

# Golden Nuggets

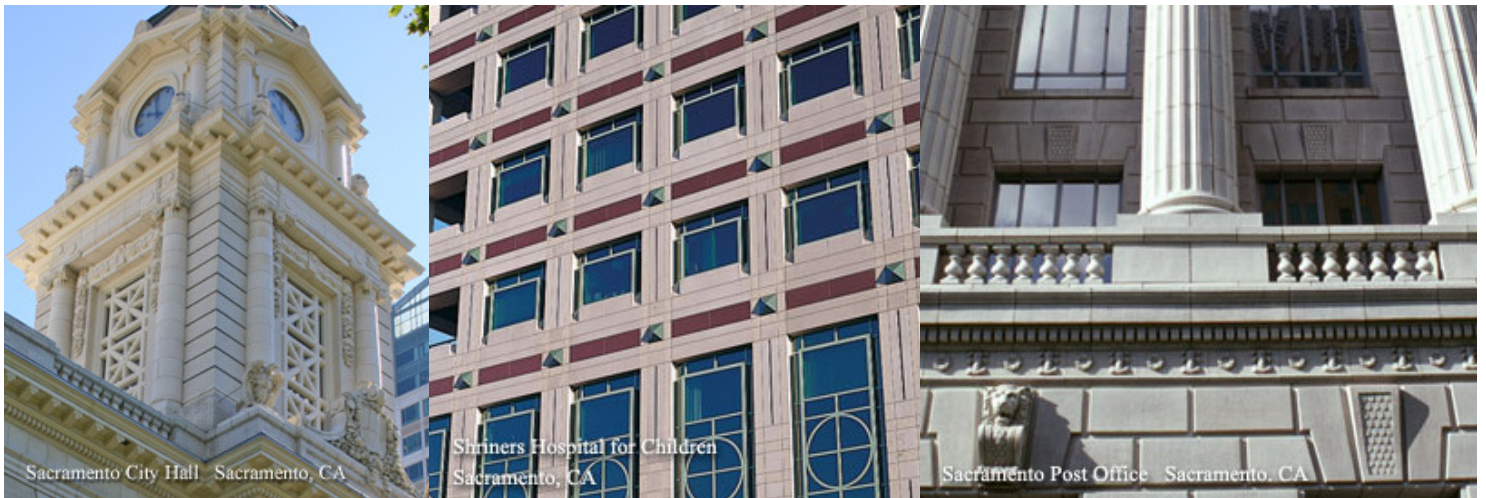
June 2008

Tuesday, June 24, 6 PM & 6:30 PM, SCHS Talk & Walk

**Gladding McBean in Sacramento: A Stroll Through Our Architectural Heritage**

Library & Courts Building, 914 Capitol Mall, & nearby points

Led by Gary Kurutz



Sacramento City Hall Sacramento, CA

Shriners Hospital for Children  
Sacramento, CA

Sacramento Post Office Sacramento, CA

Left to Right: Sacramento City Hall, Shriners Hospital for Children, Sacramento Post Office      Photos: Gladding McBean

Our June program is a guided walk through downtown Sacramento focused on structures clad in terra cotta details fabricated at Lincoln's historic Gladding McBean company. California State Library Director of Special Collections Gary Kurutz, who has written an entertaining text for a photo history of Gladding McBean, will be our host and tour guide. A short slide show will introduce the history of the company and present an overview of what we will see on tour. The talk will be held at the (old) State Library & Courts Building, at 914 Capitol Mall Tuesday, June 24 at 6PM, and the walk will begin in front of the building at 6:30 PM. The entire program is free and open to the public, so bring a friend.

A longtime member of SCHS and a former Board member, Gary Kurutz was born in La Canada, California. He holds an M.A. in History and a Master's in library science, and has worked at the Henry E. Huntington Library, the Sutro Library, and the California Historical Society prior to coming to the California State Library in 1980. He has written extensively on the California Gold Rush as well as many other areas of western Americana. His most relevant publication for this program, **Architectural Terra Cotta of Gladding McBean**, was originally published in 1989 by Windgate Press. A second edition was published in 2000. Photographer Mary Swisher, who helped curate the large collection of negatives from Gladding McBean as a volunteer at the California State Library, also contributed modern photos of the company to the book.

This promises to be a great evening and a fun finish to our SCHS program year. We are sure to see many interesting architectural details we never noticed before and gain a deeper appreciation of Sacramento's architectural heritage, especially its tree-lined downtown district. It might be fun to plan to stay after and have dinner at a favorite midtown restaurant. Mark your calendars now!

## The Bridges of Sacramento County, Part 2: Free to a Good Home

By Pat Turse



Preparing to remove the historic Meiss Road Bridge  
Photo: J. M. Turner Engineering Company

The Meiss Road Bridge near Sloughouse is the oldest steel through-truss bridge in Sacramento County. (Briefly, the roadway runs through the truss opening on such bridges.) The bridge can be yours if you can find an adaptive re-use for it that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and demonstrate the ability to assume legal and financial responsibility for it.

Built about 1894, the 217-foot-long bridge is a Pennsylvania variation of the Pratt truss bridge. Developed by the brothers Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844, the Pratt truss was mostly metal, rather than wood, with V-shaped diagonal struts. Engineers of the Pennsylvania Railroad added more smaller struts, and the Pennsylvania truss was born.



Above: Pratt truss. Below: an example of a Pennsylvania truss with added short struts darkened.



The Meiss Road Bridge spanned the Consumnes River for about a century. In the 1960s when Dillard Road was constructed connecting Meiss Road to the Jackson Highway, its function changed. The bridge remained in use as a pedestrian and bicycle path through early 1991, when vandals burned it. About half the deck structure was destroyed, taking it out of use completely. In January 1997, a 200-year flood

hit the area, damaging the bridge and its sub-structure. Later that year Caltrans hired CH2M Hill engineering consultants to conduct a feasibility study on reconstructing the bridge. Estimates came in at over two million dollars, including upgrades to meet modern seismic and other safety standards.

After efforts to secure federal funding to reconstruct the bridge in another location failed, CH2M Hill was asked to prepare plans and estimates for the removal and storage of the historic bridge. In October of 2000, the County awarded the construction contract for the removal to Yubacon Corporation of Diamond Springs, whose bid of \$412,000 was the lowest. Yubacon hired J.M. Turner Engineering Consultants of Santa Rosa, to devise a removal plan.

The plan involved construction of a temporary bridge in the interior of the damaged bridge. The temporary one provided support for workmen who dismantled the historic structure. Before anything was touched, all pieces of the bridge were numbered and photographed for future re-assembly. By early 2001, the bridge was down and safely stored at Mather Airport.

The Meiss Road Bridge is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It just may be the only bridge eligible for listing to be mentioned in a Kat Colorado mystery. Sacramento resident writer Karen Kijewski, whose books are set in area locales, has a character



Meiss Road Bridge,  
1894. CSRM Library

in her 1994 **Wild Kat** murder mystery trying to encourage the community to save the Meiss Road Bridge. Literary and historic note in tandem! Call the Sacramento County Department of Transportation at 916-874-6291 if you can give this bridge an appropriate new use.

Last Golden Nuggets Until September

**Have a Historically Happy Summer!**

**How the West Was Worn  
Bustles and Buckskins on the Wild Frontier**  
(TwoDot, 2005, 144 pages)

Book Review by Clare Ellis

**How the West Was Worn: Bustles & Buckskins on the Wild Frontier**, by Chris Enss, is a delightful read about fashion in the old west.

Each chapter highlights a “Legendary Trendsetter.” Among the most famous are Elizabeth “Baby Doe” Tabor and her \$90,000 diamond necklace; the nattily attired Bat Masterson with his derby hat and French linen shirts; and Oscar Wilde in flowing bow ties and velvet suit with knickers, accessorized with knee-high cowboy boots and a large-brimmed cowboy hat. Even ordinary people could make strong fashion statements, as noted in the following Sacramento Bee item of May 26, 1861, “The daughter of Dr. Hanson, of this city, appeared in the bloomer suit at a convention last week. It was scandalous.”

Dress of the Gold Rush era is well described. Barnes Store, located on the North Fork of the American River, posted the following prices for clothing in 1849:

- Socks \$3.00 a pair
- Denim trousers \$7.00 a pair
- Shirts \$4.00 each
- Cotton handkerchiefs 50 cents each

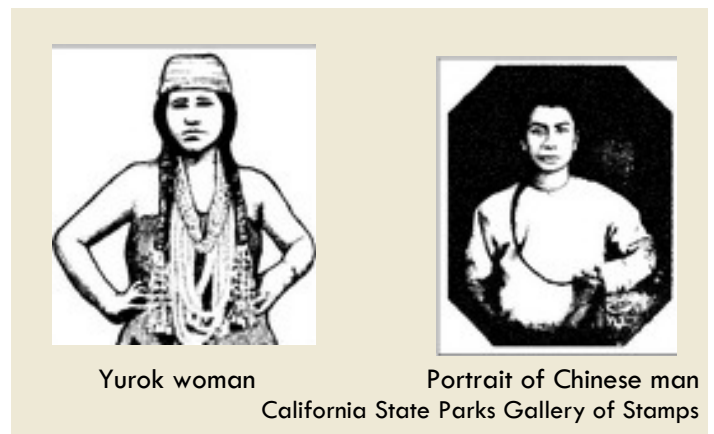
An original Levi Strauss & Co. ad for overalls is reproduced. Prior to Levi’s denim becoming popular, work pants were made of delicate gabardine. Denim proved to be a vast improvement.

Articles from various sources as early as the mid-1850s support the text. The **Daily Alta California**, the **Grass Valley Union**, and the **Colorado Sentinel** are among the newspapers quoted. Illustrations are plentiful. Hats, cowboy boots, and the indispensable chaps—in shotgun, batwing and woolie versions—are shown. Native American dress, gloves, parasols, pierced earrings, and intimate apparel share space with a pattern for one of Annie Oakley’s favorite outfits. Period photos of people (unfortunately, not always dated) enhance

the book’s realism.

The book presents many unusual and little known “facts.” Pioneer women sewed lead into the hems of their wide flowing skirts to avoid having their dresses billow as they walked the trails. Hatless men often wore bonnets to protect their eyes and head from the overpowering sun. A cowboy’s home state could be determined by the way his pants and hat were worn.

**How the West Was Worn** shows how changes in fashion paralleled changes in the western United States. The people of the west created their own style, and this set them apart from the rest of the country. Being on the western frontier didn’t limit people’s desire to look their best; it just allowed them to be highly inventive in their dress. -SCHS Board member Clare Ellis is the Sacramento Room Librarian at the Sacramento Central Library.



Celebrate  
a  
**Historic Fourth of July**  
Visit  
[www.sachistoricalsociety.org](http://www.sachistoricalsociety.org)  
Read or Download Golden Notes, July 1972  
**Fourth of July, 1861-1900**  
One of many well-researched accounts of times gone by featured in the SCHS Golden Notes, usually available only to SCHS members on our website, available to all for a limited time.  
**Happy Fourth!**

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**Please deliver by June 10, 2008!**

## Out & About

Date	Time	Event	Place & Contact
June 21 & 22, Fri & Sat	10-5 Sat 11-5 Sun	Juneteenth Sacramento's 7th annual festival of freedom. The nation's oldest celebration marks the end of slavery. Music, dance, theater, poetry, food, educational and just plain fun events. Free!	William Land Park Sutterville Road & Land Park Drive Sacramento 916-808-8983 <a href="http://www.discovergold.org/juneteenth">www.discovergold.org/juneteenth</a>
July 12 Sat	10 AM	<b>Symbolism in the Cemetery Tour</b> Learn the meaning behind many interesting artistic motifs on headstones throughout the historic cemetery.	Old City Cemetery Meet at 10th and Broadway entrance 916-448-0811 <a href="http://www.oldcitycemetery.org">www.oldcitycemetery.org</a>
July & August Thurs thru Mon	11 AM	<b>Walking Tours of Old Sacramento</b> Historically costumed docents in will give you the 1850s picture; no reservations needed, but get there 15 min. early	Old Sac. Living History Center 1101 Second St. (corner of 2nd & K) <a href="http://www.oslhp.net">www.oslhp.net</a> Group info: 916-445-3101
Aug. 29 to Sept. 1 Fri thru Mon Labor Day weekend	TBA	<b>Gold Rush Days Festival</b> The excitement of the Gold Rush is brought to life with music, reenactments and a car-less old city.	Old Sacramento State Historic Park Front to 2nd St & I to L St. blocks <a href="http://www.oldsacramento.com">www.oldsacramento.com</a>