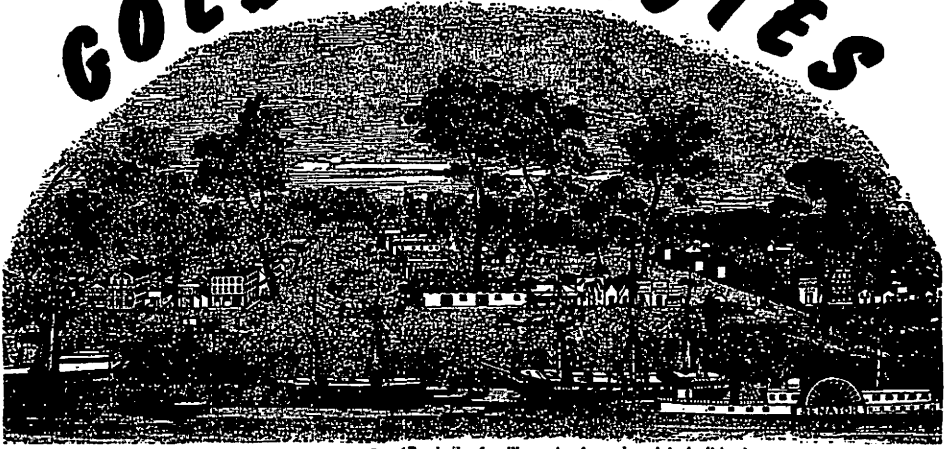


# GOLDEN NOTES



SACRAMENTO, WINTER OF 1849. (Facsimile of an illustration from the original edition.)

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### HISTORY

There is no great and no small  
To the Soul that maketh all;  
And where it cometh, all things are;  
And it cometh everywhere.

I am owner of the sphere,  
Of all the seven stars and the solar year,  
Of Caesar's hand, and Plato's brain,  
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's brain.

Emerson

### HISTORY

There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only sovereign agent.

Of the works of this mind history is the record. Its genius is illustrated by the entire series of days. Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history. Without hurry, without rest, the human spirit goes forth from the beginning to embody every faculty, every thought, every emotion which belongs to it, in appropriate events. But the thought is always prior to the fact; all the facts of history pre-exist in the mind as laws. Each law in turn is made by circumstances predominant, and the limits of nature give power to but one at a time. A man is the whole encyclopaedia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn, and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man. Epoch after epoch, camp, kingdom, empire, republic, democracy, are merely the application of his manifold spirit to the manifold world.

The opening paragraphs of The Essay on History  
By Ralph Waldo Emerson

#### SOME THOUGHTS ON HISTORY

I have read somewhere or other--in Dionysius, I think--that history is philosophy teaching by examples.

Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751)  
On the Study and Use of History 1752, Letter 2

Nations, like men have their infancy. Ibid. Letter 4

Peoples and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principals deduced from it.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)  
Introduction to Philosophy of History 1832

#### I, TOO, AM AMERICAN

A story of integrated schooling  
in Sacramento, California.

Ruth A. Butler

ON August 1, 1893 the ungraded colored school located on O Street between Ninth and Tenth Streets was ordered discontinued by the Sacramento City School Board and the pupils were directed to attend schools in the districts in which they resided. Miss Sarah M. Jones, the negro teacher who had faithfully served for twenty years, was then assigned as principal to the white Fremont primary school which employed a staff of six teachers. So ended segregation in Sacramento Schools.

This event did not appear in the local press along with deaths - marriages - crime news - visiting celebrities and all that makes up small town life. Although it went unsung, it was big news. It meant Americans in California had reached a new high point in their understanding and practice of democracy.

There is a story behind this integration of the negro into Sacramento's public schools that spans forty-four years. To understand the situation, one must view the thinking that originally caused segregation in terms of the thinking of the nation as a whole. It must be remembered that California citizenry had migrated West from all sections of the United States including the South bringing with them the ideas and prejudices created by environment. The natural philosophy that the negro was inherently inferior and incapable of social and political equality took root and flourished in the newly formed state of California. New lands and new opportunities did not mean new ideas in democracy. Only gradually were prejudices questioned and concessions made to the negro.

The attitude held by the Supreme Court in the Dredd Scott Decision, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglas were reiterated in California's Constitutional Convention held in Monterey in September 1, 1849.

The debate centered on the question whether to admit the negro in California or exclude him, and if admitted what rights would be allowed. The consensus was that negroes were shiftless, unmanageable and generally undesirable. Few stood up to defend the negro on ethnic grounds or on principle.

Whether the legislators originally came from the North or the South, there was agreement among them that the free negro should not be admitted into either the same citizenship or economic rights with the white Californians.

It was finally decided that the legal status of the negro should be settled by the first legislature which convened in April 1850. During the first session of the legislature definite antipathy to the negro was voiced by Governor Burnett. He advocated excluding the free negro in his opening speech to the session in which he pointed out two courses of action; either admit him to full and free enjoyment of the privileges guaranteed to others by the Constitution, or exclude him. The Governor reasoned that to admit the negro without full rights would have dire consequences insofar as he would have no motivation to contribute to society. The Governor then proposed the alternative - to exclude the negro altogether. A Bill was introduced to exclude the free negro but was not passed. Thus, the negro stood neither legally barred nor legally accepted. They did come to California and many came to Sacramento.

The beginning of public education in Sacramento was so faltering that little thought was given by the city to education of negro children. The first school of any kind was started in 1849 as a private venture with no more than 9 students who only attended until December 1849. It was not until February 20, 1854, that the first public school opened on the southeast corner of 5th and K Streets, in two rented rooms. With 1500 white school age children in line to attend, the 80 negro children in Sacramento had little chance for consideration.

Many negro parents became concerned about educating their children and set about to educate them. Mrs. Elizabeth Thorn Scott, a negro, opened a private school for negroes on May 29, 1854. Thirty of the eighty children in Sacramento attended. Simultaneously, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was a going concern, the members having built their own church and started a Sunday School. Seeing the many negro, indian, and oriental children without any possible chance of education, the congregation took over Mrs. Thorn Scott's private school, made it into a free elementary school, established it in the church basement, and assumed financial responsibility for its operation.

The state legislature passed a law the following year, 1855, that required the common (city) council to start a school within the council boundaries if the heads of fifty white families petitioned and the state would provide state school funds to aid in the project. The negro was not referred to in this legislative act, so one might assume that he had no legal grounds for being included in public schools. The negro was, in effect, ignored.

Mr. Sanderson, the new teacher of the negro school, made repeated appeals to the Sacramento Board of Education for financial assistance. The Board was having financial troubles of its own, but

did give sporadic financial assistance, trying to give in proportion to the tax revenues received from the negro community in relation to the total community's share of school support. This did not amount to much, so the negro people were still almost fully financially responsible for their own school.

The negro school had been operating 4 years in 1858, when the legislature again decided to debate excluding free negroes from the state. The tenor of debate indicated that feeling toward negroes had not changed much since 1850, and many legislators were strongly convinced of the negro's inferiority, wanting to exclude him for this reason.

Despite the harangue in the legislature, the negro people persisted in their efforts for adequate schooling. They purchased property on O Street between ninth and tenth Street, and built their own frame school house. They furnished it and, except for some small financial aid from the Sacramento School Board, hired their own teacher. Finally, in 1859, their continued appeals for financial aid secured a monthly teacher's salary contribution of fifty dollars from the city. At the same time, by comparison, the city was paying teachers and janitors \$100.00 per month.

In 1860, a law was passed sanctioning separate but equal schools for minority groups, supported by public school funds. The legislative act prohibited negroes, mongolians and indians from attending white public schools. This law did not change the relationship of the school to the city system.

Events then occurred which eventually led to the school being included in the city system. First, a flood demolished the negro school house in the winter of 1861. When the water receded, a new school house was built and occupied for nearly two years. Then, someone set fire to the school in September, 1863, burning it to the ground. The negro community then turned to the school board and asked to be made a part of the public school system as provided in the law of 1860.

Inquiry showed that there were fifty negro property owners holding deeds on one hundred lots of real estate in the school district and about 30 negro school children. Agreement was reached with the city and the school was officially made a part of the public school system but still segregated. During 1864 and 1865, school was held at the African Baptist Church and when flood waters came, the school was moved to the African Methodist Episcopal Church on seventh street. In early 1866, the city built the negroes a one-story frame school building on their original lot. The enrollment had now climbed from an average attendance of forty-one in 1864 to fifty-one in 1866.

In 1866, the legislature passed a school law requiring School Board Trustees to respond to applications made for the education of minor children regardless of race. This did not mean integration, but it did mean separate facilities were to be provided.

The next step toward integrated schools resulted from events that took place in San Francisco, where a negro student appealed to be admitted to a white school. He was denied the right from the principal up to the Supreme Court, which ruled that separate schools did not

violate the state constitution or the fourth amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

Meanwhile, the negro people of Sacramento petitioned in January, 1873, to be allowed to attend the night school in Sacramento. The privilege was granted.

The negro school did not break the grades of instruction down chronologically nor did instruction go much past the fifth year. Because of this limitation, two young negro girls made application to attend the white grammar school in December, 1873. The Board deliberated and passed that any qualified student, deemed qualified by the principal, should be admitted. When the principal admitted the girls, he was ordered to stop by the superintendent of schools. When the principal disobeyed, he was suspended. He appealed to the school board, asking with whom the power did lie and the pre-eminence of the board's authority was established. By this time, the Supreme Court handed down its ruling that segregated schools were legal, but must provide equal facilities or negroes would be permitted to attend white schools. The school board declared on May 25, 1874, that segregated facilities were economically impractical and that negro children be admitted into grammar and high schools. Hence, the negro's right to a better education and integration were established and the little frame school on O Street between ninth and tenth streets was closed on August 1, 1893.

From a paper submitted to Dr. McGowan  
at Sacramento State College  
January, 1961

RADIO STATION KRAK initiated a series of vignettes entitled "ALL ABOUT SACRAMENTO", on November 27, 1961. The series was produced in conjunction with the Sacramento County Historical Society and was presented three times daily. The first portion of the series dealt with Sacramento's earliest years, 1808-1849 with a different feature each day.

Because of the demands on the radio station to report political news, the series has been suspended for the past month and will remain off the air until the elections are completed. The first five vignettes were done by Mr. Allan Ottley, historian in the California Section of the California State Library and a member of your historical society. The first five are presented below as taken from the scripts of Radio KRAK - written by Jay Hoffer. - - - -

\* \* SACRAMENTO'S FIRST OFFICIAL POST OFFICE \* \*

SACRAMENTO'S FIRST OFFICIAL POSTOFFICE was opened July 4, 1849, aboard the sailing vessel Whiton moored at the foot of Jay Street. Sacramento's postal service began unofficially in 1839, shortly after the settlement of Sutters Fort. At first, John Sutter took care of the few letters that were received but soon after the discovery of gold in January 1848, the mail increased until Sutter was no longer able to handle it and as the business center shifted from the Fort to the Embarcadero, the new town began clamoring for the establishment of a regular mail service.

\* \* THE FIRST SACRAMENTO COUNTY COURT HOUSE \* \*

ONE of the first public buildings in the city of Sacramento was a county court house at the corner of Seventh and Eye Streets. It was started in 1850, the cornerstone being laid June 24, and was completed on December 24, 1851. In a short eventful life, it not only housed the early county court but also provided a home for the legislative sessions of 1852 and 1854. The building was completely destroyed by the great fire that swept the pioneer settlement of Sacramento in 1854.

\*\*\*\*\* THE EAGLE THEATER \*\*\*\*\*

LOCATED on Front, between Eye and Jay Streets, the Eagle Theater was opened October 18, 1849 and it was the first theater built in California. The seating capacity on the main floor was 300 and in the gallery about 100. During the opening days, the charge for a dress circle seat was five dollars and on the main floor, three dollars. Performances were held three times a week and an orchestra of five pieces furnished the music. In January 1850, the Eagle Theater gave its last performance and the troupe moved to San Francisco.

\*\*\* THE PIONEER BOOKSTORE \*\*\*

TOO many people think of the early West as wild and savage, completely without culture. Early in August 1850, in a room on the first floor of the Placer Times, then located on Second Street, between Kay and L, the Pioneer Bookstore was opened. John Hamilton Still, an enterprising young man in his early twenties, was responsible for the development of the store under the firm name Still, Conner and Company.

\*\*\*\* THE CITY HOTEL \*\*\*\*

THE CITY HOTEL was built in 1849 of timbers originally in John Sutters grist mill. Although the City Hotel was not the first in Sacramento, it rates that distinction because it was the first important building constructed expressly for use as a hotel. It was located at 919 Front Street and was built at an estimated cost of \$78,000.00. The guest rooms were upstairs and they were small and narrow with just enough space for a bed, dresser and the occupant to turn around in. The City Hotel was a three story building, 35 x 55 feet square.

FOR THOSE MEMBERS interested in the Civil War, The Sacramento Civil War Round Table is presenting Mr. Drew West at the Garden and Arts Center, May 22, 1962 at 8:00 p.m. Mr. West will speak on Civil War Photography and has the 4th largest collection of such photography in the nation.

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Garden and Arts Center  
3330 McKinley Boulevard  
Sacramento 16, Calif.

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