

# Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

November - December 2018, vol. 23-24

## Sacramento Historical Society Presents Rev. Richard A. Cheu Chinese Railroad Workers

Tuesday, November 27 7:00 PM (Doors Open 6:30)

Columbus Hall, 5961 Newman Court, Sacramento

On November 27, we are proud to present Rev. Richard A. Cheu of St. John's University as he gives "the Chinese railroad workers a voice in America's historical memory." May 10, 2019 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad. Since 1869, the Central Pacific Railroad's Chinese workers have been incorrectly depicted and absent from the nation's historic memory. This presentation gives them a rightful place in American public history.



Heading of east portal Tunnel No. 8,  
Central Pacific Railroad

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The Transcontinental Railroad was America's largest nineteenth century infrastructure project. In 1862 President Lincoln signed legislation authorizing two companies to build a nation-spanning railway; the Union Pacific Railroad working westward from Nebraska and the Central Pacific Railroad eastward from California. Critics said the Central Pacific Railroad could never cross the Sierra Nevada mountains. Unable to hire enough white workers, the railroad resorted to hiring thousands of Chinese workers.

Chinese and Irish crews initiated the May 10, 1869 completion ceremony at Promontory Point, Utah, each laying a final rail. Published photographs of the ceremony show only whites and no Chinese. Their deliberate exclusion from the photographs and America's his-

toric memory was based on the publicly accepted depiction of Chinese as racially inferior and incompatible with assimilation into American society.

A history-correcting representation of the Chinese workers as *sojourners*, not immigrants, will be presented. Their goal—to earn enough money to create a higher standard of living for their families on returning to China—was disciplined by their work habits and supported by a healthy lifestyle. Historically important questions, previously ignored by historians, addressed in this presentation include: Why, how and when did they come to America? Why did they return to China? What commercial infrastructure facilitated their movement between China and America?

With the upcoming 150th anniversary of the completion of the first Transcontinental Railroad next year, Cheu argues the time to give Chinese rail-

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End of track near Humboldt Plains,  
Central Pacific Railroad

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## 2018 Enlightenment Awards Recipients Honored

On June 26, 2018, the 2018 Enlightenment Awards ceremony honored a number of organizations, and individuals associated with them, that have contributed to the preservation, recordation, and interpretation of Sacramento's history. These organizations and individuals are listed below. The awards event highlighted the achievements of these inspiring people. To read more about them, the ceremony's program booklet will be added to the end of this newsletter in its online form, which can be accessed at [www.sacramentohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.sacramentohistoricalsociety.org).

### California State Railroad Museum & Foundation

The California State Railroad Museum and Foundation is dedicated to protecting and sharing California's railway heritage by literally bringing railway history to life. Both the Foundation and California State Parks provide the needed financial and staff resources to manage over 225,000 square feet of showcased exhibits and beautifully restored railroad cars and locomotives which illustrate railroad history in California and the West. They also co-manage and operate the Sacramento Southern Railroad, offering excursion train rides along the Sacramento River. The nationally historic Central and then Southern Pacific Railyard Boiler and Erection Shops, located just north of the museum and Old Sacramento, held over 40 national engineering patents on products associated with improving steam power and railroad operating equipment.

Individuals Highlighted: Paul A. Helman, California State Railroad Museum Docent and Community Volunteer; Heather Kearns, California State Railroad Museum Docent; Richard Paul, California State Railroad Museum Docent. Manager, Sacramento Southern Railroad Maintenance of Way; Mike Taylor, California State Railroad Museum Docent

### Sacramento Historical Society

The mission of the Sacramento Historical Society is to preserve the heritage of the Sacramento region, promote greater awareness of regional history, act as a resource for inquiries regarding local history, and educate the public about the importance of local and regional history.

For more than 65 years, the organization has brought together people to share their lively interests. They offer informative publications, programs, and special events. The Society is a volunteer organization which, on occasion, has advocated for the preservation of historical resources in the community. The greater Sacramento region's history is rich and complex. The Society's activities not only raise awareness about the past, but also are lively and fun. The Sacramento Historical Society brings history to life and these folks have made that happen.

Individuals Highlighted: Steve Beck, Anita Clevenger, Lois Dove, Dr. Bob LaPerriere, Christina Richter, and Pat Turse.

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### Chinese Railroad Workers *(continued from page 1)*

road workers their "rightful place in American public history" is tremendously overdue.

Richard Cheu is a PhD student of World history at St. John's University with a Chinese American field of specialization. He also has degrees in marketing and biology. Since the mid-1980s, Cheu has been an independent scholar focusing on late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese American history. In this capacity, he has conducted more than 60 oral histories, which are digitized and archived at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. For the past ten years he has served as a volunteer history interpreter in the National Park Service-Amtrak Trails and Rails program.

Be sure to RSVP for this important and fascinating presentation.



**Labors near the opening of Summit Tunnel, Central Pacific Railroad**

*Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division*

## 2018 Enlightenment Awards Recipients Honored *(continued from page 2)*

### Freemasons

Freemasonry is the world's first and largest fraternal organization. Masonry is based on the belief that each man has a responsibility to help make the world a better place. Through the Freemason culture of philanthropy, they make a profound difference for their brothers, families, communities, and future. Masons find satisfaction in being part of a centuries-old fraternity whose traditions and core values are relevant today, and will endure for centuries to come. The Sacramento Masonic Temple, completed in 1918, is considered one of the most intact century old architectural period pieces in Sacramento. In 2001 the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Individuals Highlighted: John Lilburn Cooper III, Past Grand Master of Masons in California (2013-2014); Joseph Kouassi Dongo, Past Master of Washington Lodge No. 20 (2010, 2012)

### Preservation Sacramento

Preservation Sacramento is committed to a Sacramento where all citizens recognize the intrinsic value of historic sites and cherish them as a vital part of everyday life. They envision a Sacramento where citizens advocate for careful use of our diverse historic resources and understand the economic and social benefits of historic preservation. They strive to remind Sacramentans throughout the region of the value of our shared past, the ways in which it enriches our lives, and the irreplaceable legacy it provides our children.

Individuals Highlighted: Karen Jacques, Historic Preservation Advocate; Richard Rich & Megan Wygant, E. Claire Raley Center for the Performing Arts, Fremont School Adaptive Reuse Project; Athol Wong, President, Friends of Capitol Mansions

### Sacramento Heritage Inc.

Sacramento Heritage was incorporated by the City of Sacramento in 1975 as a not-for-profit corporation governed by a nine-member volunteer board of directors appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by

the City Council. They host walking tours, organize grants for historic Sacramento locations to be preserved and rehabilitated, and manage the historic properties plaque program.

Individuals Highlighted: Tyler Girimonte, Sutter Capital MAY Building Restoration; Gretchen Steinberg, City of Sacramento Mid-century Modern Survey; Ali Youssefi (in memoriam), CFY Development, Warehouse Artist Lofts (also associated with Preservation Sacramento)



**The Enlightenment Awards ceremony was held at the Sacramento Masonic Temple.**

### Tower Records

In 1960, Russell Solomon opened the first Tower Records store on Watt Avenue, in Sacramento, California. He named it for his father's drugstore, which shared a building and name with the Tower Theater, where Solomon first started selling records on a folding table. By 1976 Solomon had opened Tower Books and Posters at 1600 Broadway, next door to Tower Records. Tower spread all around the world: New York, London, Singapore, Japan. Numerous Sacramento Tower Records management employees, through their dedication and creativity, helped build a small music store into a retailing giant.

Individuals Highlighted: Julie Rubins Bianucci, Director of Communications; Heidi Keller Cotler, Vice President, Tower Books & Magazines; Robert "Bob" Delanoy, Vice President, Retail Operations U.S.; Mike Farrace, Vice President, Publishing & Direct to Consumer; Stan Goman, Chief Operating Officer; Jennifer Birner Hegji, Vice President, Training & Education; Christopher J. Hopson, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer; Stephen Nikkel, Vice President, Global Advertising Operations; Michael A. Polster, Vice President, Information Technology; Michael Solomon, Vice President and Legal Counsel, President; John Thrasher, Vice President, Video Sales; Mark Viducich, Chief Operating Officer, Tower Bayside; Terri Ball Williams, Vice President, Tower Advertising & Marketing; Russ Solomon, President & Chief Executive Officer.

Congratulations to these worthy and inspiring organizations and individuals!



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

## GOLDEN NUGGETS

Published bimonthly, September to June  
 Newsletter Editor: Jenan Saunders

# OUT & ABOUT

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION & OTHER INFO
Nov 27	7 PM Doors open 6:30 PM	<i>Chinese Railroad Workers</i> SHS presents Reverend Richard A. Cheu of St. Johns University as he discusses the exclusion of Transcontinental Chinese railroad workers from America's historical memory, highlighting their deliberate exclusion from the May 10, 1869, Golden Spike ceremony	Columbus Hall 5961 Newman Ct, Sacramento <a href="http://www.sachistoricalsociety.org">www.sachistoricalsociety.org</a> Members free, Non-members \$5
Dec 10	6:30 PM to 9 PM	<i>Preservation Sacramento Holiday Party</i> Preservation Sacramento will hold its annual holiday party in the historic Arnold Brothers Building, built in 1927. Partygoers are encouraged to wear 1920s period dress. Ticket price includes food and two drinks.	58 Degrees Restaurant & Bar 1218 18th St, Sacramento <a href="http://www.preservationsacramento.org">www.preservationsacramento.org</a> Members \$45, Non-members \$50
Dec 6	6 PM to 8 PM	<i>Fall 2018 Preservation Roundtable</i> City staff and consultants will provide an overview of the draft of Sacramento's Historic District Plans (HDP) project, focusing on the historic context and survey.	CADA Courtyard 1322 O St, Sacramento <a href="http://www.preservationsacramento.org">www.preservationsacramento.org</a> Free
Dec 8	10 AM to 5 PM	<i>Hands On History: A Simple Emigrant Christmas</i> Step back in time to the 1850s to enjoy festive holiday traditions from early in California's history when people from around the world passed through the Fort gates, each with their own customs and traditions for the holiday season.	Sutter's Fort 2701 L St, Sacramento <a href="http://www.suttersfort.org">www.suttersfort.org</a> Adults \$7, Youth \$3, 5 and under free