

# GOLDEN NOTES

Sacramento County Historical Society

PAUL PALAZZO, Printing Chairman

CARL G. WINTER, Editor

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Number 1

## A NOTE ON OURSELVES

THE HISTORY of Sacramento County is pivotal in the early American history of California because Sacramento was the commercial center of all California north of the Mokelumne River. Since 1854 Sacramento has been the capital of the state and as such has been a focus of historical interest. The Sacramento County Historical Society was organized to learn, preserve and make known this important history, not only for local residents but also for all interested in the Golden State's history.

The Society has at present adopted one method for achieving this purpose, the periodic publication of a bulletin which will include reprints of historical documents, and vignettes of history, expanding eventually into a larger publication. Other means of developing interest in local history have been proposed and will undoubtedly be put into effect gradually during the next few years.

Although early progress has been slow due to problems of organization, we hope to expand our activities in the future and stimulate interest in the history of our area.

DR. JOSEPH A. MCGOWAN, President.

## Sacramento 1853 by Mark Hopkins

Sacramento, Sept. 30, 1853.

Friend Hamilton,

Since you left us nothing remarkable has occurred in our personal history worthy of notice — Our household, and the circle of our mutual acquaintance all continue in health — and are as prosperous in business affairs as we could reasonably expect, though not making money so fast as in 1849, when the fellow drew from his breeches pocket \$10.00 or \$15. in silver & threw it broadcast into the bushes by the wayside because it was burdensome to carry further in his journey to the mines where he expected to find an abundance of gold — The Election which has just passed was the most exciting that has ever taken place in California — The vote was larger than any previous — And as usual Democracy is victorious — Bigler is again

elected Governor — Extension & all\* — and according to the opposition newspapers and stump orators poor California will be ruined again this winter — It is consoling to know from experience that she can stand being ruined once a year.\*\*

Emigration over the plains will be about 25, or 30,000 this year about one half women & children — The proportion of families who come to make this their future home is much larger than any previous

\* Bigler, Democratic nominee, was opposed by William Waldo, a Whig, and won by a majority of 1,503 in spite of the opposition of San Francisco to a bill favored by Bigler to extend the city boundary 600 feet into the bay and create new land.

\*\* Both San Francisco and Sacramento were Whig strongholds.

year — The quantity of cattle, horses & sheep coming in this year is far greater than last year — Indeed it is greater than ever before in any one season — Emigrants generally arrive in good health & have met with less difficulty than formerly — but a good many cattle have died on the road from eating or drinking some poisonous substance, it is thought — Head & Spencer have just arrived safe with their stock — Their loss has been small compared with some others — Prices of cattle, horses & mules keep up much higher than was expected, and I am inclined to think the price of stock will continue high for two or three years — The demand for American stock for breeding purposes has just commenced & until stock is grown here of American blood prices will range high & and all that could be driven cannot reduce it much —

The mines I think are paying well — The aggregate produce I think will be larger this year than ever before — The numerous canals & ditches that carry the water into the dry diggings will increase the yield of the season — The rivers are now at their lowest stage, and the daming & fluming companies are beginning to get into the bed of the Rivers —

Agricultural pursuits are this year extending more than ever — Produce is abundant at low prices compared with former years. Potatoes are worth 2c & 2½c — Cabbage 1c & 1½ — Beets 2½ & 3c. Barley 2¼ — Beans 6 to 7c — Onions 3 & 3½c — Hay \$25. a ton.

Goods generally are low—lower, if any difference, than when you went away — So plenty at San Francisco that there is no disposition to speculate in anything — Indeed so much money is wanted to pay freight & charges & for remittance that there is considerable shining\*\*\* every steamer day down — Hopkins & Miller are as usual, exempt from that sort of business — On the whole, business continues moderate this season, but improving in Sacramento.

San Francisco continues to build up as fast as ever — and here in Sacramento brick buildings are so numerous in course of erection that we keep no run of the number — There are ten now building on Front Street below K. The filling & planking of the streets goes on well & will all be completed according to contract — The filling in of Front Street is in appearance the greatest improvement in town — Real Estate is looking up again — That lot next to ours where Reed & Miller are was sold last week for \$4000. cash. We

have rented a lot on the corner of 5th & K\*\*\*\* for two years at \$200. a month, paid monthly in advance — I think before long we will be realizing \$1000. a month for that corner property through to the alley. Woods & Kenyon are building a brick store for their own use 100 ft. deep on our West line of that property. I am more than ever convinced that K is destined to be the street.

Everything looks promising in Sacramento, except that our Locofoco Mayor Haruenberg & his common council are creating a large city debt & issuing a host of city bonds, for the levee, Water Works, Fire Department, etc, etc. Hardenberg has failed, & Do. Bidleman owner the Orleans Hotel & some people fear he will run the city under before he gets through — But she goes glib now — and if real estate gets up good I mean to pocket some of mine — Taxes are high — Ours this year, licenses & all, will average \$3,000 — but most of it is for extraordinary street improvements —

The Niagara people at the Bay seem to be getting on as usual — McNeil was here a few days since, & Henry Pierce also. They went to Ione Valley and made Carter a visit — Frank DeLong was here a few weeks since — Carman is here frequently — He and his brother are as usual — Warren Sadler is at work with them on the ranch — Franklin Crane is now at work at San Francisco — He talks of going home by every Steamer, but has not gone yet — I tell him he ought not to go, but I suppose he knows best — Mr. O'Leary is here yet — He calls occasionally to see us & is quite well — Please give my respects to I. T. Bellah, Jas. Bacon, your son James & others of my old acquaintance in Lockport — It seems to me almost like a dream that I was so long a resident of Lockport, & so content to be there — I am pleased to hear it is so much improved. O'Leary favors me with Lockport papers by every mail. The three sons of Essapheris Lee, I see frequently. They are well and prosperous.

Yours Very Truly,

Mark Hopkins.

Obtained through courtesy of Miss Caroline Wenzel.

Original on file in California State Library, Sacramento, California, gift of J. E. Hamilton of the Hamilton Manufacturing Co., Printers Equipment, Two Rivers, Wisconsin, Nov. 1929. Mr. Hamilton is the grandson of H. M. Hamilton to whom the letter was written. Mr. H. M. Hamilton was living at Lockport, New York, in 1863.

\*\*\* Shining was borrowing of money.

\*\*\*\* The present Stall Building.

## Present Members of Sacramento County Historical Society

- Azevedo, Frank
- \* Baggelmann, Ted
- \* Baggelmann, Mrs. Ted
- \* Baker, Dwight
- \* Bell, Miss Cieta M.
- Bielefeld, Miss Jeanne L.
- \* Capen, Miss Nelle B.
- \* Christy, Frank S.
- \* Christy, Mrs. Frank S.
- \* Clark, Miss Irene
- \* Collins, Henry B.
- \* Crandall, Don
- \* Crandall, Mrs. Frank R.
- \* Davis, J. F.
- \* Davis, Mrs. J. F.
- \* Dean, Miss Helen C.
- Leterung, Charles W.
- Drake, Miss Dorothy
- Enzmann, Albert
- \* Ferguson, Miss Martha J.
- \* Firebaugh, Mrs. Dorothy
- Foster, Mrs. Muriel
- \* Gardiner, Robert Ashton
- \* Gilette, Mrs. F. B.
- \* Goethe, Charles M.
- Greenleaf, Mrs. Margery
- Halsted, Mrs. Helen
- \* Harrison, Michael
- \* Harrison, Mrs. Michael
- \* Howes, Edward H.
- \* Jones, Dr. J. Roy
- Kantor, David
- \* Lee, Mrs. Aletha A.
- \* McGowan, Dr. Joseph A.
- \* Meeks, Miss Elsie
- \* Mitchell, Stewart
- \* Mitchell, Mrs. Stewart
- \* Motlow, John D.
- \* Murray, Paul R.
- \* Ottley, Allan R.
- \* Ottley, Mrs. Allan R.
- Palazzo, Paul
- Powrie, Harry
- Powrie, Mrs. Harry
- \* Pugh, Miss Dawn
- \* Pugh, Mrs. R. D.
- Rase, Wm.
- Rensch, Ethel Grace
- Rensch, Hero Eugene
- Sayre, Edgar A., Jr.
- Sayre, Mrs. Edgar A., Jr.
- \* Shaw, Ralph H.
- Simpson, Mrs. Wm. M.
- Sowell, Ernest E.
- \* Smith, Carl P.
- \* Smith, Mrs. Carl P.
- \* Smith, Col. Waddell F.
- \* Smith, Willard

- Steuber, Mrs. Robert N.
- \* Stoddard, Walter E.
- Templeton, Connor
- Templeton, Mrs. Connor
- Wales, Joseph H.
- \* Webster, Mrs. Rita C.
- \* Weems, Mrs. Tom
- Wemmer, Frederick A.
- \* Wenzel, Miss Caroline
- Wilson, Alan L.
- \* Wilson, E. L.
- \* Wilson, James R.
- \* Winter, Dr. Carl G.

\* denotes charter members.

## History of the Sacramento County Historical Society

At the instigation of Dr. Joseph A. McGowan, the first informal meeting to consider the feasibility of establishing a Sacramento County Historical Society was held in the Sierra Room at Sacramento State College at 8 p. m. May 28, 1953. Twenty-nine people were present.

A brief outline for such a society was given by Dr. McGowan; several activities were suggested such as recording reminiscences, collecting letters, and diaries; research, and outlining trips to points of historical interest. It was suggested that the Society should foster a publication of a modest nature and later a more ambitious work.

Two decisions were reached at this meeting. Dr. McGowan was elected President of the Society, and a committee composed of Dr. J. Roy Jones and Walter E. Stoddard with President McGowan was appointed to consider suggestions made at this time and to report on June 25, 1953, which was designated as the organizational meeting to be held in the State College Library. At this meeting, Ted Baggelmann was nominated for Vice-president and Mrs. Michael Harrison for Secretary-Treasurer, and they were later elected.

Stewart Mitchell was appointed chairman of a committee of five members to draft a Constitution and By-laws, to be presented at the September meeting. The other members of the committee were Michael Harrison, Walter E. Stoddard, Miss Caroline Wenzel, Dr. Carl G. Winter with Dr. McGowan and Ted Baggelmann ex officio members. Frank Christy was appointed as chairman of publicity.

It was unanimously decided that the name of the Society be "The Sacramento County Historical Society" and dues would be \$1.50 for each calendar year, or portion thereof. Charter members were to be those who paid their dues on or before September 24, 1953; forty-seven members qualified. Due to being absent from the city, Mrs. Michael Harrison resigned as Secretary - Treasurer and Mrs. Stewart Mitchell was appointed to fill the office.

After a two month vacation, the first regular meeting of the Society was held September 24, 1953, the speaker for the evening being Judge Peter Shields, age 92, retired Judge of the Superior Court of Sacramento County.

The Constitution and By-laws of the Society were approved after a few minor changes. According to the Constitution meetings were to be held the fourth Thursday of the month, September through May, unless holidays or emergencies interfered.

On October 22, 1953, Dr. G. N. Bowman, Historian in the office of the State Archivist, was the speaker. He spoke on "Checking and Analyzing Facts Before Accepting Them." Allan Otley and Mrs. Frank Christy were elected directors of the Society for the remainder of the year.

Dr. McGowan reported on the Historical Landmarks Committee of the City Council which he attended. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss "the feasibility of establishing a local Historic Monuments Commission to stimulate and organize the establishment of markers to commemorate buildings, sites, or events of importance or interest to local people."

At the November 19, 1953, meeting, Mr. A. E. Morrison, County Agricultural Commissioner, was the speaker. He showed slides and gave a talk on early Sacramento history. It was announced that Walter E. Stoddard had been appointed as Librarian for the Society.

Instead of having a speaker at the December 17th meeting, suggestions were given by the members as to future projects for the Society. Many suggestions were

offered, to be given consideration at later meetings. It was agreed that the Society would issue certificates as well as membership cards. Robert Ashton Gardiner was asked to take charge of having these made. The art work on the certificates was done by Ted Baggelmann and Mr. J. F. Davis. At the end of the year 1953 the Society had 47 charter and 9 other members, and \$84.00 in the treasury.

On January 28, 1954, the speaker was Mr. Carroll Hall, Curator of Sutter's Fort, who spoke on "Analysis of Sutter's New Helvetia Diary." Dr. McGowan appointed Dr. Carl G. Winter, Miss Caroline Wenzel and Frederick A. Wemmer on the publications committee. They were given authority to decide the nature of the material to be published.

February 25, 1954, a more centrally located meeting place was discussed because of difficulty of transportation and other disadvantages of places mentioned, but it was decided to continue meeting at Sacramento State College. Mrs. R. D. Pugh, Walter E. Stoddard and Mrs. Michael Harrison were appointed on the welcoming committee. Frank Christy, chairman of the Landmarks Commission, spoke on "Sacramento Firsts." A report of the publications committee recommended either a reprint of a document or an original article. Reprints of documents could include those published, if in a rare work, or one hard to get. A bibliographical item should also be included, such as a brief discussion of the early histories of Sacramento County.

At the March 25, 1954, meeting, Chester Gannon, Sacramento Attorney, spoke on "California History Applied to Sacramento Vicinity." It was decided that the mailing address of the Society would be Sacramento State College. Paul Palazzo was appointed on publications committee as printing chairman. It was decided that the Constitution be changed to include in the list of officers a Corresponding Secretary and to divide the office of Secretary-Treasurer.

Mrs. Stewart Mitchell, Secretary.

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## SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sacramento State College  
Sacramento 19, California