

# Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEPT-OCT 2013, NO. 1-2

**Tuesday September 24, 6:30 PM (or any time after 5PM for better light)**  
**A Tour of East Lawn Memorial Park's Stained Glass Windows**  
**East Lawn Memorial Park, 4300 Folsom Boulevard, Sacramento**



Wisteria window. You can see this in color online. Link to newsletters on page 4.

The Sacramento County Historical Society is pleased to announce that its September program will be a tour of East Lawn Memorial Park's late 1920s vintage stained glass windows. It will start at 6:30 to get better solar backlight through the windows. Craig Peterson, General Manager, who has received some new information on the windows in recent years, will present the program. There are nearly 50 stained glass windows at East Lawn, some in the main mausoleum building, others in the William Land mausoleum. The latter building, a Greek temple, is not usually open to the general public. The mausolea will *both* be open to SCHS visitors at 5 PM for those who can arrive early when the sun is higher. Park near the main building.

Two companies worked on design and fabrication of the windows: Sacramento Art Glassworks, once located on 16th & J Streets, operated by Clarence Todd, and the W. G. Pearson Art Glass Studios of Portland, Oregon. Todd worked with the Tiffany art glass studios in New York, and the East Lawn windows have a similar painterly quality. Come early if you can, but come!

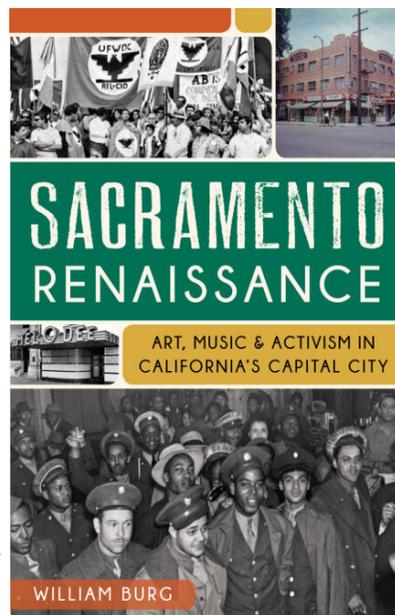
**Tuesday, October 22, 7 PM (Social Time 6:30)**

**William Burg: Sacramento Renaissance: Art, Music, and Activism in California's Capital City**  
**Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building, 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento**

SCHS Vice President William Burg has just published his fifth (wow!) Sacramento history book, one which looks at various aspects of the interesting postwar renaissance in our fair city. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Touted as progress, postwar redevelopment spawned a new age in Sacramento, California. As city planners designated areas of urban blight and directed bulldozers to make way for commercial districts and pedestrian malls, the churches, jazz clubs and family homes of the West End and Japantown were upended and residents scattered. Displaced families and businesses reestablished themselves and redefined their communities around new cultural centers.

Historian William Burg weaves oral histories with previously unpublished photographs to chronicle the resurgence of Sacramento's art, music and activism in the wake of redevelopment. Celebrate the individuals and organizations who defined an era: the beatniks and Black Panthers of Oak Park, Southside Park's "League of Nations," George Raya of Lavender Heights and the Royal Chicano Air Force in Alkali Flat.



Excerpts From  
**East Lawn Memorial Park Centennial Talk, 2004**

By Doctor Bob La Perriere

Traditionally a cemetery is thought of solely as a burial place for loved ones. However, a cemetery is much more. It is a study in diseases, in ethnicity, and in socio-economic class; it is an outdoor museum of art and an outdoor museum of history. It is indeed our greatest repository of the past, and should be thought of as a memorial not only to the people lying at rest there, but to the history of the entire region.

### HIGH GROUND

Cemeteries tend to be on high ground, and lots with a view in some cemeteries do command a higher price. In an area such as Sacramento that was quite prone to flooding, they are on high ground to prevent the potential de-interment of those buried there. East Lawn, at the Folsom Boulevard site, is reputed to be on the highest ground in the City of Sacramento.

### EAST LAWN CONCEPT

In 1904 East Lawn indeed was a new concept in Sacramento—a private cemetery with perpetual care, that is a cemetery maintained with funds set aside for that purpose, as opposed to by fees, charged year-to-year at levels which may change. Active promotion for perpetual care did not begin until 1891 with the American Association of Cemetery Superintendents. Indeed, the entire concept of funerals and death also was in evolution, there being a transition from a preoccupation about dying to a much more private approach.

### CHANGES AND REFORMS

The Mt. Auburn Cemetery, near Cambridge, Massachusetts, was established in 1831 as the first *rural garden cemetery*. The new cemetery helped stop the spread of disease and improved sanitary conditions by moving the burial ground to the countryside, in a natural setting. This was important because it was not until almost 1880 that embalming was widely used, which would sanitize the body and prevent disease spread. Embalming additionally eliminated one of the greatest fears of the nineteenth century --- the fear of being buried alive.

The term cemetery replaced the less pleasing graveyard and burial ground. The rural garden cemetery dominated burial reform during the middle third of the nineteenth century. In these garden cemeteries massive monuments were built, resulting in the development of American sculptors' art and offering an elitism and class distinction after death. By 1860 about 65 such cemeteries were established. Visiting these peaceful beautiful cemeteries became a Sunday family tradition. In fact, as a result of the success and popularity of garden cemeteries as visitation and recreational areas, the nation's first city park, New York's Central Park, was planned in 1856.

### LAWN PARK CEMETERY

About this time, however, concern developed about the

over-monumentalized and hedonistic displays of wealth in the garden cemeteries, and the first *lawn park cemetery*, without headstones or monuments, was opened in 1855. By 1885 this natural setting lawn cemetery became the most popular type. Grave lot enclosures by fences and grave mounds which obstructed the path of lawn mowers (and which also symbolized death) were forbidden. Willow trees were banned and nothing was present to even suggest the presence of death.

In 1917 Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale became renowned for interment of the rich and famous and became a tourist attraction. In 1919 cemetery superintendents allowed the introduction of modern machine-made marble slab gravestones, creating an artificial individuality. By 1920 other aspects of cemetery design and layout were changed so that the cemetery once again looked like a place of the dead and not like a park. By the 1960s over one and one-half million people visited a cemetery each year. The design and concept became the prime influence on twentieth-century cemetery development.

### EAST LAWN'S START



Early construction scene from East Lawn collection

In Sacramento, the development of East Lawn began in 1904, two years after San Francisco passed a law forbidding further burials as land was becoming too valuable for cemeteries. Cypress Lawn Cemetery had anticipated this and had already started burials in Colma, just south of San Francisco, in 1892. In 1914 eviction notices were sent to Laurel Hill Cemetery and others, but local opposition delayed the removal of bodies to various cemeteries in Colma until 1940.

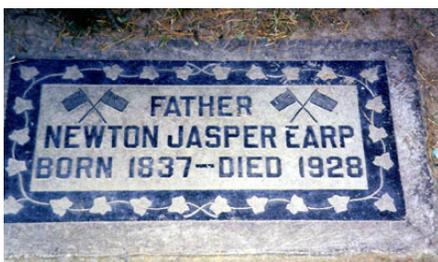
### NEW HELVETIA TRANSFERS

The New Helvetia Cemetery, contiguous with Sutter's original burying grounds, was flourishing when East Lawn began, but was to be closed to burial in 1912 and shortly afterwards leveled off its beautiful tombstones and monuments to be converted into a park, with identical appearing concrete markers laid flat to allow recreational activities over them. In the 1950's the New Helvetia bodies were removed to allow for the construction of Sutter Middle School, and 4685 graves were transferred to this cemetery. It is for this reason that though East Lawn began in 1904, almost 5000 of its burials date to as early as 1849.

These transfers were long forgotten by our community, as no markers or plaques were erected by the City when they moved these early settlers and pioneers to East Lawn and reburied them in the 1950s. In 1989, in commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of Sacramento, a joint effort by the Old City Cemetery Committee and East Lawn honored these 4685 individuals. East Lawn generously donated and erected corner walls and a beautiful monument dedicated to the memory of these early settlers. Shortly afterwards the Japanese Community erected a monument to the hundreds of Japanese who were moved here from New Helvetia Cemetery, and subsequently other groups have erected monuments in memory of various individuals.

**EAST LAWN START**

The early 1900s when East Lawn started was an era of small farms. The gold rush had subsided and new “gold” was agricultural produce. This era was also the beginning of an arts and crafts lifestyle. When East Lawn opened, fewer than 30 automobiles were registered in Sacramento, and it would be only two years before the glow from the fires in San Francisco due to the devastating San Francisco earthquake would be seen in Sacramento. Oak Park had been created 15 years previously as Sacramento’s first suburb, but 7 years after East Lawn’s opening, the city had grown so extensively that Oak Park was annexed into the City of Sacramento. East Lawn Cemetery’s 40 acres has well demonstrated the evolution of Sacramento, from a country farm, called Twin Oaks Farm, at the turn of the century to the final resting place of people synonymous with Sacramento and the early West.



Newton Earp, Wyatt’s brother, John Breuner of Breuner’s Furniture company; William Land, who donated \$250,000 to the City to establish the park now bearing his name; Buddy Baer, former number one heavyweight boxing contender; and Charles McClatchy, editor and president of the Sacramento Bee for 53 years, rest in East Lawn. Efile Yeaw, and a multitude of not as well known people who played significant and colorful parts in our history, such as Alex Adams, known as the King of Sacramento’s once large gypsy community, are buried here. There are other rather unique residents, such as the British Soldiers who died in a plane accident during World War II; they are buried at East Lawn in British soil brought over from England.

The first entry in the book of burials, however, is that of a boy. Though so many of the early deaths were due to diseases, with no known treatment at the time, the cause of death of this first East Lawn burial was, and still is, preventable. Sadly, it is still not an uncommon cause of death in our River City: drowning.

The next major step in East Lawn’s development was the building of the mausoleum and administration buildings in 1926 which had just been preceded by the landing of the first transcontinental mail plane at Mather Field and was followed by the grand opening of the Alhambra Theatre. (Editors Note: Descendants of Charles Dodd believe Dodd also designed the Alhambra stained glass windows.) East Lawn has continued its tradition of offering Sacramentans a final resting place which continues to provide not only a beautiful and peaceful setting for one’s last place on earth, but a fine memorial to Sacramento and those whose efforts have helped create our community.

**New Updated & Improved Website Coming Soon!**

TESTING AND FINAL DECISIONS UNDERWAY

YOU’LL BE ABLE TO JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE WITH PAYPAL!

**SCHS Membership Form**

Please, circle your membership level

Personal Memberships	Business & Sponsorship	Educational
Individual     \$35	Contributing   \$100	Library* \$50
Senior           \$30	Patron           \$250	*Non-voting
Student         \$20	Gold             \$500	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ New member OR Renewal? (Circle choice)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State & ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks out to SCHS and mail to PO Box 160065, Sacramento, CA 95816-0065 Thank You!

**2013 Board of Directors**

Please deliver by Sept. 17, 2013

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**GOLDEN NUGGETS**

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Online at [www.sachistoricalsociety.org/newsletters.cfm](http://www.sachistoricalsociety.org/newsletters.cfm)

**Out & ABOUT**

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE & CONTACT
Opens Sept. 21 Sunday thru Jan 5	11-4 Tues.-Sun.	<b>Extraordinary Collections</b> More than 20 private collections ranging from early Barbies to train lanterns, to I Love Lucy lunchboxes, and other amazing items people have collected. Adults \$4, kids \$2.	Folsom History Museum 823 Sutter St., Folsom, CA 916-985-2707 <a href="http://www.folsomhistorymuseum.org">www.folsomhistorymuseum.org</a>
October 13 Sunday	12-4 PM	<b>An Afternoon at the Historic Kilgore Cemetery</b> BYO picnic and enjoy music, tours and stories of the pioneers resting in the 1874 Kilgore Cemetery Free and open to all, this sounds like a new event that could be nice family fun!	Kilgore Cemetery Kilgore Road, Rancho Cordova <a href="http://www.ranchcordovahistory.com">www.ranchcordovahistory.com</a>
Oct 18,19,25,26 Friday & Sat.	7 PM, 7:45 PM 8:30 PM, and 9:15 PM each night	<b>Lantern Tours</b> Journey through Sacramento's past and meet Old City Cemetery residents who will share stories of intrigue and misadventure. Annual fundraiser sells out fast. \$30 includes entertainment and light refreshments. Bring a flashlight too.	Old City Cemetery 10th St & Broadway, Sacramento <a href="http://www.brownpapertickets.com/eventlanerntours2013">www.brownpapertickets.com/ eventlanerntours2013</a>
November 19 (3rd) Tuesday	7 PM	<b>Sacramento's Japantown</b> November SCHS program moved up ahead of holiday week. Mark your calendars now.	Sierra Sac Valley Med Society Bldg. 5380 Elvas Ave., Sacramento