

of the
Tuolumne County
Historical Society
Sonora, California

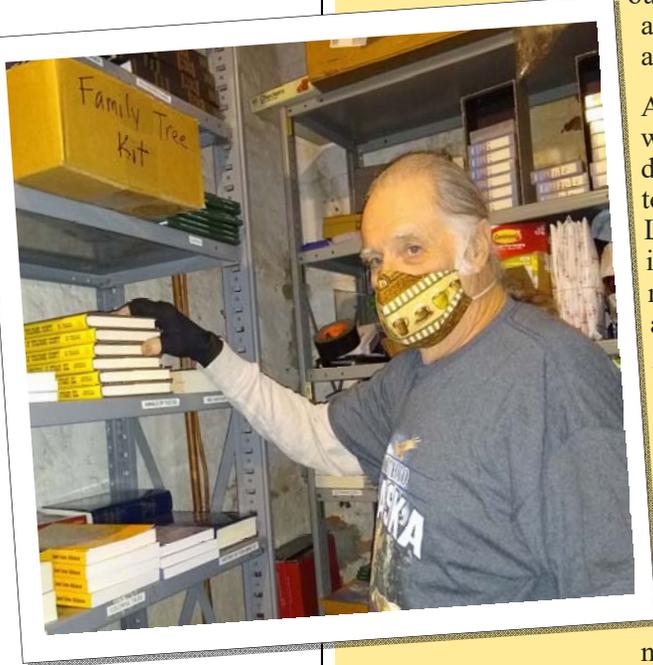
Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Members,

I'm glad to see that the COVID vaccine is now available for people 65 and over. The scramble is on for folks to secure an appointment and get vaccinated. This means that we are just a little bit closer to getting back to normal. The reopening of places such as our Museum still won't happen for a few more months, as there is a ways to go before we have a large enough portion of our population vaccinated. But the planning and behind-the-scenes preparation for our eventual reopening has begun. Of course, we will look to State and local recommendations, as well as to our own needs, for guidance in this process.

Although the Museum and History Research Center remain closed, we have had a small group of volunteers working behind locked doors to keep things going. We have taken advantage of being closed to freshen up or change displays in the Museum. Our Curator, Billie Lyons, has had time to work on getting caught up on the never ending amount of computer work involving the cataloging of information and pictures. We have a consultant who has been working on a significant upgrade/redesign of our website. We also have made great progress on the production of a video version of our Fourth Grade Tour. In the coming months, we will provide additional updates for these activities.

One of the behind-the-scenes projects I would like to share with you at this time is our acquisition of a new collection of photographs. Long-time resident photographer and Columbia College photography instructor Thad Waterbury has offered to donate his extensive collection of photographs. This donation is unique because it is not a collection of digital photographs, but rather a large number of 35mm black-and-white negatives. Since Thad started taking pictures of downtown Sonora in 1973, and continued to do so for the next 47 years, this collection contains thousands of high quality, historically significant photographs. Thad's donation is so large and significant that we are working together with Andy Mattos at the Carlo M. De Ferrari Archive to both preserve it and to provide access for the public. The Archive is going to handle the physical storage of the thousands of negatives while our Museum volunteers will digitize the pictures so they can be put into a computer database. We are happy to work with the Andy on this donation and very excited to be able to add this large group of photographs to the Museum's Collection. We will provide additional reports as progress continues on this project.



Chuck Holland, President, doing the annual inventory.

Welcome New Members:

Amanda Brown-Stevens
Lowell & Susan Thomas
Justin & Vicki Reedy—Life



The latest decade collection CD of *Chispa*, Jan.—Mar. 2001 to Oct.—Dec. 2020, is now available. The *Chispa* articles are in Adobe Reader PDF format and every-word searchable. Adobe Reader can be downloaded for free: get.adobe.com/reader/.

Each CD is \$40.00, which includes shipping. To purchase the latest CD or any of the other five decades of *Chispa*, go to the TCHS website—<https://tchistory.org/product/chispa-decade-collections/>.

Julia Mock Clark Nicol

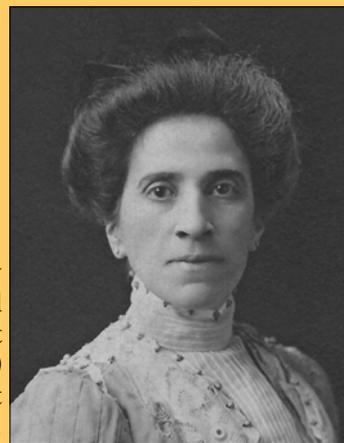
By Pat Perry

Julia Mock was born on September 16, 1859, in Sonora, California. She married two of Sonora's most prominent men: Charles Clark, who left her a very wealthy widow, and George Nicol, a Superior Court Judge in Tuolumne County.

On June 10, 1883, when Julia was twenty-three years old, she married Charles Clark, who was fifty-eight at the time. He was quite wealthy from his investment in the Bonanza Mine, the most productive pocket mine in Sonora's history. Apparently, there was a bit of talk around town about the age difference between Julia and Charles. A poem over ninety lines long and published in the *Tuolumne Independent* on June 16, 1883, reflects this social scrutiny. It begins as follows:

*Mr. So-and-So's married to Miss So-and-So!
Well did you ever, and, no I never!
To New York, and perhaps to Europe they'll go
Well now I never, say did you ever?
Good gracious! O Dear! You must be joking
But surely now it's too provoking
That such a thing should happen in town
And we have no chance to utter a word!*

Charles and Julia's daughter, Harriet Alma, was born on July 28, 1884, in Sonora. Very little is known about her. In the 1900 census, she is recorded twice—once as living and attending school in San Francisco with her aunt Pauline Mock Joseph, and the other at home with Julia and her second husband, George Nicol, as also documented in the 1920 census, in which Harriet is shown with no occupation. Julia told a neighbor in Sonora that Harriet was "mentally deficient." According to the family she later lived in an institution. Harriet died on February 18, 1924, and is interred with her mother in the San Francisco Columbarium.



Julia Mock Clark Nicol



Clark Monument

Charles Clark died on August 12, 1885. Clark was buried in the Hebrew Cemetery in Sonora. Julia erected a beautiful marble monument for his grave, which cost her \$1,000. Clark's estate was valued at over \$110,000, which was left equally to Julia and their daughter, Harriet.

In the spring of 1887, Julia hired contractor, Charles Sell, to build her a beautiful home on Stewart Street in Sonora. On August 20, 1888, Julia married George W. Nicol, a prominent attorney in Sonora, who was much closer to her in age. They were married in San Francisco at the home of her sister, Pauline Joseph. The marriage ceremony was private, with only relatives and a few intimate friends attending. Julia's mother, Rebecca Mock, and daughter Harriet attended the wedding, and then returned to Sonora.

Upon their return to Sonora the couple was serenaded by the Sonora Band and good cheer reigned supreme, and all were royally treated by the happy pair. Not to be outdone, on September 11th, the Columbia Cornet Band serenaded the couple: "After the magnificent rendering of some appropriate selections, the doors were thrown open, and the members of the band elegantly entertained. After enjoying the lavish hospitality of the recipients of their compliment, the visitors withdrew, wishing the pair a long life of prosperity, health and happiness."



Julia had this home built after the death of her first husband.

In 1890, George Nicol was elected to the Superior Court Judgeship on the Democratic ticket. He continued as the Superior Court Judge in Tuolumne County until his death in 1922. Judge Nicol died on December 3, 1922, at the Clift Hotel in San Francisco. He had been ill for some time. The funeral was held in San Francisco and the remains were taken to the Cypress Lawn Cemetery, where they were cremated. His estate was valued at \$8,000 in personal property, with no real property. There was \$7,000 in stocks and bonds and his law library was valued at \$1,000. The law books were given to Tuolumne County and are now housed at the Carlo De Ferrari Archive. Everything was left to Julia. In March 1923, Julia sold her home in Sonora to Walter and Nellie Cherry, who converted the building into apartments. After the Judge's death, Julia continued to reside at the Clift Hotel, where she lived until her death in 1944.

Museum Corner

Window In Time

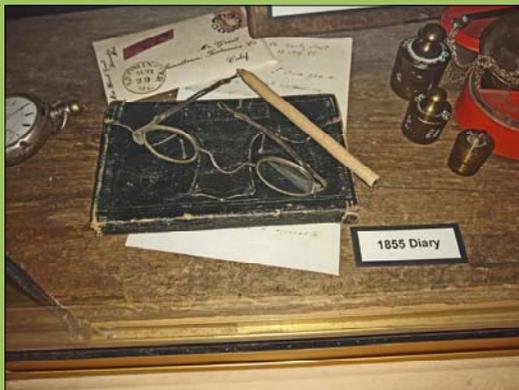
The Exhibits Committee, Allan Bryant and Betty Sparagna, continue to work on new displays in the Museum during the pandemic. One of the latest exhibits is a “Window In Time” vignette of an 1855 miner’s tent on the slopes of Table Mountain. It appears that the miner just stepped outside, leaving his diary on the table.

While searching for items in the Museum Collection to go into the display, Allan and Betty came across a diary by an unknown diarist, who was mining the area around Mormon Creek. Over the year 1855, the miner and his various partners—Adams, Hitchcock, Hamilton, Brown, and Bridges—prospected other areas around Table Mountain. Many entries in the diary were about the weather, going to Jamestown for mail, or purchasing supplies in Columbia. Keeping track of gold, which they “washed out,” was often recorded. At one point, August of 1855, the diarist sent home \$500 to his father. Some days were filled with washing and mending, while other days robberies and hangings were recorded. On May 1, 1855, it was noted there was a “total eclips [eclipse] of the moon to night.”



“Window In Time” Miner’s Tent—1855

Also part of the display is a *batea*, seen in the lower right corner of the window. This wooden tool was used as a gold pan by Mexicans in the early days of placer mining. It is made from a plank of wood and has been repaired with a piece of metal when it split. Another

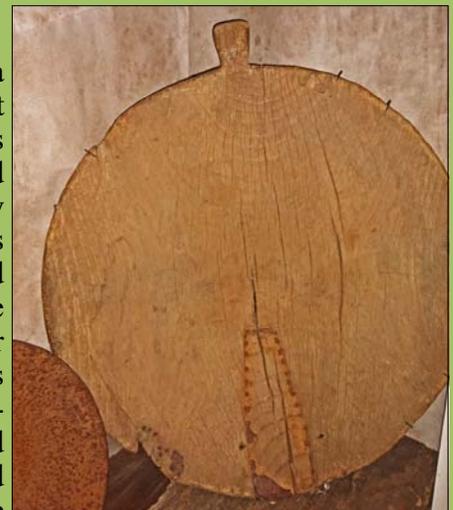


1855 Diary—Tuolumne County

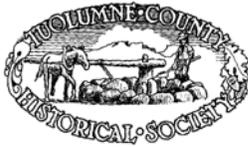
rare sample of mining equipment is the horn or *poruña*. The horn was used to sample a claim. Carved from the horn of an animal, it was softened in boiling water and then worked by hand. The miner gathered samples of dirt and sand and when the horn was half-filled, he plunged it into water and washed the contents. He tilted the horn so the water carried off the material lighter than the gold, which stayed in the bottom. If there were gold nuggets visible to the naked eye, the site was judged good and the miner marked his claim.



Poruña—used to sample a claim



Batea—early wooden gold pan



**TUOLUMNE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Sonora, California

*The Mission of the Tuolumne County
Historical Society shall be to discover, collect,
preserve, and disseminate knowledge about
the history of Tuolumne County and
the State of California.*

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Change in address or contact
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