Lucy Belucchi

5 — ~~John~~ Tibbets.

6 Mrs. Fred Jacobs

7 2nd row — Mae Wadge

3rd row -

8 Lena Clements

9 Elizabeth Wadge

0 Oliver Wadge

1 Jane Tibbets

2 Esther Dieren

3 Elizabeth Ramazzotti

4 Dan Ramazzotti

5 Cecil Dieren

6 Fred Jacobs

7 John Belucchi

Elizabeth (Mother) and two daughters (Lucy and Elizabeth) remained in Sutter Creek, while Gilbert went to the Bay Area, Oliver to Stockton and daughter Lena to San Francisco. The mother passed away at her home on Spanish Street in 1931.

DEATH CLAIMS

DEATH CLAIMS SUTTER LADY

Death claimed Mrs. Elizabeth
WADDE well known and beloved resi-
dent of Sutter Creek, at the home
of her daughter, Mrs. Lucy Delucchi
in that city, at an early hour on
Tuesday morning. News of her pass-
ing was a shock to the many friends
of the venerable lady in this com-
munity.

Mrs. WADDE has been a resident
of the neighboring town during the
past 63 years. She was a native of
England aged 87 years. She arrived
at Sutter Creek in 1868 with her
husband, the late William WADDE
and since that time had made her
home there continuously. During her
lifetime she was an active worker
in the Methodist Episcopal church
and her charitable disposition had
won for her legion friends.

The surviving relatives include three daughters, Mrs. Lena Clements, of San Francisco; Mrs. Luly De-lucchi and Mrs. Elizabeth Ramazzotti, of Sutter Creek; two sons, Oliver WYADGE of Stockton, and Gilbert WYADGE of Berkeley.

The funeral was held on Thursday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock services being conducted at the Sutter Creek Methodist Episcopal church by Rev. Upton E. Partridge. The funeral was held under the direction of J. J. Daneri and Son and interment took place in the cemetery at Sutter Creek.

She is buried next to William in the Sutter Creek cemetery. Our student, Gilbert, found employment in San Jose and moved to the Bay Area. He returned home to visit family and friends from time to time. In 1914 he married May Baron in San Francisco. They had two children and lived in the Bay Area communities of San Francisco, Berkeley, and Alameda where Gilbert passed away in 1961 at the age of 74.

As a side note, Gilbert's brother Oliver (1873-1938) was married to Mae Blackwell. Mae's parents, Daniel and Margaret Blackwell lived along Sutter Creek-Volcano Road and operated a small sawmill about four miles from Sutter Creek. (For more on the Blackwell family, the sawmill and the Sutter Creek-Volcano Road, see the January 2022 newsletter in the SCCBF website at the newsletter tab.) The Blackwell property was subdivided into Whitmore Acres in the 1940's. In 1955 my wife's parents bought one of those parcels and we still live the

Mae Esther *Blackwell* Wadge

BIRTH 27 Oct 1878
Amador County, California, USA

DEATH 11 Dec 1960 (aged 82)
Stockton, San Joaquin County, California, USA

BURIAL Sutter Creek City Cemetery
Sutter Creek, Amador County, California, USA

MEMORIAL ID 26078974

Photo added by M Bustillos

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Gravesite Details

Shares stone with Oliver

Family Members

Parents

-  Daniel Monroe Blackwell
1830–1879
-  Margaret *Leath* Blackwell
1837–1925

Spouse

-  Oliver Wadge
1873–1938 (m. 1898)

Siblings

-  Joseph C. Blackwell
1863–1927
-  George Monroe Blackwell
1871–1907

Children

-  Margaret E *Wadge* Cassilis
1904–2003

Maintained by: Steve Jones
Originally Created by: Ancestry Seeker
Added: Apr 16, 2008
Find a Grave Memorial ID: 26078974

Find a Grave, database and images (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/26078974/mae_esther-wadge: accessed December 8, 2024),

1 of 2 12/8/2024, 9:54 AM

Thanks to Kelli and Matthew Davis who live in the Wadge home and Marcie Canale who helped with historical research on locating it.

Do you know someone who would like to receive our monthly newsletter? Send contact information to info@sccbf.org to be added to our distribution list.

SCCBF is funded primarily by public contributions and memberships. If you have an interest in preservation, history, or are looking to be involved in the community, email INFO@SCCBF.org.

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DONATE

SCCBF's current renovation project is the Historic Sutter Creek Grammar School which is rich in Gold Rush history. This beautiful building is California's second oldest two-story brick schoolhouse. There are four rooms within the Historic Grammar School that can be rented. Contact the City of Sutter Creek for information on rates and availability - (209) 267-5647 ext. 230 or email info@cityofsuttercreek.org / [website - cityofsuttercreek.org](http://website-cityofsuttercreek.org)



The Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation (SCCBF) is dedicated to the restoration, preservation, and development of the community's historic assets both now and for future generations. (nonprofit 501(c)3 – Tax ID #87-1825043)

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