

SACRAMENTO PIONEER ASSOCIATION
OUR 165TH YEAR

PIONEER NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2018

WINTER EDITION



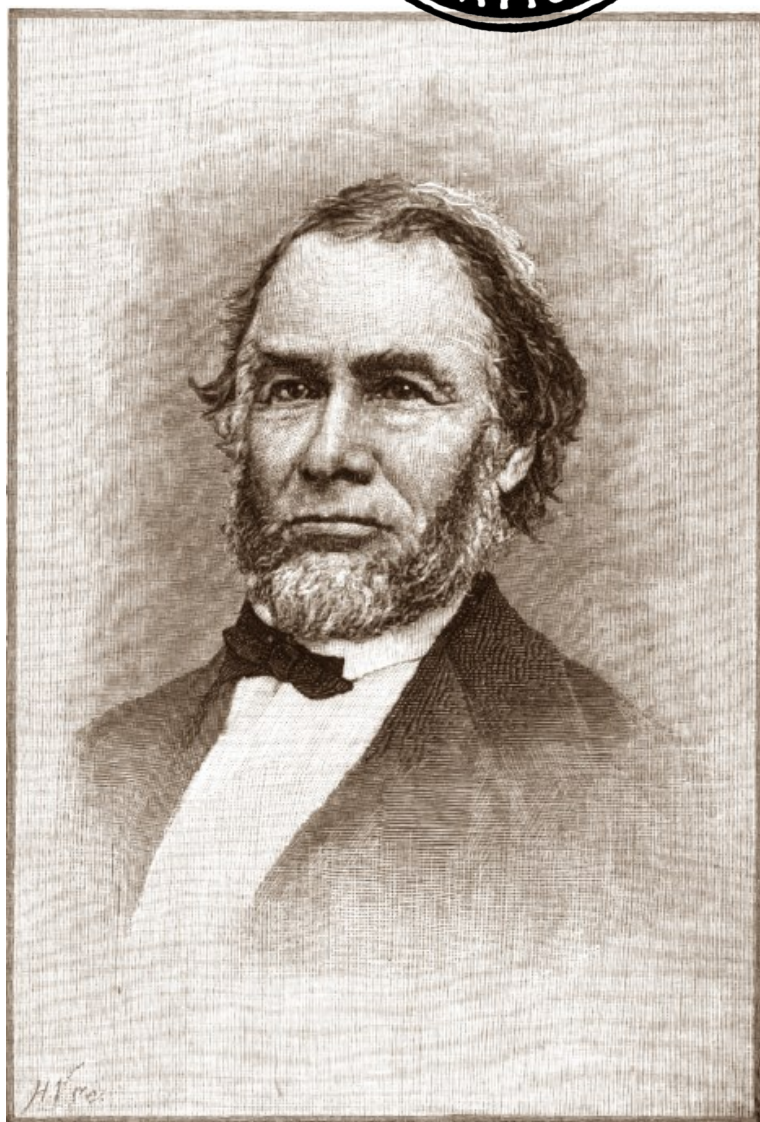
President's Message

Remembering
Mead & Burnett

The Day That
James Marshall
Discovered Gold

Correction!
Holiday Gala To Be
Held Wednesday,
December 5, 2018

2018 Annual Picnic
Photos



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY SIMAR.

James W. Marshall

THE DISCOVERER OF GOLD AT SUTTER'S MILL.

Sacramento Pioneer Association Quarterly Newsletter



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IN MEMORIAM

Mead B. Kibbey
R. Burnett Miller

Cover Image: Portrait of James W. Marshall, an engraving made from a photograph, as printed in the folio edition of *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, November 1890 to April 1891, published by the Century Company, New York, in 1891.

Of special note, the Sacramento Pioneer Association accepted the membership application of James Marshall at its meeting on Saturday, October 26, 1872.



THE GRIZZLY (URSUS HORRIBILIS). (FROM AN ORIGINAL PAINTING BY THE LATE CHARLES NAHL.)

Sacramento Pioneer Association Quarterly Newsletter TM

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President's Message

Greetings Pioneers,

A small statue of a devil, holding parchment and quill, sits in the minster in Bonn, Germany, next to the alter. This mischievous creature is said to be taking down the names of those who gossip, mumble their prayers, or nap in church. His name is Titivilus and he is also the patron demon of scribes. Throughout medieval Europe, Titivilus bore responsibility for the errors that appeared in the text of manuscripts copied by monks.

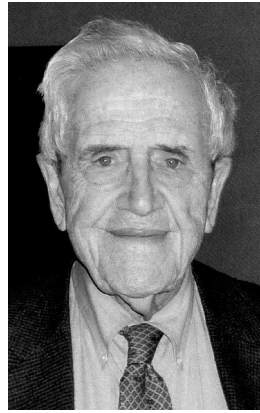
That said, the invitation to the 2018 holiday gala mailed in early November contained the incorrect date! Correction notices promptly followed. To reaffirm, the holiday gala will be held Wednesday, December 5, from 6PM to 8PM at the Crocker Art Museum ballroom. My apologies for any inconvenience. Please call (916) 447-7411 for more information.

In other news, misfit (correctly spelled with a lowercase m), our long-time tenant of Pioneer Hall's second floor, is enjoying growth and success. So much, in fact, that the business has outgrown the floor space of Pioneer Hall. Fortunately, past-President Steve Huffman, who chairs the Pioneer Hall committee, has worked diligently with Jack Diepenbrock to secure new tenant Position Interactive. The marketing and website design firm moves in on December 1.

Speaking of Pioneer Hall, the 150th anniversary of the building's 1869 dedication occurs on January 4, 2019. Also, our Association acknowledges the 165th anniversary of its first meeting on January 24. Of course, the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869, is among the most important anniversary events. Of modest historical significance, our organization adopted the name Sacramento Society of California Pioneers on November 27, 1869, which remained for ninety-seven years until it was replaced temporarily by the Sacramento Pioneer Foundation in 1966, then reverted back to the original Sacramento Pioneer Association in 1970.

Let us not forget that the Mission of San Diego, considered the first permanent settlement in California, was founded on July 16, 1769, which means California's quarter-millennial anniversary occurs in 2019!

Michael Shepard, President



Mead B. Kibbey & R. Burnett Miller

In the autumn of 2018, the Sacramento Pioneer Association lost two of its Foundation members. Mead B. Kibbey passed away on September 21 at age ninety-six. R. Burnett Miller passed away three weeks later on October 14 at age ninety-five.

One might draw parallels in the lives of these outstanding men without much difficulty. That these two friends both lived well into their nineties is a given. Additionally, Mead and Burnett were both native Sacramentans. (Actually, Mead was born in San Francisco, but he moved to Sacramento when only two weeks old.) Both Mead and Burnett served with valor in the European Theater of the Second World War; Mead aboard the U.S. Navy Mine Sweeper YMS-350 and Burnett with the U.S. Army, 11th Armored Division. Each was decorated for his heroism in the line of duty.

In 1966, Mead Kibbey and Burnett Miller, along with Tom Hammer, were instrumental in revitalizing the Sacramento Society of California Pioneers. The historic organization, formed in 1854 by Forty-niners, maintained for over a hundred years by sons and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, had dwindled down to only four surviving members. The reinvigorated and renamed Sacramento Pioneer Foundation attracted new members between 1966 and 1970. After 1970, the organization reclaimed its original 1854 name, the Sacramento Pioneer Association.

The comparisons between Mead and Burnett are many. Their devotion to Sacramento and its history is matched by few. Their sense of civic duty rose above and beyond that of most. These two friends were extraordinary men. Each had the uncanny ability to bridge generations and be a friend to all.

Mead Kibbey and Burnett Miller will be dearly missed and their memory will be venerated in the annals of the Sacramento Pioneer Association.

The Day that James Marshall Discovered Gold

By Michael Shepard

On a cold and clear winter morning in 1848, James Marshall's accidental discovery of gold in the tailrace of Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California, set in motion a global transformation of monumental proportion summed up neatly as the "California Gold Rush."

The incident occurred without much thought to its historic significance or consequence. In fact, Mr. Marshall could scarcely recall the exact date of the event when his story was committed to print years later. It was "on or about the 19th of January," speculated Marshall, "--I am not quite certain to the day, but it was between the 18th and the 20th of that month." January 19th, 1848, became the date accepted by conventional wisdom up until the death of James Marshall on August 10, 1885.

To commemorate both the death of the man who unleashed the California Gold Rush and the thirty-fifth anniversary of California Statehood, historian John S. Hittell delivered a September 9th oration about the discovery of gold in California before the members of San Francisco's Society of California Pioneers. Shortly after that event, Mr. Hittell learned that one of Marshall's mill workers, present at the time of gold's discovery, concurrently lived in Utah. Hittell promptly sent a copy of his lecture to that gentleman, named Henry W. Bigler, to verify the accuracy of the account of the happenings on January 19, 1848.

Henry Bigler diligently compared Hittell's lecture to his own diary written at the time of gold's discovery - a diary previously not known to exist. Bigler's hand-written entry clearly stated that Marshall discovered gold on Monday, January 24, 1848.

Over the next few years, Hittell cross-referenced the new information with other sources. He must have had a Eureka moment when all evidence pointed to the 24th being the correct date of the discovery of gold in California.

Members of the Sacramento Pioneer Association felt obliged to investigate the significant findings of John S. Hittell. The board of directors formed a research committee, which included Winfield J. Davis, historian to the California State Legislature and official historian of the Sacramento Pioneer

Association; Nathaniel D. Goodell, renowned architect and builder of Pioneer Hall; and Henry Triechler, a close personal friend to James Marshall. The committee validated Hittell's work and presented its conclusion to the Sacramento Society of Pioneers at its monthly meeting on Saturday, April 29, 1893. The report was also printed in the *Sacramento Daily Union*, on Monday, May 1, 1893, and reads as follows:

Mr. President and Brother Pioneers: Your committee, who were appointed by this association to investigate and find out, if possible, the date on which gold was first discovered in California by J. W. Marshall, beg leave to make the following report: We have examined many documents, heard many verbal statements of what this and that one had said and heard in the matter, many of them contradictory. Some say that the 18th of January, 1848, was the day when gold was first discovered by J. W. Marshall at the mill race at Coloma, California. Others say that the 19th was the day, and some say the 20th, but according to the best information that we can get, we believe that the 24th of January, 1848, was the very day that gold was discovered in California by J. W. Marshall.

We believe this because this is the only day that there is any written record of the fact made on the day that gold was first discovered in California. This record was made by H. W. Bigler, on the very day, in these words:

"Monday, January 24th. This day some kind of mettle [*sic*] was found in the tail race that looks like goald [*sic*] first discovered by James W. Martial [*sic*], the boss of the mill. Sunday, 30th. Clear and has been all week; our mettle has been tried and proves to be goald; it is thought to be rich; we have picked up more than a hundred dollars' worth last week."

The above is the first record of the discovery, and the only one made in writing on the day of the discovery, and was in the diary of Henry W. Bigler, one of the laborers at the mill. H. was in the habit of keeping a regular record of important events which transpired under his observation.

Nothing was said in authenticity about the date of the discovery until 1856, eight years after the event, when Marshall published a letter in which he said that he found gold at Coloma about the 19th of January, 1848. Neither then nor at any

subsequent time did he claim that this recollection of the day was aided by a written memorandum.

In 1857 he published a statement that the discovery was made on the 18th, 19th and 20th of January 1848.

John S. Hittell says that in his investigation, which made him familiar with the diaries of Izariah Smith and one of the mill builders at Coloma, also of Sutter, these three diaries agree substantially with one another, and with Marshall's statement that four days after the discovery he took specimens of gold to Sutter's Fort. Smith made his entry on Sunday, as a rule, and on the 30th day of January he wrote that on the preceding week gold had been found at the mill, and that Marshall had gone to New Helvetia to have it tested.

This was probably written in the morning, for Bigler's entry, made on the same day, mentions that the test was successful, implying that Marshall had returned.

Sutter's diary states that on the 28th of January Marshall arrived at the fort on important business, without mentioning the gold. The agreement of the three diaries with Marshall's statement, that he went to New Helvetia (or fort) four days after the discovery.

The superior value of the documentary evidence as compared with vague recollections dimmed by years of intervening events, and the uncertainty of Marshall in reference to the date, left no room for doubt that the 24th was the true day.

It is worthy of note that, although Marshall's date was first discredited by Bigler, the latter sought no publicity on this point. For more than twenty years after Marshall's story had been in print he kept silence, and finally did not give his testimony until solicited to do so. We may presume that his attention was not called to the discrepancy of dates until 1885; and then he did not seem to attach enough importance to it to make any effort to inform the public about the error.

Now, after examining this matter quite thoroughly, pro and con, we have finally come to the conclusion that the 24th of January, 1848, was the day that J. W. Marshall first discovered gold in California, and we recommend that this society indorse that day as being the true day of gold discovery in this State by James W. Marshall. Also, that this society celebrate this day annually

in some becoming manner; also, that the above preamble and resolution be spread upon our minutes.

N. D. GOODELL,
WINFIELD J. DAVIS,
H. TREICHLER.

Despite the incontrovertible evidence regarding the true date of gold's discovery, it had not been well publicized and a rather notable public monument regrettably displayed the incorrect date on its pedestal. The state-appointed Marshall Monument Commission had dedicated a grand statue on May 3, 1890, in Coloma, to the memory of James W. Marshall. The forty-one foot tall monument depicts Marshall clad in pioneer garb, a gold nugget in his right hand and his left arm stretched out with index finger pointing to the site of Sutter's Mill. The commissioners inscribed January 19th upon the memorial and so the incorrect date remained for nearly thirty years.

In 1917, California Governor William Stephens revisited the controversial date of Marshall's gold discovery (though the controversy had been settled many years ago), and appointed a new commission, authorized by the California Legislature, to investigate the matter. Two years later, the commission presented its findings, based entirely on historian John H. Hittell's prior research, that Marshall discovered gold on January 24, 1848. Both the legislature and assembly approved the report and resolved that the date upon which gold was discovered in California by James Marshall was officially January 24, 1848. Furthermore, the legislative bodies resolved that the date on the Marshall monument be corrected - and so it was.

By unintentional design, the very first meeting of the Sacramento Pioneer Association occurred at Jones's Hotel on J Street, between Front and Second Streets, on January 24, 1854 - exactly six years to the day since that momentous discovery by James W. Marshall. The synchronism of these events is profoundly meaningful. After all, Marshall's discovery inspired the action of each and every Forty-niner to embark upon the adventure of a lifetime - and become a California pioneer! ❖

23rd Annual Pioneer Picnic By Karun Yee

If you can image the most beautiful emerald green park-like setting nestled against a vine and tree lined levee, you would see the landscape of Heringer Estates Vineyards and Winery in Clarksburg. The Sacramento Pioneers were truly fortunate to be able to visit such a lovely setting for our 23rd annual picnic on September 23rd, 2018.

Guests were treated to the delicious flame grilled tacos by Chando's, enchanting music by the Felipe Ferraz trio, desserts by Vickie Prune's CC Celebration Cakes and of course superb wine by the Heringer winery. Steve Heringer gave us a fascinating history of the winery and local tales of the area. Monica Pope won the door prize graciously given by the Heringer winery for a 6 person wine tasting event. Who will be her happy companions?

Pioneers had the opportunity to meet our new secretary, Shelly Ford, at the reception table. Julia Shaw was an invaluable contact person for our party. Thank you Shelley, Marie, Julia, Rodney and Bill for helping out.

After the weekend, we received many positive comments by thrilled members. This delightful afternoon was planned and executed by our events team; Debbie Elliot, Pete Heringer, Michael Shepard and Karun Yee. Thank you all !

DATE CORRECTION!

The 2018
*Sacramento Pioneer Association
Annual Holiday Gala*

at the
Crocker Art Museum Ballroom

216 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

will be held

Wednesday, December 5, 2018
6 PM to 8 PM

For more information please call
(916) 447-7411



The state's official bicentennial medal

The California Bicentennial Celebration Commission, formed by the state legislature in 1967, ordered the minting of a 4.25 oz. silver medal in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the first permanent settlement in Alta California: the Mission of San Diego, founded on July 16, 1769. Next year, July 16, 2019, marks California's quarter-millennial anniversary - that's 250 years! Perhaps the current state legislature has something big planned.



Sacramento Pioneer Association Annual Picnic
September 23, 2018
at Heringer Estates Family Vineyards and Winery



Burnett Miller enjoying the picnic.



Trisha Setzer chats with proprietor Steve Heringer over a few bottles of wine.



Vice-President Pete Heringer surveys the festivity.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Sacramento Pioneer Association Calendar of Events

2018
Wednesday, December 5

Holiday Gala at the Crocker

2019
Friday, January 4

150th anniversary of the dedication of
Pioneer Hall. No event planned.

Thursday, January 24

171st anniversary of Marshall's discovery
of gold and 165th anniversary of the
Sacramento Pioneer Association's first
meeting. No event planned

2018 - 2019