

June / July 2017 HPF Report

Here is a preliminary report from the 140th Grand Parlor. The HPF committee wants to thank all who visited the HPF room at the Monterey Marriott. The donations received were up 45% from the last year to just over \$37K in the HPF room. The committee thanks all who donated; we continue to strive to earn your trust in our mission throughout the State of California. Examples of what can be accomplished by parlors through their own commitment were on full display by Frank Cunha of Amador Parlor #17 who gave an inspiring presentation to the delegates at the convention. There will be a more complete report in the next edition of The Native Son.

Below are excerpts from the HPF report to the Grand Parlor:

I want to start by recognizing PGP Barney Noel, who was one of the founders of the HPF in the year 2000 and who is retiring this year after 17 years. After a very rocky start for the HPF with the Sesquicentennial in Sacramento, Barney was the guiding light and inspiration for many of us as he diligently guided the Foundation toward solid ground, helping it become an organization that has turned around and has a positive direction and increasingly successful mission.

Past Year's Results



Now, let's get down to the results for the past year. The HPF was able to see some of its past grant awards come to fruition. Examples ranged from the study of St. Helena Parlor Hall, which was completed, along with the reattachment of Father Junipero Serra's head, to the completion of Miner's Bend Park in Sutter Creek. New opportunities were presented to the HPF in Yosemite Valley with the reconstruction of an historic Native American ceremonial roundhouse and in Los Angeles with the potential remarking of the Battle of Los Angeles from 1847, to the replacement of the Olvera Street Cross located at the original birthplace of Los Angeles. The HPF has also donated toward restoration work at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse and the Pasadena Playhouse. These historic preservation projects were funded by the HPF last year for over \$25K in grant awards.

There has been no final resolution on the three State Parks funding requests from last year, the Pioneer Monument in Truckee, Monterey Custom House, and the Vallejo Adobe in Petaluma. The focus of the projected work on the Pioneer Monument in Truckee has changed from one of restoration to one of maintenance. We are still waiting for reports and direction on that one and HPF Board members will continue to monitor

each of these projects. Even though the Pioneer Monument project has changed considerably and barely re-started it can be considered one of leveraged success. Due to HPF influence and sponsorship of the Sierra State Parks Foundation, this project is moving forward. The HPF has helped raise the visibility of this project to one of optimism and inevitability after 20 years of no progress.

A Unique Organization

As I have mentioned many times before, the HPF is a unique organization that operates differently than what most Native Sons are familiar with—and that is by design. Basically, it never knows how much it will receive or to where it will go and to whom funds will be granted. The Foundation has never received a major donation and after an arduous journey is starting to receive recognition within and for the Native Sons. For the last several years, through the generosity of parlors and members, the HPF has been able to receive about \$25K in donations each year. The donations or matching grant amounts have increased accordingly, but we have only scratched the surface of the goals. There are still opportunities waiting for funding and recognition.

At the 2010 Grand Parlor in Rohnert Park, Joseph W. Knowland of Halcyon Alameda Parlor #47, the grandson of Past Grand President Joseph R. Knowland, one of the most significant figures in the first half of the 20th century, questioned why the Native Sons continue to under-represent their true mission; he recommended that parlors balance their donations toward the two Foundations. A few parlors understand this, but the majority do not.

From the prefatory in the Native Sons Constitution, “The Order of the Native Sons of the Golden West was organized for the mutual benefit, mental improvement and social intercourse of its members; to perpetuate in the minds of all native Californians the memories of one of the most wonderful epochs in the world’s history—the ‘Days of ‘49’—to unite them in one harmonious body throughout the State by the ties of a friendship mutually beneficial to all.”

This statement of purpose tells each of us that the Order was founded and exists to have an historical focus. Since the inception of the Native Sons in 1875, we have been charged with maintaining this historical focus. As I travel the state representing the HPF it is quite apparent that any person I meet who has an historical background knows what and how important the Native Sons of the Golden West has been to the state and citizens of California. Why in 2017 is it so hard for our members to universally recognize and support this?

History is of Great Importance

The relevance of history to our civilization is recognized by the following passages. Author Steve Berry, who was the first spokesperson for National History week, wrote, “History is not something obscure or unimportant. History plays a vital role in our everyday lives. We learn from our past in order to achieve greater influence over our future. History serves as a model not only of who and what we are to be; we learn what

to champion and what to avoid. Everyday decision-making around the world is constantly based on what came before us. Why? Because history matters.

From the philosopher George Santayana, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” That is one of the reasons that history is taught and studied at every level of our educational system. Closer to home, it is clearly an important part of the mission of the Native Sons.

From our own dedication ceremony; “The present is like unto this mortar which we may mold and shape at our will. If we have made it according to the teachings of the past, it will harden into history that will glorify us; but errors on our part will forever show in the hardened mass. The present is ours, but the present will soon be in the past; we shall pass on into history”.

Once again why is it so hard for our members to recognize our own historical significance and support this? One of the positive by-products of the HPF’s increasing growth and exposure is that that it is now recognized as a resource not only for our members but for the outside public as well. The brand of the Native Sons of the Golden West is spreading throughout California and its vehicle is the Historical Preservation Foundation of the Native Sons of the Golden West. That is our unspoken mission. Many see the HPF and what it represents as the ultimate path of what will save the Native Sons from extinction. I am not alone in this belief and the list is growing. Again, why can’t our membership recognize this?

Until next time, see you on the California Trail.