

# Golden Nuggets

November 2007



Mokelumne Hill, Calaveras County. Drawn from Nature & on Stone by Kuchel and Dresel, 146 Clay St. S.F. Published by A. Rosenfield, Bookseller & Stationer, Mokelumne Hill.

## SCHS November Activity California Bird's-eye Exhibit Group Tour

Saturday, November 17, 11:00 AM  
State Capitol Museum

Meet at 10th & L Entry at 10:45

The November member "meeting" will be a group tour of the major new exhibit, *Bird's-Eye Views of California*, at the State Capitol Museum. Board member and historian John Allen will lead the program. Drawing on rarely seen materials from the California State Library, this exhibit provides a series of nearly 50 historical urban portraits from the last 150 years. By capturing the development of the state's cities and towns, artists were able to create a fascinating visual re-

cord of vistas now lost to time. Starting with the earliest portrayals of California Indian villages, bird's-eye views illustrate how early pastoral settlements and embryonic cities later grew into today's major urban centers. Over the last 200 years, talented artists used a wide variety of print media to portray the rise and development of the urban West. By 1800 the newly developed print medium called lithography helped to turn bird's-eye view making into the popular mass media of its day- sort of an artist's version of today's Google Earth.

Come join us for an enlightening late morning get-together. The city parking lot on 10th street just north of L is available nearby, and you can pay a new machine by cash or plastic. Some street parking may be available along Capitol Park, but bring quarters because the meters are in effect. The tour is expected to last about 75 minutes, more if there are lots of people and or questions.

## Sacramento Railyards Project Nearing Decisions

- ◆ Do you want to try to help ensure that the Sacramento Railyards project adequately addresses railroading history and other preservation concerns?
- ◆ Are you available and willing to be part of a group of concerned citizens? Your presence alone—in numbers—may help sway opinion.
- ◆ Tentative November open meetings - subject to change, sometimes at the last minute:
  - ◇ Commission Reports to City Council: Tues. Nov. 6, 5:30 Design; Wed., Nov. 7, 5:30-Preservation; Tues. Nov. 13, 5:30-Planning
  - ◇ Public Hearing & Action: Tues. Nov. 20, 6:00, all probably at Historic City Hall, 915 I St.



**YOU can help!**

Confirm times, sites, and other details at 916-808-5876, or email [nferrario@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:nferrario@cityofsacramento.org)  
Complete information: [www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/projects/railyards/](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/projects/railyards/)

## Moving Experiences

By Mary A. Helmich

Director John Ford offered viewers of his films a rather romantic impression of 19th century stage travel. With only a few passengers and a very photogenic Concord coach, the images Ford projected through his movies were more nostalgic than historic. In mid-19th century California, lightweight celerity wagons, mud wagons, spring wagons, and ambulances ruled the roads. Mules pulled these stages more often than sleek horses did.

The driver and conductor (or guard) sat on the bench at the front. Mail was secured beneath the driver's seat, in the "boot" at the back or, at times, inside. Some vehicles could carry luggage and extra passengers on the roof. However, mail was the first priority of the cross-continent stage companies—not passengers! Overland stages traveled continuously, day and night, with no more than brief stops at way stations for often poor food and no rest.

Through choking dust, constant heat, or intense cold, passengers huddled inside the stage, shoulder-to-shoulder, and three to a bench. Each had about 15 inches to call his own. Those stuck on the center bench of a large coach had only a leather strap to support their backs. Raphael Pumpelly, who rode the Butterfield Overland Mail stage west to Tucson, explained the interior seating arrangements:

As the occupants of the front and middle seats faced each other, it was necessary for these six people to interlock their knees; and there being room inside for only ten of the twelve legs, each side of the coach was graced by a foot, now dangling near the wheel, now trying in vain to find a place of support. An unusually heavy mail in the boot, by weighing down the rear, kept those of us who were on the front seat constantly bent forward.

One stage passenger at Maricopa Wells exclaimed:

Eight of us inside, not able to stretch much. Mere lying a full length is a considerable part of the relief as sleeping in a good bed. In coach the knees get weary, the back bone gets crooked, and it can only be straightened by a severe effort, and every nerve, muscle tendon and bone has a little protest of its own to make upon the natural strain upon it...

Coaches had a lurching, rolling motion that increased with rough roads. Travelers often suffered from motion sickness—but without any refreshing sea breezes. The heat could be unbearable. Dust permeated every inch of clothing. Sweat, insects, and other irritating conditions made for an interesting, if not particularly pleasant trip.

Besides the heat, dirt and cold, there was the darkness to be experienced inside. Waterman L. Ormsby, the first through passenger on the westbound Butterfield Overland Mail and a reporter for the New York Herald, wrote feelingly of "the heavy mail wagon whizzing and whirling over the jagged rock... in comparative darkness... to feel oneself bouncing—now on the hard seat, now against the roof, and now against the side... was no joke."

On occasion passengers were required to get off the stage to relieve the fatigued teams or to push the vehicle. Ormsby recalled, "We were obliged actually to beat our mules with rocks to make them go the remaining five miles to the station, which is called Pinery..."



Passengers push a stage in the California gold fields. From Alonzo Delano's Pen Knife Sketches, 1853.

If passengers chose to stay in a town or at a home station to seek relief from their journey, they could become stranded for a week or more before resuming their travels. A ticket did not guarantee the passenger the right or the pleasure of traveling on the next stage when another occupied the seat.

Next time you watch a Western film or a television rerun, reflect on the moving experiences of long-suffering 19th century stage passengers and enjoy the comforts and conveniences of 21st century travel.

Editor's note: Next September marks the 150th anniversary of the Butterfield Overland Mail line. In celebration, Golden Nuggets will offer more articles on early stages in California.

### State Capitol Museum Volunteers Wanted

On Wednesday, November 14, the California State Capitol Museum will host a Volunteer Recruitment Seminar focusing on the joys and benefits of being a volunteer at the State Capitol Museum. People interested in volunteering their time to share government history, lead historic room tours, greet visitors, interpret historic rooms, work at the information desk and re-enact historic events are welcome at this seminar.

Learn what is required to be a State Park volunteer at the State Capitol Museum. Hear personal experiences from current volunteers, understand training requirements, ask questions and have opportunity to apply for a State Capitol Museum volunteer position.

Prospective volunteers will be interviewed in January. Successful candidates will begin training classes in February. Volunteers may choose to research historic events, serve as Museum tour guides or participate in hands-on, interactive educational programs for school groups just to name a few. Volunteer training represents a serious commitment, but the hours are flexible—and the rewards can be tremendous. For further details about volunteering at the State Capitol Museum, or to register for the seminar, please call (916) 324-0312, x272 or email [plarsen@parks.ca.gov](mailto:plarsen@parks.ca.gov).

The Sacramento History Foundation  
announces  
the  
**James E. Henley Internship Endowment**

honoring Jim's commitment to  
the Sacramento historical community

Tax deductible checks may be made out to the  
Sacramento History Foundation. Mail to: SAMCC,  
551 Sequoia Pacific Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95814

**Coming in November from Big Tomato Press:**

"Gold on the Diamond

Sacramento's Great Baseball Players, 1886-1976"

Sacramento had a great baseball history long before the Rivercats began playing ball in 2000. The Altas, Senators, Gilt Edge (named after a popular beer) and Solons teams all contributed great players and stories to Sacramento's baseball legacy.

In baseball historian Alan O'Connor's new book, the great players of the past step up to take their place on the diamond. O'Connor shows off his stunning collection of Sacramento baseball memorabilia as well as his encyclopedic and entertaining knowledge of the players, their records and their lives. Also covered are a short history of Sacramento ballparks, highlights of each decade and bios of managers and associates important to Sacramento baseball.

O'Connor recounts which player could hold seven baseballs at once in his huge hand, how 'Duster' Mails and 'Demon' Doyle earned their nicknames, and which star outfielder and slugger for the Solons saw the Enola Gay take off from Tinian Island in the South Pacific. He knew more than a few of the old players and his personal reminiscences make the book sparkle.

Many of Sacramento's great players went on the major leagues, and just as many of these 'local boys' retired to the Sacramento area becoming farmers, businessmen and lobbyists who left imprint on the region. O'Connor's fantastic collection of photos, trading cards, and program covers and memories make this book a necessary volume for any baseball fan's library.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 160065  
Sacramento, California 95816-0065  
www.sachistoricalociety.org

Non-Profit Org  
US Postage  
Permit No. 674  
Sacramento, CA

**2007 Board of Directors**

President: Susan Ballew  
Vice President: BranDee Bruce  
Membership: Jenan Saunders  
Secretary:  
Treasurer: Alan O'Connor  
History Consortium: Dr. Bob LaPerrière

**Members-at-Large**

John Allen, Shelly Atkinson, Rick Bettis,  
Lisa M. Calloway-Wire, Becky Carruthers,  
Illa Collin, Clare Ellis, Bill Gaylord,  
Mory Holmes, Dan Winkelman

*Journal* Editor: James E. Henley

**GOLDEN NUGGETS**

Pat Turse, Editorial & Layout  
Email: newsletter@sachistoricalociety.org

Please deliver by November 3, 2007

## Out & About

Date	Time	Event	Place & Contact
<b>November</b> 3 Sat.  thru Jan 6	11AM to 4 PM Tuesday-Sunday	<b>Up in Flames.</b> A glimpse into the Gold Rush past, present and future of the historic Folsom Fire Department. Enjoy dynamic displays of photos, documents and fire equipment.	Folsom History Museum 823 Sutter Street, Folsom 916-985-2707 www.folsomhistorymuseum.org
17 Sat. Replaces 4th Tues meeting	11 AM (meet at 10:45)	<b>Group Tour, California Bird's-eye Exhibit</b> Historian John Allen will introduce us to the newest Capitol Exhibit. Bring magnifying glasses! See next listing for a follow-up idea.	State Capitol Museum, Sacramento Meet at 10th & L St. entry at 10:45
17 Sat.	10 AM to 5 PM	<b>Sutter's Fort Living History, "Life on the Home Front."</b> Make it a downtown history day with an afternoon tour. See November 1846 life at the Fort with most men away at the Bear Flag Revolt. Note: A candlelight tour tonight is sold out.	Sutter's Fort State Historic Park 2701 L Street, Sacramento 916-445-4422 or www.parks.ca.gov/suttersfort
<b>December</b> 2 Sunday	1:00 PM	<b>Alan O'Connor Book Signing event</b> Gold on the Diamond, see page 3 for details	Avid Reader, 16th & Broadway, Sacramento (near Tower Records) www.bigtomatopress.com