



THE NATIVE SON

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Number 4

CALIFORNIA AND THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD

By Douglas Love, Grand Historian

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill is one of the seminal events of California history. Almost every Californian knows the story of how, on the 24th of January, 1848, James Marshall who was supervising the construction of a saw mill for John Sutter in Coloma, looked down and saw a glimmer of gold in the mill race. Most of us know how he flattened the samples and made some crude tests to make sure that he had actually found gold. We also know that he went to Sutter's Fort, met with Sutter himself and together they further tested the material, determined that it was gold and behind the locked door of Sutter's office decided to keep their discovery a secret. Yet within a matter of days, the secret was out. Within a few months, California was flooded with young men eager to scoop their fortunes out of the soil and become rich.

Yet, hardly anyone mentions how the secret of gold on the American River was revealed. Franklin Tuthill in his 1866, *The History of California*, written just 18 years after the discovery does not mention how the secret got out, only that once it had, in the words of the editor of *The Californian*, "the whole country from San Francisco to Los Angeles, resounds with the sordid cry of 'Gold'". According to Tuthill, whole towns were depopulated as, "The people were all flying eastward and northward, to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada." In his work, Tuthill does set the date of Marshall's discovery as the 19th of January and mentions that, initially, the reports of gold in California were dismissed as fiction. He cites a report of Hakluyt's

that Sir Francis Drake believed there were precious metals in California and that small amounts were found near the Colorado River by the Spanish and mentions the other finds and specifically the discovery of gold near Los Angeles in 1838 but he dismisses these as small and of little value. Other than mentioning two miners, one named Isaac Humphrey, from Georgia, saw the samples of gold in Yerba Buena and went to Coloma on March 7th and began to work the deposit and another, a Frenchman, named Battiste, who was working for Sutter at Weber's, joined Humphrey a few days later. But there is no name mentioned of the individu-

al who showed Humphrey the gold at Yerba Buena.

Even Kevin Starr, the Dean of California Historians, in his *California: A History*, only states that Sam Brannan, who was a store keeper in Sutter's employ, took the news of the discovery at Sutter's Mill to San Francisco, "a few months later."

It is Starr who has

Brannan running through the streets, shouting at the top of his lungs that "gold, gold, gold had been discovered on the South Fork of the American River!" By July, Colonel Richard Mason, the military governor, and Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman toured the area and returned to Monterey. There, Sherman wrote a report which was signed by Mason detailing the gold finds in California.



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Grand President, Erik Christeson

As I noted in last month's message, we're all human and make mistakes. Grand Officers, Past Grand Presidents and even Grand Presidents are not immune. When I took office, and as I noted in my installation speech, I intended to make, and have to a great extent, changes that I believed were for the betterment of the Order as a whole, even if they were received poorly by a small, but vocal minority of members.

One such change was my desire to return The Native Son, our official publication, to a true, historical periodical. The theory being, that when we interact with other historical, archeological or archivist organizations, it would present a professional picture of the Native Sons of the Golden West. The perception of our Order as a serious, competent historical fraternal organization is imperative to cooperation with other like-minded organizations and will only serve to open more doors that will help us fulfill our duties as reflected in the mission statement of our Constitution and incorporation documents.

What this also meant, however, was that articles about corned beef and cabbage, crab, spaghetti, sausage, prawn, steak and other various and sundry food events would go by the wayside so as to devote more page space to our true and stated mission. While this has received a positive response from most members I have spoken with, many of the knife and fork members felt disenfranchised, which was never the intent.

“In my official capacity it has been my constant aim and unalterable determination to do what lay in my power toward bringing about the improvements needed in the Order.”

- Grand President, Erik Christeson

I believed, perhaps naively, that the avenues of subordinate parlor newsletters, Facebook pages, and websites; Dates to Remember issued by Grand Parlor to every single subordinate parlor; and the www.nsgw.org calendar (and the Easy Events Form) would be sufficient to cover the majority of these dinners so that members would continue to be apprised of the sorts of events that interest them.

GRAND PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I noted in last month's message, we're all human and make mistakes. Grand Officers, Past Grand Presidents and even Grand Presidents are not immune. When I took office, and as I noted in my installation speech, I intended to make, and have to a great extent, changes that I believed were for the betterment of the Order as a whole, even if they were received poorly by a small, but vocal minority of members.

What I've also come to learn is that many subordinate parlors do not share the Dates to Remember and many members are unaware of the website calendar or even their own parlor websites. In order to help resolve this issue, I ask that subordinate parlors 1) share their parlor newsletters with other nearby parlors, highlighting the events of local interest; 2) publicize subordinate parlor Facebook pages and websites among its members; 3) share the Dates to Remember issued monthly by Grand Parlor; and 4) begin to actively use the www.nsgw.org website calendar.

To utilize the website Calendar, simply point your browser to www.nsgw.org. At the right-hand side of the screen is "Our Calendar". There you can see all of the events entered by Grand Parlor, subordinate parlors and other organizations within the Native Sons. If you wish to add your own event, at the top of the page is a button called "Easy Events Form". Once you click on this, there is a fillable form that you can use to add your event to the NSGW Calendar. Ain't technology grand?

I readily acknowledge that the overhaul of The Native Son is a work in progress and as such, the Editor and I have concluded it would be beneficial to begin including a section for subordinate parlor events for those Brothers who cannot or will not utilize the alternative methods discussed above. Emphasis will be placed on, and preference given to, events that have an appeal to Brothers in a broader geographical, regional or historical sense, such as participation in parades, local dedications, district wide celebrations, or participation in information booths; essentially things that promote our Order and its mission. Hopefully these forthcoming changes will alleviate the concerns and frustrations voiced by some Brothers.

No man ever discharges any trust to the fullest degree. Effort serves but to lead us nearer to the unattainable. In my official capacity it has been my constant aim and unalterable determination to do what lay in my power toward bringing about the improvements needed in the Order. Not everyone will agree with every step I have taken, but I hope they can all agree that I did it with the best of intentions.

As always, I welcome any questions or suggestions Brothers may have at grandpresident@nsgw.org.

SUTTER CREEK FIRE HISTORY PROJECT

By Ed Arata, Amador Parlor #17

The Sutter Creek Fire District (SCFD) and the Sutter Creek Volunteer Fire Department (SCVFD) began a history project in 2005 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Sutter Creek Fire District in 1905. The result of a year's worth of research resulted in the production of a broadsheet style history paper covering the Fire Departments History from 1869 to about 1960, and a display of photos, documents, maps and artifacts at the Fire Department annual dinner in 2006. The Broadsheet Fire History can be viewed and/or downloaded at - <http://suttercreekfirehistory.org/projects/broadsheet-history>.

As part of this initial program, the 1939 Amador City Dodge fire truck, built in Sutter Creek, was brought out of storage and cleaned up. An original Sutter Creek hose cart was totally restored and another brought out of storage for display. An old style chemical fire extinguisher cart, donated by Chief Sherrill, was refurbished for display. Finally in 2010, the original Sutter Creek fire bell was relocated to the Main Fire Station for display and a new plaque added to tell a more complete story of the bell.

The History Projects then sat dormant until early 2015 when Ed and Mimi Arata proposed that the unfinished portions of the projects be restarted and completed within a five-year time period. These projects would include: 1- Developing the old Amador City fire house as a mini museum to house the 1939 Dodge truck and other displays. 2 - Recreate Sutter Creek's fire truck, a c.1924 Dodge Brother's pick-up truck that was built locally as Sutter Creek's first motorized fire equipment. 3 - The development of the old Sutter



Photos of Sutter Creek's first "Fire Truck" c. 1927 and photos of the piles of parts that were purchased to recreate the truck

fire house on Main Street as a Fire Museum and workshop for the Dodge Brothers' project in #3. 4 – Rebuild the fire bell tower on Main Street with the original hose cart house below and tell the story of Eureka Hose Company #3 associated with this cart house and bell tower. 5- Cleanup and highlight the first Sutter Creek fire house on Spanish Street with interpretive signage and equipment as available. To facilitate these projects, the Aratas provided a seed donation to get the ball rolling again. The SCFD/SCVFD have received support and grants from local groups and individuals – The Jackson Rancheria Casino, the Amador Community Foundation, the Gretchen Kingsbury fund, the Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation and other smaller donors.

The first project to be completed was the Amador City fire house museum in 2015 as part of the Amador City 100th anniversary. This fire house had just recently been renovated as part of the Amador City bridge replacement project and the Sutter Creek Fire Department refurbished the fire bell tower and fire bell at this time. The interior of the fire house now displays the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Amador City from 1890 to 1930 and the 1939 Dodge fire truck is housed here. The 1939 Dodge is drivable and it is used for community events and parades.

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The 1939 Amador City Dodge fire truck that was built in Sutter Creek is now housed in the old Amador City firehouse along with other displays

California and The Discovery of Gold —Continued from page 1

It was this report, entrusted to Lieutenant Lucien Loeser, along with 230 ounces of gold from California, which arrived in Washington DC in November and formed the basis for President Polk's announcement to Congress on December 5th, 1848 that gold had been discovered in California. This announcement, according to Starr, sparked the Gold Rush of 1849 and transformed California forever and became a defining moment in American History. So, who let the secret out? How did a bit of information, known by only a few at Sutter's Fort in January become announced by the President to Congress in December and lead to one of the most important events in the history of California and the United States? Why did Sutter and Marshall want to keep it a secret in the first place? For that, we have look at what life was like in California before the Gold Rush and delve deeper into the story of how Marshall discovered gold in the first place.

Americans had been emigrating to California ever since Jedediah Smith became the first American to enter the area in 1823. Over the years, Americans and Europeans had trickled in, John Marsh settled in what is now Contra Costa County at Rancho Los Medanos in 1836 and John Sutter had established his settlement of "New Helvetia" in 1839. Famously, the Bartleson-Bidwell Party was the first to arrive by wagon train in 1841. With the advent of "Oregon Fever" the number of Americans entering California grew but after the tragedy which befell the Donner Party in 1846, the number slowed to a trickle. According to the census of 1840 there were approximately 8,000 Americans living in California.

During this time, most of the non-Native American population of California lived in the coastal region. From San Diego to Sonoma, the Californios and Yankees lived within 100 miles of the coast. The great central valley was almost devoid of European settlement. The one great exception was Sutter's colony of New Helvetia at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers. Sutter ran his vast 48,839 acre holding almost as a feudal baron. The colony was part military outpost, part commercial and agricultural enterprise. The wealth of California was unimaginable. Described by Richard Henry Dana in "Two Years Before the Mast", the ease and luxury in which the Californios and other Europeans lived, with income primarily from ranching and the tallow and hide trade was simply almost unbelievable to the Americans who lived east of the Mississippi River. There had been reports of gold and other valuable minerals in California as far back as Richard Hakluyt's description of Drake's voyages, published in 1589 but except for some small deposits around the Colorado River and Lopez' discovery of gold in Placerita Canyon in 1840, there was little evidence that California was brimming with precious metals. Neither of these finds would have the impact upon California and the United States as did Marshall's discovery at Coloma.

So, before the Gold Rush, California was a distant, exotic place where one could live a life of ease with most of the non-Native American population clustered around coastal

settlements. John Sutter was living the life of a feudal baron and most of the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada were largely devoid of European settlement. The economy of Mexican California was based upon agriculture and ranching, with tallow and hides being the most traded commodities. There was some whaling and hunting for fur seals and sea otters off the coast but there was almost no manufacturing and very little mining.

This all changed with Marshall's discovery of gold. John Sutter himself feared that he would lose most of his vast land grants to squatters who would flood in to California looking for gold. Since he was unsure that the American military government in 1848 would recognize his title to the lands around Coloma, he and James Marshall tried to keep the discovery of gold a secret. Sutter himself let the secret slip when he wrote to Mariano G. Vallejo on the 10th of February, 1849 that, "I have made the discovery of a gold mine, which according to experiments we have made, is exceedingly rich." He also sent one Charles Bennett, in the middle of February, to travel to Monterey to secure title to the land around his mill in Coloma. Bennett was instructed to say nothing about gold but was to "secure the land with mill, pasture and mineral privileges" giving the reason for the last as the soil had the appearance of "lead and silver" deposits. Bennett took six ounces of gold with him on the journey to Monterey. On the way, he stopped on Benicia, at Pfister's store to rest. At Pfister's store Bennett overheard that coal had been found at the foot of Mount Diablo and that California would soon become of great importance to the United States. Bennett replied, "Coal! I have something here which will beat coal and make this the greatest country in the world!" He then began to show his sample around the store. Now, Sutter's secret was out. Bennett continued to Monterey, stopping in San Francisco where he showed the sample to Isaac Humphrey. Upon reaching Monterey, Bennett met with Colonel Mason, but Mason refused to make any promises concerning title to the land, stating that California was a Mexican province, held by conquest and he could not confirm any title until a public survey had been made.

At the end of February, Sutter needed supplies and with scurvy making an appearance sent a Swiss teamster to Coloma. The teamster, who was an alcoholic, scoffed when he was told that there was gold in Coloma. The mother of one of the mill workers gave him some gold to prove that the claims of her son were true. When he returned to Sutter's Fort, he went into Smith and Brannan's store to buy some whiskey, using the gold as payment. Smith, asked him where he had gotten the gold and the teamster told him. Smith checked with Sutter who confirmed that there was gold in Coloma and then told his partner, Sam Brannan, who famously shouted the news in the streets of San Francisco.

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GRAND PRESIDENT GIVES CHECK TO SAINT JOHN'S CLEFT PALATE CENTER

By Robert Santos

Grand President Erik Christeson and the Charitable Foundation gave a \$85,000 check, the largest check to date to St. John's Cleft Palate Center. This is the 49th straight year that the Native Sons has delivered a check. Present at the presentation was Erik's core of Grand Officers and all of the Southern Parlors. From the Charitable Foundation you had Chairman Joe Ursino, Southern California Coordinator Steve Faessel and Treasurer Robert Santos. The hospital staff made a presentation on the team approach to care of a child with a cleft and is now a standard of care for children with a cleft throughout the world. St John's was one of the first hospitals to adopt the team approach. From the hospital staff Danelle Fisher, MD Director, Cleft Palate Center introduce her staff. Also present was Sister Maureen Craig a long time friend of the Native Sons and a huge supported of our cause in helping children with a cleft lip or palate.

The Native Sons and those in attendance listened to a young patient by the name of Tente who shared his journey with St. John's as a cleft palate child. He was shy but also very comfortable in sharing his 18 years with the hospital. He said he never felt different from other kids while growing up. He is now going to Cal State Northridge and is fine example in the help and care he received from St. John's.

We deeply appreciate all the people who donated to this most worthy cause. Without your donations we could not help these children face the world .



Young patient by the name of Tente who shared his journey with St. John's as a cleft palate child

California and The Discovery of Gold — Continued from page 4

Captain Joseph L. Folsom, Collector of Revenue at San Francisco heard about the discovery when Sutter's schooner brought samples of gold to that city in February. Folsom then wrote to Colonel Mason in April concerning "rumors of gold" at Sutter's Mill. This letter caused Mason and his aide, Sherman, to travel to Coloma to see the place for themselves. Initially, most of the reports of gold were dismissed, but after Sherman's report was made public by President Polk, the world knew that Marshall's discovery was not fiction and sparked the Gold Rush which transformed California overnight. From 8,000 Americans living in California in 1840, the American population swelled to 379, 994 in 1850 and California was admitted into the Union.

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BOLO TIES

For those Brothers that make bolo ties I have a kit made of cords, tips, fasteners, and glue plus info on suppliers of these items.

These are all free contact Dave McCann

-National Parlor 650-871-7466



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LUCKY CALENDERS!

NSGW Lucky Calendars for 2018 are available from your parlor secretary or from the Grand Secretary's Office for just \$25. The calendars contain full-color photos of many of the Native Sons monuments as well as descriptions of our activities. Prizes range from \$25 to \$3,000; winning tickets are returned to the drawing—many people have won more than once. Proceeds go to support Native Son activities and reduce the per capita tax.

GET YOUR NATIVE SON ON-LINE

We continue to add to our list of Native Sons who receive this newspaper via e-mail.

The e-mail edition is put online as soon as the newsletter is sent to the printer. Mail copies reach our members up to a month later. An added feature of the on-line copies: full-color photos!

Our goal is to eliminate snail mail copies to those who wish to receive their newsletter by e-mail. That will result in a savings to our per capita tax of about \$3 for each person who switches to e-mail. Unfortunately, we are still unable to delete e-mail users from our membership database, which means e-mail recipients will—for the time being—still receive a snail mail copy. We hope that will change soon so we can realize the substantial savings.

For the present, just get on the e-mail list, joining almost one thousand of your brothers who are already on that list. Send your e-mail to Tom Widlund at t.widlund@yahoo.com. Be assured that our e-mail lists will be kept confidential and never used for other purposes.

PARLOR ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

By Thomas Widlund, Managing Editor of The Native Son

A few of our parlors expressed their desire that "The Native Son" list Parlor events and activities. To accommodate this "The Native Son" will include a monthly section for the purpose of sharing these activities and events. Regular meetings of Subordinate Parlors are listed in the directory provided to each Parlor as well as being listed at www.nsgw.org and will not be included. To have your event or activity listed please submit the following:

1. Activity/Event Name
2. Parlor #
3. Date/Time
4. Contact Info.

All submissions must come via email to t.widlund@yahoo.com prior to the 15th of January for publication in the February—March issue.

PAST PRESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Rose Twyman of Golden Gate #29 was installed as governor general of the NSGW Past Presidents Association at an October 28 ceremony marking the conclusion of the organization's Annual General Assembly in Rancho Cordova.

Members of the PPA, which is composed of parlor past presidents, work with subordinate parlors when needed, educating new book officers and responding to other parlor needs. The PPA is composed of several subordinate assemblies throughout California.

By Fred Codoni



Past Governor General Jon Fletcher passes the gavel to incoming Governor General Rose Twyman.

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GRAND PRESIDENT'S NATIVE SONS HISTORY CORNER

By Erik M. Christeson, Grand President

In honor of the upcoming Weekend in the Redwoods, I turn my attention this issue northward, to Humboldt County.

Excerpted From *The Grizzly Bear*, January, 1918 (100 Year Ago!)

An Early County Seat Election

Many are the interesting stories told of early county seat elections in California. Few, indeed, are there among the older counties which are not able to furnish reports of bitter and sometimes long-continued contests between rival towns, each of which craved the prestige and profit to be derived from the possession of the county seat; and not infrequently were new county divisions formed in order to satisfy the ambitions of some village which otherwise would be deprived of this coveted honor.

The records show that more than ninety towns in California have at some time been the seats of justice of their respective counties; that in forty per cent of the counties the local capital has been moved at least once. Stanislaus County has had as many as five county seats, while no less than four counties, namely, Butte, Calaveras, Alameda and Sutter, have each had four different towns as county seats. Three towns have each served as county seats successively of two different counties; these are Jackson, for Calaveras and Amador; Auburn, for Sutter and Placer; and Crescent City, for Klamath and Del Norte. For three years a town in a neighboring state served as a California county seat. This was Aurora, Nevada, the county seat of Mono County, 1861-1864.

Humboldt County... was created by an act of the Legislature in 1853, the county seat being fixed at Uniontown (Arcata). This place was then the leading town upon Humboldt Bay, it being the chief shipping center for the mines of both the Klamath and Trinity Rivers. There were, however, other towns which reluctantly yielded to Uniontown this coveted honor. Bucksport and Eureka were the two leading rivals. The former was a lively little village supported largely by the troops of Fort Humboldt, near at hand, while Eureka, about the same size, was the center of the rising lumber industry. All three of these towns, together with the short-lived Humboldt City, and Trinidad, then the county seat of Klamath County, had been founded at nearly the same time during the spring of 1850, and since that time had displayed a feeling of intense rivalry.

Opposition to Uniontown was, in a degree, well founded. Klamath County, before it was abolished in 1875, included all that part of the present Humboldt County north of the mouth of Mad River. The northern boundary of Humboldt

County, therefore, ran within a few miles of its county seat.

The active campaign for a change of the county seat began in September, 1854, with the presentation of a petition asking for its removal to some point further south. Very soon afterward this was followed by a generous, and to us a most extraordinary, offer by the people of Bucksport, led by William Roberts, a large land holder there. It was announced that a block or more of land in the center of town would be donated to the county for the erection of a court house and other public buildings, and that a town lot within the limits of Bucksport would be given to each voter, not already a resident or property owner within Bucksport Township, who could establish by oath that he had voted for Bucksport at the election. Not only was this offer publicly announced in the local paper, but it was officially placed upon record and may still be found in the archives of the county recorder.

In spite of this tempting offer, Bucksport received but third place in the election which was held on October 25th.

These returns show that this election resulted as follows:

Eureka 405; Bucksport 236; Union 221; South Fork (Trinity) 62; Eel River 59; Table Bluff 39; Angel's Ranch 25; Pacific 20

As had been anticipated, the first election failed to give either of the towns a majority of the votes cast, consequently, by order of the county judge, another election between the two more popular towns was called for November 20th. The keenest rivalry was now developed between Eureka and Uniontown. the two remaining candidates, for the friends of each place felt that the future of their towns depended largely upon the outcome of the point at issue.

The result of this second election showed some remarkable things regarding the voting population of some parts of the county. It is related by Byron Deming, a pioneer of Arcata (Union), that at the official canvas the outcome of the vote was a matter of much uncertainty. The representatives of Eureka brought forth their polling list with a feeling of great pride, for it had been written out in two parallel columns on legal paper, the whole pasted together to form a roll more than twenty feet in length, 1 while that for October had been but one inch over nine feet long. The manner in which this was displayed was intended to strike dismay to the hearts of the opponents of Eureka, and was in a manner successful.

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***Sutter Creek Fire History Project —
Continued from page 3***



Sutter Creek's Village Hook & Ladder Wagon on the Sutter Creek Fire utility vehicle for the Italian Picnic Parade — 2017

In 2015, the Sutter Creek Fire Department began vacating their old fire house on Main Street (c.1936) and work began on the front half of the station to develop it as a 1930's auto workshop, garage where the first Sutter Creek fire truck could be recreated and eventually housed for display. (Photo) At the same time, two 1920's Dodge Brothers' trucks were purchased to supply the needed parts for ONE finished fire truck. The parts were sorted and un-needed parts were sold off to support the project. Since that time the frame, wheels and engine have been reworked and restored. Work has now started on the body. This recreation is guided only by the two photographs that we have of this vehicle from c.1927. SCFD/SCVFD are indebted to Donn Marinovich of Columbia and the Northern California Dodge Brothers and Sisters Club for their support on this project.

In 2016, the SCFD/SCVFD contracted with Wayne Orvik of Bellevue, Idaho for the construction of "Village Hook & Ladder Wagon" to recreate the style of wagon that was used in Sutter Creek until the early 1920s. This wagon is now being equipped with wooden ladders, pike poles, axes and other firefighting equipment of the time period. This wagon will be displayed at the Fire Museum and used for community events, along with the original hose carts and other equipment.

In 2017, we have moved in the rear of the old fire house and begun the development of the Fire Museum. The main feature of this area will be the recreation of a small portion of the old Fire Meeting Hall and Kitchen that was in the basement of the Sutter Creek Auditorium until the late 1980s when the Fire Department moved to its new firehouse on Hanford Street. This area will highlight the firemen's dinners in this hall and display materials that were on the walls over many years. The other portion of the museum will

display documents, maps and vintage firefighting equipment. A video loop on a wall mounted monitor of the fire history is planned.

The refurbishment of the fire bell tower on Main Street at the Sutter Creek bridge is planned for 2018/2019 when the bridge will be replaced with a new bridge. During this time the bell tower will be taken down and the tower and bell repaired and refurbished. The tower will then be put back up with the original hose cart house below displaying one of our original hose carts and telling the story of Eureka Hose Company #3. And in 2018/2019, the first Sutter Creek firehouse on Spanish Street will be cleaned up and interpretive signage placed to mark this location of fire history.

The SCFD and SCVFD wish to thank all of those who have supported this project thus far, and we encourage you to learn more about our projects at the Sutter Creek Fire History web page - <http://suttercreekfirehistory.org/> and follow us on Face Book at - <https://www.facebook.com/SutterCreekFireHistory1869/>

E. Edward Arata, Amador Parlor #17 is currently the Chairman of the NSGW History Committee appointed by Grand President, Erik Christeson. He is involved in a number of history project in Amador County and he is currently the Vice Pres. of the Amador County Historical Society.



Some of the displays in the new Fire Museum

THE WATTS TOWER

By Paul Griffith, Ramona Parlor #109 / D.D.G.P – Rio Hondo #294

The Watts Towers also known as “Nuestro Pueblo” is located in the Watts community of South Central Los Angeles and is considered one of Southern California’s most culturally significant public artworks. It is also designated as California historical landmark #993.



The Watts Tower California Historical Landmark No. 993.

The 17 interconnected sculptural structures were designed and constructed by Italian-American immigrant Sabato “Simon” Rodia. Simon called the towers “Nuestro Pueblo” (Our Town) in Spanish.

Sabato “Simon or Sam” Rodia (1879 – 1965) was born in Serino, Italy and arrived in the United States around 1894. After making his way through various states with his family, Simon settled in the South Central Los Angeles community of Watts in 1921 at the age of 42.

Mr. Rodia began constructing the towers on his residential property in 1921 using scrap steel rebar wrapped in mesh then covered with mortar and embellished with pieces of soft drink bottles, mirrors, dishes, sea shells and anything else he could find. He also used various pieces of broken pottery that the neighborhood children would bring to him. Mr. Rodia often spent time walking along the Pacific Elec-

tric Railway between the community of Watts and the city of Wilmington, California (approximately 20 miles) looking for anything he could use for building and embellishing the towers. Mr. Rodia did not use any special construction equipment, scaffolds, or pre-drawn up plans. He liked working alone with just his hand tools and also utilized the nearby railroad tracks as a makeshift vice to help bend the steel rebar for the framework.

In a period of 33 years (1921 – 1954), Mr. Rodia constructed the towers in his spare time. The tallest of the towers is said to reach a height of approximately 99.5 feet.

In 1955, Mr. Rodia decided to end construction. Mr. Rodia also decided to deed the property to his neighbor and permanently relocate to the city of Martinez, California to live with his sister.

On the Fourth of July 1956, the bungalow on Mr. Rodia’s former residential property accidentally burned down as a result of fireworks. The bungalow was condemned and in 1957,



Looking North at the Watts Towers

the property was ordered to be destroyed by the city of Los Angeles. Unable to locate the current owner of the property over the next two years prevented the order from being executed.

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HISTORICAL PRESERVATION FOUNDATION REPORT

By PGP David Allen, Chairman

Here is something to chew on prior to getting into the nuts and bolts of the report.

From Webster's Dictionary here are some definitions that I have gleaned and they may not be in the proper usage of this class of words as to whether they are nouns, verbs (transitive or intransitive), or adjectives, but proper nomenclature or syntax is not the object here, history is.

History - Study of all recorded events of the past, the branch of knowledge that deals systematically of the past; explanation of past events; something that belongs to the past; a narrative, play, story or tale; what has happened in the life or development of a people, country, institution, etc.; showing the development or evolution in proper chronological order; something important enough to be recorded.

Preservation - To keep from harm, damage, evil, or to maintain, taking positive measures to preserve something, ie., a historic building.

Education - The process of training and developing the knowledge, skill, mind, character, etc. especially training, teaching or formal education.

Recognition - Acknowledgement or identification of a person or thing showing approval or gratitude.

Research - Careful, systematic, patient study, and investigation in some field of knowledge undertaken to discover or establish facts or principles; careful or diligent search for new knowledge.

Throw all those together in a bag, add the word California and shake it up and you get, the Historical Preservation Foundation of the Native Sons of the Golden West and that is our basic mission in a nutshell.

Even though we are only halfway through this current Grand Parlor year it is shaping up to be our most successful year in terms of fundraising, progress of our mission, and overall involvement. The map that many of you saw at Grand Parlor in Monterey is expanding. Thank you to all of the members and parlors who support us, to those who will support us in the future, and to those who recognize the importance of the HPF as it relates to the long term viability of the Native Sons.

Now on to the results: The HPF has been busy over the last several months awarding grants totaling \$18,500.00. Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project in San Francisco was approved in June and now with much of the bureaucratic work out of the way it looks like California Registered Historical Landmark # 1002 will finally (It was originally approved in 1991) be placed at the site of the first dynamite factory in the United States which was under the exclusive license of Alfred Nobel. There should be a dedication sometime in January. Twin Peaks Parlor #214 jointly contributed toward this plaque. In Oroville, Argonaut Parlor #8 has been able to secure a new home, the Wyandotte Community Center. Along with the HPF's assistance they were able to put a new roof on this structure which dates back to 1910. In the Los Angeles area, California Registered Historic Landmark #167 will be replaced in a safer spot (it was stolen). It commemorates the La Mesa Battlefield which was the last California battle of the Mexican War on January 9, 1847. Final funding is being accumulated and is being held in restricted accounts by the HPF. University Parlor #272 has contributed toward the cause. The funding

should be completed shortly and there will be a dedication of this site located in the City of Vernon.

Miller's Red Barn (Gilroy, CA) which is on the National Register of Historic Places, requested assistance toward the restoration of the historic barn which was owned by rancher Henry Miller known as the Cattle King of California. You can learn more about this endeavor at <https://themillerredbarn.org/>. Meanwhile back down the state in Pomona, the Native Daughters of the Golden West requested assistance in the research of Palomares Cemetery which is owned by the NDGW.

There hasn't been an update in a while regarding the Pioneer Monument in Truckee and there isn't a lot of information as of press time, but there is activity and at the beginning of the year numbers should be available as to what is to be required for the maintenance, restoration, and landscaping to be down around the monument. Mark your calendars for June 9, 2018, where there will be an all day kick off function commemorating the 100th anniversary of the monument. The monument, as well as the park, was due to efforts of the Native Sons.

This demonstrates the geographic scope of the HPF which has been one of goals to impact historic efforts throughout the state. This exhibits not only support for California State Parks, but neighborhood groups, local associations, Native Sons parlors and other like minded organizations such as the Native Daughters of the Golden West. The Historical Preservation Foundation of the Native Sons of the Golden West is becoming a source, resource, and player for the history of California and something all Native Sons can take pride in.

I wish everybody a wonderful holiday season and enjoy the food, friendship, and family with various holiday functions. Until next time, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and see you on the California Trail.

SUTTER CREEK, CALIF.

EST.  2014

LEONI

FARMS

Jon Campbell, SDDGP District #11, Proprietor

Tasting Room: 67 Main Street, Sutter Creek, CA 95685
 Directly across the street from the NSGW hall. 20%
 discount to all NSGW and NDGW members

The Watts Tower — Continued from page 9

In 1959, actor Nicholas King and film editor William Cartwright located the owner of the property and purchased it with interests of preserving it. Soon after, a committee was formed consisting of artists, architects, enthusiasts and community activists to help preserve Simon Rodia's Towers.

The towers were confirmed safe and cleared from the demolition order after the committee negotiated with the city of Los Angeles to allow engineers to test the safety of the structures.

In the year of Mr. Rodia's passing (1965), The Watts Towers were officially designated as Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Monument #15 under the ownership of the committee.

In 1975, the committee partnered with the city of Los Angeles in preserving the property. By 1978, the city of Los Angeles partnered with the State of California which designated the property as the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia State Historic Park.

When members of the community and people in the press would ask Mr. Rodia why he built the towers, the most cited response was "I wanted to do something big and I did it"



"You got to do something they never got'em in the world" - Simon Rodia



A couple of fountains created by Mr. Rodia as part of his amazing collection of work.

DISCOVERY OF GOLD WEEKEND JANUARY 26 - 28

Monterey parlor #75 and the Discovery of Gold Committee, invites all brothers to join us in honoring James Marshall's discovering gold at Sutter's Mill, in Coloma. This will be a Grand Parlor meeting so expect a focus on work, peppered with lots of good fun, good food and great company.

**For more information and to RSVP call or text
Kathi Rapozo Pearce 831-524-1754
or email nsgwmonterey75@gmail.com**

Please call the hotel to make your reservations!
Hotel Abrego 755 Abrego St. Monterey Ca 93940.
800-982-7986
Room Rates;
Abrego Rm (1 bed) \$115.00 per night
Deluxe Rm (1 or 2 beds) \$129.00 per night
Premier Rm (1 or 2 beds) w/ fireplace \$149.00 per night
Rates are plus tax, mention NSGW when making your reservations.

**Deadline for Registration and Hotel Reservation
is January 17 2018**

Grand President's Native Son's History Corner — Continued from page 7

The partisans for Eureka were, however, swept off their feet by a vigorous and unexpected flank attack. One of the smaller voting precincts, known as Angel's Ranch, was not counted until the last. This place was located above Union and, therefore, strongly opposed the attempt to remove the county seat. In the general election of September no votes had been reported from this precinct; in October, however, the matter of the county seat removal brought out twenty-five votes in opposition to the change. That the vote of this precinct would be unanimous for Union was conceded by all, but that it would materially affect the result was not for a moment considered.

Imagine, then, the consternation among the friends of Eureka when the envelope from this precinct was found to contain a tightly folded sheet of paper slightly less than sixteen feet long. Furthermore, upon closer examination, it was found to contain not only two, but four, parallel columns of names, making a total of exactly 2,136 certified votes, all of which, according to the sworn statement of the election officers, were cast for Union. Where so many names could be found at Angel's Ranch is a mystery, but it has been explained by some who seemed to know that, since the San Francisco papers published as a regular thing the list of passengers arriving on the steamers from Panama, these lists were found most convenient at this time. The final results of the election were as follows:

Union 3107; Eureka 1713

That Eureka had been defeated was plain. That illegal votes had been cast for Union was still more evident, but would not a close investigation also show that the poll list of Eureka had been greatly augmented for the occasion? The county judge declared that Union had received a majority of the votes cast and was, therefore, entitled to retain the county seat.

There was much dissatisfaction with this outcome. The auditor refused to pass the accounts of those precincts where fraud was evident; the supervisors voted to abolish the precinct at Angel's Ranch, and refused to appropriate money for the erection of county buildings at Union. Eureka threatened to contest the results, but upon reflection it was decided to let the matter pass quietly. In the intensity of the dispute, it was even suggested that the county be divided in order to provide for two county seats.

Determined not to be outdone in such a flagrant manner, the friends of Eureka sought a solution elsewhere. One of the most loyal of their number was elected to the Legislature the following year, and, as soon as the opportunity offered, he presented a bill which provided definitely for the removal of the county seat of Humboldt County to Eureka. This became a law in 1856, and, in consequence, the offices of the county were transferred from Union to her rival town on May 1, 1856, where they have since remained.

JOE OESCHER MEMORIAL WEEKEND IN THE REDWOODS TO BE HELD FEBRUARY 9-10, 2018

The Best Western in Fortuna, CA will again be the headquarters for the annual Joe Oescheger Memorial Weekend in the Redwoods to be held February 9 and 10, 2018. Friday and Saturday night events will be hosted by Ferndale Parlor #93. Activities will kick-off Friday night at 6:00 p.m. with a hosted reception of food and drinks in the Redwood Room at the Fortuna Best Western Inn. On Saturday Humboldt Parlor #14 has coordinated with the Clarke Museum for Native Sons to see both the current exhibit and ongoing exhibits. The current exhibit is on fraternal organizations in Humboldt County. Humboldt Parlor has provided some significant artifacts as part of that exhibit. The museum is open at 10:00 a.m. and admission is free (although they have a donation box). At 11:30 a.m. Humboldt Parlor will provide refreshments and a light lunch at their Parlor Hall located in Old Town Eureka at 623 3rd Street (between G & H Streets). There will be a speaker to provide some interesting historical facts about the area. The Clarke Museum is just two blocks down the street from the Parlor Hall, so you can visit the Museum before or after the lunch and historical talk. Then on Saturday night, Ferndale Parlor will host an initiation and dinner. Initiation will be convened at 4:00 p.m. in the Redwood Room at the Fortuna Best Western Inn. Dinner is at the Fortuna Volunteer

Fire Department, 320 South Fortuna Boulevard, Fortuna, CA. Cocktails and appetizers are at 6:00 p.m. and dinner is at 7:00 p.m. Dinner is \$25.00 per person. There will also be a silent auction and raffle.

Please contact Allan Baird at (707) 725-5182 or email Jerry Colivas at jerry.colivas@yahoo.com for dinner reservations or additional information.

Room rates for the event, at the Fortuna Best Western Inn located at 2025 Riverwalk Drive, Fortuna, CA 95540, are: \$85.00 per night for a king; \$94.50 for 2 queens; and \$109.00 for a suite. These prices are guaranteed through January 8. Please contact the Fortuna Best Western Inn at (707) 725-6822 and ask for the Native Sons room rate.

Joe Oescheger Memorial Weekend in the Redwoods was named in honor of Past Grand President Joe Oescheger who started the event to get members from around the State up to enjoy the beauty of Humboldt County. PGP Oescheger was raised in Ferndale but moved to the Bay Area and was a member of Redwood Parlor #66 when he was elected Grand President in 1963. He held his Grand Parlor in 1964 in Eureka at the historic Eureka Inn. That was the last time a Grand Parlor was held in the area.

CHARITABLE FOUNDATION DONATIONS

Here is a list of recent donations to our Charitable Foundation in honor or memory of. Such donations are a fine way to honor deceased members, friends or relatives. The Charitable Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) organization and all contributions are tax deductible. You can find the 2017 Cleft Palate March, Total Donations and our Donation Form on our website, nsgw.org. Click “ Community Involvement.

In Memory of Robert Casselberry

Frank & Kay Compani
Quartz Parlor #58

In Memory of Michael J. Perry

Cambria Parlor #152

In Memory of Carolyn “Sandy” Calderia

Ronald & Rita Holliday

In Memory of Guido Scotto

Gene & Debbie Perry
Bob & Martha French

To Cleft Palate Fund

Grand Parlor Board Meeting Fines
Your Cause Applied Materials

In Memory of George P. Oakes Jr.

Eden Parlor #113

In Memory of Melford Alameda

Washington Parlor #169

In Memory of Ray Crosat

Pat & Suzi Riley

In Memory of Ray & Mary Crosat

Janet Fauss

In Memory of Marge Barajas

Pat Riley

In Memory of Christy Barisone

Robert & Donna Fletcher

How to Give—Giving to the Cleft Palate can be done either directly or through a gift model that can provide tax benefits. Also through your employer matching funds. Check with your tax consultant on different programs.

49ER DAYS

March 9-11
Volcano, CA

3 Dedications
and Banquet
Saturday March 10th

Breakfast
Sunday March 11th

Contact: nsgw31@gmail.com

DE ANZA TREK

February 9-11
El Centro, CA

Cannonball Run
Friday February 9th

Parade, Dedication,
Initiation and Dinner,
Saturday February 10th

Contact: tdssw@aol.com

RETRO RAMBLINGS

By Douglas Love, Grand Historian

On the morning of October 9, 2017, I drove up to Pope Valley to take part in the dedication of the Pioneer Cemetery. It was a glorious day, soft and warm, as I drove up Suisun Valley and Monticello Roads to the cemetery. The ceremony, hosted by the Brothers of Calistoga Parlor #86, was in a lovely setting, in a vineyard and was well attended. After the ceremony, the attendees went to the historic Hubcap Ranch for a barbeque lunch. After lunch, I drove down Deer Park Road, through Angwin, to the Silverado Trail and then to a friend's birthday party. As I was driving down the trail, I was thinking that there are times when our Native State and the Napa Valley are truly the fairest portion of God's Creation. The next day, October 10, I spent at home, doing chores, and getting ready for the work week ahead.

After I went to bed, my wife, Jennifer, came in and said, "the Silverado Trail is on fire." I said, OK, and went back to sleep. Little did I know that she had told me about the beginning of one of the worst wildfires in the history of Sonoma, Solano and Napa counties. When I woke up the next day, the air was sharp with smoke. The rising sun was dim and everything was enveloped in a haze. I knew then that this was no normal fire. In fact, there were four fires burning, the Atlas Peak Fire, the Tubbs Fire, the Nuns Fire and the Pocket Fire. I went to work and during the day the smoke became thicker and thicker. When I got home, areas along Silverado Trail and in Sonoma County were under evacuation orders. I made the decision to open the Native Sons Hall in Napa for evacuees. I drove up to Napa and stayed with Chris Adams until about 10 p.m. that evening. We discovered that Brothers Bob and Dottie Streich had been evacuated and as the fires worsened, I made the decision to cancel the Parlor meeting for that night.

The next morning, the smoke was still thick in the air. Chris was at the Napa Hall, keeping it open and I went to work. The news was not good. None of the fires were contained and CalFire was stretched thin fighting fires from Butte County to Anaheim. By then the Tubbs Fire had burned into Santa Rosa and destroyed the Coffey Park neighborhood. Ironically, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District called for a "Spare The Air" day due to poor air quality. I was in touch with Chris Adams and Brother Stephani Stephenson, who was helping out at the Napa College evacuation center. Even though the fires were out of control, everyone seemed to think that things were under control, even though some wineries were damaged and Santa Rosa was severely damaged. Early in the afternoon, I got a call from Chris and Stephani asking if we could take "overflow" donations at the Hall and possibly open up the kitchen for cooking meals for evacuees. I said, yes.

The next day, I went up to the hall and found it full of donations. There was bedding, new and used clothing, food, pallets of water, toiletries, games, toys and numerous household items. I had been in contact with PGP Dean

Zellers and Brothers Pat and Barbie Hoffman in Sonoma. Since both Highways 121 and 37 were closed, getting to Sonoma was impractical but they all seemed to be fine. That day, Calistoga was evacuated and the Atlas Peak fire had burned into Solano County threatening Fairfield. All of the area schools were closed by then. I held a brief meeting of the Napa Hall Association which ended early because PGP Clark Brant's neighborhood was put under an evacuation advisory.

By Thursday, CalFire announced that the fires were still not contained and were burning out of control. Much of southwestern Fairfield was placed under an evacuation advisory and the Napa Hall was still accepting donations. Brothers Chris Adams and Shelia Gentry were organizing volunteers to sort and inventory what we had. I went up to help and spent the day sorting clothes, bedding and getting rid of trash. By early afternoon, we stopped taking donations and began to find a way to distribute what we had to those who needed it. By Friday, the Hall was mostly cleaned out. The food went to the Napa County Food Bank, the cash and gift cards went to Napa Valley COPE, for those in need and we had found storage for the bedding and clothing.

We still had a distribution problem, however. Over the weekend, Shelia had found a commercial laundry in Sacramento to launder the used clothing and bedding, some 20,000 pounds of it. We arranged for a truck and trailer and that was accomplished. Grant Trustee George Adams arranged for a store front in Riverpark Shopping Center to become a pop up distribution center and Stephani and Shelia began work on designing and opening the space. Volunteers were called in, insurance obtained, and by the end of the week, the store front was opened with a second serving as a storage facility.

Currently, Napa Parlor, along with other community volunteers, is operating the distribution center for those in need on a volunteer basis. All of the clothing, bedding, and non-food items are available to victims of the fires for free. The store will be open until the end of November, at which time all of the items left will be donated to local charities and the Salvation Army.

As I write this, I cannot tell you how proud I am of the Brothers of Napa Parlor for their efforts during this time of need. I know that this has been a departure from my normal Retro Ramblings as it has been more rambling than retro but the Napa Wildfires have been one of the worst disasters in our history. As I write this, the fires are still not fully contained, over 335 square miles have been burned, over 8000 structures destroyed, including several historic and local landmarks, damage has been estimated at greater than \$3 Billion, nearly 100,000 people were evacuated, and so far 42 have lost their lives.

Napa and Sonoma will recover and once again become the wine capital of the state but this will be a memorable event in the history of our Beloved State.

DEATHS

May the Lord grant eternal rest in the Grand Parlor on High to these brothers.

HONORED DEAD

Raymond A. Crosat, South San Francisco #157: Attended five sessions of Grand Parlor as a delegate.

DECEASED BROTHERS

George P Oakes Jr went to the Parlor on high July 18, 2017. Born October 5, 1920 joined the Eden Parlor #113 October 22, 1938 which makes him a 79 year member. He was in combat in World War 11. Initiated by his Father George Oakes SR. President of the Eden #113. His Grandfather was the 1st President of the Parlor in 1887. He was number 17 on the original charter of Eden Parlor. The Oakes Family has history with Eden Parlor going back to 130 years. Eden #113 was instituted 1887.

Placerville #9 John Stich	Los Banos #206 Walter Terra	Benicia #89 Norman V. Gonsalves Norman Koerner Andrew Nickolatos	Cambria #152 Wayne R. Adams
Quartz #58 Robert Moore Casselberry	Guadalupe #231 George William Coleman	Las Positas #96 Dave Bryan Fagundes Dallas Smith Don Scullion	
Redwood #66 Vincent Truscelli Frank C. Parcell, Jr.	Stockton #7 Victor L. Rolleri	Arrowhead #110 Phillip Kassel	
Chispa #139 Robert Purington	San Jose #22 Albano Margarit	Eden #113 George P. Oakes, Jr. National #118 Christo Pallas Frank J. Ruggiero Frank Wolfe	
San Miguel #150 Raymond Dodd James E. Hodge	St. Helena #53 William Conrad Studebaker		
Cambria #152 Michael J. Perry	Napa #62 Robert Carey Chatteleton		

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members joining in September and October!

We hope you will be active in your own parlor and that you will visit neighboring parlors.

Argonaut #8
Cheryl Wilcox

San Jose #22
Madeline Di Salvi
Leonard Di Salvi
Catherine Marie Meltzer

Golden Gate #29
Timothy Michael Hale

Solano #39
Matthew Steven Lozano
Jeffery Lozano
Jeffery Alan Collin
Gary Lee Lozano
Steven William Lozano

Quartz #58
Edward H. Beck

Chispa #139
Ronald Joseph Schmid

Fairfax #307
Michael Orlando
Mason Rockwell Austin

Auburn #59
Michael Rhodes
Charlie Sundblom

Napa #62
Liesel Anne McAllister
Philip Edwin Dahlberg
Lisa Reifers
Dennis Elven Pangburn
Dominic Stephenson
Bryan Tapper
Natalie Syverson
Deborah Parsons
Kathleen Herdell
Benjamin Callison

Redwood #66
Greg Garcia

Vallejo #77
Joseph Richard Rohrer

Benicia #89
Charles L. Cain
Lionel Largaespada
Steve McClure
Scott Przekurat

Las Positas #96
Skylar Vincent

Arrowhead #110
Rebekah Karen Aquirre
Joe Navarro
Pamela Montana

Eden #113
Donald Lee Jackson

San Miguel #150
Michael Stewart
John Allan Peschons

Amador #17
Frank Tortorich
Peter Jensen
Quintan Taylor
Trent Millsap
Richard Bartoloti

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DECEMBER 2017 — JANUARY 2018

DISCOVERY OF GOLDE WEEKEND
January 26 - 28, 2018

DE ANZA
February 9-11

WEEKEND IN THE REDWOODS
FEBRUARY 9-10, 2018

49er DAYS
March 9-11

THE NATIVE SON
Tom Widlund, Managing Editor

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