

of the
Tuolumne County
Historical Society
Sonora, California

Special Events in Columbia (Subject to cancellation)

Back to School Night
Sept. 18—4:00-7:00 pm
Opportunity to enter the
Old Schoolhouse

Stories in Stone
Sept. 24 & 25,
Oct. 1 & 2
Guided walk through the
old Columbia Cemetery
with appearances by
some of those
buried there.

Dress warm & be
prepared to walk on
uneven terrain.

More information -
588-9128
For tickets:
Go to Website—
FriendsofColumbiaSHP.com

Welcome New Members:

Barbara Balen
John & Susan Russel
Christy Gianelli



Letter from the President

Our Changing Plans—Chuck Holland

It was just a few months ago that our Board resumed having in-person meetings and began making plans for re-opening the Museum and History Research Center. Back in June we figured the Museum would have a “soft” re-opening in late August, a full opening in September. We also made plans for a Dedication/Memorial Ceremony in honor of Angela Brown to be held in the Museum Courtyard on October 2, 2021.

That was before the recent surge of the Delta variant of Covid cases filled the local hospital and resulted in a new round of restrictions on indoor activities and large group events. As a County facility, we are currently following the mandate of masks being required for all staff and public, regardless of vaccination status. All of the County meeting rooms and community halls have been closed. Tuolumne County Public Health is recommending postponing all gatherings, especially gatherings with 50 or more people.

Our Dedication/Memorial event, on October 2, 2021, has now been **postponed** until conditions for large group gatherings improve. We are still hoping to try a limited re-opening of the Museum and HRC on an **appointment only** basis. Masks will be required, regardless of vaccination status. To schedule an appointment at the Museum or the HRC, you can email a request at info@tchistory.org or call 209-532-1317.

It is the consensus of the Board of Directors that we exercise caution in re-opening and resumption of normal activities. It is our hope that re-opening on an appointment only basis will allow us to resume some degree of service to the public, while maintaining a safe operating environment for our volunteers, many of whom are anxious to get back to work.

New HRC Coordinator



Sherry Blake, HRC Coordinator

Sherry Blake is our new History Research Center Coordinator, starting September 1, 2021. You may know Sherry as the Chair of the Museum Board of Governors, but she has stepped down from that position to become our new Coordinator. She has a background in teaching and has been the driving force behind the 4th grade virtual tour DVD, which will soon be distributed to all schools in Tuolumne County. Sherry was also chair of the fundraiser When Shadows Whisper. Her days at the History Research Center will tentatively be Wednesday—Friday. For an appointment to visit the Museum or HRC, email info@tchistory.org or call 532-1317.

Swell A. Knapp

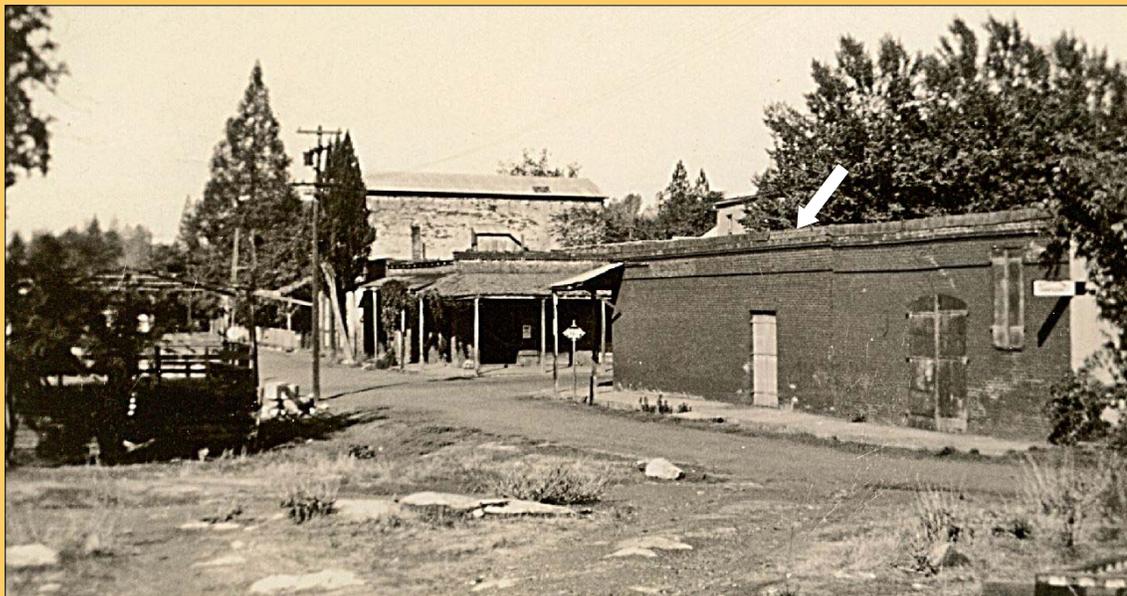
An exception to the experiences of most of the men who came to California.

By Sherrin Grout

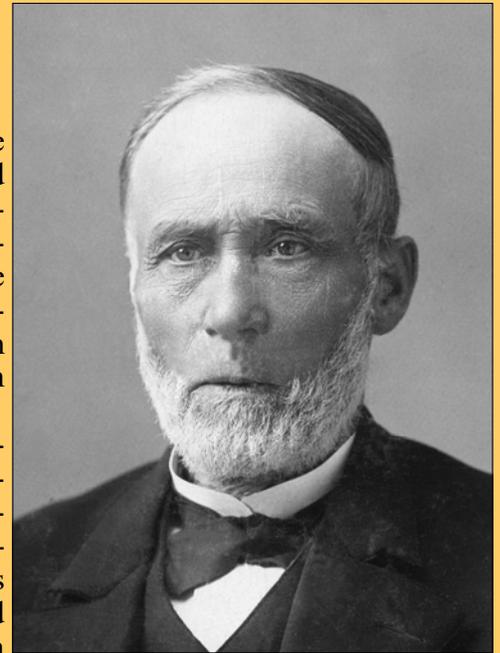
Sewell A. Knapp arrived in California from Maine in 1849. He mined in Moccasin Creek and, according to family legend, found \$118,000 in gold nuggets. He also realized the importance of a good supply of firewood so he went into that business. With a solid financial outlook, he returned to Maine, married Caroline Gilman, then returned alone to California in 1851. In 1852, Knapp arrived in Columbia, set up a mercantile business and established one of the first sawmills in the area. With his finances secure, he sent for Caroline, who arrived in Columbia in 1853.

That was also the year Knapp purchased the lot and frame building on the corner of State and Main Streets. When the wood frame building burned in the July 1854 fire, he rebuilt it of brick, which luckily survived the 1857 fire. As a prosperous merchant, Knapp added on the warehouse at the back (east end) of the building in 1856, using his own teams of horses to transport supplies from Stockton. In the off-season, he rented the horses to do plowing around Stockton, which led to his interest in farming in the valley. In 1862, Knapp purchased 1,500 acres near the Merced River, which was planted in wheat.

In 1864, with a family of five children—a sixth child born the following year—Knapp purchased a house on Fulton Street in Columbia. Much later the house was moved across the street, where it is still stands today. Reflecting his continued interest and success in the lumber business, Knapp's thriving lumberyard was located just a block and a half east of his house. Knapp was well on his way to become one of the wealthiest men in Columbia.



The arrow points to the Knapp building. Today it houses the Columbia Museum (formerly the Cavalier Museum).



TP321

Swell A. Knapp

In *Jaynes Almanac* for 1881, Knapp's advertisement as a general dealer in "Dry Goods and Groceries" included patent medicines, boots, shoes, hardware, crockery, paints, oils, dye stuffs, glass, drugs and medicines, hats and caps, and all other types of goods usually kept in a country store.

Knapp was active in community affairs, serving on the Columbia Board of Trustees after the 1854 incorporation of the town.

He was also on the board of the Columbia and Stanislaus River Water Companies. He continued in the dry goods business until 1887, when he sold it to his son William Knapp and R. D. Davis.

Knapp died in 1888 and is supposed to be buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery in Columbia, but I have yet to find his grave or that of his son William, who died in 1889.

P36716

Museum Corner

TCHS is looking for a volunteer to be responsible for our FACEBOOK page. Interested? Contact info@tchistory.org.

New Addition to the Museum Gallery



The Kole Family after setting up the pony cart

The well-preserved pony cart pictured below is a new addition to the Museum—a donation from the Kole Family, descendants of Gerrit Elijah Tolman Kole, aka “Tag Along Puppy Dog,” later shortened to “Puppy” or “Pup,” a paperboy in downtown Sonora.



Cousins: Robert Kole, Donnelle Kole Long, and Linda Jane Kole

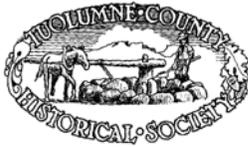
After winning a pony in a contest for selling the most newspaper subscriptions, Pup made a deal with an elderly woman in Sonora to purchase her pony cart on a payment schedule. This 150-year-old pony cart now sits in the Museum gallery. Pup’s story will be featured in an upcoming *Chispa*.



Patricia “Pat” Rhodes

Patricia Hertert Rhodes 1927—2021

Patricia “Pat” Hertert Rhodes passed away on June 21, 2021, in Walnut Creek, CA, at the age of 93. Pat was an early active member of the Historical Society, working tirelessly to make the Museum and History Research Center (HRC) what it is today. She was on the Museum Board of Governors for many years, president of the Historical Society (1971-72), and recipient of the Order of the Wheelhorse Award. In 2011, Pat was honored at the annual Lamplight Dinner and presented with a dedication plaque later mounted at the entrance to the History Research Center. The HRC was renamed the *Patricia Hertert Rhodes History Research Center* for her many years of service.



**TUOLUMNE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

158 Bradford Street
SONORA, CA 95370-4920

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
U S POSTAGE PAID
Permit #15
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.

**Tuolumne County Museum
History Research Center**
158 Bradford Street, Sonora, CA 95370
Museum: 209-532-1317
History Research Center: 209-532-4227

The *Historian* is published several times a year by the Tuolumne County Historical Society, 158 Bradford St., Sonora, CA 95370-4920 for the benefit of the membership. There is no charge for the *Historian*. (In compliance with Public Law 103-123, 39 U.S.C. 3656 subsection [j].)

Work Day at the HRC

By Sandy Fisher

Shown here are volunteers in the History Research Center. Using the museum software system CatalogIt, we were able to look up the item number, find the record already in the old system (PastPerfect), which showed the location of the item, take a photo, if



Ruth Pedro & Allan Bryant



Brad & Sandy Fisher

needed, then return the item correctly on the shelf. All volunteers agreed CatalogIt was easy to learn and user-friendly. This is one of the many volunteer opportunities available at the Museum and HRC. If you're interested, contact info@tchistory.org.

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Change in address or contact information?

Contact Kathy Boone—

cookie48@mlode.com or (209) 984-3359