

Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH-APRIL 2016, VOL. 7-8

SCHS Presents Steve Swatt: Twelve Elections that Transformed California
Tuesday, March 22, 7:00 PM (Social Time, 6:30)
Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building, 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento

“For the last 165 years, ordinary citizens sent strong messages to Sacramento that reverberated at the Capitol and beyond, but now they are staying away from the polls in droves, telling us they dislike politics and government, and that their vote doesn’t count,” says Steve Swatt, co-author of *Game Changers: Twelve Elections That Transformed California*. “We wanted to write a book that illustrates that understanding the contours of power and exercising our right to vote does matter.”

Swatt and his co-writers, Jeff Raimundo, Susie Swatt and Rebecca LaVally, have more than 150 years of experience in journalism, public policy analysis, and political consulting. Join them as they lead us in a spirited conversation that examines history through the prism of a dozen watershed elections that dramatically shaped California- from the railroad’s decades long dominance of just about every facet of commerce and politics, to the storied battles over the influence of money, water, dirty campaigning, term limits, and do-it-yourself democracy.



SCHS Presents Bill Burg & Garret Root: Sacramento Architecture
Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 PM (Social Time, 6:30)
Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building, 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento

Sacramento’s neighborhoods include a beautiful variety of homes in a dizzying assortment of styles, constructed over the course of 150 years. Many people visit neighborhoods like Alkali Flat, Boulevard Park or East Sacramento’s “Fabulous Forties” to admire the architecture, but don’t know how to identify specific styles. Others simply describe any older home as “Victorian,” a term that refers to an era, not an architectural style, even if it was built well outside the lifespan of Queen Victoria. This talk, presented by architectural historians William Burg and Garret Root, will introduce you to the styles of Sacramento architecture, the national trends that influenced them, and tell the stories of some of the city’s most prominent homes. Most of the styles described by this talk are residences, but some prominent examples of commercial architecture will also be included in the presentation.



The Didion House, 1931 22nd St., a Prairie Style/Colonial Revival. Photo: Lisa Oulette

This “tour” of common architectural styles will start at the beginning, including traditional Nisenan housing and the improvised frontier architecture of the Gold Rush era. Sacramento, like other frontier cities, rapidly adopted popular American architecture styles to demonstrate its modernity and sophistication as the second-largest city on the West Coast and capital of California. Architectural choices were driven by fashion, availability of materials and technological innovations like steam-powered lathes and lumber mills. Fire, flood and the Sacramento Valley’s scorching summers necessitated regional adaptation expressed in the built environment. A dizzying array of 19th century local styles included Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate and Second Empire, Stick, Stick-Eastlake, Queen Anne, Shingle, Colonial Revival and Classical Revival. In the 20th century, California architects came into their own, developing (over)

styles expressive of the environment and culture of the West Coast, as well as a new era of electricity that allowed faster travel and more expansive architecture. Sacramento's streetcar suburbs allowed rapid travel from downtown to pleasant residential districts where architectural style was limited only by the tastes and budget of the buyer.

The Arts & Crafts movement brought simplified, modern styles like Craftsman and Prairie, Art Deco and Streamline Moderne, and revival styles including Tudor, Mission, Spanish Eclectic, French Eclectic and Renaissance Revival. Suburban master builders allowed buyers to purchase off-the-shelf designs with customized details made to order. The age of the automobile and the atom brought even more styles, including Ranch, Mid-century Modern and International Style.

William Burg is a past president of Sacramento County Historical Society and Preservation Sacramento, and serves on the board of Sacramento Heritage Inc. and Capital City Preservation Trust. He is a graduate of the CSU Sacramento Public History program, the author of six books about Sacramento, and works as a historian for the California Office of Historic Preservation, Registration Unit.

Garret Root is the current President of Preservation Sacramento, a graduate of the CSU Sacramento Public History program, and works as an architectural historian with Cardno, Inc. He conducts historic property surveys, environmental reviews, oral histories, exhibit design and production, throughout California. He is the author of *From Sawdust to Uranium*, a history of electrical power generation in Humboldt County.

Name That Sacramentan (A History Quiz)

By Patricia Turse (Answer, p. 4)

I left my medical practice in New York in 1849 to come to California in hopes of improving my health and—by trying my hand at mining—my wealth. By 1850 I had settled in Sacramento, where I opened a medical practice just before an epidemic of cholera broke out. To me, medicine was “a calling so ennobling in purpose, yet so trying and dangerous in the labor it entails.” During the cholera outbreak, I gave generously of my services, often without pay. A man of great verbal skills, I later wrote a lively first history of Sacramento. I died in 1874 in San Francisco. My obituary began, “No man has ever died in California leaving behind a larger circle of warmly-attached personal friends...”

Meet the Board: Marshall Garvey



A love for history has been a part of Marshall Garvey's daily life since childhood. Growing up with a history teacher for a father created an environment that seamlessly nurtured a strong curiosity about the past. Whether it was reading Walter Lord's *A Night to Remember* to soak up details about the sinking of the Titanic, or perusing his father's collection of *Time/Life* magazines, Marshall quickly cultivated a passion that has grown exponentially since then.

Originally starting college as a journalism major, Marshall naturally switched to history as his primary field of study. Before senior year of college, he gained valuable experience as an intern at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, CA. In addition to learning archival procedures with the library's National Archives wing, he also wrote 10 articles for the Richard Nixon Foundation's "New Nixon" blog, even gaining praise from renowned historian Evan Thomas. Several weeks before graduating from UC Davis with a B.A. in history in June 2014, he joined the Sacramento County Historical Society as an intern. After a year, he was appointed to a vacancy on the Board of directors in August 2015.

Marshall's proudest creation as a historian is his Presidents Baseball franchise, which is based around a set of cards that colorfully depict all 44 U.S. Presidents as members of their own baseball team. The cards not only combine his guiding passions for history and baseball, but also provide a fun way to learn about both subjects for people of all ages. The cards have retailed at the gift shop of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library since April 2014, and are available at: www.presidentsbaseball.com.

Even with the duties of SCHS board member and the continued promotion of Presidents Baseball on his plate, Marshall still has plenty of energy for other major projects. He also lends his writing and journalism skills to Last Token Gaming, an independent video game commentary website he co-founded with his longtime friend Terry Randolph in 2013. Working with a host of other talented staff members, the site continues to gain recognition in the burgeoning Sacramento gaming scene.

Currently, he's working on several books, including *The Hidden History of Sacramento Baseball*, and a book on the recently reoccupied historic Governor's Mansion, as well as a "dream project" baseball encyclopedia he had officially copyrighted by the U.S. Copyright Office last year. Note: We hope to introduce the entire SCHS Board eventually. Marshall was kind enough to write his own bio.

Sacramento's Railroad Hospital Played Important Role in Establishing American Health Care

By Bill George

The Central Pacific Railroad began building east from Sacramento in the 1860s. When it hooked up with the Union Pacific in 1871 it created the first transcontinental railroad.



CPRR Hospital, Sacramento, the “very first” railroad hospital. RailwaySurgery.org

The transcontinental railroad was a wonder of the world, reducing a trip that had previously taken weeks or months to a few days travel. One of the early journalists to take the transcontinental railroad to California was easterner Charles Nordhoff, who wrote travel articles for magazines and travel guides. He usually wrote about the scenic views the railroad afforded in the Sierra and the mighty feats of construction it took to build the road. But he also wrote about another impressive accomplishment that helped enable the railroad line’s completion, the establishment of the Central Pacific Railroad Hospital in Sacramento. Nordhoff called it “a fine building which stands in an open square...is first in the order of salubrity [sic] and successful results in the world.”

The early industrial age was an era when people rarely visited a doctor and most babies were birthed at home. But the massive scale of building a railroad across the country created challenges on how to treat injured workers and passengers. Here is a contemporary’s description of early railroad medical care: “He [the injured worker] was usually tied up with rope, old rags, soiled handkerchiefs, or anything else lying about, lifted into the first train, possibly some time after being hurt, with his crushed members dangling behind him unsupported; then sent along the road many miles in a cold damp car, each start and jar of which would almost close the scene. ...the crushed arm or leg so mixed up with clothing, gravel, sticks, etc., that the whole mass looks like nothing but bloody rubbish. . . He has been jostled and bled to death, and so he dies.”

In response to such “care” The Central Pacific Railroad owners opened a temporary medical facility in 1867, and then built a larger facility at 13th and D Streets in Sacramento, dedicated in February 1870. The cost was \$64,000.00, and it consisted of “a main building, 60 by 35 feet; four stories and basement, with a veranda at each story.” The hospital was financed and operated by a 50-cent per month fee levied on all workers and managers. That amount covered all medical care and hospitalization. It remained at 50 cents until 1922, when it was raised to 75 cents. In the 1860s, Central Pacific laborers were paid between \$30 and \$35 per month.

While the railroad was headquartered in Sacramento, its operations spanned hundreds of miles in California and other western states, with few medical facilities. As the railroad grew it expanded its medical network. In the Sierra Nevada town of Truckee, the company opened a medical office and pharmacy staffed by a physician. By the 1950s the railroad operated more than 50 hospitals in the west.

The Sacramento hospital operated until 1899, when the hospital was closed and a new one opened in San Francisco, where the railroad had relocated its corporate headquarters. One student of railroad medical care put the accomplishments of the Central Pacific hospital in context: “They sought to deliver comprehensive health care to large numbers of people efficiently and economically—a challenging goal even today. Their innovative approaches to this problem, such as the prepaid health plan and the vertically integrated regional healthcare network, left a lasting contribution for future generations.”



The 1870 SP Railroad Hospital on the corner of 13th and D Streets. Railway.Surgery.org

Sources for this article include the book *Sunset Limited* by Richard Orsi; the booklet *THE OLD CENTRAL PACIFIC HOSPITAL*, by J. Roy Jones, M.D., published by the Western Association of Railway Surgeons; and *The Train Doctors: A Brief History of Railway Surgeons* by Robert S. Gillespie, MD, MPH, which may be found online at RailwaySurgery.org. Images are also from the online postcard gallery at the previously cited web pages.

Bill George is a Board member of the Sacramento County Historical Society, and a recipient of an SCHS Award of Excellence in media for his video on the construction of the transcontinental railroad.



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Email: info@sachistoricalociety.org

Quiz Answer: Dr. John F. Morse

OUT & ABOUT

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE & CONTACT
Sunday March 20	Noon	Crocker History Tour Learn about the Crocker family and the era during which they lived as you journey back in time on this history-infused gallery tour. On-street parking is still free on Sundays. Free with paid admission.	Crocker Art Museum 216 O Street, Sacramento 916-808-7000 crockerartmuseum.org
Fridays March 25, April 29, May 27 & April 29	12-1:00 PM	Lunchtime State Archives Tours Fourth Fridays, March thru June, provide a close encounter with some of the Archives' one-of-a-kind historical documents, a behind the scenes look at the preservation and imaging labs, and free entry to the Exhibit Hall. Free, but registration required.	California State Archives 1020 O Street, Sacramento 916-653-7715 sos.ca.gov/archives/public-events/tours (11 spaces left for March)
Wed. March 30	7:00 PM	Chinese Tea-Ancient Traditions & Modern Practices Lecture by visiting prof from Jiangnan University, China on Chinese tea and tea culture including history, social and physical functions in ancient traditions and modern practice. Taste 3 premium teas after. Free, but call to reserve and ensure space.	Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society 5380 Elvas Ave, Sacramento 916-452-2671 ssvms.org/museum and open Medical History Lecture Series PDF
Sunday April 3	1:00 -2:30 PM	Technology Tips & Handy Utilities for Genealogists Popular lecturer and historian Kathryn Marshall will discuss handy utilities like Evernote, easybib, TreeConnect, Google Chrome extensions, online research log templates, password encryptors, mind maps, and more. Free!	Central Library West Meeting Room, 1st floor 828 I Street, Sacramento 916-264-2920 saclibrary.org