

SACRAMENTO PIONEER ASSOCIATION

OUR 166<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

# PIONEER NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2019

SUMMER EDITION



Message from  
President Schaw

Congratulations to  
Pioneers of the Year  
Jim Craig & Fritz Harrold

2019 Scholarship  
Award Recipient

Screen Shots from  
*Guardians of the Past*



David Hewes' Gold Locket & Miniature Spike

# Sacramento Pioneer Association Quarterly Newsletter



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Secretary.....Thom Gilbert  
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### Term ending March 2021

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Debbie Elliot              Brian Witherell

### Term ending March 2022

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Joan Kibbey Taylor  
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Michael Shepard

## IN MEMORIAM

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Ed Grebitus

**Cover Image:** Photograph of the reverse-side of David Hewes' gold locket and miniature spike. Note the exquisite detail including San Francisco's seacoast fortification Fort Point at the bottom of the locket. Image courtesy of Brian Witherell.



**Left:** David Hewes, c. 1889, as depicted within the gold locket that Hewes gave to his fiancée, Miss Anna Maria Lathrop. Screenshot from *Guardians of the Past* courtesy of Tim Walton.

## Sacramento Pioneer Association Pioneer Newsletter™

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## President's Message

### SPA Board Continuity

As the new president of the Sacramento Pioneer Association I want to very sincerely thank our board members and association officers, all of whom have agreed to continue in their roles during the coming year. The Association is led by capable and dedicated people who make possible the service we provide to our members and to the community, the story of which we exist to celebrate and continue. Thanks to all of them.

### ***Guardians of the Past* Showing at RR Museum as Part of the Gold Spike Lectures**

After its preview at the KVIE studio and subsequent broadcast on KVIE's ViewFinder program, *Guardians of the Past* has been again the center of attention. It was shown on May 7<sup>th</sup> at the California State Railroad Museum. This very well regarded film celebrating Sacramento's and the Pioneer's origin story was featured as a part of the Railroad Museum's Gold Spike Lecture series commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transcontinental railroad's completion in 1869.

You can view our film any time on YouTube where it's always available. This means that far-flung relatives and friends, who do not know as much about Sacramento's history as they should, now have a truly valuable resource to rely on. Feel free to tell them this.

### **Gold Locket & Miniature Spike Acquisition and Gift to State Railroad Museum**

In other news, the SPA has now completed acquisition of Mr. David Hewes' gold spike commemorative locket/fob and has made a donation of these artifacts to the California State Railroad Museum. They are now on display at the museum helping to continue the commemoration of the railroad's 150<sup>th</sup> year. Thanks in particular to board members Brian Witherell and Bill Gould for arranging this transaction and encouraging the SPA's involvement. It's another example of our efforts to preserve and enhance the celebration of Sacramento's dynamic history.

## SPA Web Site Redevelopment

We have begun work to create an upgraded web site providing us with more flexibility for edits, document inclusion, transactions, and confidential password protected content (i.e. our membership roster). Michael Shepard and Shelley Ford are working with webmaster Michael Geminder to achieve these goals within the next few months. More news about this effort later.

Bill Schaw, President



**Lori Gualco  
Katie Brown  
Trisha Setzer**

## Witherell's Gold Locket Reception Honors Mead Kibbey

Sacramento Pioneers gathered on the evening of May 28, 2019, at Witherell's Auction House in Sacramento's New Era Park neighborhood near Sutter's Landing for a reception co-hosted by Jim Craig and Brian Witherell. There, the Association officially unveiled David Hewes gold locket and miniature spike to its attending members. The locket and spike, recently acquired by the Sacramento Pioneer Association and donated to the California State Railroad Museum Foundation in memory of Mead Kibbey, debuted at the reception on loan from the railroad museum. Pioneers admired the historic treasure secured within a display case surrounded by an impressive private collection of Central Pacific and Union Pacific memorabilia including miniature spikes and rings crafted from a gold nugget that had been attached to the "last spike." Wood Fire Pizza Company served delicious *hors' du oeuvres* while the Sutter Club's Devin poured drinks. Ty Smith, director of the California State Railroad Museum delivered a compelling address to the Pioneers regarding the significance of the Association's gift to the museum.



# David Hewes' Gold Locket & Miniature Spike

By Michael Shepard

In the spring of 2019, the Sacramento Pioneer Association purchased a unique 19<sup>th</sup> century gold locket with attached miniature gold spike whose intriguing history intertwines with that of the completion of the transcontinental railroad one hundred and fifty years ago. Months prior to the acquisition, the Mead B. and Nancy Kibbey Family Trust generously bequeathed \$10,000 to the Association. Shortly after, board members Brian Witherell and Bill Gould presented the exciting opportunity for the Association to acquire this venerable locket and miniature spike from descendants of one Mr. David Hewes - the man who commissioned the jewelry.

The locket and spike together appraised for \$20,000, but the sellers, in recognition of the historic significance of the pieces, offered to donate half of the appraised value if the locket and spike were to find a permanent home in an accredited museum. Inspired by the Sacramento Pioneer Association's mission to collect, preserve and share early regional history, the board of directors unanimously agreed to purchase the David Hewes gold locket and miniature spike in memory of Mead B. Kibbey funded by the Kibbey gift. The Association then donated the acquisition to the California State Railroad Museum Foundation for permanent display at the railroad museum in Old Sacramento.

Perhaps as early as 1869, but surely no later than 1889, Mr. David Hewes commissioned the fabrication of this oval-shaped, transcontinental railroad-themed, gold locket. Embedded in the face of the 1 ¼-inch by ¾-inch treasure are two semi-precious stones of polished California gold-bearing quartz and Rocky Mountain moss-agate. An emblem of a gold spike fills each cleft in the space above and below the point where the oval gemstones touch. Scrollwork on either side of the stones bears the inscription *D.H. to A.M.L* engraved in fine cursive.

The reverse of the locket showcases an exquisite scene composed of gold inlay in onyx-like black enamel that illustrates the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. In the picture, a locomotive departed from New York and a locomotive from San Francisco meet at Promontory Summit, Utah Territory. Notably, the military stronghold Fort Point appears prominently at San Francisco's Golden Gate.

Fastened to the locket's chain, there dangles a miniature gold railroad spike, no more than 9/10-inch long, inscribed with the words "the last spike" and "May 10, 1869." Inside the locket appears a portrait of a bearded David Hewes, probably in his late sixties, which coincides with the year 1889 when he married his second wife, Anna Maria Lathrop, whose initials appear on the

locket. At this point, one naturally might ask, who is David Hewes?

Mr. Hewes, while perhaps overshadowed by a California titan the likes of Leland Stanford, was himself an early California entrepreneur who garnered considerable wealth and achieved significant stature in the West.

A twenty-eight-year-old David Hewes arrived in California from Massachusetts in 1850, not to prospect for gold, but to market an inventory of prefabricated galvanized iron houses, which he shipped over to the West Coast to capitalize on the population boom and infrastructure deficit. He erected his buildings on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in Sacramento and rented them as offices for a sizeable profit supplementing his income from an already successful general mercantile business. It was in Sacramento that Hewes befriended Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Collis P. Huntington and the two Crockers, as well as others of esteemed reputation.

The great fire of November 2, 1852, destroyed Hewes' business ventures in Sacramento, including his newly erected six-story Queen City hotel on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and J Streets. The ensuing flood of 1853 drove him to abandon the river city and relocate to San Francisco with few assets save for his ambition.

In San Francisco, David Hewes started a business grading and removing the sand dunes prevalent on the eastern shoreline of the peninsula; first with manual Chinese labor, then by steam shovel. He experienced such success in this project that he literally transformed the topography of the city by filling in Yerba Buena Cove, Mission Bay, and the tidelands of North Beach, thus extending the shoreline and creating much of the ground where San Francisco's financial district now stands. David Hewes earned the nickname "Maker of San Francisco."

While David Hewes literally made a name for himself in San Francisco, his Sacramento acquaintance, Leland Stanford, grew exceptionally wealthy as a merchant. Stanford, along with Crocker, Huntington and Hopkins (dubbed the Associates) became the primary financiers of civil engineer Theodore Judah's visionary plan for the Central Pacific Railroad, which the five of them incorporated in 1861. In 1862, Californians elected Stanford the eighth governor of the state. While in office, he became president of the Central Pacific Railroad Company. Governor Stanford turned over a shovel full of earth at the foot of K Street in Sacramento on January 8, 1863, to inaugurate the construction of the transcontinental railroad. In his own autobiography, Hewes recollects that the Associates "strongly solicited me to join with them in the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad" - a prospect that he turned down due to the perceived risk. Nevertheless, Mr. Hewes remained a staunch supporter of the project from its inception.

In the spring of 1869, as the transcontinental railroad neared completion, David Hewes took it upon himself to

commission two gold railroad spikes. One spike was the “last spike,” to be ceremonially driven into the “last tie.” Mr. Hewes commissioned the other gold spike as a keepsake for his own personal collection.

According to Stanford University’s Cantor Art Center where the “last spike” is housed in the Center’s permanent collection, William T. Garrett’s brass and bell foundry at the corner of Fremont and Mission in San Francisco cast the “last spike” as well as its keepsake companion. Fused to the tip of the “last spike” was a gold nugget, about six inches long, to be broken off before its ceremonial driving into the “last tie,” then used to make memorabilia. The second spike retained a length of sprue attached to its tip formed during the casting of the spike. Schultz, Fischer & Mohrig, manufacturers of silverware in San Francisco, finished and engraved both gold spikes according to the original receipt dated May 4, 1869.

On May 5, 1869, five days prior to the historic completion of the transcontinental railroad, San Francisco’s *Daily Alta California* printed the following article:

Mr. David Hewes left yesterday with a gold spike manufactured for him by Messrs. Schulz, Fischer & Mohrig, of this city, and which is intended to be the last spike driven on the completion of the road. This spike weighs about eighteen ounces and is valued at \$350. A nugget about six inches in length is attached to the head of the spike, and will be broken off at the conclusion of the ceremonies to be made up into mementoes.

The Sacramento *Daily Union* of May 5 reported similar details of the last spike:

The spike is a facsimile in size and shape of the ordinary six-inch spike, to the point of which was attached at the casting a nugget of about the same length as the spike itself, which is designed to be broken off at the time of the ceremony by the President of the road, to be used probably in the manufacture of mementoes of the occasion for the officers of the corporation.

Hewes also organized the cooperation of the transcontinental railroad companies and Western Union Telegraph so that when a commemorative silver hammer made contact with the “last spike,” wires attached to both hammer and spike would convey the message through the telegraph system across the country that the railroad was complete! The captain of San Francisco’s military outpost, Fort Point, even wired the overland telegraph to a 15-inch gun, which electrically discharged with the final hammer stroke on the “last spike;” hence, David Hewes’ inclusion of Fort Point on the backside of his gold locket.

In David Hewes’ autobiography, privately published in 1913, Hewes recollects: “It was to Secretary Seward that I presented a symbolic gold ring, made from the gold nugget which I had moulded on the end of the spike, for the purpose of making souvenirs of the great event marking the completion of the road. The ring was made

with two oval shaped emblems, one made of California gold quartz, and the other of quartz containing moss-agate, which was found in the Rocky Mountains; the gold quartz representing the Central Pacific, and the moss-agate the Union Pacific.” The description of the ring embedded with quartz stones bears an uncanny similarity to the design of David Hewes’ gold locket.

Twenty years after Promontory, sixty-seven-year-old widower David Hewes married Miss Anna Maria Lathrop whose initials appear on the locket. The portrait of Hewes inside the locket likely portrays a contemporary likeness of the groom. The couple wed on June 11, 1889, at Leland Stanford’s Nob Hill mansion in San Francisco - a fitting venue not only because of Hewes’ friendship with Stanford, but because Miss Lathrop and Mrs. Stanford were sisters. David Hewes’ nephew, Rev. Granville Sharpe Abbott assisted with conducting the low-key ceremony attended by relatives and a limited number of intimate friends according to a *Daily Alta California* article printed the following day.

Sadly, the marriage was short-lived. Once again, David Hewes found himself a widower after Anna Maria passed away in August of 1892. David’s nephew, Rev. Abbott, was one of two ministers who presided at the funeral. Hewes entrusted his deceased wife’s locket to his sister, Ruthe Abbott, who was Reverend Abbott’s mother.

The recent conveyance letter, dated June 1, 2019, which authorized transfer of the David Hewes gold locket and miniature spike from seller to buyer, describes the ownership of the historic ornament over generations as it passed down the line through the Abbott family:

Ruth Hewes was known to be David Hewes’ favorite sister, and the locket and miniature spike was probably given at some point to Ruth by David Hewes and later transferred to Ruth’s son (Granville Sharp Abbott) and his wife Susan Davis, and from there was probably given by them to their son Granville Davis Abbott and his wife Florence Brackett, and from there was given to their son Carl Philip Abbott and his new bride, Jean Hagan. After the divorce in 1943 of Carl and Jean, Jean Hagan ended up with the locket and miniature spike, which has been in her ownership and possession to this day.

The David Hewes gold locket and miniature spike now reside with the California State Railroad Foundation on permanent display at the railroad museum in Old Sacramento. The new addition stands adjacent to David Hewes’ keepsake gold spike, twin to the “last spike,” with sprue still attached to its tip from when it was cast. Thomas Hill’s iconic mural, *The Last Spike*, overlooks the two Hewes transcontinental railroad artifacts. It is with great pleasure that the Sacramento Pioneer Association presents this magnificent gold locket and miniature spike, in memory of Mead Kibbey, to the people of the great state of California. ❖



## **Jim Craig and Fritz Harrold, 2019 Pioneers of the Year**

At this year's Sacramento Pioneer Association annual dinner meeting, two esteemed Association members earned the Pioneer of the Year award for their service to this organization. Past Pioneer of the Year Steve Huffman presented the awards to Jim Craig and Fritz Harrold at the Sutter Club where Pioneers held their meeting on March 21, 2019.

Fritz graciously accepted the awards for both Jim and himself in Jim's absence due to a previously scheduled engagement. Later, Jim expressed that he and wife Susan "enjoy the friendships they've developed in the Pioneers and the experiences they've had at various events throughout the years."

In recent years, long-time friends Jim and Fritz have been responsible for masterfully organizing some of those Pioneer events that Jim spoke of - specifically the highly anticipated holiday parties. They appeared to have a lot of fun doing it, too! Some of their most memorable venues include the Stanford mansion, the Goethe house built by Julia Morgan and the Sacramento History Museum.

It is with great pleasure that we acknowledge the dedication of these two gentlemen with the 2019 Pioneer of the Year award. Congratulations!

## **Sacramento Pioneer Association Proud to Present 2019 Scholarship Award**

From within the elegant dining room of the Sutter Club during the Sacramento Pioneer Association March Annual Dinner Meeting, President Bill Schaw presented John F. Kennedy High School senior Aldo Gonzalez Ruiz with this year's \$5,000 scholarship award. Among the numerous qualified applicants, Aldo stood out as a highly motivated student who has overcome adversity. Aldo tragically lost both of his parents at the age of seven and grew up under the care of his aunt and uncle. With a weighted grade point average of 4.25, this determined student ranked among the top ten of his class numbering 517. Aldo excels in academics, competes as a mathlete, runs cross country with his school's track and field team and volunteers as a calculus tutor. He looks forward to pursuing a degree in either mechanical or electrical engineering at a California university in the fall. We wish this determined young gentleman the best of luck in his pursuit of higher education.



**President Bill Schaw and Aldo Gonzales Ruiz**



## *Guardians of the Past: The Sacramento Pioneer Association*



Sacramento Pioneer Association director and expert appraiser of 19th century American antiques, **Brian Witherell** lends his wisdom to the film *Guardians of the Past*. This documentary by filmmaker Tim Walton aired on KVIE Channel Six in May of 2019. The film explores the early history of Sacramento and the role that the Sacramento Pioneer Association has played in preserving regional history since its inception in 1854.



Pioneer Association Past President **Michael Shepard** recounts stories of Sacramento's early settlers in *Guardians of the Past*. In addition, city historian Marcia Eymann and California State Railroad Museum Director Ty Smith share their historical expertise in the film.



Association member **Kenneth Knott** (far left) portrays a 19th century Sacramento gentleman in *Guardians of the Past*. Mr. Knott also actively participates with the Native Sons of the Golden West and the Sacramento History Museum's Old Sacramento Living History Program.



The screenshot, left, shows the exquisite detail of David Hewes' gold locket and miniature spike. The locket's face showcases California gold-bearing quartz representing the Central Pacific Railroad and Rocky Mountain moss-agate representing the Union Pacific Railroad. Clearly visible, the date May 10, 1869, appears inscribed upon the miniature spike signifying the completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory.



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### **Sacramento Pioneer Association Calendar of Events**

**Tuesday, July 16**

**250th Anniversary of the founding of California.** No event planned.

**Monday, September 9**

**California Admission Day.** No event planned.

**Saturday, September 21**

**SPA Annual Picnic.** More information to follow.

**2019**