

# Golden Nuggets

FEBRUARY 2007

## SCHS Presents

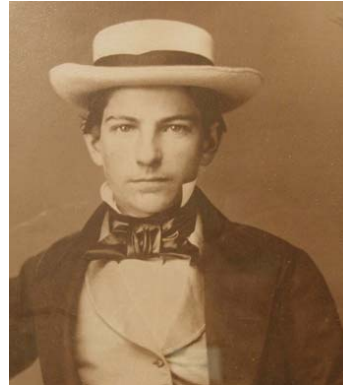
**Steve Beck on the Sutter's Fort Archives**  
 Tuesday, February 27, 7:00 PM at SAMCC  
 551 Sequoia Pacific Boulevard, Sacramento

**Rare Treasures in Sutter's Fort Archives**  
 By Steve Beck, Sutter's Fort Archivist

Behind an unmarked, locked door in the Central Building of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park reside the Sutter's Fort Archives. It holds an eclectic collection of thousands of visual images and original pieces of California history. Its existence is not common knowledge among the visiting public. Many of the materials in the collection have never been publicly displayed. Some have only been viewed by park staff and scholars, and some are still being removed from original containers in which they arrived at the Fort.

There was a time in the early 20th century when Sutter's Fort was known as "Sacramento's Attic." The term "attic" was literal, as after the Fort's restoration 1894, the upstairs rooms in the Central Building were a repository for articles from California's Gold Rush. Until 1926, a caretaker lived on the grounds to look after the facility. During this 32-year period, many of California's earliest pioneers—people who traveled to California by wagon or by ship—passed away. Their families donated pictures, diaries, documents, and ephemera to the Fort. Donations came in burlap sacks, wooden crates, cigar boxes and a variety of other containers. The caretaker put everything in "the attic" until it no longer fit.

In 1926 Harry Peterson was hired as curator and Virginia Storti as registrar. They had the huge task of organizing and evaluating the collection and creating a museum, while still accepting donations. Storti handled almost every piece in the collection, diligently stamped items



Daguerreotype prints from the Fort Archives.

"Property of Sutter's Fort" and gave most objects an accession number and a one-line description. She is my personal hero! In 1941 Harry Peterson died unexpectedly from a heart attack. He had just negotiated to receive "historical pieces" from the estate of Patty Reed Lewis, survivor of the Donner Party. Virginia Storti continued working at the Fort for about four more years.

Today Sutter's Fort holds the largest collection in existence of original materials related to the Donner Party. It also has the oldest "brand registry book" from California, an *1847 Marriage Book* from New Helvetia, the rough draft of the *Ide Proclamation* from the "Bear Flag Rebellion," and original papers from John Bidwell, P.B. Reading, Leland Stanford, Nathan Coombs, and many other famous Californians. We are finding hidden treasures every day. At the SCHS meeting on February 27, I will be showing digital images and telling the stories behind some of these incredible artifacts. Come see images of our unburied treasures.

Steve Beck has volunteered or worked at Sutter's Fort for about ten years. His archivist position is funded by the Sacramento Historic Sites (cooperating) Association. He is the Fort's first on-site archivist since the 1960s. - Editor

## Sacramento's Boy Scout Camps

By Alan O'Connor

Editor's Note- February is Boy Scout Month. Alan's article and photos are sure to evoke some pleasant memories among long-ago Boy Scout campers.

Boer War hero Lord Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scouts in England 1907. Three years later Boy Scouts of America was incorporated in February 1910, and scout troops began to operate in the Sacramento area. Troop 1 became the first area troop to officially charter with the national office in 1916. It was their 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year. The Sacramento Council, formed in 1920, provided services to troops and their leaders, becoming the Golden Empire Council in 1937.

Recognizing the need for a program-rich, multi-troop summer camp, the Council conducted a Palisade Lake summer camp near Soda Springs in 1921. The camp offered opportunities for troops to enjoy water sports, scout crafts, merit badge work and camaraderie with other troops. The first year was a hit so the Council operated a High Sierra camp at Cisco, also near Soda Springs, from 1922-1924. Two other camps closer to Sacramento began in 1922, one—now under Folsom Lake—at Salmon Falls, another at Lion's Lodge, now Camp Pollock. Salmon Falls and Lion's Lodge both offered summer programs into the 1930s.

In 1925 the Council opened a new and improved High Sierra summer camp, Camp Audrain, on Lake Audrain on the east side of Highway 50 at Echo Summit. Audrain became the Council's main summer camp through the late 1940s, providing fond memories for generations of Scouts. Camp North (now under Lake Berryessa) opened on Putah Creek primarily for Scouts from Solano and Yolo Counties in 1925. It operated through the 1930s. In 1948 the council operated another High Sierra facility, Camp Chapman Creek, off Highway 49 near Sierra City.

By 1949 the Golden Empire Council's program had outgrown Camp Audrain, primarily because the lake had shrunk to a size that no longer afforded water activities (it is now a marsh), so Camp Harvey West was developed

on Upper Echo Lake on the west side of Highway 50 at Echo Summit. Harvey West provided wonderful summer camp experiences for Scouts (including the author in the early 1960s) through 1971, when environmental concerns led to its closure.

Sacramento's population growth caused continual expansion of the program and the 1957 opening of Camp Winton on Bear River Reservoir, off Highway 88. Camp Winton remains a High Sierra summer camp. Off Highway 50, Camp Loon Lake operated as a third summer camp for area scouts from 1966 through 1976.



Above: Canoeing, swimming, cavorting in the water, and just sitting on the dock were some of the summer sports at Camp Audrain, circa 1925.



Camp Harvey West, 1950s featured a lakeside "marina" complete with totem pole, Swiss style upper window, and "cigar store Indians."

## A Swan Song

This is it! My last column as President of the Sacramento County Historical Society. The six years—two terms on the Board of Directors with two years as president—flew by. I highly recommend it to each of you. It has provided exceptional opportunities for getting close to Sacramento history through lectures, tours, programs, history, and especially people.

It has been my great pleasure to work with the Society's Board. Over the years, this unsung group has continued to challenge themselves to serve the membership in new and better ways. This is a volunteer organization, so it is impressive to see their sustained focus on the Society's goals and their drive to ensure that every member has access to local history resources and events.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you. I will see many of you again at a future meeting or event. I know that together we will make history. You have my best regards.

- Mary A. Helmich, President

## History Group Tours Harrison Collection



Daryl Morrison, in blue, UC Davis head of Special Collections shows Sacramento Area History Consortium members an exhibit from the Michael Harrison Western Research Center collection. Well-known in history circles, Michael Harrison spent over eighty years amassing one of the finest Western Americana history collections in private hands. His collection was donated to UCD after he passed away in 2005 at the age of 107. The collection contains over 21,000 volumes, fine press books, Native American baskets and pottery, Western artwork and other rare items and is available to the general public for research. For information about the collection, please phone 530-752-2112 or email [dmorrison@ucdavis.edu](mailto:dmorrison@ucdavis.edu).

## Request for Nominations Sacramento County Historical Society 2007 Annual Achievement Awards

Each year the Sacramento County Historical Society recognizes deserving individuals and organizations for special achievements that further interest in and preservation of the unique history of the Sacramento Region. You are invited to submit nominations in the categories of publications, education, and preservation pertaining to Sacramento History. You may offer nominations in one or more categories. You may also submit nominations for special achievement in an area that does not readily pertain to the categories (see below), if it can be demonstrated that a significant contribution to history has been made. The primary categories are:

**EDUCATION:** For achievement in the education of the community, encompassing students of Sacramento area history. Activities may include formal and informal classes; docent and tour guide services; and development and installation of exhibits, works of art, and other educational and interpretive displays.

**PRESERVATION:** For achievement in preservation and restoration of sites, structures, artifacts, documents, and memorabilia of historic significance to the Sacramento area. Activities may include research, physical preservation or restoration, and outreach to the public, organizations or individuals.

**PUBLICATION:** For achievement in research, writing, editing, and publishing books, scholarly papers, articles, informational pamphlets and other publications that further interest in the history of the Sacramento area.

More than one award may be given in any of the categories. **Awards Nominations must be received by Tuesday, February 13, 2007.** The awards ceremony will be held in March. Nominations should be submitted in writing on the enclosed form or by electronic mail to:

**Sacramento County Historical Society  
Awards Nominations  
P.O. Box 160065  
Sacramento, CA 95816-0065  
Email [info@sachistoricalociety.org](mailto:info@sachistoricalociety.org)**

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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Sacramento, California 95816-0065  
www.sachistoricalociety.org

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Pat Turse, Editorial & Layout  
Email [newsletter@sachistoricalociety.org](mailto:newsletter@sachistoricalociety.org)  
Contributions Deadline: 20th of month

**Please deliver by February 10, 2007!**

## Out & About

Date	Time	Event	Place & Contact
February 13 Tuesday	5:00 PM	SCHS Awards Nomination ballots due	SCHS Awards, PO Box 160065, Sacramento, CA 95816-0065 <a href="mailto:info@sachistoricalociety.org">info@sachistoricalociety.org</a>
14 Wed.	6:30 PM Cocktails 7:10 PM Dinner	<b>Book Collectors Dinner Meeting</b> with Belinda Taylor <i>Being Julia Morgan</i> Dinner, talk and re-enactment, \$38 Reservations by Feb. 9	Lions Gate Hotel & Conf. Center at McClellan Park, Club House Ballroom Salon A, 3410 Westover Street Sacramento/McClellan, CA 95652 916-643-6222
27 Tuesday	7:00 PM	SCHS presents Steve Beck <i>Rare Treasures in Sutter's Fort Archives</i>	SAMCC, 551 Sequoia Pacific Blvd., Sacramento, off Interstate 5 at the Richards Blvd. exit. 916-264-7073
March 27 Tuesday	6:30 PM Dinner 7:15 PM Awards & Program	SCHS Awards Dinner & Program More details TBA	Sierra Sacramento Medical Society building, 5380 Elvas Ave. #100 Sacramento, CA 95819