

# Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January-February 2019, vol. 25-26

## Sacramento Historical Society Presents Robert Lee Grant's *Gold Rush Generation* **Leidesdorff: California's First Gold Rush Millionaire**

Tuesday, January 22 7:00 PM (Doors Open 6:30)

Columbus Hall, 5961 Newman Court, Sacramento

Please join us for a screening of Robert Lee Grant's *Gold Rush Generation* documentary film detailing the amazing life of William Leidesdorff—a mixed-race U.S. citizen whose entrepreneurial, financial, and diplomatic genius led to his becoming the first gold rush millionaire in the American West.

Robert Lee Grant graduated with a PhD in Business Economics and is a well-established historian and filmmaker. His documentary discusses the extraordinary life of William Leidesdorff—a dynamic, entrepreneurial financial genius of the American West. A West Indian immigrant of Danish and African Cuban descent, Leidesdorff left his birthplace, the Danish island of St. Croix, for New Orleans where he became a U.S. citizen in 1834. He resettled in Yerba Buena in 1841, five years before Sam Brannan. His global shipping and trading experience as a businessman culminated in his obtaining a Mexican land grant of 35,500 acres, Rancho Rio de los Americanos adjacent to the Mormon Island gold strike along the American River. Grant elaborates on

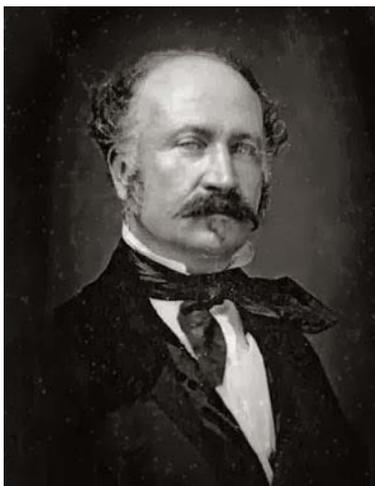


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## Sacramento Historical Society Presents Robert Lee Grant's *Gold Rush Generation* **The Real John Sutter and His World**

Tuesday, February 26 7:00 PM (Doors Open 6:30)

Columbus Hall, 5961 Newman Court, Sacramento



Come and enjoy a fascinating presentation by author, anthropologist and historian Steve Beck as he delves into history to discover the real John Sutter—a Swiss immigrant who influenced the course of history, not just for Sutter, or California, or the United States, but for the entire World.

Who was the real John Sutter? Join us on Tuesday, February 26, as author, anthropologist and historian Steve Beck delves into history, sharing a plethora of archival pictures, maps, and drawings to find the answer.

An influential figure in California history, John Sutter grew from poor beginnings. In 1834 poverty forced him to leave his family behind in Switzerland in pursuit of a better life in the United States. After securing his fortune, Sutter returned for his family in 1850. Beck will examine the years Sutter spent away from his homeland. During that time, Sutter settled the interior of California, encouraged

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## Leidesdorff: California's First Gold Rush Millionaire *(continued from page 1)*



Two maps of Leidesdorff's Rancho de Los Americanos, one a Mexican *disueño* from the 1840s and the other from 1857

how Leidesdorff's financial achievements in California resulted in his becoming the first gold rush millionaire and the wealthiest man west of the Mississippi River.

*Gold Rush Generation* is a four-part documentary serial that masterfully tells the story of some of the most influential and unknown figures in the development of the American West. The documentary is written, edited, produced, and narrated by Dr. Grant, whose previous work—*Nourishing The Kids Of Katrina*—won four awards and was a runner-up at the Cannes Film Festival. This first part features a particular emphasis on the endlessly fascinating James Beckwourth, African American mountain man and Crow Indian chief, as well as Leidesdorff

With *Gold Rush Generation*, Dr. Grant has innovated a special kind of film storytelling, 'histoire vérité', a technique that depicts the factual history of several unheralded figures, including minorities and women, who helped tame the West and who significantly contributed to the creation of California.

Don't forget to [RSVP](#) for this unique opportunity.



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## The Real John Sutter and His World *(continued from page 1)*

Western migration, rescued the Donner Party, and was instrumental in the Revolution of 1845, the Bear Flag Revolt, the Mexican-American War, the discovery of gold, and bringing agriculture to the Sacramento Valley. Some regarded Sutter as a resilient hero, while others perceived him as a scoundrel who mistreated and enslaved Native American laborers.

Uncover history with us as Beck attempts to unmask the real John Sutter—a man who influenced the course of history, not just for Sutter, or California, or the United States, but for the entire World.

Be sure to [RSVP](#) for this fascinating presentation.



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## 2019 Annual Membership Renewal Time

Thank you for making 2018 a very successful Sacramento Historical Society (SHS) quality growth year, by improving monthly programs, member feedback, and a 65 percent increase in monthly program attendance. This has resulted in our permanent move to the Knights of Columbus Hall (Columbus Hall) on Newman Court for 2019. For the first time since 2007, we have raised the annual membership fees for 2019 by \$5.

We have exciting improvement plans in the works for the organization and Columbus Hall facility in 2019. In late 2018 we debuted a new, permanent motorized projector screen, a 50/50 investment with the Columbus Hall building owners. We also just added ceiling fans. We have plans for an improved sound system, video system, and formally becoming a Club, which will facilitate improving the bar area. We are also contemplating a dinner show option. The index card feedback surveys, so instrumental to our growth, will be back in January and February to facilitate your ideas and input into our directional guidance early in the year.

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## Keeping Sacramento History Alive

The Sacramento Historical Society (SHS) will hold our annual Board of Directors election at our February program meeting. We will have one open board position as Dr. Bob LaPerriere will be stepping down to devote more time to the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Museum of Medical History. Even though Dr. Bob is leaving the SHS board, he assures us that he will still be active in helping up preserve and promote the history of Sacramento.

You don't need to be doctor or have a degree in history to serve on the board of SHS. If you support the mission of SHS—preserving the heritage of the Sacramento region and to promoting a greater awareness of regional history—you have already met most of the requirements for serving on the board.

As president, one of my goals is to support each board member's passion for local Sacramento history. Each board member brings an area of interest that has a special place in their heart. Those interests are usually what become a SHS program or project. For instance, Director Mark Davidson has a deep interest in the history of the Mexican land grants in the area. He is leading an effort to determine if it is feasible to erect signs on major thoroughfares in Sacramento announcing the boundaries of the different land grant areas such as Rancho Del Paso and Rancho San Juan.

Another interest of the board is to develop deeper ties with CSU Sacramento. We are in preliminary discussions about a scholarship for history majors at the university. Director Gregg Lukenbill has a passion for preserving the fifty years of Golden Notes we have published, and Director Bill George works to keep railroad history in our program mix.

Then there are people like me who are focused on administration and organization. Although you would not know it from looking at my desk, I have a deep proclivity for having documents and administrative tasks properly documented and organized. Yes, I suppose I am a bureaucrat at heart. However, I am focused on the member's experience at SHS. A strong organizational structure results in smoother check-ins at monthly meetings and, hopefully, a more pleasant experience during our programs.

But SHS faces challenges. As our membership has grown, and we have had to move to a new facility to accommodate the increase in attendance at our program meetings, we have had to adapt. That means experimenting with seating, finding the correct screen, and continued challenges with the existing sound system. Since our primary member benefit is our monthly program meetings, we are continually searching for excellent speakers to entertain and inform our members.

While you may not be a subject matter expert in some aspect of Sacramento history, you may have other gifts or resources that our board needs. I hope you will entertain the prospect of serving on the board of the SHS. We only meet once a month for board meetings, separate from the monthly program events, and we are enhancing our online communication to keep board members informed and engaged, reducing the number of outside meetings.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the current board members about their experience and time commitments.

*—Kevin Knauss, President*

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### 2019 Annual Membership Renewal Time *(continued from page 2)*

Your membership donations support our mission to preserve the historical heritage of a broader Sacramento regional emphasis. With your continued support, together we make a difference learning about where we've been, and understanding where we are going, as we move toward building an even brighter history future.

We have fascinating Speaker Programs lined up for the next five months, with four out of the five delving deep into our nineteenth century roots. We are featuring Folsom's Leidesdorff, John Sutter, McClellan Air Force Base, an obscure Sacramento genius attorney duo, and in May a new movie titled "Sacramento and the Transcontinental Railroad that United the World." We are also planning another regional Enlightenment Awards celebration for the fall.

Renew your membership for 2019 online at [sachistoricalsociety.org](http://sachistoricalsociety.org).



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[sachistoricalsociety.org](http://sachistoricalsociety.org)

## 2018-19 Board of Directors

### Officers

President: Kevin Knauss  
 Vice President: Vacant  
 Treasurer: Joan Gherini  
 Secretary: Bill George

### Board Members

Eric Bradner, Mark Davidson,  
 Gregg Lukenbill, Marshall Garvey,  
 Dr. Bob LaPerriere, Andrew McLeod,  
 Greg Voelm

To email Board members,  
 visit [sachistoricalsociety.org](http://sachistoricalsociety.org)

## GOLDEN NUGGETS

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 Newsletter Editor: Jenan Saunders

# OUT & ABOUT

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION & OTHER INFO
Jan 22	7 PM Doors open 6:30 PM	<i>Leidesdorff: California's First Gold Rush Millionaire</i> Join SHS for a screening of Robert Lee Grant's film detailing the amazing life of William Leidesdorff, a mixed-race U.S. citizen whose entrepreneurial, financial, and diplomatic genius led to his becoming the first Gold Rush millionaire. .	Columbus Hall 5961 Newman Ct, Sacramento <a href="http://www.sachistoricalsociety.org">www.sachistoricalsociety.org</a> Members free, Non-members \$5
Feb 2	10 AM to 4 PM	<i>Sacramento Museum Day</i> Experience the city's incredible wealth of art, history, science and wildlife through its myriad museums. Many of the museums are within walking distance of each other and easily accessible via public transportation.	Various Locations: Plan to visit two or three museums to allow time to enjoy the experience and travel between sites. <a href="http://sacmuseums.org">http://sacmuseums.org</a> Free
Feb 26	7 PM Doors open 6:30 PM	<i>The Real John Sutter and His World</i> Come enjoy a fascinating presentation by author, anthropologist, and historian Steve Beck as he discovers the real John Sutter--a Swiss immigrant who influenced the course of history, not just for California, or the U.S., but for the world.	Columbus Hall 5961 Newman Ct, Sacramento <a href="http://www.sachistoricalsociety.org">www.sachistoricalsociety.org</a> Members free, Non-members \$5
Jan 19	Tours start 6:30 PM	<i>Sutter's Fort Candlelight Tours- RESCHEDULED</i> Rescheduled from November, these tours offer a unique experience for visitors to "eavesdrop" on inhabitants of the Fort as they gossip about their neighbors and comment on the events of 1846.	Sutter's Fort 2701 L St, Sacramento <a href="http://www.suttersfort.org">www.suttersfort.org</a> \$20, tours start every 10 minutes