

# Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAY-JUNE 2015, VOL.9-10

SCHS Presents: Alfred Yee: The Chinese Community of Locke

Tuesday, May 26, 7:00 PM (Social Time, 6:30)

Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building, 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento

Locke, a Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is the sole remaining village in America built by and exclusively for Chinese. In 1915, after Walnut Grove's Chinatown burned to the ground, a group of Chinese moved out and built on land leased from George Locke. Exclusionary laws prevented the Chinese from owning the land at that time. **Locke's centennial celebration is on May 9.** Please see Out & About, p. 4, for details.

Our May presenter, Alfred Yee, holds a Ph.D from the Ohio State University and has taught Asian American History and Chinese Civilization at CSUS and Consumer River College. He is a past board member of the Locke Foundation and the Locke Management Association. His book, *Shopping at Giant*, records the history of Chinese American grocers in Northern California. This talk and the Centennial are a great mix.



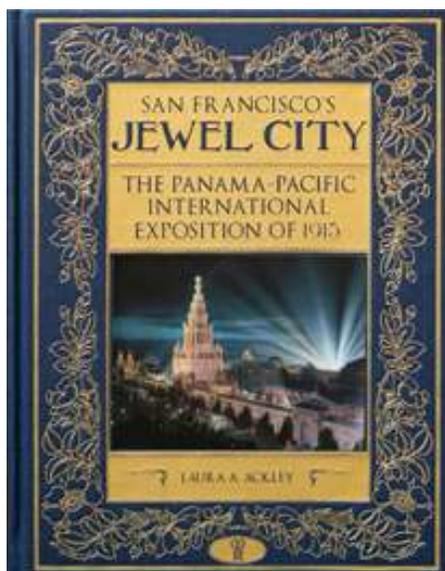
Weather beaten structure and welcome sign on north side of Locke Street, one of three main streets that form most of the village.

---

Laura Ackley: San Francisco's Jewel City, The Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915

Tuesday, June 23, 7:00 (social time 6:30)

Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building, 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento



Heyday Books, 2015. Hardcover, 8.5 x 11, 352 pages, over 200 full-color photographs and illustrations.

The year 2015 marks the centennial of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, when host city San Francisco emerged from the ashes of earthquake and fire as a center of beauty and progress. On the Presidio's waterfront and in what is now the Marina District, courtyards, formal gardens, and eleven Beaux-Arts palaces made up a miniature city. Each palace hosted a thrilling array of exhibits and events that showed off the young century's achievements and possibilities.

Architectural historian Laura Ackley, the SCHS May speaker, has created a lavishly illustrated volume as much a triumph as the fair itself. *San Francisco's Jewel City* takes readers on an in-depth tour of the PPIE, revealing the dramas of constructing the fair and the displays of culture and industry that awaited within the exposition walls. Ackley's text is unparalleled in its breadth of scope and richness of detail, providing social and political context for the fair and offering insight into its legacy today. Kevin Starr called it, "A tour de force of scholarship, illustration, and graphic design... a definitive narrative of this transformative event."

It might be good to come early for this one. Books for sale and signing? Yes!

## Land for Eighteen Cents An Acre!

By Ray Oliver



Samuel Norris, 1881  
California State Library

A huge portion of the north area of Sacramento County once sold for less than 20 cents an acre. On August 8, 1849 Samuel Norris paid Hiram Grimes \$8,000 for the Rancho del Paso, a former Mexican (not Spanish) land grant of about 44,000 acres north of the American River. That amount was cheap even in those distant days. There might have been other deal-

ings between Norris and Grimes since both had apparently been involved in business deals in the Sandwich Islands, now Hawaii, before coming to the Sacramento area.

Hiram Grimes claimed to be the sole owner of the rancho based on two codicils to the will of his uncle Eliab Grimes. Eliab had obtained the land grant from the Mexican governor, Manuel Micheltoarena, in 1844. Grimes' relatives in other parts of the United States later challenged the codicils in a series of lawsuits that kept the ownership of the land in question for several years.

Samuel Norris came from Denmark where he was known as Gotthilf Wilhelm Becher Christensen. Before coming to Sacramento, he lived in Honolulu and San Francisco and was involved in some business there with John Sutter as well as Eliab Grimes.

The next notable sale of the rancho came on March 5, 1851, when Norris sold it to Sam Brannan for \$200,000. On the following May 28, Brannan sold the rancho back to Norris for \$100,000. The transactions do not seem reasonable. There is no record of what else might have been included in the deal. Both men were involved in the loan business as well land speculation. The land transfers might have been part of—or perhaps cover for—some other transaction.

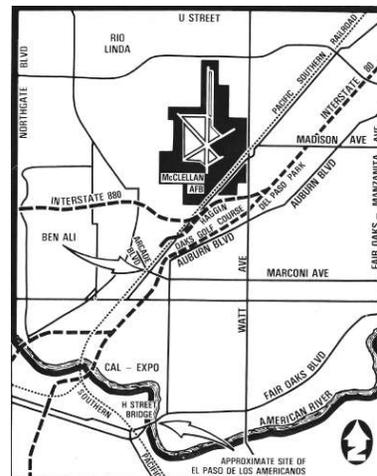
Norris also had to deal with the problems of obtaining a United States government patent for the rancho, an expensive and time consuming process, as well as the lawsuits by the Grimes relatives. His lawyers for all this legal activity were James Ben Ali Haggin and Lloyd Tevis, two enterprising lawyers and land speculators who had eyes on the rancho for themselves. The patent process was successful in 1858 when President James Buchanan

signed the document recognizing the Mexican land grant and confirming Norris as owner. The Grimes' lawsuits dragged on and on until April 30, 1860, when the United State Supreme Court issued its verdict. Eliab Grimes' will was declared valid, as was Hiram Grimes sale of the rancho, and Norris was indeed the legal owner.

Norris' victory was a hollow one. He was so deeply in debt to his lawyers for the years of litigation that he lost the rancho to them. He tried suing them, but lost, and the rancho was sold at public auction on May 9, 1862, to Tevis and Haggin for \$63,500. On June 23, 1862, they gave Norris \$5,000 for whatever claim he might still have to the rancho. Perhaps the payment was to encourage Norris to go away, which he did. He went back to Hawaii and did more land speculation and filed numerous lawsuits.

Haggin used the rancho to raise race horses that he sold at annual gala events in Madison Square Garden in New York. One of his horses, Ben Ali, won the Kentucky Derby in 1886. Another, Salvator, set the record for the mile in 1890 with a time of one minute and 35.5 seconds. Streets in North Sacramento bear their names and those of some of Haggin's other winning racehorses.

By 1905 Haggin and Tevis, now among the richest men in the nation, decided to sell the rancho. They wanted \$2 million but in 1910 they accepted \$1.5 million from the Sacramento Valley Colonization Company. It was the rancho's final sale.



The new owners proceeded to develop the land with nationwide advertising. Now the former land grant includes North Sacramento, Cal Expo, McClellan Park, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Arden-Arcade, Town and Country, Del Paso Park and a large portion of Carmichael.

Rancho Del Paso area, 1982.  
Map: Ed Soto, McClellan AFB

Ray Oliver is a longtime member and former board member of SCHS and the former Rancho del Paso Historical Society, and a former McClellan AFB historian and museum curator. He is the author of the now out-of-print booklet, *Rancho del Paso, a History of the Land Surrounding McClellan AFB*.



# PRESERVATION SACRAMENTO

Just as we're getting used to **Center for Sacramento History** as the new name for the former Sacramento Area Museums and Collection Center, along comes **Preservation Sacramento**, the new moniker (logo above) for the Sacramento Old City Association. This writer always thought the original name was a bit confusing. Just what was the Old City? Old Sacramento? Midtown? Change is good! -PT

## Preservation Sacramento Presents Jane Jacobs Walks, May 16-17

Preservation Sacramento will host five Jane Jacobs Walks and one 'Roll' bike ride. Part history tour, part urban planning discussion, these tours explore how Sacramento's city neighborhoods function for pedestrians and cyclists, residents and businesses, public transit and cars (or, in some cases, not.) All tours are free and open to the public. Start times and meet locations are below.

Jane Jacobs Walk and Jane Jacobs Roll are part of a continent-wide series of walks and bike rides based on the principles of Jane Jacobs, author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Written in an era when American cities promoted the suburb and the automobile, turning their backs on downtowns and older neighborhoods, her work changed the way American planners thought about cities. It is widely read today by modern urban planners, promoting sidewalks, parks, mixed use, residential density, local economies and walkability.



For more information about Jane Jacobs Walk events, contact Preservation Sacramento at [preservation.sacramento@gmail.com](mailto:preservation.sacramento@gmail.com) or call 916-202-4815. Visit [preservationsacramento.org](http://preservationsacramento.org) for more information about Preservation Sacramento and other events.

### Saturday, May 16, Walking Tours

#### Preservation Roundtable/Oak Park Tour

**9 AM-noon, Wellspring Women's Center, 3414 4th Ave**  
Presentation on citywide preservation & planning projects, Oak Park history & potential historic districts survey results. At 11 AM, two walking tours of central Oak Park depart.

#### Boulevard Park Walking Tour

**1-3 PM, Corner 22nd & H Street**

Historian William Burg leads an exploration of Boulevard

Park's designed landscapes, "commons" spaces, beautifully restored historic homes and its one remaining 'Fainted Lady', the long-neglected Hart Mansion at 2131 H Street.

#### Lavender Height Walking Tour

**4-6 PM, Lavender Library, 1414 21st Street**

Explore the social history of Sacramento's LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) community including political activism, community centers, and nightclubs with Historian William Burg, Preservation Sacramento board president.

### Sunday May 17 Walks and a Bike "Roll"

#### Sacramento Cannery Bike Ride

**10 AM-noon, 7th St & Richards/Township 9 Station**

Bike to 3 historic canneries and a can factory, discussing food processing and transportation history and adaptive reuse. Led by Preservation Sacramento's William Burg.

#### East's Sacramento's 38th Street

**1-3 PM, 38th & J Street**

Explore a portion of East Sacramento, one of Sacramento's earliest streetcar suburbs, notable for its architectural beauty and landscape design. Tour led by Preservation Sacramento's East Sacramento Subcommittee.

#### R Street Corridor

**4-6 PM, Southwest corner of 3rd & R Street**

Take a walking tour of historic R Street, a railroad and industrial corridor undergoing transformation into a mixed use neighborhood of art galleries, housing, restaurants and pedestrian/transit oriented spaces. Tour led by Todd Leon of CADA and Preservation Sacramento president William Burg.

### Lost and Found: Savory Stories & Classic Recipes from Sacramento Home Cooks

Contributed by Maryellen Burns

Every family has a treasured recipe, beloved as much for the memories it evokes as for its taste. Most families have many such recipes, handed down through generations, squirreled away on food-spattered index cards, taped on the inside of well-worn cookbooks, or cut from yellowing newspaper or magazine articles. Do you have a 'storied' recipe?

Stories collected from Sacramento home cooks and their families will form the basis of *Lost and Found*, a new book due out in November. SCHS members are encouraged to submit their local stories, recipes, illustrations and photos no later than June 15, 2015. SCHS board member Maryellen Burns and a team of volunteers will also collect stories and recipes at the Antelope Library, Saturday, May 9, at 2 PM, and McClatchy Library, Wednesday, May 13, at 6:30 PM. For specific guidelines or to volunteer to test and type recipes or conduct research, contact Maryellen Burns at [foodtalk@me.com](mailto:foodtalk@me.com) or 916-456-4930.

**2015 Board of Directors**

**Please deliver by May 8, 2015**

President: Greg Voelm  
Vice President: William Burg  
Corresponding Secretary: Lisa Wire  
Treasurer: Dan Winkelman  
History Consortium: Dr. Bob LaPerrière

**Members-at-Large**

Maryellen Burns-Dabaghian, Clare Ellis, Doug Fowler  
Tom Herzog, Patricia Turse, Greg Wellman

**Membership:** Jenan Saunders



**GOLDEN NUGGETS**

Published at least bimonthly,  
September to June  
Editorial & Layout: Patricia Turse

Email: [info@sachistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sachistoricalsociety.org)

## OUT & ABOUT

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE & CONTACT
Saturday May 9	12-4 PM	<b>1915-2015, The Legacy Lives On</b> Celebrate the Locke centennial. Traditional Asian entertainment, lecture by Laurence Tom ( <i>Locke &amp; the Sacramento Delta Chinatowns</i> ), and the visiting exhibit, Gateway to Gold Mountain: the Chinese Immigration Experience. Free and open to all.	Downtown Locke, CA, about 30 miles south of Sacramento <a href="http://locke-foundation.org">locke-foundation.org</a>
Thursdays May 28- Sept. 3	10AM to 8 PM	<b>Thursday Museums Night 2015</b> The California State Railroad Museum, the Sacramento History Museum, and the Adult-themed Underground Tours will all offer extended Thursday hours through Labor Day. Usual admission fees.	CSRM, 111 I St., Old Sacramento, 916-445-6645 Sacramento History Museum (and Underground Tour info), 101 I St., Old Sacramento, 916-808-7059
Saturday May 30	2-3 PM	<b>California and the Repatriation to Soviet Armenia</b> Program by artist/art historian Hazel Antaramian-Hofman explores the Great Repatriation of Armenians from California following WWII. Exhibits and lecture free if registered by 5 PM Friday, May 29.	The California Museum 10th & O Street, Sacramento 916-653-2574 Reservation form at <a href="http://californiamuseum.org/event/armenian-journey-lecture-series">californiamuseum.org/event/armenian-journey-lecture-series</a>
Wednesday August 5	7 PM	<b>Welcome to California!</b> People came to California from all over to find a better life. Many lost their lives, victims of cholera, smallpox, bubonic plague, and influenza. The popular Dr. Faith Fitzgerald presents a medical history of the Golden State. Calendar this now!	Sierra Sac. Valley Museum of Medical History 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento ssvms.org