

Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JAN 2013, NO. 1

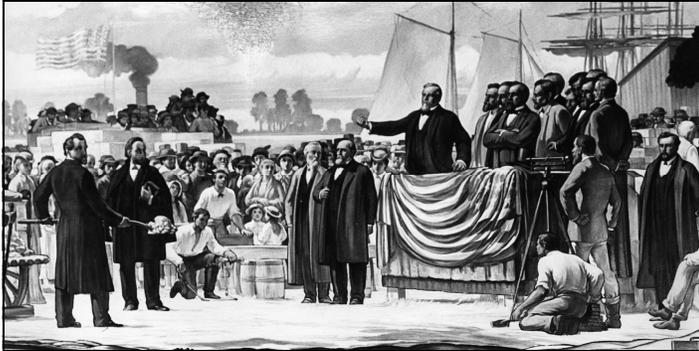


Image of somewhat fanciful (note train!) 20th century painting in Sacramento Amtrak station of CPRR groundbreaking.

SCHS/Public January Programs

Central Pacific Railroad Groundbreaking Sesquicentennial Events

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

Old Sacramento State Historic Park &
California State Railroad Museum

Sign Unveiling: 12:30 PM, Front and K Streets

Illustrated Presentations: 1 to 5 PM,

California State Railroad Museum

111 I Street, Old Sacramento

Evening Program and Reception: 6 PM-9 PM

California State Railroad Museum

East Theatre and TCRR Gallery

111 I Street, Old Sacramento

One hundred and fifty years ago - on January 8, 1863 - California Governor Leland Stanford turned a ceremonial shovelful of earth near the intersection of Front and K Streets. This marked the starting point for the Central Pacific Railroad, one of two companies that together would construct America's first transcontinental railroad, almost a year before Union Pacific started building west from Omaha. This year, a sign commemorating the inception of one of the United States' most significant accomplishments will be unveiled at this historic location.

Following the unveiling, the California State Railroad Museum will offer an afternoon of special public programs focusing on the First Transcontinental Railroad. Featured speakers include Dr. Richard Orsi, author and professor emeritus of history at California State University, Hayward; Kyle K. Wyatt, curator of history and technology at the California State Railroad Museum; and William Burg, SCHS Vice-President and CSRM docent.

Sign Unveiling and Daytime Program
12:30 PM, Front and K Streets
1 to 5 PM, California State Railroad Museum

Starting at 1:30, Burg's presentation "Sacramento's Victory" will explain how and why Sacramento became the starting point and original western terminus for the Pacific Railroad. At 2:30, Dr. Orsi's presentation "Rising Above" will include the showing of a recently produced Sacramento documentary by the same name, and discuss how the Central Pacific Railroad's construction helped hold back the flood waters of the Sacramento River. At 4:00, Wyatt's presentation "Dreamers Wanted" will address how the U.S. grappled with locating a suitable route and why this one was ultimately chosen. The presentations are included with regular Museum admission, and limited to the first 135 attendees on a first-come, first-served basis.

Evening Program and Reception 6 PM to 9 PM
California State Railroad Museum

An evening program and reception for invited guests will take place at the California State Railroad Museum. All SCHS and SOCA members and their guests are welcome to attend. CSRM Docents and guests are also invited. We'll gather at the Museum from 6:00 to 7:00. At 7:00, all three speakers will be on hand to present an abbreviated version of their presentations and take questions in the Railroad Museum's theater. At 8:00 we'll adjourn to the Transcontinental Railroad Gallery to toast the occasion with appetizers provided by contributions from SCHS and SOCA. The event will end at 9:00.



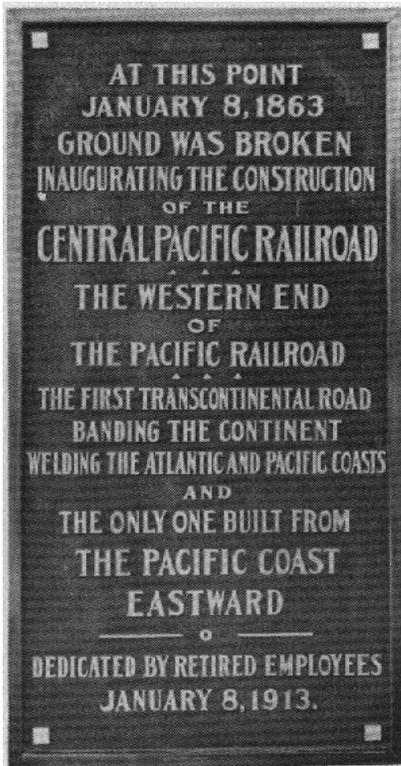
We apologize for the late notice but these multiple events took some time coming together. We hope many of you can attend at least some of them. See Pages 2 and 3 for more information.

The Transcontinental Railroad Groundbreaking Plaque: Sacramento's Victory, and Our Legacy

By William Burg

Begun almost a year before the Union Pacific Railroad started construction west from Omaha, the Central Pacific Railroad was Sacramento's railroad, the victor in a competition between every West Coast city to become the western terminus for what was then called the "Pacific Railroad." The project was completed six years later, when the Central Pacific met the Union Pacific at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869. While a later extension connected the Central Pacific directly with Oakland and San Francisco and the Pacific Ocean, Sacramento became California's central railroad junction point. It also became home to the Central Pacific (later Southern Pacific) Railroad Sacramento Shops (today's Downtown Sacramento Railyards), one of the most important railroad repair and manufacturing facilities in the U.S. and the largest single-site industrial complex west of St. Louis.

This groundbreaking event was commemorated in 1913 with a bronze plaque created in Southern Pacific's brass foundry just a few blocks north, paid for by retired Southern Pacific employees. The plaque was mounted on a freight shed at Front and K, among the busy Southern Pacific waterfront docks and freight yard. In 1963, the centennial of the groundbreaking was celebrated by a rededication of the 1913 plaque, and dedication of California Historical Landmark #780, *First Transcontinental Railroad*. The landmark nomination was written by Sacramento County Historical Society president Tom Hammer (who is currently president of Sacramento History Foundation.) Hammer also served as Master of Ceremonies at the centennial event, sponsored by SCHS. Participants in the centennial event included California governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Southern Pacific company president D.J. Russell, Sacramento Citizens Committee president Henry Teichert, and Sacramento mayor James McKinney.



1913 groundbreaking plaque, formerly located at Front & K Street on long demolished SP freight shed

However by 1963, Sacramento's waterfront neighborhood known as the "West End" (today's Old Sacramento) was targeted for redevelopment, and the plaque was never mounted on the freight shed. Instead, the bronze plaque was stored until 1985, when it was mounted inside the "Transcontinental Gallery" of the California State Railroad Museum, alongside the 1913 plaque removed when the freight sheds on Front Street were demolished. As the West End was transformed into Old Sacramento, no sign was left to indicate the groundbreaking site. Front and K Street became the permanent home of the *Delta King*, at the site of the old riverboat dock, and a replica of the Central Pacific Railroad Freight Depot was constructed on the west side of Front Street between J and K Streets. Excursion trains operated by the California State Railroad Museum today use the Freight Depot as their ticketing and departure point.

In an effort to promote interpretation of this historic spot, a Sacramento non-profit (Capital City Preservation Trust) has worked in conjunction with California State Railroad Museum staff to bring a new sign to Front and K Streets. Early scenarios considered relocating the California Historical Landmark plaque from inside the Museum to Front and K, but it was not possible to complete the project in time for the sesquicentennial. For now the site will be marked with an interpretive panel explaining the role of the site, including a scene from the 1931 mural prominently displayed in the main waiting room of the Sacramento Valley 1913 groundbreaking plaque, formerly located at Front & K Street on SP freight shed station (the historic Southern Pacific depot) depicting the groundbreaking event. The sign will aid tour groups and visitors to the site, explain the importance of the groundbreaking, and mention the original plaque inside the Railroad Museum.

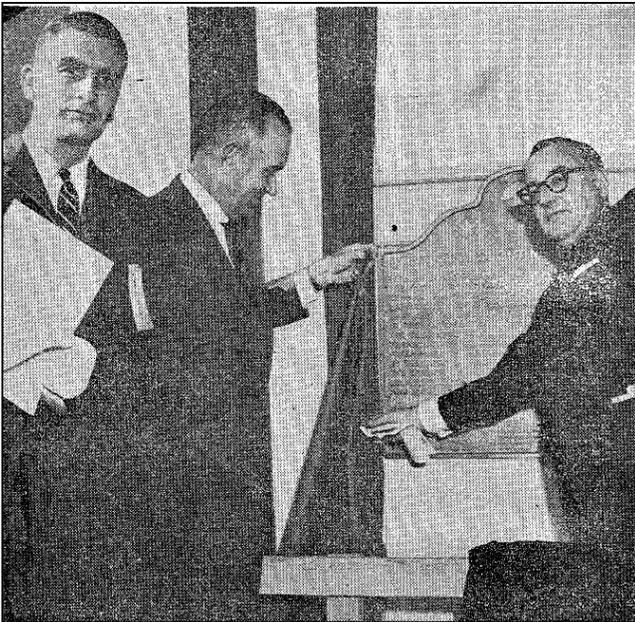
Notes From the President

By Patricia Turse

The SCHS Board is in the process of lining up some very interesting programs for the coming year. Our January event has moved up to the 8th (as you now know) because it marks the 150th anniversary of the 1863 groundbreaking for the Central Pacific Railroad. In February, we are going to hear about the history of Donner Pass, gateway to northern California. In March, Dan Winkelman will do a presentation on his new book, from which this newsletter has often featured excerpts. Our Annual Awards Dinner, usually in the end of March, has been moved to April 9 at the Dante Club, due to numerous March conflicts. On the 4th Tuesday in April, we hope to have a program on the late Fran Pendleton's baseball book. Later, we have discussed a joint program with the Sacramento Book Club on Mark Twain in Sacramento. Things may be tweaked a bit, but stay tuned! It should be fun.

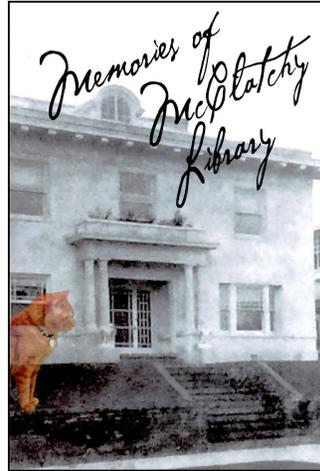
It has been my honor to have served as SCHS President for the past two and a half years, but it is time for new leadership. Meanwhile I look forward to having more time for this newsletter. Thank you for your support.

SCHS Leading the Way



"First Transcontinental Railroad" California Historical Landmark plaque, nominated by former SCHS President, Tom Hammer (left) with Southern Pacific vice-president Benjamin F. Biaggini (middle) and California Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown (right.) Image from the *Sacramento Bee* article on the 1963 centennial event, coordinated by Sacramento County Historical Society members fifty years ago.

Friends of the Library Announce *Memories of McClatchy Library* A Book by Library Patrons



Just in time for the holidays, the Friends of the McClatchy Library have served up a charming collection of reminiscences about the library and its role in the lives of its patrons. *Memories of McClatchy* is a fundraiser for the Friends, the non-profit that supports library activities.

Forty-one contributions from library patrons and some excerpts from library newsletters were compiled by five editors into a sort of collection of eyewitness accounts of the quaint little library's special role in the community from about the 1940s on. The book was printed at the Central Library's exciting new I Street Press.

There are articles about the early history of the building and use of the library when it was the Charles K. McClatchy family residence, how it became a library branch, how it almost closed in the mid-nineties when not enough money was allocated by the City for its upkeep, and how the library's unique patio mural was created. Photographs from the Sacramento Public Library Archives and from library patrons' private collections add to the book. There are also some very entertaining tales of unexpected adventures that befell visitors and staff over the years. Finally, readers will learn about Sherlock, the library's official greeter, who is pictured on the book cover.

The book is great fun for current McClatchy library users and those who either visited the library as a child or who take their children there now. However, its perspective on the community and the historic McClatchy home will interest many readers. The paperback book, well-received by the local media, is available for purchase for \$15 by contacting mcclatchymemories@gmail.com to arrange for payment and receipt.

Board Elections Ballot Enclosed

Please vote, fold, stamp and return

Please deliver by December 27, 2012



OUT & ABOUT

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE & CONTACT
Daily thru August 2013	Museum hours 10-5 daily	Creative Railroad Photography Awards Exhibit Special Exhibit of 2012 award winners of prestigious international competition. An opportunity to view railroading life through the lens of photographers from around the world.	California State Railroad Museum 2nd & I Street, Old Sacramento 916-445-6145 www.csrmf.org
Saturday January 12	Noon to 3 PM	Recipe & Food Traditions Story Collection Award-winning author and National Public Radio contributor Elaine Corn will record local food-related stories, traditions and recipes centered in Rancho Cordova and Folsom. Come share!	Rancho Cordova Library 9845 Folsom Blvd, Rancho Cordova www.we-are-where-we-eat.com
Tuesday January 15	6 PM	History of Courtland High School Sacramento River Delta Historical Society annual meeting and potluck. New 2013 calendars featuring colorful, historic pear labels will be there for purchase.	Jean Harvie Community Center 14273 River Road, Walnut Grove www.srds.com 916-871-4060
Saturday Feb 2	Varies, mostly 10-4 or 10-5	Sacramento Museum Day Fifteenth annual event involving many area museums you always meant to go to. Access will be free to all participating sites. Mark this on the first Saturday in February on your new calendars.	Watch for details coming soon at www.sacmuseums.org