

DIXON HISTORY



Dixon Train Station

VOLUME 4 • SUMMER 1995

The Rohwer Family <i>by Otto Rohwer</i>	1
The Schroeder Family <i>by Elmer Schroeder</i>	8
The Bulkley Family <i>by Irvin Bulkley</i>	10
Slaughter Houses of Dixon <i>by Olin Timm</i>	12

Journal of The Dixon Historical Society

"The Rohwer Family and Baseball in Dixon"

Otto Rohwer

Speaking to the Dixon Historical Society

June 12, 1994

Before I start I'd like to tell you that Helene and I will celebrate our wedding anniversary. It'll be number sixty-three. (applause) Don't give the hand to me. Give it for Helene. I was going to remark that that would mark a sixty-three year record but I picked up the new book that you put out today and find that in my speech I made at Tremont some six or seven years ago I told about our wedding anniversary and said that Helene was setting an endurance record of fifty-eight years. Well, that's what I was going to say today. An endurance record for sixty-three years. I can see I've got to drop that word out of my language because every year we set a new one so it's no use to brag about it anymore. When Olin asked me to relate to you what I remember about Dixon baseball and the place of the Rohwer family in it I was really shocked because it's too bad he didn't think of this some twenty years ago when my brother Eggert was alive. Eggert lived his entire ninety-three years in Dixon. Never left it. And he was associated with baseball from the time he was able to first play on the team until the day he died. If you'd had him with his great memory he could've given you a real history of baseball in Dixon. And while I'm on that subject, three times today people have come to me with pictures of baseball in Dixon: one doing with Little League and another with a team in 1938, and so forth. I'm to relate that my speech will have nothing whatever to do with those things because we didn't have Little League baseball when I was here and I have been gone too long to talk about the membership or the activities of baseball after say 1930 or '35 when all of the members of my family got out of the game and, so far as I was concerned, Dixon got out of it also. Now, the trouble with this is that you're left with an eighty-nine year old person, who in spite of being an attorney, has to depend a lot on hearsay evidence to try to tell you what went on in baseball in Dixon.

Before I start this discussion of that, I'd like to try and set the picture of Dixon of my youth. Situated in the northeast part of Solano County, it's neighbors were Benicia, Fairfield, Vacaville, Winters, Esparto and

Davis. Not one of those had a population of a thousand or more until well into the 1930's. Yet everyone of them had a town baseball team and the rivalry between them was very, very intense. And, the game of baseball was really a mania with the people in those communities. I've often wondered why baseball was so popular at that time and I came to my own conclusion...this is mine...it was so popular because there wasn't anything else to do. And why was this? In my estimation, it was the isolation that all these communities had to endure at that time. What caused that? Of course, it was the lack of adequate transportation. You don't think of that today because you can get in your automobile and you can leave here at 8 o'clock in the morning and go up and go all around Lake Tahoe and visit every place and spend a little money in the casinos and be back here by 6 o'clock. Or, you do as in the old days. People wanted to go up and see the blooms in the Capay Valley. You could go up there now and see the Red Buds and you can be back again by noon. Or you can go to San Francisco and you can go through China Town and be back in time for dinner. And better than that, you can get on an airplane and go to Los Angeles and just be gone for a day. That was not the case in the old days that I'm talking about when baseball was young in Dixon. Of course, in those days there were only three main considerations for transportation. You didn't have the airplane. You only had the railroads, automobile and the horse and buggy. The railroad, of course, there was the main line running from Benicia up through Suisun/Fairfield, Dixon, Davis and in to Sacramento. Then there was the branch line running up from Elmira to Vacaville, Winters, Esparto, and terminating at Guinda in the Capay Valley. Well, there was a good railroad line. The trouble was it didn't suit you for ordinary transportation mainly because they ran on their schedule and not on yours. And if you wanted to take a trip, it would take you a full day to get up to Guinda. If you wanted to go visit Esparto, it was out of the question to do it. The next means of transportation was the automobile and, of course, that was just starting in the early days of baseball that I'm thinking of

here between 1910 and '20 and along in there. The automobile of that day was expensive for the average person and more than that it was inadequate in many ways because it was not reliable mechanically. And the tires! I don't know what word to use for it. All I know is you didn't dare go more than ten miles away from home without carrying at least two spare tires. You'll pardon me if I have to use notes, but at 89 those ideas don't pop up there so fast. More over, another problem with the automobile was that then they had few, if any, paved roads. As the old timers will remember, Dixon didn't have any paved streets until about 1915, and I can well remember Olin's dad's old wagon with a couple of horses on it loaded with milk cans coming around the corner of our place there at the edge of town, and proceeding through the mud up to the railroad track to deliver the milk. And neither did they have paving on the outer part. The Causeway, for instance, to Sacramento wasn't completed until 1915. To put it all together, it meant that you just didn't have a means of transportation that could even, in any way, compare to the way it is today. This left the horse and buggy and you couldn't get very far with that. I remember when I was a boy my family went up to visit a family up at Esparto. It took us a full day. We left at daylight and got there just about sundown. So it's quite obvious that that didn't work out. This left towns isolated and the problem arose what to do with your time. Well, the first six days of the week were adequately taken care of by hard work. They didn't have all the labor saving devices and things that you have today. Just stop to think of what a difference it was. I venture to say that it took Helene's mother longer to get her wood stove heated up to cook the morning breakfast than it does for Helene to prepare breakfast for the two of us, eat it, wash the pots and pans, and put the dishes in the dishwasher. On the farms, a grain harvester had a crew of five or six, and besides that they had a man to pick up the barley after it was dumped in the field. Today, one man does the entire operation, has it in a truck where he can deliver it to the warehouse in 15 minutes. I venture to say that Bob Gill's tomato harvester can harvest more tomatoes in one day than 30 or 35 pickers could do in the old days. So, that was a time that six days a week you didn't have to worry about what to do with your time. Then came Sunday. And that was adequately taken care of in the morning by the religion of that time. Dixon, for instance, had five main churches: The

Lutherans, the Catholics, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists. Then that left the afternoon on Sunday. Well, some of the families would go on a coffee clutch with the Schroeders and the Timms but, on the whole, most of them went for baseball. There wasn't any other sport. They didn't have a tennis court in the town as I recall until about 1917. So that was it. It was all baseball. And it was really a fetish with the people of this community.

Now, I'm too young to remember the real olden days of baseball in this community. I can, however, recall, from talking to other members of the family, some of the older time baseball players. I'll give you a few of those names. One of them was Clay Grove who was the town marshal. He played first base. Another one was Mr. Ferguson. I don't recall his first name, but I do recall that he's the only man that I remember that they claimed hit a fly ball over the left field fence at the Dixon Park. Nobody in history ever did it. In addition, there was Charlie Kirby, Helene's dad. There was Charlie Meyers and a man by the name of Merle Valdez, who, incidentally, graduated from high school here in Dixon the same time that my brother Eggert did. Well, then, along about 1908 or '09 the Rohwer family started to show up. And that, of course, is the time I'd like to tell you about. When the old timers refer to the Rohwer boys, they refer to the four older brothers because they were the only ones in the family that got to play together on a team for several years. Jake and I were too young and never got that opportunity to play with the rest of the members of the family. Since this is, as I say, the main subject of the discussion, I will try to give you a thumb-nail description of the six members of my family. The oldest one was Hans. Hans was a right-handed pitcher, and, I think, with all due deference to Bud Peters and Buddy Eames, probably the best pitcher that developed in the Dixon district. The stories of the battles with the Hoyts from Davis, to the old-timers, were of great interest. The only difficulty as far as Dixon was concerned, was, that in about 1916, Hans left to go to Canada to farm, and, of course, he played ball there all over central Alberta. By the time he came back to Dixon, they had given up the game of baseball. The next brother was Eggert who was born in 1893. Eggert was left-handed all the way: throwing and hitting. With all due deference to my brother Ray and my brother Claude, who had professional experience, I think Eggert may have been the best ball player in the whole family. He was

not only a great outfielder and a great hitter, but he possessed probably the best throwing arm I've ever seen outside of Merle Hoyt who became a great legend with the New York Yankees in later years. Nearly every time they'd have a game, particularly when they had that old north wind howling through the valley, the talk for the next three days was how Eggert threw somebody out from center field against the wind. I think Eggert could have made it as a professional ball player except that he wore glasses that weren't the vogue in those days. I don't think they had one of the big leagues until the 1920's, and also he might have probably turned it down because in those days the professional baseball players were generally considered kind of a rowdy group. Matter of fact, Lou Moering offered him a contract to play for Sacramento when he was 35 years old, which he turned down. The next brother was Ray, who was born in 1895, and, I suppose, was the crown jewel of the family. Ray played baseball on the town team early, graduated from high school in 1913, stayed out of school for a year, and then went down to Berkeley with my brother Claude, where they started for the University team and for the next several years, were on the all time all-star baseball team for Berkeley. My brother Ray still holds the record for being the only man in the history of the University to have ever led the Varsity in hitting for three separate years. One of the treasured thoughts in connection with their years at the University was a game against Stanford, their most hated rival, in which it came to the 14th inning with the score tied. Claude hit a single, and Ray hit a home run to win the game. In our family, we still talk about the incident. Unfortunately, or fortunately, Ray's years at the University terminated in his senior year when he enlisted in the Army. After completing his enlistment at the end of the war he spent a year with the Army of Occupation in Germany. He returned to the University in 1920, when he again led the varsity in hitting, completed his education and graduated in Engineering. I could not find the exact date. It's either in 1922 or '23 that he signed a professional contract with the Pittsburgh Pirates of the National Baseball League. He played for them for two years. In the second year, he hit three home runs. That sounds kind of silly to even mention that in this day and age, because you can pick up tomorrow morning's paper and I'll give you two-to-one odds that there is at least one man playing who hit three of them. But then I only bring it up to remind

you that the leading hitter in the league that year only hit nine of them. That winter they sold Ray to Seattle where he played for two or three years, spent a short time with Portland, and then came to Sacramento, where he played until 1931. He retired to go to work for the Federal Land Bank. Next in the order was Claude. He was born in 1897. He holds the distinction of being the youngest man ever to play for the Dixon town team. He was 14 years of age when he was a regular shortstop for the team. He graduated in 1914 from high school, and, as I say, he and Ray went to Berkeley and started down there. When Ray went off to the Army, Claude took over as captain of the team and finished out the year. He then enlisted in the service till the end of the war, and, after that, he returned to Berkeley to complete his education in the Law. He graduated in about 1921 and in the second year that Ray was with Pittsburgh, Claude signed a professional contract with Pittsburgh. It might be of interest to you, thinking of present day salaries, which you read about in the papers every day, and their fighting over the fact that they can only get four million instead of five, Ray's original contract was for \$550.00 a month for the months he played. Claude was a better negotiator. He got \$750.00 a month. That again was for the months they played. Claude, after spring training, was sent by Pittsburgh to Charleston in the South Atlantic League where he played the entire season. On his return, they sold him to Sacramento where he played for two or three years as shortstop and third base, and then retired to go into the practice of the Law. This he started in Vallejo, and then moved back to Dixon. He played a lot of semipro ball here at that time. This completes the big four as I would call them. Now we go to my brother Jake and me. Jake was the youngest member of the family, born in 1907. He got a bad start because it wasn't until he was well into his teens that the family realized that he couldn't see and needed glasses. After he got them he started to perk up, and later became the third baseman for the high school and also for the Dixon town team. Unfortunately, Jake died early, umpiring a softball game over here. He left adult sons who are still...one of them here in Dixon and one of them in Sacramento. Now we come to Otto. Believe me, I didn't save the best till last. I was undoubtedly the poorest baseball player in the family but I say, without fear or doubt, that I was the luckiest. I was lucky enough to play on four championship baseball teams in high school. In those

days, you played only baseball in the spring, summer and fall, because we didn't have any football. In those four championships, we beat the school of Vallejo, two times. Their enrollment was some ten times as big as Dixon's. I also played first base for the championship Freshman team in college. But then, when I got up to Varsity, somehow I lost it and I couldn't hit my hat. It didn't deter me, however, from trying. I stayed out and I pitched batting practice, and I did the coaching at third base. I played whenever they needed me. Oh, I was a pinch runner. In 1926, the baseball team spent the summer in Honolulu, playing ball and I was with them. In 1927, we spent the entire summer in Japan, and again I was with them. Two trips of course are out of this world, then or now. For a guy that couldn't hit .200, I would say that was pretty lucky. My luck held even further than that because, not being any good at baseball, I didn't give any thought to going into the pros. So, I went immediately into law school, graduated in 1930, was the second to the last man to get gainful employment out of my class. Lo and behold, I landed with the best law firm in Northern California. So, again my luck held. Well, this kind of tells you the story of the Rohwer family. But I wouldn't want you to get the idea that's the only thing you'd talk about when you'd talk about baseball in Dixon. I'd like to give you a run-down of some of the men that I remember who played baseball in Dixon. One thing that I want to make certain is, except for one exception, I want to talk later about Francis Watson. I've not talked about our high school teams and I've not talked about Little League. We didn't have Little League when I was here. I left town and went to practice law in Sacramento, and never knew enough about the high school and what they were doing. So I didn't try to bring that into my discussion.

These are what I call Town Team baseball players. First of all there was Chick Fontana. Mr. Fontana played left field, played there for many years, a good left fielder. We had Charlie Jennings playing third base. Mr. Jennings was the assistant to the master of the railroad station. Next was Lowell Eames, a catcher. Then came Bud Eames. Buddy Eames was a great right handed pitcher. He started for the high school and he also started for the Davis Aggies. He had bad luck because he went on a deer hunting trip shortly after he got out of school. And while he was back in the woods, at a camp, his appendix burst, and before they could get him to a hospital, he died. Next to him,

as far as I was concerned, was Bud Peters. You all know him as probably one of the best law enforcement agents Dixon has ever had. I know him as a good right-handed pitcher who was so good that he got a tryout with the Sacramento Solons. In addition to that, there was Vernon Van Sant who was a catcher. Vernon Schmeizer played the outfield. Then there was a man by the name of Hall. After my brother Hans left, Dixon was short a pitcher. Lo and behold, out of a clear sky, a man by the name of Hall showed up. Nobody knew where he came from. But, he said he could pitch, and he could. And, he carried the team for two years. He was really a very fine pitcher. The only thing about him was we finally learned that he was a convicted parolee. And at the end of two years, he suddenly disappeared, and I doubt if there's anybody who can tell you where he came from or where he went, but he was a good pitcher for Dixon.

Now, as I say, I want to get away from my general rule that I would not talk about the high school players. But, I have to mention my friend Francis Watson who, in my opinion, was the best athlete ever developed in Dixon. That's with due deference to all the great ones that you fellows remember that came in the later years. Francis was a great tennis player. He won the singles championship three out of four years. He and I won the doubles championship for four years. He was a star forward on the basketball team for four years. He was the star shortstop and pitcher for the baseball team throughout his time. In addition, which few people don't realize is, he was good enough in track and field to go to the finals of the state track meet in Los Angeles in his senior year. When he left here he went to Berkeley and became an All American forward in basketball, and played for two years as shortstop on the Varsity. Lo and behold, when he got out of school, he took up golf and became a very low handicapped golfer. I think, without a doubt, he's the best athlete I have ever known. Well, as you might guess, in covering this long period of time a great many incidents have taken place, some of which I would like to bring to your attention. First of all, it's been a tradition in baseball from its beginning that a left-handed thrower never played second base, shortstop, third base or catcher because of the difficulty of turning around and making the throw. In all the years that I've followed baseball, I only know of one infielder for San Francisco that was left-handed, and one catcher. I can't remember his name. Lo and behold, Dixon had

two of them. They had Charlie Jennings playing left-handed at third base, and Lowell Eames was a left-handed catcher. And they both played their positions well. Among the things that are discussed among big league baseball fans and have been for seven years was a game played some six or seven years ago, or maybe even longer, when a batter had claimed that he had been hit in the foot by a baseball thrown by the pitcher. The umpire said he didn't see it, and was about to make him get up to hit, and the argument was on. Finally, someone had the bright idea to look at the baseball. When they looked at it and saw a blue marking where the baseball had hit the batter's shoe and rubbed a little off on it, he was awarded first base. What I'm going to tell next I think is even better than that one. I don't know how many of you remember, but in the old days the ball field was located in the extreme south portion of the race track, with the home base on the west side so that the left field foul line ran directly east. North of that foul line, and just behind third base was the sewer district. And often the water would overflow, and when it did it was ditched off to the east and it went into the race track. And it flowed around until it finally sank. This particular day there was a big mud puddle right beyond the center field fence. My brother Eggert was playing center field and the opposing hitter hit a line drive...it was headed out of the park and Eggert reached up and caught it going full tilt, just as he hit the fence. And, of course, it toppled him over into the mud puddle. Well, despite the fact that he wore glasses, he climbed back over the fence, and charged into the infield looking for the umpire. He found the umpire, put his glove out, reached in and took out the ball to show him that the glove was dry underneath. Therefore, he had not only caught the ball before he went over the fence but he hadn't dealt with it afterward. A little quick thinking saved a run at least. Another thing inherent in baseball, which is causing an awful lot of trouble today, is what is known to the trade as the Brush Back Pitch. A Brush Back Pitch, in the purest sense, is a case where the pitcher will throw the ball just inside the plate far enough to drive the batter away from the plate. There's no intention in that to hit the guy. It's merely to alert him to get out of the way, so that the next pitch that's on the other side of the plate he'll hesitate to miss it. Well, of course, the only person who knows whether the pitcher is throwing a Brush Back Pitch, or an intentional if he intends to hit it, is the pitcher. Nobody else knows it.

And so it developed, particularly in later years, that when a man gets hit by one of those balls, he drops his bat and starts for the pitcher to do battle. Well, the catcher starts to save his pitcher, and the on-deck man starts to save the batter, and pretty soon the whole outfit's out of all the dugouts and they have a big battle, and a lot of times somebody gets hurt. As I say, it's a scourge in baseball. It's not good in the point of view of the players because so many of those million dollar players get hurt, and more than that, the fans don't really like it. It's gotten so bad that in the last month or two, the new commissioner of baseball suspended for six days the last man that charged the pitcher. In this day and age, that's a pretty good fine. Maybe it will stop and maybe it won't. I only tell you that story to tell you that I think my brother Ray had a perfect answer for the Brush Back Pitch. I didn't see the game, but my brother Eggert did. The first two times at bat Ray had two good solid base hits. And, as often happens, if a man hits a home run or does pretty well against them, the next time the pitcher would brush him back. He laid Ray right flat on the ground with the first pitch, and he did it with the second pitch. When he threw the third one Ray hit it out of the ball park. That, of course, is the perfect answer to the Brush Back Pitch. But you have to have a hell of a lot of nerve just to be in there long enough to do it. Another time, in one game he went to the plate six times without being charged with a time at bat. He walked four times, was hit by the pitcher once, and hit a sacrifice fly the other time. Another incident, is that in one of the years with the Coast League, he broke the Coast League record for home runs. He hit forty. The only trouble was that the outfielder hit forty-two, so Ray didn't get the record. When I tell that story, I'd like to have you know that Ray never stood more than 5'10", and never weighed more than 165 pounds. And for him to hit the home runs that he did was really remarkable. The highlight, I suppose, of all of Ray's years in baseball happened in 1927 during the week of Memorial Day. Playing in San Francisco for that week, Ray had twenty-eight base hits in one week. Nobody has ever come close to it since. I had a laugh because recently, within the last week, Jose Canseco, the great hitter for the Texas Rangers, had eleven hits in a week, and that's all they talked about in the papers for three days. Compare that to twenty-eight. It's nothing... The incident is of particular interest to me because, at the time, as I say, I was in Japan with the California

baseball team. And when the news came over the wire what Ray had done, our coach, Carl Zamrock, who had a running joke with me all the time about my hitting, remarked, "Otto, that's more base hits than you'll get in a life time." And I had to agree with him. Speaking of Carl Zamrock, I'd like to digress from baseball in Dixon for a moment to talk about Carl. He coached three members of the family, and was a great friend to all of us. I particularly laugh about it because after he got out of baseball he went to work for one of the oil companies as a Public Relations man and showed up in Sacramento. At that time, for a short time, I was a member of the Del Paso Country Club. So, I called Carl and asked him if he'd like to go out and have lunch and play a round of golf. He said, "Sure". So after lunch we got up and I was the first one off the third tee. And I hit, I suppose, the best drive I've ever hit in my life. Right straight up the middle for two hundred and fifty yards. And I stood back feeling kind of good about myself. Without cracking a smile, Carl said, "Well Otto, I see you do a hell of a lot better when the ball is standing still." If you have any questions about his magic powers you can ask my wife, Helene.

About this same time, the local politicians in Sacramento put on a party for the then Lieutenant Governor Butch Powers. They held it at the old hotel...Well, the one down town. In any event, Helene and I went to the party. The first person I ran into was Carl Zamrock. So, I introduced them. Says Helene to Carl, "Gee, I'm sure pleased to meet you, Mr. Zamrock. Otto has talked so much about you and all the magic you could do. It's too bad I can't see some of it." "Well," he said, "I didn't bring any gear with me but maybe we can fake it." So he spread his hands out like this like he's spreading out a deck of cards. And he said, "Helene, take one." So she went along with the gag and she pulled out a "card". He said, "What is it?" She said, "The nine of diamonds." He said, "Fine. Put it back in the deck." She did. He folded the deck up and shuffled them. And he said, "Now, I just happen to have a deck of cards with me." He reached inside of his pocket, brought it out and spread it out face up. The only card in it that was upside down was the nine of diamonds. Don't ask me how he did it. I never knew. I guess I never will. In addition to being a great tactician as a coach, I thought Carl was a man of honor, one who was a good person to coach children and men. Even young men in college. He had

great principles. And I tell this about another incident when we were playing in Japan, in which we were invited to a party one night that was being given by the royal family. And two of the members of our team got a little too much to drink, and kind of made fools of themselves. I learned the next day that Carl was going to send them home. I just felt that was bad for them; they came from very fine families and everything. Well, I got hold of Jimmy Dixon, who was the star football player at the time. And, we convinced Carl not to send them. "Well," he said, "that's all right but I'm going to have a meeting." We had a meeting. Probably the best, shortest meeting I've ever attended. Says Carl, "Last night two of you did such-and-such and such-and-such and made donkeys of yourselves, and ruined the University's reputation as well. I was going to send you home but I've been talked out of it by some of the other members of the team. So this will end the meeting. Before we close, however, I just want to tell them and tell the rest of you that a gentleman never gets drunk on free whiskey."

In addition to the fact that Dixon had all these stars and everything, the surrounding teams had them, too. For instance, Vacaville had Babe Dobbins, Zupo Brothers, Bassford, and others. Winters had Jonah Graf and Frank Judy. Davis had the Hoag brothers. Knights Landing had the Richter brothers. As I say, things were very, very, tense between them. And the stories of the games between Davis and Dixon, particularly with the Hoags and the Rohwers, were legend in those days. This, I think, kind of concludes the history of baseball.

Before I close I'd like to comment on a couple of things. First of all, in the course of this proceeding I came across this clipping from one of the local newspapers of several years ago in which the man interviewed Ray. And he quoted Ray saying, "My father hated the game of baseball." Well, that seemed kind of peculiar to me because, as I remember, my father attended every baseball game they played when he was alive. He went to Berkeley several times to watch Ray and Claude play while they were there, and when the Dixon Park was not available, he let them build a ball field complete with bleachers on our ranch just across from where the Community Church is now. Hardly the action of a man who hated the game. However, even I must admit that I think he had his misgivings about our playing, for the same reason that he prohibited us from getting on roller skates. The rea-

son was quite obvious. He was afraid we'd get hurt, break an arm or break a leg, and we would be unable to do the chores on the ranch. Now, I'd like to close by talking about one last Dixon baseball player. I doubt that very few of you even knew him, and those of you who did, may have long since forgotten him. That was one Joe Truffini. Joe Truffini and his sister were the children of emigrant Swiss/Italian parents. They lived in a little house directly across from the main entrance to the Dixon High School. The father was a farm worker, one of the two best sack sewers ever to be developed in Dixon. Reputedly, could sew and tend one thousand sacks of barley a day on a harvester. Joe didn't have as much talent as a lot of people did, but he make up for it in enthusiasm. And by the way of working very hard, he finally became the catcher for the Dixon High School, and later the Varsity. He left Dixon sometime in the 1920's and went to Davis and opened a Standard Oil service station, and for the first four years after we were married, Helene was working for the University at Davis, and she drove back and forth from Sacramento to Dixon six days a week. Joe handled all of her automotive problems. We became great friends, and Joe even became a client of mine. It was my pleasure to do the legal proceedings when he adopted his two children. Joe died several years ago and Helene and I attended the funeral. I don't know how many people were in Davis at that time but, in my opinion, at least half of them showed up for his funeral. There wasn't even standing room outside the church within listening distance, say nothing about inside. Joe, being Catholic, the services were conducted by the local Priest. But the eulogy was delivered by the minister of the local Presbyterian Church. He went into great detail to tell about all the great things Joe and his wife had done for the city of Davis, and particularly for the youth, particularly in Little League baseball, soccer, and in scouting. He also told about what a great sense of humor Joe had, and how one time Joe asked him, "Reverend, in your reading of the Bible, do you recall any place where they make reference to the game of baseball?" "Well," the minister said, "I can't remember anything like that." Joe said, "I'm sure surprised because in the opening sentence it says, 'In the Big Inning God created the heaven and the earth.'" I'd like to nominate Joe Truffini for membership in the mythical Dixon Baseball Hall of Fame, not for his bum joke, but because he not only played the game well on the field, but played it even better off

the field. Thank you very much. *as*

Addendum--Olin Timm

In a telephone call, Otto stated that he had omitted mentioning Mox Pritchard as the umpire during this period. He also stated that, although Mox's calls may at times have been questionable, he was formidable enough to enforce his decisions.

Also, Otto mentioned that, over the years, either the operators of Dawson's Cigar Store or the Acme Club (Shellhammer's) were the sponsors of the Dixon Team.

History of the Schroeder Family

Elmer Schroeder

Dixon Historical Society Minutes

September 25, 1988

This house was built in 18... Well, before I start, Margaret did a lot of research. This is all from old papers she found in the closet some place that I didn't even know about. So this is the way she puts it (he reads). This house was built in 1873 and belonged to my grandparents, where all of their eight children were born except for the oldest. My grandfather, Joachim Schroeder, was born in Stagstedten Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, in 1844 and came to the United States in 1865, entering at New Orleans, then on to California by way of the Isthmus of Panama.

He worked for his half-brother, Hans Timm, who was the grandfather of Malcolm Timm, on the farm which is now the Irving Bulkley ranch. He also worked on the John Mayes Ranch. He homesteaded 160 acres east of the Bulkley ranch but gave it up after a year when he was flooded out. He purchased this ranch and in 1871 married Gretchen Rohwer who also came from Schleswig-Holstein, Germany in 1869 when she was 20 years old. This place had a small house and other buildings. When this house was built in 1873 it cost approximately \$3,000.00

My grandfather helped move some buildings from Silveyville to Dixon in 1868 when it became a town. My grandmother, Gretchen Rohwer Schroeder, came to the United States with her two half-brothers, Jacob and Christian Rohwer. Peter Peters, who had come to Solano county and found it a land of great promise, returned to his home town back in Germany and talked of the wonderful advantages of California. A group of friends decided to migrate to America, among them my grandmother. Her first employment was at the home of Mrs. Delmar Dudley. She was working at the home of her uncle, Hans Rohwer, when she married my grandfather. My father, Ed Schroeder, was the youngest of their eight children. Gretchen Geraty, daughter of Herman Schroeder, is also a grandchild of Joachim and Gretchen.

While I am speaking of my ancestors, I want to mention my maternal great-grandmother, Eliza Evans, first married to Nathan Eames and, after his death, married to Samuel Ford. She was born in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1849. When she was four years old her parents joined a wagon train bound for the



Schroeder Home, built 1873

west, first going to Oregon, then to California. They had rough going across the plains... Here's a letter that she wrote later on in life that I'd like to read now. This is about their crossing the plains:

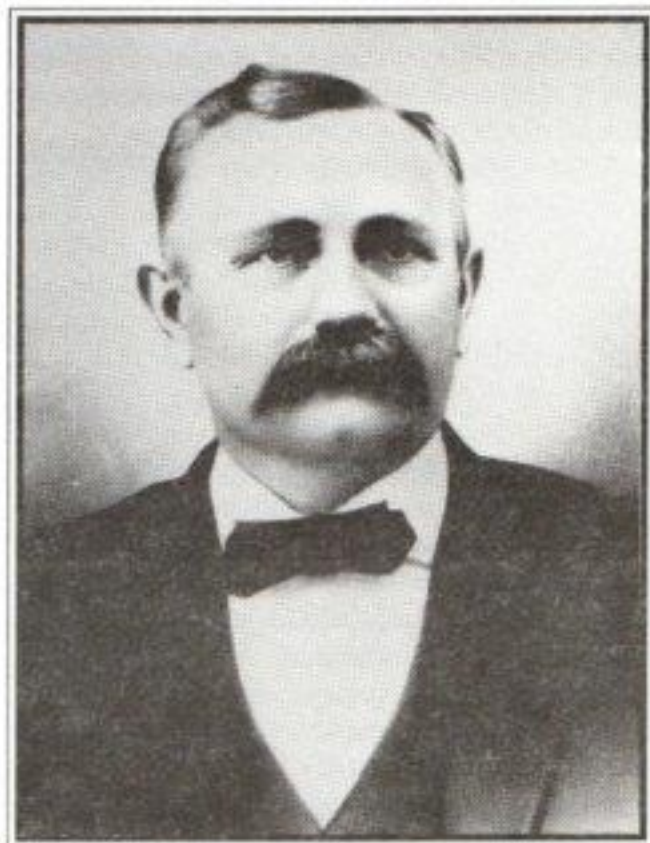


Gretchen Rohwer Schroeder
1-1-1849 to 5-20-1935


"Born in Dubuque, Iowa, across the plains in 1853 in a covered wagon. There were 50 wagons in the train, 60 men. Most of them had their families with them. At Council Bluffs the Indians, 400 in number, stopped the train and came down but found the men all heavily armed and two wagons full of ammunition. Smoked the peace pipe and said they would not bother us anymore. Captain of the train gave them provisions and different ones bought from them buffalo robes and beadwork. Two days before, the Indians had massacred a whole train and captured all of the horses and cattle. We were not molested anymore by the Indians until we reached Salt Lake. Then they stole some horses and cattle at night. The men would herd the stock for feeding and then would make a corral with the wagons and several men, armed, would stand guard all night. Had plenty of wild game and fish all the way across. We were five months on the way."

My maternal great-grandfather, Herman

Hanke, came from Germany and settled in Solano County in 1853. He owned 960 acres east and south-east of Dixon. (I've got my maternal grandmother and grandfather and paternal... in the parlor in there. Maybe you've seen them already. Where the mirror is. That's the picture of my grandparents.) This front half of the house is unchanged. The rooms still have the original plaster and many of the windowpanes are still original. They've got imperfect glass. You can tell by looking at some of the glass which ones are the originals. A few had to be replaced because of poorly aimed beebee guns and other such accidents. The parlor furniture and old bedroom set was purchased from Breuner's shortly after the house was built. Our living room was originally the kitchen. The ceiling has been lowered and the two larger windows were installed.



Joachim Schroeder
5-30-1844 to 7-18-1909

Both the porches, which were first lattice and netting and then later screen, are now enclosed. What is now our kitchen was formerly a small bedroom and pantry. When the house was first built, the upstairs was one large room and was used for many dancing parties. Later, it was partitioned, making four bedrooms with a hallway down the center. At the present time, we use it mostly for storage space. 

History of the Bulkley Family

Irvin Bulkley

Dixon Historical Society Minutes

September 25, 1988

After our last meeting at Seifert's I got a letter from Olin (we'd talked a little bit about family). He said, "You ought to write it down, but don't wait too long." So I hurried to a mirror to just see how bad I did look. I've had the privilege of knowing a man in Berkeley who is a publisher whose name is John Bulkley McCutchet. And he went into the genealogy of the Bulkley family quite thoroughly, and I have quite a knowledge of where they came from and how far back they go. We won't go back that far. The fifty or sixty Bulkley families that live in this country now are all descendants of the Reverend Peter Bulkley who had a Parish in England. He was born on January 31, 1582. His father was a Reverend before him, and when he died he took over the Parish. They were all Puritans and they adhered to the Puritan way of preaching. But after a while, (it was during the time when they were changing back there, getting more modern,) the Archbishop of Canterbury found out about his preaching and there was an edict of silence and they served that on him. He figured it was coming, so he made preparations to come to New England. They had trouble getting on the boats because they were watched. A lot of people were sympathetic to their cause and they slipped out. His wife was on one boat and he was on the other. He was with the Reverend John Jones, one of the founders of Concord, Massachusetts. It started with twelve families. That's where we started from. All the families here are from him. Peter came over with four sons, and they had a family after that.

My grandfather, Robert, was born in New York and as a young man he drove team along the Erie Canal. Before they had power, they had to pull the boats back and forth with teams. I guess he was kind of an

adventurer, and when gold was discovered in California, he found out and made up his mind he'd like to go. So he joined up with a wagon train and he was a Captain over five or six wagons. In those wagon trains they have a wagon master who was the boss of it all. He came across and I've often wondered (that was in 1849), I'd think that a man who would be a captain on the wagon trail would be around 40 years old, but he was only 19 years old.

After Robert came across (and there are some Indian stories that I'm not going to tell) he headed for

Virginia City, and tried his hand at mining. He wasn't too successful, but he still had his livestock. So he went to freighting and that was a pretty good deal. So he freighted all summer and in the winter time took all his money to feed the stock. After a couple of years, he heard that you could come over the mountains and down into the Sacramento Valley, and get your stock fed for free just for working your animals down here. So in 1854 he came down here for the first time, and he kept doing that for several years. In 1865 he married my grandmother who was a widow with two boys (she and her husband had separated. One of the

boys was George Stevens who some of you remember. He lived across from the Sikes' over there on Sikes Road. My grandfather adopted him). My aunt Belle was born in Carson City in 1868; my father was born in Tremont in 1870.

He raised his family in Tremont. There was Belle, and there was my father, who was Ralph, there was Blanche, and Carrie, and May and Wallace. Carrie died as a young lady; the rest grew up in this area. Aunt Belle lived in this area for many years and died in Dixon. Father was Ralph. He married a San Francisco girl, Lillian Shellgrain, who was a friend of Mrs.



Irvin Bulkley on his 88th birthday.

Earnest Anderson. They were instrumental in getting a lot of those bachelors down there. There was Mrs. Fritz, and Mrs. Atkinson, and Mrs. Remke, they were all San Francisco girls that came down. They were friends of mother's and Mrs. Anderson.

My parents had two sons. My brother, Wallace Bulkley married Alice Sikes. They had three daughters who are all living, Blanche married Harry Hay. A lot of you remember Harry Hay; he was kind of a drunk around Dixon. She divorced him and raised the kids, and they're all gone now. And then there was May, who didn't have any children.

My grandfather, Robert, had three quarter sections: one was the old Brady place that he must've bought from the Bradys on Guthrie Road; the quarter in the middle he called "the middle grant"; and the quarter on Sikes Road. Each one of the boys got one of the quarters. Uncle Wallace got the home quarter and my dad bought that from him. That's where the house was that he moved. (It was the old Grieve home over on Sikes Road.) There was a railroad fire in 1903 and it burned out all the fences. Dad was thinking of getting married. I don't know why he moved that house. They hitched a harvester team onto it. Herman Stick drove the team and Carl Becker threw biscuits at the horses to keep 'em going. They came right in to where they put the house, and then they built on to it.

Grandfather had more property than those three quarter sections. He had two quarter sections, where Jackson had, and they sold that. He had two sections of land on Rio Vista Road that belonged to the Smiter family. They used to run a dairy down there. Milk the cows, skim the cream with a skimmer, make butter out of it, and bring it to town. I wonder what that stuff tasted like. My grandmother sold that ranch to the Solano Irrigated Farm. Some of you have heard of that, the Solano Irrigated Farm; it came through many years ago. The plan blew up. People came and thought there was going to be a big city. "Solano City" started there, but it never amounted to anything.

Now, on to our family. Did I tell you who my father married? My father married Lillian Shellgrain who came from San Francisco. Funny thing, the Reverend Peter Bulkley was religious; my dad wasn't very religious; my mother was religious. It was just kind of turned around, wasn't it? My brother passed away a few years ago so I guess I'm the only one left. My brother had a son and a daughter: Ralph, who lives in Knight's Landing, and Susan King who lives here in

Dixon. I think a lot of you know Susan. That traces it down pretty well.

I want to tell you one thing about way way back. The name Bulkley. It wasn't Bulkley to start with; it was Bulclough. And a guy, his name was the Baron Robert Bulclough, changed the name to Bulkley. Way back around the time of King John. That was a long time ago.

That's it, that's the way they are, that's the end of it.


Elmer/Eleanore wanted to know about spelling. Buckley's no relation...there's no Bulkeleys. When Lillian and I were in England, we looked in all the telephone books we could find, and there's pages of Buckleys but we never found a Bulkeley. In Sydney, Australia, we found eight Bulkeleys, spelled B-U-L-K-E-L-E-Y which is our family, too. But a lot of them changed it because they didn't want to be called Bull-Kelly, so they just took the E out.

I wanted to say that I married a girl from Seattle. Her name was Fae Olson. We had a son Robert, and Robert married Barbara Foth and they had a daughter. She married a guy named Ken Collins. They are separated. She has a son, my great-grandson, and he's the youngest.

Woman in the Audience: Now you have Lillian.

Irvin Bulkley -- addendum

Irvin later stated that there were two Indian incidents involving his grandfather. On one occasion an Indian tribe stopped the wagon train. After some discussion the Chief agreed to allow passage providing each family pay a fee in grain. While the tribute was being delivered, Robert Bulkley, who was with his wagons, saw four Indians crawling over the back wagons. He raised his rifle, shot one, and the rest ran away.

Later in the trip one morning as Robert rode out in the morning to gather the pasturing horses, two Indians jumped out of the bushes and grabbed his reins. He was carrying a side arm on each hip, and the story goes that he grabbed both, shot one Indian with one gun, and the other Indian with the other. 

SLAUGHTER HOUSES OF DIXON

Olin Timm

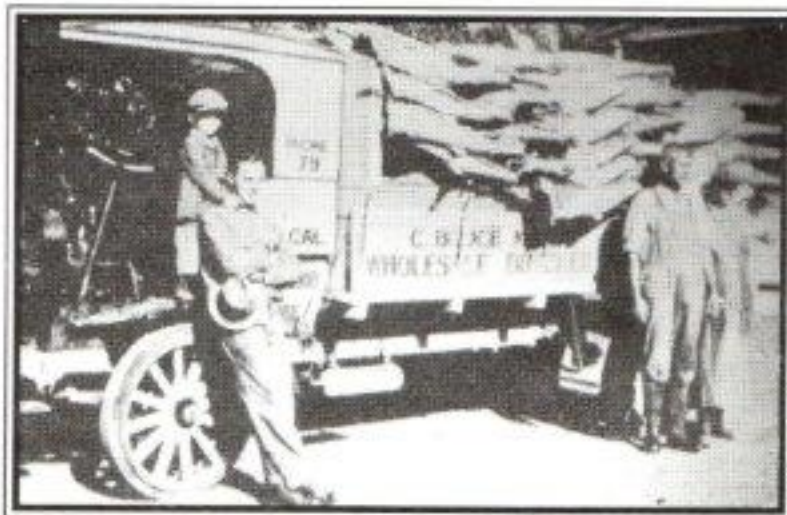
*I*n the beginning, say 1900 and after, there were two butcher shops in Dixon, Shangraw's and Henry W. Timm's meat markets. Henry W. Timm was the son of Hans Timm. Henry R. Timm was the son of Peter Timm. The middle initials "W" and "R" were added by each son to ease postal problems.

Each butcher shop killed its own animals. The Shangraw building was located at the north end of an extension of Second Street. I learned of the location of the Timm slaughter facilities when I complained of the number of rats which seemed to be around my mother's house at Doyle Lane and East Dixon Avenue. Leonard Ferguson explained that these rats were the descendants of the blood drinkers that colonized around the Timm slaughter house which had been located about 300 yards south of our house and in the field behind the Rohwer home. Slaughter at both of these sites ceased after the establishment of the Mace and Livingston slaughter houses.

Though the slaughtering procedures were somewhat below present standards, I was never aware of any health problems from eating this meat. All meat was well roasted or well stewed. I did not see a pink piece of meat on my plate until I went to college. The only food problem I can recall occurred after a community banquet. The dinner took place on a Saturday night in the high school gymnasium and the creamed chicken was prepared on kerosine stoves brought into the boys' locker room. The clean-up crew came in Sunday afternoon and took home with them the remaining chicken which had stood in pots from the night before. The families of the Sunday crew encountered a considerable amount of intestinal discomfort.

All food was cooked longer in those days. I recall my mother stating that her mother boiled string beans for forty-five minutes and that she, my mother, cooked them for no more than twenty-five minutes because they tasted fresher that way.

The first of the two large slaughter plants in Dixon was started by C. Bruce Mace. The Mace family and sons and daughters lived most of their lives near Gunnison, Utah. Times for them in the early



Mace's first delivery truck. Under the management of C. Bruce Mace, the Mace family operation started out with six employees. Note first phone number, 79. In the picture (left to right): Freland Mace (boy), "Slim" Mace, Noble Mace, and butcher (unidentified).

1900's were not prosperous. One of the sons, C. Bruce, left Utah and moved to the Dixon area in 1918. For a time he worked in a meat shop in Winters and later set up his own shop in Dixon. Butchers then killed their own cattle and Bruce needed some place to kill. About this time Fred Hutton decided to close his dairy. Bruce bought the dairy and started killing cattle using the cement floor for killing and the milk cooling room for chilling the carcasses. They killed grass-fat cattle which, unlike middle western grain fed animals, had yellow fat. In California most of the cattle were fattened on grass. The calves would be carried over for a second year and during this second year, having attained their growth, would convert their summer grass to fat.

In 1919 Bruce called on his younger brother Alden (Slim) to come from Utah and work with him. In 1920 Bruce put the call on Calvin (Cal), another brother.

When they first started they killed five to six cattle a day and during the spring lamb season 20 lambs a day.

The first men outside the family to work for Bruce were Dick Leathers and Frank Nickum. These five men formed the nucleus of the Mace Meat com-

pany, and they continued as part of the organization during the life of the company.

The cattle were shipped to the plant by rail and in the early days the S.P. Corrals were located on a siding close to the Grange's scales, one block north and east of the Methodist Church. Normally, after unloading, the cattle were driven a quarter of a mile along the railroad right-of-way to the Mace plant. Occasionally, a steer would break and head down Main Street (North First). Slim recalls that he was working part-time at the service station which was located on the northwest corner of the Women's Improvement Club Park when a steer got loose from Cal and came down Main Street in front of his station. Slim, all in white, went after the steer on foot and finally roped it. By the time the steer was under control, Slim was green from head to foot. He was nineteen at the time and very embarrassed about pumping gas in a uniform that was not snow-white. Later the S.P. moved the corrals to a siding behind the plant.

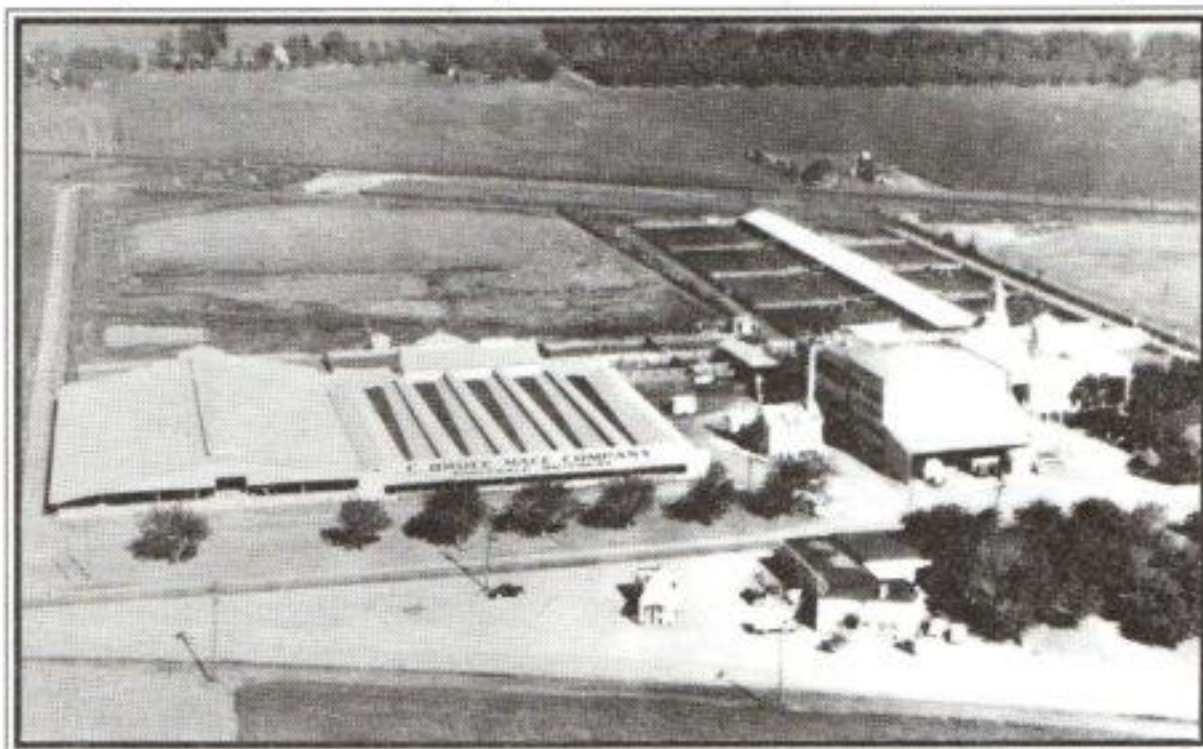
The slaughter numbers increased and the plant

During the 1920's Slim was the truck driver and distributor. The truck was a two cylinder Auto Car with a 92-inch wheel base. The motor was horizontally opposed and under the driver seat. The tires were solid rubber. It was equipped with Presto-Lite (bottled gas) head lamps and no windshield. If it rained, the driver rolled down an isinglass front shield. The truck held five to six carcasses.

Some time after 1925 Del Grieve became Bruce's partner and from then on he did the buying. According to Hans Lund of American Trust, it was a partnership based on a handshake.

The plant was continually being expanded until by the late 40's the kill was 2000 lambs and 100 cattle a day. Slim then was head of the sales force and Cal was in charge of plant operations.

Slim gave me copies of weights and purchase prices which were given him by Robert Swanson, a wholesale butcher in West Sacramento. These purchases were made in 1931-1934. There was a notation on the side, "Slim, we think things are bad now.



Mace Meat Co. - 1951

grew: first a larger killing floor and then larger ice boxes. Eventually, the original killing floor became the hide floor.

The meat was trucked to Sacramento and sold to Wing Lee Co., Clause and Krause, some other jobbers and a few retail markets.

Bill." These steers were sold off the range as two-year or three-year-olds. All of the deliveries were at R.R. stock corrals. The weights were mostly 1100 to 1200 pounds. Prices were around \$.03 a pound. The Alturas area provided much of the stock. The names of Flourney, W. J. Davis, Dorris and Ed Waltz, from

Gerlach, Nevada appear on the sales sheets.

In 1934, in July, I accompanied Howard Vaughan on a lamb buying trip. Howard bought the Ed Waltz lambs for 5 cents. We shipped 6,000 head in five days, a band a day. We were in Gerlach five days. There were no phones. We slept every afternoon on the depot benches, selling lambs over telegraph and waiting for return confirmation. The feeder lambs went east to Marion-Wilkins; the ewe lambs to California for breeding stock.

After Gerlach we went to Lakeview, Oregon. The price kept going down and Howard eventually bought lambs at 2 3/4 cents a pound. There were thousands of lambs involved in the Lakeview shipments.

Freland Mace contributed the following.

In the thirties most of the production was handled on open-bed trucks. Canvas was used to cover the loads, secured by one-inch rope. Loading crews would start around 1:00 A.M. Drivers would all be on the road by 5:00 A.M. They unloaded at customers' doors early in the day before the meat started to get warm.

During this period the trucks had to be low enough to fit on the ferry boats crossing San Francisco Bay. When the Carquinez Bridge and Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge were completed, the scope of operations increased tremendously. Larger trucks were purchased about 1940. Most of the new trucks were enclosed with insulated bodies.

In the late thirties, for a period of several years, the plant was awarded the contract for providing meat

at California State Institutions. Some of the weekly deliveries were to Folsom Prison, San Quentin, Napa State Hospital, Stockton State Hospital, Sonoma State Hospital and Preston Boys Reformatory at Ione.

In 1940 the plant was remodeled to increase killing capacity and also to comply with U.S. Federal

Inspection regulations. Prior to 1940 the plant was under California State Inspection. Changing to Federal Inspection gave us the right to sell our products outside California. Our new Federal Stamp was No. 100. When World War II started in December, 1941, all U.S. inspected plants were compelled to sell 85 percent of the production to the Army and Navy, leaving 15 percent sales to civilians. This brought on rationing and food stamps along with price ceilings, governed by the United States Office of Price Administration, OPA.

Price ceilings during the war brought on Govern-

ment Grading Regulations as to grades Prime, Choice, Good, Utility, Canners and Cutters. The Armed Forces used only Prime and Choice products. At times, until the end of the war, our plant had to work six days a week, plus overtime, to keep up with these Government contracts.

In the early fifties, the Armour Meat Co. in South San Francisco was sold for an industrial park development. The plant needed to be updated to meet new standards, thus it closed. Armour started purchasing meat from us to service its accounts. Armour officials kept approaching my father with purchase offers. After much negotiating the offers became more



Original cooler of Mace Plant, circa 1950. L to R, George Quinn, two unknown men, Walt Stockman, Chuck Thompson, Scotty McLaren. Information from Ralph McCarty.

attractive. My father believed that Dixon's population would grow and the city boundaries would spread to the point where a slaughter house operation in that location would not be favored by some environmental views.

The sale was finalized in June, 1958, and A. D. "Slim" Mace was retained as General Manager for a year to assist in the transition. The last owner of the plant was Montfort Meat Co. of Colorado. These owners elected to curtail the Dixon operations for a future land use. Presently, the plant is being demolished for a planned development on the 43-acre site.

The slaughter plant south of Dixon now operated by Superior Farms has had several owners. The first slaughter house was built by George F. Livingston. It was small and planned for local trade. Livingston did not prosper and finally the plant was operating only one day a week.

The next owner was Wilbur F. "Willie" Marks. Willie and his wife, Aleen "Danny" Daniels, grew up in the 1920's, he as a real estate broker with a penchant for cowboying and she as a store clerk in a fashionable Hollywood store where she was finally put in charge of the window dressing. The end of the Twenties put an end to the real estate business. The young married couple started pasturing, mostly dairy stock on the Baldwin Estate close to Los Angeles, but their future seemed dim. While reading a trade magazine, Willie came upon an advertisement of a slaughter house for sale in a northern California town--Dixon. Without any previous experience in the slaughter trade, Willie came to Dixon, and with the financial assistance of the First National Bank (Angus Madden was then manager), he purchased the plant from Mr. Livingston. The work force consisted of two butchers and Willie and Steve Parante, a friend. The latter two kept the plant clean and shrouded the cattle. Shrouding was a cosmetic procedure. After the cattle were killed, both halves were covered with a heavy cotton cloth shroud and then chilled. After chilling, the cloths were removed. The fat was smooth. Danny washed the shrouds at home and kept plugging the Dixon sewage system with the fat she washed out of them. Willie did the purchasing and selling. He learned on the job, but learned fast and the business grew. Cooler space was added and a lamb killing floor was enlarged. Business expanded and American Trust took over their banking.

Willie, whose father was a musician, loved to

play his trombone and organized jam sessions in the evening for relaxation.

After WW II, Willie took on a Chrysler agency for Dixon. For all auto dealers at that time, cars sold as fast as they were delivered. However, looking for a larger operation, Willie then bought another slaughter plant in Woodland. Willie's brother-in-law, John Daniels, ran the Dixon plant. Willie commuted on motorcycle between Dixon and Woodland and the family continued to live in the Oscar Schulze house on East B Street.

The Marks plant in its expansion eventually assumed a different structure than the Mace plant. The Mace plant evolved into the traditional configuration, the killing floor on top, the animals being driven or led up a long ramp. Then by gravity the slaughtered animals went to the chilling floor and finally to the coolers which were at truck-loading level. The Marks' facilities were all on one floor, more efficient.

The Marks' Woodland plant kept expanding, so the Dixon slaughter house was sold to a man by the name of Ketchum who, when he closed, left a considerable number of unpaid bills. Then the plant was operated by a man named Reed from Livermore. By the time the Stoeven Brothers became interested, the plant had been closed for some time. This was in 1949.

The father of the three brothers, Lawrence, Hal and Chet, had operated a small slaughter house in Livermore. Lawrence and Hal were working for United Packing in South San Francisco when they became interested in the Dixon plant.

American Trust had an interest in the facility and in order to provide sufficient capital to meet the bank's required equity, all three brothers sold their homes in the Bay area. It was obvious that repairs and improvements should be done before opening, so the brothers hired a contractor and the three brothers, plus Lawrence's two sons, Larry and Bob, and Hal's son-in-law, Ross Hanna, provided the labor. The rebuilding of the plant took three months. The estimated cost of the renovation was \$35,000, but when completed the cost was \$75,000. American Trust carried them on a strict budget.

When the plant was reopened the kill was 15 to 20 cattle and 20 to 50 lambs a day. But the business grew. Lawrence was the buyer, Hal the bookkeeper. Ross and Larry were salesmen.

One day soon after the plant opened, the well went dry. A slaughter plant without water is like a

ship without an ocean. Fortunately, one of the employees, Kenny McGrew, was a volunteer member of the Dixon Fire Department. He suggested that they borrow the Department's tanker truck. For a week Ross hauled water to the plant. By constant hauling the tanker kept the plant operating. The deliveries were slow since the maximum speed of the truck was 12 miles an hour. The Fire Department made no charge for the use of the water truck, so the Stoevens bought a large quantity of raffle tickets for the Fire Department's widows and orphans benefit feed. As the winnings of the plant members mounted, someone complained. Fire Chief Kilkenny replied, "Buy \$1000 worth of tickets and you will get your share."

In the years that followed, more coolers were built, a new lamb ring was installed, and it became an efficient operating butcher business. In later years, the plant was capable of processing over 300 cattle or 2000 sheep per day.

office to collect a feed bill, I asked Hal how things were going. Hal replied, "We are going to have Lawrence locked up. He is trying to buy all the lambs in California." Another time, years later, I was again collecting a feed bill and by this time Lawrence's grandson was working in bookkeeping. I asked the same questions, and he replied, "I don't know, I haven't seen Lawrence yet this morning."

During the period that both plants were operating, they constituted a large part of Dixon life. Relationships between the two meat plants were always congenial. To begin the day both crews met for breakfast about 4:00 A.M. at Tom Wong's Corner Cafe. (When trucks became insulated, loading time moved from 1:00 to 4:00 A.M.) The back door to Tom's restaurant never closed. In the evening Tom would see that the coffee machine was ready to go and snails and doughnuts were available. The first man to come in set the coffee machine going. As everyone trooped



The Stoeven Meat Plant as originally purchased in 1950.

Though the Stoeven Brothers united to purchase the slaughter plant, they were not always united in policy. Lawrence, the oldest, was the livestock buyer. He also was inclined to have a mercurial temperament. Our feed lot furnished feed for the plant's holding animals. One morning when I went into the

out, they paid their dues into a box.

Tom trusted his Dixon customers. One time when I was leaving on a trip, I discovered I was without cash. Everyone's alternative bank, Dawson's Cigar Store, was not open, so I went to Tom's and asked him if he would cash a check. "Sure, Olin, come," he

said, and I followed Tom back into the storage room where he kept sacks of onions and potatoes. He dug into a potato sack and extracted a First National Bank money bag, pulled out the money I needed, took my check and then put the bag back in among the potatoes. Tom fed many a vagrant out of the back door. Elmer Jones, who slept in the basement and drove Tom to gamble in Sacramento while he was working his way through high school, says that Tom always sized up these vagrants before he decided to feed them.

The two slaughter plants cooperated. As a salesman, Ross was free to call the Mace plant if he was short on an order. Slim would meet him at the cooler door and tell him to take his pick. In later years, when Slim ran cattle on the Cowell ranch, Slim and Lawrence would hunt deer every fall. No one knows how many deer were shot, but they both enjoyed the sound of ice in a glass when mixed with a supportive fluid.

Members of both plants were part of the Dixon community. Slim Mace became Master of the Masonic Lodge and later President of Dixon Rotary. Willie Marks and his trombone were always in jam sessions and later were joined by Ross Hanna and his coronet. They formed the famous Dixon Philharmonic which played for charitable dances and dinners. Ross, who had majored in Business Administration at the College of the Pacific, directed the Dixon Community Church Choir. He became my daughter's hero when he formed a German Band with high school students to perform for civic functions.

But the slaughter business in the U.S. was changing. The older companies, Swift, Armour, Roth, Wilson, were closing plants. Not only were their plants becoming obsolete, but these older companies were faced with high union wages. New companies like Iowa Beef built plants in non-union areas. Stoeven and Armour in Dixon were faced with competition in the Los Angeles area from meat slaughtered in the Midwest under a wage scale of \$6.50 an hour, while they were paying \$16 an hour. Furthermore, refrigerated trucks developed a back haul of vegetables and oranges from California to the Midwest.

After Chet, Hal and Lawrence had all died, the sons were faced with rough times. A decision was made to sell the plant. Phil Cohn of Oregon became the buyer. Phil and his father had been in the livestock business for years. They had built a lamb feed lot in Hermiston, Oregon. They entered the slaughter house

business when one of their feedlot customers was unable to pay his feed bills. This customer owned a slaughter plant in Ellensburg, Washington, and Cohn acquired the plant in payment of these bills.

The first move of Cohn as new owner of the Dixon plant was to close the plant and lay off the employees. When the plant reopened a month later, it did so with non-union workers and began training butchers. The new employees began working at wages competitive with the non-union plants of the Midwest. The plant was efficient and the chief change in operation since its purchase has been a shift from selling whole carcasses of lambs to fabrication, i.e., selling cut up parts in packages.

After the closing of the old Mace plant, Superior became and still is the only large lamb slaughter house in California. Lamb numbers in California had decreased.

The material for this article was obtained from an interview with Alden "Slim" Mace, a letter from Freland Mace, the Danny Mark's book When You and I Were Young, Willie, and interviews with Ross Hanna.