

FRIENDSHIP LOYALTY AND CHARITY

THE HISTORY OF THE
NATIVE SONS OF THE GOLDEN WEST



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By PETER CONMY, PGP
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Revised by FRED CODONI, PGP
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Revised by THOMAS PERAZZO, PGP
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414 Mason Street San Francisco, CA 94102

(415) 392-1223
(800) 337-1875

www.nsgw.org



GENERAL ALBERT MAVER WINN FOUNDER OF THE NATIVE SONS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

Foreword

“Gold! Gold! By golly boys, I’ve found gold!”

With the exclamation by James W. Marshall at Sutter’s Mill in January of 1848 began the greatest peacetime migration in the history of the world, the California Gold Rush.

Fortune seekers from every portion of the earth journeyed to California to dig and sluice for the precious yellow mineral they hoped would bring them prosperity.

The Gold Rush turned California from a collection of sleepy Mexican villages into a string of boomtowns that eventually became one of the world’s largest economies.

Not all of the immigrants at the middle of the 19th Century sought gold; many found their fortunes in serving the miners: businessmen and bankers, ministers and bartenders, sea captains and newspaper-men—all prospered on the fringes of the Gold Rush.

One of these men was General Albert Maver Winn, a Virginian. Winn came to Sacramento in 1849 and became that city’s first mayor. He led the California Militia and was land agent for General Sutter. For many years after the Gold Rush cooled, Winn thought about constructing a monument to the “Men of the Days of ’49, whose courage and fortitude he so admired. Discarding a statue, a building or a granite monument, Winn finally decided to create a living memorial, the Native Sons of the Golden West.

Here is the story of General Winn and the organization he founded.

Introduction

The Native Sons of the Golden West, though it is a fraternal order with roots going back almost to the founding of California, is not an “antique” or static organization. Rather, it is a dynamic association which continues to change in response to the changing needs of its members and the State it serves.

The Order has not lost sight of its original purposes: it 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 through the State by the ties of a friendship mutually beneficial to all and unalloyed by the bitterness of religious or political differences. . .to elevate and cultivate the mental faculties; to rejoice with one another in prosperity and to extend the Good Samaritan hand in adversity.”

The Order’s early accomplishments are legendary in the annals of the Golden State. They include preserving historic sites such as Sutter’s Fort, celebrating Admission Day, working to get the Bear Flag adopted as the State Flag, preserving the missions, lobbying for the creation of the State Park System, placing orphans in good homes and working for the advancement of the State of California and the conservation of its resources.

Over the years, the Order has changed to meet the needs of its members and the public. The Native Sons of the Golden West continues its commitment to historic preservation through its program of marking historic sites and through the Native Sons of the Golden West Historical Preservation Foundation. The Order helps children born with craniofacial anomalies through the Native Sons of the Golden West Charitable Foundation. It sponsors an essay contest for fourth grade students. It urges its members to serve their communities and provides opportunities for social interaction among the parlor members.

Although membership has declined, a trend faced by most fraternal and service organizations, the remaining parlor members carry on the dream of General A. M. Winn, the Order’s founder, to be a perpetual, living memorial to the men of the Days of ’49.

This history of the Native Sons of the Golden West is dedicated to those who have gone before, those “who have passed beyond the touch of our hands, leaving a birthright and a legacy fairer and greater than the seers of old times beheld in their dreams of the golden future.”

The history of the Order is so rich and so lengthy that we can only touch the surface of it in this book. We hope that this story will instill pride in all Native Sons of the Golden West and inspire them to research further the history of the Order to which they belong.

We offer special thanks to the memory of the Order’s foremost scholar and historian, the late Past Grand President Dr. Peter T. Conmy, without whose meticulous research and insightful writing this history would not be possible.

General Winn’s Idea

The idea for a fraternal order composed of those born in the “Golden West” formed in the mind of its founder, General Albert Maver Winn, much earlier than 1875, the year in which he founded the Native Sons of the Golden West. In California’s first years of statehood, Independence Day was the most important holiday observed by the state. San Francisco always had a parade. In 1869 General Winn suggested that a unit composed of native Californians would constitute an appropriate marching group, but the boys who participated, largely students from San Francisco’s Lincoln Grammar School, were too young for conversion into an adult fraternal society.

Six years later, in 1875, Winn again recruited a marching unit, this time made up of young native California men, and six days after the parade he formed the Native Sons of the Golden West. Prior to the parade the local press announced Winn’s plans and meetings of those interested were held to plan participation in the march. One newspaper account said “the group was spectacular. They featured a stuffed bear and followed the American and Bear Flags and escorted a decorated car of children. Some of the young men who marched wore miner’s costumes, thus giving color to the unit.”

On July 11, 1875, many of the marchers gathered and formed the Native Sons of the Golden West, a social and fraternal order which has served California and its members ever since.

General Winn’s concept went further than a group of native California men patriotically embellishing an Independence Day Parade. To him the Gold Rush was one of the great migratory movements of history and he

felt it essential that this be perpetuated in the heart and memory of man, and especially so since it was a wholly peaceful movement. Pioneers of all nations came to obtain a better life for themselves and their children. This, opined Winn, deserved a monument of self-perpetuation. He wrote:

For twenty years my mind has been running on some lasting style of monument to mark and perpetuate the discovery of gold. I could not think of anything that would not perish in the course of time. At last, it came to my mind that an Order composed of native sons of the Pacific Coast would affect the object and be sustained by pride of parentage and place of nativity, while it would be an imperishable memento—an institution that would last through all time.

Although the Order never expanded outside the borders of California, the first members of the Native Sons envisioned an organization that would extend beyond the territorial limits of California, as shown in a statement made by President John A. Steinbach on October 21, 1875:

Our society is the beginning of an Order that will proudly wave its banners over half the territory of the United States, while its power and influence may control the destinies of the Golden West.

The Beginnings

July 5, 1875. A small boy stands on Market Street watching the Independence Day parade march down San Francisco's most famous thoroughfare. Twenty-five years later, he vividly recalled the events:

I remember standing on Market Street by the side of Lotta's Fountain on Monday, July 5, 1875. A passing Independence Day parade claimed my boyish attention and interest. At that time, I had just moved from Calaveras County and was fresh from the scenes of the early mining days. The feature of the parade in which I found special attention was the Ninth Division, composed entirely of young men born upon the soil of California. The Native Sons who marched on that occasion wore the rough miner's garb of Pioneer days. They carried pick, pan and shovel upon their shoulders and at each man's side was strapped the ever-ready bowie knife and revolver. At their head was borne the Bear Flag of 1846. The appearance of the division was picturesque in the extreme; it left upon my mind a fond lasting impression.

The boy who saw the earliest beginning of the Native Sons of the Golden West was Richard Rust, who served as Grand President of the Order in 1900.

The Early Years

On July 11, 1875, the newly organized group of Native Sons met and adopted a Constitution and Bylaws. The Order began with twenty-one enrolled members. A much larger number had participated in the Fourth of July parade, but many of them were too young to be quest of the Native Sons, the Legislature made Admission Day a statutory holiday.

In keeping Admission Day alive the Order focuses attention on a fact more important than California's admission: the more salient consideration that by the terms of the Compromise of 1850 California's entrance as a free state broke the deadlock on the slavery issue. Observance of Admission Day has been a chief annual project of the Order. Some of these celebrations have left an impressive history, notably 1890, 1900 and 1910. The Diamond Jubilee in 1925 and the one hundredth anniversary in 1950 were never to be forgotten. The Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2000 was spectacular.

The Native Sons succeeded in making Admission Day a State holiday but, with the lack of interest in California's history in recent years, Admission Day is now just another day to most Californians and is no longer a State holiday.

The Native Sons and Daughters continue to strive to keep the day alive with local celebrations. accepted as members of a fraternal society. John A. Steinbach, who had been born in San Francisco on October 21, 1854, was elected as the group's first president. General Winn was elected as an honorary member, as was George P. Anthony, who donated the use of the hall for the meetings.

When the Order was organized, General Winn envisioned an educational feature which did not develop. However, he did teach the young members the rudiments of parliamentary law. Meetings were intended to be places of discussion, hence a place to speak, which in French is the word "parler." Therefore, the original band of Native Sons voted to call the group "parlor," not "lodge," "chapter" or "council." The use of the word "parlor" at times has given a false assumption that originally the society met in the homes of its members. Not

true; they never did so.

The first bylaws fixed dues at one dollar per month and provided sick benefits of one dollar per day. It was further provided that if a member's illness should become chronic, the organization might pay the member a lump sum of one hundred dollars and discontinue further benefits.

As most of the members of the first parlor were immature and unfamiliar with parliamentary procedure, a parliamentary school was held during the first year. General Winn was the teacher during the first six months and John A. Steinbach thereafter. Steinbach wrote the first ritual, John V. McDougald and Charles H. Smith.

Steinbach, the first president, was not quite twenty-one years of age. Secretary Smith was but twenty. At this time the organization was known only as the Native Sons of the Golden West.

The idea of separate, affiliated parlors did not evolve until later. The San Francisco city directories for 1875, 1876 and 1878 list the Native Sons of the Golden West as an historical and literary society, not as a fraternal or benevolent organization. From the beginning, the Order was dedicated to the history of California; the fraternal features became secondary auxiliaries of the primary function.

In January 1876 Jasper Fishbourne succeeded Steinbach as president. At this time there were ninety-six members. In July of the same year the membership totaled one hundred and eighteen. John E. McDougald became president at that time. He was succeeded by D. W. Wheply and G. H. Fairchild in January and July 1877, respectively.

Membership was limited to white males born in California on or after July 7, 1846. This date was selected because it marked the raising by Commodore John Drake Sloat of the Stars and Stripes at Monterey which proclaimed California under American rule. All persons born in California from that time on were held to have been born under the American Flag and hence citizens from birth. After the Order was organized it was felt that the adherence to this rule requiring birth after July 7, 1846, worked a hardship upon a number of desirable and patriotic men who were born in California prior to that date and who wished to affiliate with the Order. One of these was Romauldo Pacheco, born in San Luis Obispo in 1831, governor of California in 1875 at the time the Order was organized. Pacheco gave his approval to the new society and, in later years when Californians born here before 1846 were made eligible, Pacheco joined Alcatraz Parlor No. 145.

The first project of the new organization was the observance of Admission Day, September 9, 1875, the twenty-fifth anniversary of California's admission to the Union (see section on Admission Day).

Why a Fraternal Society?

Although fraternal societies existed in the primitive ages of man, their growth in the United States was one of the major social phenomena of the nineteenth century. Modern fraternal societies are a product of the Industrial Revolution and the urbanization movement. As long as the majority of men worked from sun to sun, they had little time for lodges. The transplanted workers from farm to city promoted leisure time in an age when men had few books, poor light for night reading and nowhere to go; hence, there was a gap in their lives which was filled by the organization of fraternal societies.

Since unemployment insurance, health insurance and other social security had not yet been conceived, men looked to one another for security and protection. They found in fraternal societies sick and death benefits. Another fact of the last half of the nineteenth century was that working men received low wages, there were no unions, and few had a chance to use their powers of leadership. Only a few could enter politics. In the fraternal society, however, each man had his voice and vote, and each member was on a par with every other member.

People joined fraternal organizations for six major reasons: the desire to be with other people, for variety, for security, for social approval, to feel less inferior and to help others.

Expansion

The original branch of Native Sons was linked to San Francisco, but the aims and purposes of the group appealed to many and soon there were requests for branches throughout the West. However, the Order has consistently confined itself to the political boundaries of the State of California. The term Golden West might imply a larger area, as Spanish and Mexican California extended inland beyond the Colorado River.

The Order's first expansion came on December 17, 1877, when Oakland Parlor No. 2 was instituted. Sacramento No. 3 followed on May 3, 1878. A meeting of representatives of the parlors to discuss common problems and policies was held in San Francisco on November 20, 1878, and this constituted the first Grand Parlor. A second such meeting was held in 1879. At the third session in 1880 the Grand Parlor was made a parent body. The San Francisco unit surrendered its authority and became a subordinate parlor under the name "California Parlor No. 1." From then on, the Grand Parlor has been the organic governing body of the Order.

In the meantime, two additional parlors, San Francisco No. 4 and Los Angeles No. 5 had been instituted. Both had brief existences. In the Order's history, about 320 parlors have been instituted. In earlier years, many parlors were formed in places that have been depopulated, resulting in their demise.

The Story of General Winn

California has had an unusually colorful history. Her discovery by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, her exploration, and finally her settlement and founding of the missions, is truly a glorious story. The missions, fundamentally a religious enterprise looking to the conversion of the Indigenous People, were accompanied by civic development. In the presidios and on the ranchos, children were born, and a generation of citizens raised. It was the discovery of gold, however, that affected the fullness of California's development.

When the news of the discovery was heralded, a great migratory movement started and men and women from all parts of the world came to California. For the most part, they were Americans and brought with them the mighty American spirit of democracy. Too, they gave California the benefit of their will to work, to build and to develop so that what was wilderness became an empire.

The Gold Rush was one of the great migrations of history. It was different from most other population shifts in that it was not part of the pillages of war but was characterized by peace. The pioneers arrived in California and built homes for their children. Cities grew, the soil was cultivated, the organization of state government was perfected, schools were opened, industries were introduced, and the new state became great almost immediately. This was the work of those mighty men and women. It was not the result of the efforts of one or two or ten great ones but was the consolidated contribution of all.

Among those who came in Gold Rush days was Albert Maver Winn, who arrived in San Francisco on May 28, 1848. He was a man of vision and saw beyond his immediate present. He realized what had been taking place and sought immortalization of the pioneer fathers and mothers of California.

Albert Maver Winn, founder of the Native Sons of the Golden West, was born in Loudon County, Virginia, on April 27, 1810, the oldest of eighteen children. His father, Capt. John Winn, was of Welch ancestry, the son of a distinguished soldier in the Revolutionary War. His mother, Anjanet Maver, was a native of Liverpool but of Scotch-Irish parents. When Albert was but two years old his father, commissioned a captain, marched away in his coat of blue to fight against England in the War of 1812.

Impressed with patriotism and love of fatherland from his very infancy, Albert grew up with an intense love of American institutions that characterized his conduct from youth to old age.

After the close of the war the family moved to Culpepper County. This was not a period of prolific interest in education, especially in the South, and hence Winn's schooling was somewhat restricted. He attended a school in Culpepper County, however, until he was about twelve years old. Thereafter he helped on the farm until he was sixteen. About this time, he became an apprentice and learned the carpenter's trade. In 1824 when Albert was fourteen, the family moved to Zanesville, Ohio. In 1829 at age nineteen Albert Winn married Miss Catherine Gaffney at Zanesville. Shortly thereafter the young couple move to Mississippi where Winn engaged in the lumbering business and in carpentry. In 1831 he attained his legal majority. Andrew Jackson was now President of the United States and Albert Winn became a Jackson Democrat, ever after cherishing a veneration for the political principles of that idol of the western frontier.

It was during the years of his residence in Mississippi that Winn became interested in military affairs. In 1835

he became a lieutenant in the militia and in 1836 Governor Lynch commissioned him a major on the staff.

From 1840 to 1844 Winn was State Drillmaster. In 1845 he was promoted to colonel. It was in this military capacity that he became acquainted with Jefferson Davis and presided at the election in which he was chosen Colonel of the Mississippi Volunteers of the Mexican War. At this time (1846) Winn was president of the Master Carpenters and Joiners Society of Vicksburg and had also served on the Vicksburg City Council.

In spite of Winn's happy residence of seventeen years at Vicksburg and his attainment of position in the business, military and civic life of the state, the lure of the far west beckoned, and he joined that long train of adventurous men who set forth for California after the discovery of gold. Winn left Vicksburg on February 14, 1849, arrived in San Francisco May 28, and settled at Sacramento on June 25.

Winn had been a man of civic and military experience at Vicksburg and therefore it is not at all surprising that he took an active and constructive part in the municipal beginnings of Sacramento. In the fall of 1849, he was elected first mayor of that city. His administration appears to have been quite successful.

In 1850 California organized a militia of four divisions and eight brigades. By resolution of the Legislature on April 10, 1850, and with the approval of Governor Peter H. Burnett, Winn was appointed brigadier general. In 1854 he was reappointed by Governor John Bigler. About this time, a group of unprincipled settlers entered the lands of John A. Sutter, destroyed his timber and committed other acts of defiance adverse to the owner's rights. Sutter pursued conciliatory methods only to receive great injuries. Finally, in an attempt to disperse the encroachers, riots broke out. These are known in California history as the Squatter Riots. Mayor Hardin Bigelow was killed. General Winn organized the Law-and-Order League and used his brigade in supplementing the peace officers in restoring order.

General Winn not only made his contributions to the civil and military beginnings of Sacramento, but he was also a prime mover in the fraternal and religious life of his community as well. In 1851 he organized the first Odd Fellows Lodge on the Pacific Coast and was its first Noble Grand. He was also instrumental in the establishment of Grace Church (later St. Paul's), the first Episcopal church in Sacramento, of which he was both officer and communicant. Winn was also a Mason. Indeed, his granddaughter wrote, "We are told that the general belonged to every fraternal society in Sacramento in the early days and it is quite probably that this is true."

As early as 1849 he organized the Odd Fellows Relief Association for Widows and Orphans. Later he got the Masons and Odd Fellows to join in financing a hospital for their sick and destitute. He was a champion of temperance, having joined the Sons of Temperance in 1853.

While in Sacramento, Winn was land agent for General Sutter. Later he functioned as a Notary Public in Grass Valley. For a time, he resided in Sutter County, where he was defeated for the Legislature. He was president of the Swamp Lands Commission from its inception until his death.

Winn moved to San Francisco in 1860 and engaged in the real estate business. He was a regular contributor to the *New Age* and to the *Daily Alta Californian*. He also edited a Labor journal known as *The Shop and Senate*.

Winn's wife died in 1862, and he married the widow of the murdered editor, James King of William, whose tragic death brought the second Vigilance Committee into existence. In 1869 he attempted to organize the Native Sons of the Golden West but failed because the boys were too young. He tried again in 1875 and succeeded in perfecting the organization on July 11, 1875. On July 4, 1876, Winn organized the Sons of the Revolutionary Sires, later known as the Sons of the American Revolution. General Winn's organization was the western branch of the national society and later merged with them.

In addition to his many other accomplishments, Winn was a stalwart champion of the labor movement. It was due to his efforts that the carpenters obtained an eight-hour day.

After founding the Sons of the Revolutionary Sires, General Winn retired to the ranch of his stepson, Charles J. King, at Sonoma. From then on, his activities were lessened due to the advance of the years.

Winn died at Sonoma on August 26, 1883, and his body was taken to Sacramento for the funeral. The Masons whose precepts he had so well adhered to, the Odd Fellows he had served so long and so faithfully, and the ministry of Grace Church he had helped found might well have conducted his funeral, but this honor was given to the Native Sons of the Golden West who laid their brother-founder to rest under the ritual of the Order which give back the body of the fallen son of California to the soil of his native state. Sacramento paid a high tribute to

its first mayor, with courts and civic offices suspending business on the day of the funeral.

In 1887, the Grand Parlor voted to assess each member fifty cents to raise money for a monument on Winn's grave. The monument, erected in 1888, is a granite shaft fifteen feet high in Sacramento's Pioneer Cemetery.

Membership Confined to Native Californians

Membership in the Native Sons of the Golden West was originally limited to those born in California. Originally, these would have to had to be born on or after July 7, 1846, which date the Order selected because it marked the raising of the Stars and Stripes at Monterey by Commodore Sloat, who proclaimed California to be under American rule. Later, Californians born before 1846 were allowed to join.

Not all of the first members were Californians. Some of the correspondence which still exists from the founding days refers to "young men over 16 years of age, born west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains," It is known that two of the original members were born in Albany, Oregon.

Over the years, many attempts have been made to make non-native Californians eligible for membership; all have failed. Some of the proposed changes in eligibility called for "associate" membership, while others sought to make non-natives full members. The Order is now open to membership children of Native Sons who were born outside California because their parents were stationed outside the state's borders while performing military service or children of Native Sons born outside the borders because the nearest hospital was in another state.

Membership Open to All

Membership in the Native Sons of the Golden West is open to any California-born, or U.S. citizen residing in California, man or woman over the age of 18. It was not always so.

Like most fraternal organizations formed in the 19th century, membership in the Native Sons was originally limited to white men. While this requirement seems strange in the 21st century, it was common and accepted practice through the first half of the 20th century. A Native Son historian explained the policy as "not because of racial prejudice, but for general social reasons" (whatever that meant). At the 89th Grand Parlor in 1966, Grand President I. T. Zaragoza appointed a Constitutional Revision Committee charged with removing archaic language and updating the Native Sons Constitution. As part of their work the Committee recommended that the Constitution be aligned with the provisions of the 1967 Federal Civil Rights Act, resulting in the elimination of all racial restrictions. Delegates to the 90th Grand Parlor in Los Banos in 1967 adopted the committee's recommendations and membership in the Native Sons of the Golden West was thereafter open to all native-born Californians, without regard to race or color.

Unlike some organizations which are based on religious affiliation, the Native Sons of the Golden West has always stood for religious freedom and tolerance. In the first days of the Order, the Catholic John Steinbach, the Protestant John Edmund McDougald and the Jew William Josephi joined hands in a fraternal fellowship into which religious differences never entered. Belief in God, birth in California, loyalty to the United States and good moral character were—and are—the only requirements for membership.

After 1967, the only remaining requirement for membership was being male. By resolution of the 117th Grand Parlor in Redding in 1994, all references to gender were eliminated from the Constitution and women were permitted to enter.

Since then, Native Son parlors are composed of men and women of all ethnicities, working together. Similarly, our Grand Officers reflect the same diversity enjoyed by the citizens of the Golden State.

Native Sons and the Japanese

One part of the history of the Native Sons which we regret today is our handling of the “Japanese Question.” While our Order has not condoned these activities for decades, it is important that our members and the public understand the background of this unhappy chapter in our history.

The Native Sons’ role in promoting the incarceration of Japanese at the beginning of World War II is the most visible part of the Order’s activities in this regard, but its efforts to exclude the Japanese from the state began much earlier.

For many years in the earlier 20th century, Federal law prohibited people from Asia from becoming United States citizens. Seeking to preserve the “California for Americans” ideal and fearing that immigrants from China and Japan would take over the state’s agriculture to the exclusion of the state’s citizens, the Native Sons joined with dozens of organizations such as the California chapters of the American Legion, the American Federation of Labor and the Grange and dozens of newspapers supporting continuing the ban on Asian immigration.

The general political climate of California was one of antipathy. The Alien Land Law, passed in 1913 and aimed at preventing Japanese from owning land, was strengthened by the electorate through a 1920 initiative. While the stance of the Native Sons of the Golden West was, in retrospect, not excusable, it was in keeping with that of virtually all statewide civic organizations of that era.

The Native Sons Joint Immigration Committee was established by the Grand Parlor to have jurisdiction over immigration matters and to urge State and Federal officials to maintain control over who was allowed to enter the United States and the privileges they would enjoy when and if they did enter.

In a strange contradiction, on September 8, 1923, the Board of Grand Officers voted to send \$1,000 (\$17,109 in 2023 dollars) to the Japanese Earthquake Relief Fund, to help those whose lives were disrupted by the disastrous earthquake that year. At the same meeting the board urged continuing exclusion of the Japanese from California.

Even in those early days, the Order’s policy hurt its prestige and led many outsiders to conclude that the Native Sons were dedicated to racial discrimination. Public utterances by representatives of the Order, such as “Keep California a white man’s paradise,” alienated not only Blacks and Orientals, but all tolerant white Americans.

The “Japanese Problem” came to a head with the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The anti-Japanese hysteria was further fueled by Japanese submarines attacking California itself, such as the shelling of an oil field at Goleta on February 23, 1942, and the sinking of merchant ships off the California coast. Panicked Americans imagined they saw Japanese spies and saboteurs everywhere and demanded that all Japanese—citizens or not—be removed from areas in the “Western Theater of War,” which included California. History showed not one proven act of spying or sabotage was performed by any Japanese in California, but one has to understand the fear of the Japanese that gripped Californians and led them (and the Native Sons of the Golden West) to insist that the Japanese be interned.

While we disapprove of the racist actions of our predecessors, we cannot change one item of that history. What Native Sons can and did do was discard these policies more than a half-century ago and welcome Californians, both men and women, of all races.

Charities

The Order of the Native Sons of the Golden West has been dedicated since its earliest years to helping those who are less fortunate. It has always expressed a concern for the Order’s members and their families through payment of sick and death benefits.

In 1910, the Native Sons expanded its charitable work outside the Order by joining with the Native Daughters of the Golden West to form the Homeless Children Agency. For more than forty years the agency placed thousands of abandoned children in foster homes until changed conditions forced both Orders to withdraw from this work in 1951.

The Native Sons then adopted a new charity, the Native Sons of the Golden West Charitable Foundation, which provides funds for children born with cleft palates or other craniofacial anomalies. A 501 (c) (3) corporation, it has donated over \$7.5 million as of 2023. The Foundation is distinguished by the fact that 99% of the money raised goes to the three hospitals: University of California in San Francisco, St. John’s Hospital in Santa Monica and Sutter Memorial Hospital in Sacramento. Contributions are tax deductible. The directors receive no

compensation or expense reimbursement; the only deductions are for postage and stationery.

Many parlors offer college scholarships to relatives of members. As an example of the scope of the Native Sons' charitable endeavors throughout its history, the disastrous 1906 Earthquake and Fire left many San Franciscan's homeless and in desperate need of food and clothing. Within 24 hours, the many Los Angeles area parlors had formed a committee and sent a boatload and trainloads of relief supplies to The City. The LA parlors recruited one hundred seam- stresses which produced clothing for the victims.

Dedications

From its founding, the Order of the Native Sons of the Golden West has been committed to preserving the history of California through restoring historic sites, constructing monuments and dedicating historic structures. The list of such efforts is too lengthy to include here, but several of the most outstanding are listed below. Some of the efforts were accomplished jointly with the Native Daughters of the Golden West or other organizations.

- Restoration of Sutter's Fort in Sacramento. In the 1880s, the City of Sacramento wanted to demolish this dilapidated relic of the pre- Gold Rush days, but the Native Sons purchased it, restored it and presented it to the State. It stands today, one of the most important historic sites in California, a tribute to the perseverance of the Order.
- Restoration of the old Customs House in Monterey, one of the most significant structures of California's early history.
- Restoration of the Old Bale Mill north of Napa by parlors of the Napa Valley.
- Construction of the Donner Monument (1918) on the shore of Donner Lake where the ill-fated party found tragedy in 1846.
- Construction of the Bear Flag Monument in the Square in Sonoma, dedicated June 14, 1914, commemorating the raising of the Bear Flag on June 14, 1846.
- Construction of a monument over the grave of founder General A. M. Winn in Sacramento's Pioneer Cemetery.
- Construction of the Marshall Monument in Coloma, dedicated to James W. Marshall, the discoverer of gold in California, erected in 1890 on land donated by Placerville Parlor.
- Construction of a monument to Father St. Junipero Serra on the State Capital grounds in Sacramento (1967).
- Activities involving the California Missions, including contributions toward restoring missions in San Jose, San Miguel, San Fernando, San Diego, San Miguel, San Gabriel and Santa Cruz, as well as rebuilding the bell tower of Mission Santa Inez.
- Dedication of new civic structures, such as schools, city halls and bridges.

Admission Day

The observance of Admission Day, September 9, has been one of the goals of the Native Sons since the Order's founding.

In fact, the first project of the new organization was the observance of Admission Day, September 9, 1875, the twenty-fifth anniversary of California's admission into the Union. The Natives' observance consisted of the members marching from their hall on Bush Street to Montgomery Street, then out Market Street to Woodward's Gardens, a resort with picnic grounds at 14th and Mission Streets. They were led by the Zouaves, a French military organization. The procession was headed by the American Flag, the Bear Flag and the artificial grizzly bear they had carried in the previous Independence Day parade. At the Gardens, the small but enthusiastic group celebrated Admission Day.

For a quarter century the Society of California Pioneers had held literary exercises on September 9. The observance of the day now passed to younger and native hands. Admission Day was made a State holiday by decree of Governor William Irwin, and for the ensuing decade each governor proclaimed it. In 1888-1889, at the request of the Native Sons, the Legislature made Admission Day a statutory holiday.

In keeping Admission Day alive the Order focuses attention on a fact more important than California's admission: the mor salient consideration that by the terms of the Compromise of 1850 California's entrance as a

free state broke the deadlock on the slavery issue. Observance of Admission Day has been a chief annual project of the Order. Some of these celebrations have left an impressive history, notably 1890, 1900 and 1910. The Diamond Jubilee in 1925 and the one hundredth anniversary in 1950 were never to be forgotten. The Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2000 was spectacular.

The Native Sons succeeded in making Admission Day a State holiday but, with the lack of interest in California's history in recent years, Admission Day is now just another day to most Californians and is no longer a State holiday. The Native Sons and Daughters continue to strive to keep the day alive with local celebrations.

Parks and Conservation

The Order of the Native Sons of the Golden West has always been in the forefront of conservation measures designed to preserve California State Parks.

California's history and enhance the State's beauty. Long before the active protection of the environment became popular, the Native Sons were working to protect the beauty of California and ensure that appropriate sites were dedicated in perpetuity to the enjoyment of natives and visitors.

As an example of just one of many such efforts, the delegates to the 48th Grand Parlor in 1925 passed a resolution calling on the State Legislature to create a "fundamental plan for a State Park system... related to the highway system...and so planned as to be accessible to our citizens in various sections of the State and comprehensive enough to include all the varied features of mountain and valley, forest and mesa, stream and coastline, which make up the charm and attractiveness of California."

Parlors continue to work in partnership with the State Park System: Redwood #66 donated redwood lumber from its Bear Lodge to be used for construction of a replica Chinese shrimp-fishing junk based at China Camp State Park; Fairfax #307 rebuilt the CCC barbecue pits at Samuel Pl Taylor Park in Marine; there are many other such instances of cooperation with the State Parks System.

Public Speaking, Essay, and Scholarship Contests

In 1915, Elk Grove #41 organized a public speaking contest among high school students and conducted it locally until 1938, when it was adopted as a project of Grand Parlor. Contestants learned about California history and polished their speaking skills by researching California subjects, writing and memorizing their talks and presenting them without notes in district and area contests, the area winners competing at Grand Parlor. The contest was discontinued in 2002, largely because of a decline in interest in public speaking at the high school level.

Replacing the Public Speaking Contest was the Grand Parlor Essay Contest for fourth grade students, with prizes for local and state winners. The subject matter is confined to California history.

This contest has been highly successful in inspiring students to study their state's history and polish their writing skills.

Also continuing is the Native Sons Scholarship Contest, established by the Grand Parlor in 2005. It is available to children and grandchildren of all members. Several subordinate parlors also have scholarship contests.

Lott's Lake

Native Sons and their families have been enjoying Lott's Lake, a pristine eighty acres in the high country of Plumas County, since the Lott and Sank families of Butte County gave the property to the Native Sons "for the perpetual use and enjoyment of all Native Sons." The road leading to the lake is rough and the campsite primitive, allowing those who venture to Lott's Lake to enjoy an almost wilderness experience. Information on the Lake is available from the Grand Parlor office and the chair of the Lott's Lake Committee, whose name is listed in the Official Directory.

Mining Claims

Native Sons and their families have been enjoying the Golden Serenity Mining Camp, located in Calaveras County, for several years now. The site is available seasonally to all Native Sons and their families, for camping and pan mining. The road leading to the claim is a maintained forest service road. The site has a year-round running creek and primitive campsite areas, allowing those who venture to the claim to enjoy an almost wilderness experience. Several other claims are in the process of being transferred to the Native Sons of the Golden West.

Information on the Claim is available from the Grand Parlor office and the chair of the Mining Committee, whose name is listed in the Official Directory.

California Adventure Club

The California Adventure Club was established to provide Native Sons and their families with opportunities to explore, learn, and have fun! The club is all about embracing the great outdoors, attending exciting sporting and cultural events, and discovering historically significant sites. Whether we are setting up camp under the stars, cheering at a game, or walking through the corridors of history, there is always something for everyone to enjoy.

We believe in the spirit of adventure and camaraderie, and we welcome anyone who shares our passion for exploring new places and making lasting memories. No matter your background or experience level, if you are ready for a good time, you're welcome to join us on our next adventure!

Information on the California Adventure Club is available from the Grand Parlor office and the leader of the group, whose name is listed in the Official Directory.

Official Publication

Starting in 1908, the Native Sons of the Golden West had an official publication, *The Grizzly Bear*. It was edited jointly by the Native Sons and Daughters and published by the Grizzly Bear Publishing Company, an independent organization, the directors of which were Native Sons and Daughters chosen by their boards of directors. Unlike the later publication, it was sent only to those Native Sons and Daughters who subscribed to it, not to all members of both Orders.

By 1954, advertising revenue and circulation had declined to the point where it was no longer economically feasible to publish *The Grizzly Bear*, and it was discontinued. The Order now has a bi-monthly publication, *The Native Son*, published under the sponsorship of the Grand Parlor and distributed free to all members in good standing.

Starting in 2023, *The Native Son* became an electronic edition, available by email. Members wishing to receive *The Native Son* by email must request to be added to the email list by sending a request to grandparlor@nsgw.org, and those wishing to receive a printed *Native Son* must request it from their parlor recording secretary.

Columbia Museum

The Native Sons Museum in Columbia Parlor's Hall was established by the 88th Grand Parlor in 1965. The parlor originally owned the hall, but the State took it over as part of Columbia State Historic Park. The museum contains Native Son memorabilia as well as displays of current Native Son events and projects and serves as an introduction to the Order for thousands of tourists who visit the park each year.

Historical Preservation Foundation

The mission of the Native Sons of the Golden West Historical Preservation Foundation is to make California and American history accessible, informative, meaningful and entertaining for the public through the preservation, sponsorship and promotion of historical sites and events to commemorate historical dates. In doing so, it helps to further the purpose for which the Native Sons of the Golden West was founded: to preserve the history of 1849.

Realizing that the Native Sons needed a means to go outside the Order if necessary to further and expand the Native Sons historical preservation efforts, members of the Grand Parlor established the Native Sons of the

Golden West Historical Preservation Foundation (HPF) early in 2000. Its tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) organization allows it to receive and disburse contributions from corporate donors as well as from within the Order. It gives donors the opportunity for tax-deductible contributions. Members of the Board of Directors receive no compensation for their service; thus, almost every dollar donated goes directly to projects which preserve the history of California.

Since 2009, the HPF has been able to reconnect Native Sons with California State Parks at numerous historical sites such as the Monterey Custom House, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park and the Vallejo Adobe. The HPF was able to partner with State Parks to provide California Historical Registered Landmark plaques in many parts of the state.

The HPF has provide assistance to many local and community groups throughout the state. In addition, the HPF acts as a focal point or liaison for the Native Sons, facilitating historical activities and projects for many groups.

Through the continued generous support of both parlors and individual members, the HPF is working hard to fulfill the purpose for which both the Foundation and the Native Sons of the Golden West were founded.

For additional information, you can email us,

grandsecretary@nsgw.org

or

grandparlor@nsgw.org

Check out the Native Sons' Website,

www.nsgw.org

for current information about activities around the Order.



IN FRIENDSHIP, LOYALTY AND CHARITY.

Native Sons of the Golden West
Charitable Foundation
5755 BENTLEY DRIVE, SUITE 100
DUBLIN, CA 94568

Established 1953

