

# THE AMADORIAN

A Publication of the Amador County Historical Society

*"Preserving the past and present for tomorrow"*

Winter/Spring 2023 – Vol. 16, No. 1

## President's Corner

Dear ACHS Members:

In my first message as President, I want to thank all our members for putting their trust in me and electing me as your new President of the Amador County Historical Society. The new board was announced at the November annual dinner at Teresa's Place. I have a great set of people on the board, and I couldn't do it without all of you. We again thank the Giurlani family for all that they do for the historical society.

We have some deferred maintenance to address at the museum, and it will take a lot of work and your generous donations to accomplish our goals. One of our main goals this year is advancing the construction of the livery building. Helping us in our endeavor, we were very pleased to receive a grant of approximately \$24K from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for funds lost from closure of the museum and events during COVID. The donations from Giving Tuesday came to over \$8,000 for which we're very thankful. Together with the ARPA funds, the money the Amador County Board of Supervisors have committed to, the Giving Tuesday funds, and what we have already raised, we are almost halfway to our goal. You will shortly see the old livery stable demolished in the first phase of our plan. We want to acknowledge and thank Leonard Williams and his crew for all his work getting us to this point.

We will be putting our event calendar together very soon and will keep you informed about the upcoming events. This year we hope to add some new events, one being an antiques and art auction as a fundraiser

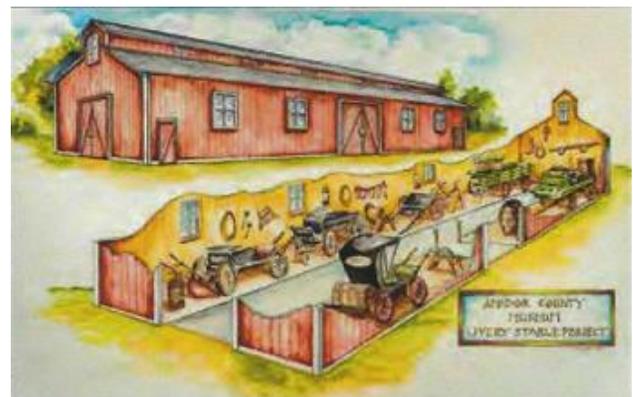
for the livery building. We hope to see you at every event.

As many of you are already aware, Thorton Consolo, a board member of the ACHS Historical Society and our grounds keeper and volunteer for the mine model at the museum for many years, was in a serious accident falling from a tree. He is doing much better and is in good spirits but will not be returning for quite a while. Boy, do we miss him!! In the interim we have his son George, who is helping us out. This brings us to the subject of volunteers. We are always looking for people interested in helping in or out of the museum. If interested, please contact us.

I hope to see many of you at the coming events being planned soon.

Best Regards,

Sue Duncan  
President



Amador County Museum Livery Stable Project



Townsend's Folding Globe from the collection at the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, Boston Public Library.

## **A Blast from the Past – *Unfolding Townsend's Folding Globe*** by Elaine Zorbas

When you visit the Amador County Museum, go upstairs to the schoolroom, where you will find a small paper globe of the world in the display case. This invention was created and patented in 1869 by early settler and teacher Dennis Townsend as an affordable tool for teaching geography in the home and school. Only 6" in size, it could be easily inflated and collapsed. The *Folding Globe* came with a 24-page book of geography lessons for students that would exceed the knowledge most of us have today about the features of our planet. The *Folding Globe* was Dennis Townsend's greatest achievement, but by no means the only one in a short lifetime of 57 years. Jesse D. Mason, in his 1881 *History of Amador County, California* on pg. 225 credited Townsend as an extremely devoted teacher:

If we measure men's wealth by the accumulation of gold, he died poor; if by the love of thousands of human beings, who have modeled their lives after his instruction, and hold his memory in veneration, he died one of the wealthiest men in the country.

The students who attended Townsend's classes are long gone, but he left an even more lasting legacy with the letters that he wrote to his family from Amador County. Of twenty-nine letters, twenty-seven were written in Fiddletown and Volcano between 1852 and 1868. Dennis belonged to a close and loving family consisting of parents and fourteen full and half-siblings, all born in Vermont. Letters became the channel that kept them together despite distance and changing times. Many of Dennis' letters were written to his sisters, especially Aurelia—six years older, married to the Reverend Horace Herrick and living in New England.

Dennis Townsend's letters yield the fresh, firsthand impressions of an educated person from New England who lands in Volcano, settles in Fiddletown, and witnesses the evolution of the area from its rough and violent beginnings to a more stable society. Prominent as Fiddletown's first postmaster, first teacher, leader of singing schools, and elected Amador County Superintendent of Schools, Townsend furthered the spread of education in the county.

The letters begin in St. Joseph, Missouri, where schoolteacher Dennis Townsend and his wife Lizzy joined the thousands in 1852 undertaking the long overland journey in search of new prospects in gold rush California. Nearing the end of their trip, they took the Volcano Cut-off of the Carson River Route and arrived in Volcano on September 15, 1852. In an October 6 letter to his parents, brothers and sisters, Dennis reported that they "were 168 days on the road. The particulars of our journey I must omit until next time. Volcano is a mining town. Miners are digging close to our house and we know not but the house stands over a pile [of gold]. Times are dull on scarcity of water for gold washing."

The next letter of January 23, 1853 consisting of eight pages, eloquently recaps the overland journey of Dennis and Lizzy, also revealing their motivation for coming to California as well as describing conditions in Volcano. Miner John Doble lived in Volcano at the same time and both his journal and Dennis' letter tell of that terribly harsh winter of impassable roads and dwindling supplies.<sup>1</sup> (cont'd on page 3)

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<sup>1</sup> Doble, John. *John Doble's Journal and Letters from the Mines: Mokelumne Hill, Jackson, Volcano and San Francisco, 1851-1865*, Charles L. Camp, ed. (Denver, Old West Publishing Company, 1962). Paperback edition by Volcano Press, Inc., 1999 with variant subtitle: *Volcano, Mokelumne Hill, Jackson and San Francisco*, 132-136.

In March of 1853, Dennis and Lizzy moved down the hill to Fiddletown, a thriving commercial town with a milder climate and closer to Sacramento. They settled in Fiddletown, witnessing its early beginnings. Two weeks after arrival, Dennis gave his first impressions to his sister Aurelia in a letter dated April 11, 1853.

Fiddletown is a very wicked place though they have preaching here every Sunday. Frequent cases of murder and robbery occur in this vicinity. This place is about 50 miles from Sacramento City. As there is no post office in this place I wish you to direct to Sacramento City and we can easily get your letters by express. We keep an express office and run a team weekly to the city.<sup>2</sup>

At the time, Dennis and Lizzy were working in a tavern (inn) connected to a store. Six months later, he noted improvements in a November 18, 1853 letter.

Several families have moved into Fiddletown this season. Society is improving, less rowdy than formerly. This town and vicinity contain about 1500 inhabitants. There is a steam sawmill here running day and night, three blacksmiths shops, one carpenter's shop, four taverns, two bakeries, two or three restaurants and 15 or 20 stores of different kinds.<sup>3</sup>

He also mentioned the diverse population, remarking first on the Chinese. "Here we become as familiar with Chinamen as with any other people. Sometimes we see them fresh from China with all their national peculiarities of dress....We trade with men of all nations, including Indians, Negroes, Chinese and Mexicans."

Dennis had his eye on bringing a post office to Fiddletown. As he anticipated, Fiddletown obtained its own U.S. Post Office on December 31, 1853, with himself as its first postmaster. However, this was not his only occupation. Dennis wore many hats in Fiddletown, covered in nineteen letters sent between 1853 and 1862.

After a short partnership with his wife's brother, who came with his family overland shortly after the Townsends, Dennis operated a store that sold about 100 newspapers from the East and South, as well as many published in California. Eagerly anticipated newspapers arrived in San Francisco with the mail twice monthly, brought by steamboat and distributed from there to the gold country. The stock in Dennis' store included stationery and books plus some surprising items that brought music and holiday gifts to the town.

In winter of 1855, he began teaching three-month sessions of school. Schools had started to spring up in the county but were only required by the state to be open three months per year. Students were needed to help on the farms during spring and harvest, so school sessions were short and in off seasons. Most teachers held other jobs to make a living.

By 1862, Dennis focused on teaching as his chosen profession. Schools had proliferated throughout Amador County. In June 1863, he moved to Volcano to teach school. He was elected Amador County Superintendent of Schools, serving from 1864 to 1865. He had a few setbacks in 1865, including a fire that destroyed his house in Volcano, necessitating him to walk to Fiddletown to visit his wife and two children. After losing re-election, Dennis returned to teaching school in Volcano, writing in a June 19, 1866 letter, "I have the credit of teaching the best school in the county. I prefer teaching to any employment in which I can engage..." (cont'd on page 4)

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<sup>2</sup> Coburn, *Letters of Gold*, pgs.150-153 and J.S. Holliday, *Rush for Riches: Gold Fever and the Making of California*, Oakland Museum of California and the University of California Press, 1999, pgs. 128-131. Express mail companies arose as early as 1849 to satisfy the pressing desire of miners for correspondence with families, news of the world, business correspondence and transportation of gold dust. Mail from surrounding mining camps were picked up and delivered to express offices in supply towns such as Fiddletown.

<sup>3</sup> Doble, 156, May 13, 1853. By contrast, John Doble described Volcano as having 11 stores, 1 restaurant, 3 bakeries, 6 hotels, 3 private boarding houses, 3 bars, 2 gambling houses and an apothecary shop.

By the late 1850s, several brothers and sisters had migrated from Vermont to the Midwest and Confederate South. Dennis ventured the furthest away of all, carving out a new path in developing California. He returned to his New England family in Vermont in 1868 to realize his dream of inventing a collapsible globe. After three years away, he concluded that California had become his true home. He hoped the *Folding Globe* would be adopted in schools and homes throughout the country, but this was not to be.

Townsend's letters intersect with local, state and national developments during a time of national growth, changes in communication, transportation and the divisive Civil War. Family connections are the heart of his story, yet he brings the times alive as he reports on the weather (lack of rain), events such as the Rancheria Massacre, the catastrophic floods of 1862, the presidential election of 1860 and the effects of the Civil War.

The letters of Dennis Townsend were transcribed by me over a number of years and are now published for the first time in my book, *Townsend's Folding Globe: A World of Letters from Gold Rush California by Dennis Townsend, Educator and Inventor*. In the Foreword to the book, James Nottage, Chief Curator Emeritus, Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, writes, "Through his own words and that of his editor, you are invited on a personal journey through a fascinating man's life...These are personal stories that are staged in the context of local, community and even national history."

*The book is available for purchase at the Amador County Museum, Kennedy Mine gift shop and the Sobon Estate tasting room in Shenandoah Valley. It can be ordered at [www.lulu.com/shop](http://www.lulu.com/shop) or in print or e-book format at [www.amazon.com/books](http://www.amazon.com/books)*

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Below is the second and final installment of a paper written by Frank Tortorich titled:

## **Maiden's Grave, or Not!- The Truth, The Myth, The Legend and Other Convoluted Stories by Frank Tortorich**

See the first installment in the Fall 2022 issue of *The Amadorian*, vol. 15, number 3



### **California Historic Landmark No. 28<sup>4</sup>**

Officially registered August 1, 1932

It was in 1932 when Elizabeth Sargent, the principal Amador County historian, was instrumental in establishing "Maiden's Grave" as the twenty-eighth California State Landmark.<sup>5</sup>

It did not take long for attention to be raised about the incorrect referencing of the name of the girl, Rachael Melton, to thinking about correcting the name to Allen Melton.

In 1935, a man named William F. Bliss wrote a letter to the State Chamber of Commerce. (cont'd on page 5)

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<sup>4</sup> The California Historical Land Mark program started in 1931.

<sup>5</sup> Larry Cenotto, *LOGANS ALLEY vol. IV* Cenotto Publications 2003 vol. IV 229. Book in out of print.

[www.amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org)

*Gentlemen:*

*By request, a copy of the inclosed (sic) reference to one of the State Land Marks was left with the California Department of the State Library yesterday. The attendant in charge suggested that I also mail a copy to you and upon looking at the reports of land marks, we find that #28, County Amador, history and description, the MAIDEN'S GRAVE, has already been reported by you.*

*The first I learned in 1935 of the recent marking of this spot and spoke to the attendants of the library of the impropriety of selecting a grave already marked as a burial place of a man, using his family name and substituting in place of his surname, that of a woman.*

*Later I made inquiry of Mr. Clarence E. Jarvis, a former resident of Amador County and now a resident of the Capital National Bank in Sacramento, as to the marking of the spot and was advised by him that he was present at that time and that it had been learned later that the maiden's burial place was pointed out, by one who claimed to know, as being at Tragedy Springs, which is about two miles east of the present location of the present marker. He did not know what became of the original marker.*

*This is confirmation of the fact that at no time in the past was there any confusion about the application of the name of the person with the original marker until the move was made to mark the Maiden's Grave arose.*

*Trusting that this information may assist in rectifying the error by our good California friends, I am*

*William F. Bliss*

Letter from the State Chamber of Commerce to Mr. Bliss, March 9, 1936.

*Dear Mr. Bliss:*

*Your letter of March 5 is received. Please be advised that the material contained in the application blank covering "Maiden's Grave", which is now known as State registered landmark #28, was sent in by Mrs. J.L. Sargent of Jackson, California, who was the chairman of a committee of historians from Amador County to send in various applications for registration. Mrs. Sargent is also the author of an extensive history of Amador County.*

*In view of the fact that you contend there is a discrepancy in regard to this landmark, I suggest that you take up the matter with Mrs. Sargent at your earliest convenience in order to call to her attention that you believe to be the authentic history surrounding this grave.*

*I would like to hear from you after you have either conferred with or been in correspondence with Mrs. Sargent.*

*Very Truly yours,  
Frank McKee Director of State Highway Department*

Howard Bartlett frequently submitted articles to the local county newspapers. He was active in several organizations, including serving as secretary of the Kit Carson Pass Association. He became interested in William Bliss' efforts to correct the misnamed "Maiden's Grave." (cont'd on page 6)

Bartlett wrote:

*In 1945, we gave all this information to Mrs. Sargent, and she said undoubtedly some of this was true, but why mess around with any changes now, because after all it's the sentiment that counts. This all happened in a small area, a radius of two miles, the real grave is off the highway while the marked one is not, so let's leave things as they are. It is a wise decision, and we agree she was right. So that is the true story of "Maiden's Grave".*

*Signed: Howard Bartlett*

We do not agree that Mrs. Sargent was right. Nor do we agree with Howard Bartlett's statement, "this is the true story."

### The Grave in the Meadow

To continue with the legend, we need to consider a "Maiden's Grave" located in the Tragedy Spring meadow.



Many people believe (the above picture shows) the "real" Maiden's Grave.

There is some doubt that it is a grave at all. By tradition, most religions bury their dead on an east-west orientation. This grave is more on a north-south orientation.

About 15 years ago a friend of ours brought his trained historic human remains detection dog, aka, cadaver dog. Our goal was to examine several graves along the Carson River Route of the California Emigrant Trail.

The Carson River Route was opened in 1848 from west to east by a group of discharged members of the Mormon Battalion who came to California with the US Army to fight the Mexicans. After about a year in California, a few members of this Mormon group were looking for a route over the Sierra. With their 17 wagons, (cont'd on page 7)

they followed ancient Indian trails that led them over the mountains, eventually through Carson Pass, following the Carson River on east. Their efforts created what I call "The Gold Rush Trail" because more '49ers traveled west using this trail than any other trail.

It is along this route where we suspected several pioneer graves might be located. All the sites tested by the dog confirmed them to be graves. However, when the dog was allowed to wander in the Tragedy Spring meadow and came in the vicinity of the grave pictured above, the dog did not react at all. So now we are wondering where the maiden's grave might be located. The only understanding we have is there might be a grave in the meadow because of the stories related above.

What we failed to do was to have the dog examine the entire meadow. A rock mound to the right of the concrete curbing also received no reaction from the dog.

Now, just because the dog did not locate this site as a grave, does not completely rule out that it is a grave. It is only that we cannot verify it one way or the other. The wet conditions in the meadow might have interfered with the dog's sense of smell.

At this time, we do not know who put the concrete curbing or the four green poles at the corners. Should any of our readers have this information, please contact us at the *Ledger Dispatch*.

Now, let us look at the two markers at the Tragedy Spring meadow grave site.



In 1986, our friend Carol Winters went to this gravesite as she often did. While spending some time there, she felt some strong spiritual connection. She then had this headstone made from a stone from Rocklin and had placed on the grave. Carol is convinced that this is the grave of the maiden.

On October 4, 2004, the Amador County Sesquicentennial Committee commissioned and dedicated two interpretive markers to clarify and correct the long misnamed "Maiden's Grave."

One of the interpretive makers was located at the grave next to the highway listed as California Landmark #28 and the other two miles to the east in the Tragedy Spring meadow.

Let us look at the interpretive marker in the meadow. (cont'd on page 8)



This marker describes the story about the elderly woman that we have already covered in detail. It was the goal of the committee to correct the history but to not remove the incorrect markers. It was decided rather to have them as part of the history, the myth, and the legend.

However, that is not the end of my ongoing search for the "Maiden's Grave" in the Tragedy Spring meadow.

### **The Myth Continues**

In 2004, I was having a conversation with my dear friend Norma Ricketts, author of numerous books and articles; among the subjects are the Mormon Battalion and Tragedy Spring.

Norma related a story of a psychic named Betty Laarveld who claimed she could locate historic graves and tell who was buried in them.

Betty had heard about the grave at Tragedy Spring where three Mormon men were killed by Indians in 1848, and she wanted to visit the grave. On August 12, 1983, Norma took Betty and her three children to that grave near the spring.

Upon arriving at the grave, Betty sat and meditated with her hands on the grave. When she was finished, Betty related a long story about how and who killed the three men buried there. Her story does not come close to matching the story that we find in the historic record. (cont'd on page 9)

(Read the story of Tragedy Spring in my three-part article in the April 2021 editions of the *Ledger Dispatch* as well as in the four-part article in *The Amadorian*, vol. 13, no. 3; vol. 13, no. 4; vol 14, no. 1; vol 14.no.2 .)

I tell you this because as the group was leaving Tragedy Spring, Betty spotted the grave in the meadow, and she wanted to visit this grave.

Betty sat down with her hands on the grave and asked Norma to write down her words.

Juliette Mertens

Died July 30, 1850

Age 17

Daughter of William and Mary Mertens of Ohio

Parents buried in San Joaquin settlement

Not knowing what to do with this information, Norma kept those notes for all those years before passing them on to me after learning about our project to interpret the two graves.

So now I am sharing them with all of you, in the hopes you understand why I support the use of documents and facts, not the “Myths.” However, my friend Doug Ketron always says, “Don’t let the facts get in the way of a good story.”

I love the Myths and Legends because they are fun and add color to the story as long as they don’t displace the facts.

All photos taken by Frank Tortorich unless otherwise indicated.  
6-22-2021

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## Another Blast from the Past That’s Coming Back by Cathy McGowen

**T**he Kit Carson Mountain Men Wagon Train and revival of the Kiddie’s Parade is coming. See the fliers and pictures in this issue of the *Amadorian*.

Some history of Carson Pass and Kit Carson:

Used as a trade route by Native Americans for over 2,000 years, the Carson Pass area was part of the traditional lands of the Washoe and Northern Sierra Miwok when the first European Americans visited. Evidence of seasonal use for hunting deer, bear and other game and gathering plants as well as trade items including abalone shells, salts and obsidian document the early presence of the bands.

In January of 1844, John C. Fremont, while in route south along the eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada, determined his expedition was short of supplies and made the decision to cross the mountains and resupply at Sutter’s Fort. After ignoring the warnings of local Washoe Indians, Fremont, his guide, Thomas “Broken Hand” Fitzpatrick, his hunter and Indian fighter, Kit Carson, and his cartographer, Charles Pruess, along with the rest of the expedition, struggled through heavy snowfall to become the first white men to cross the Sierra Nevada in the winter. On February 21, 1844, the party crossed what is now Carson Pass west of Red Lake. All arrived safely at Sutter’s Fort March 6, 1844. Their maps were later published and became guides for future emigrants. This route was to become one of the most popular routes to the goldfields with over 40,000 gold seekers and settlers (cont’d on page 10)

crossing in a single year. By the early 1850's, other more direct roads were established, but the Carson Pass Highway remains today monument to those who came before.

In 1853 Kit Carson decided to make a big profit buying sheep at a very cheap price, maybe as cheap as 50 cents a head or possibly a little more, driving them from Fort Laramie to Sacramento and selling them for \$5.50 a head. In February of 1853, Kit Carson bought 6,500 sheep and 135 milk cows and steers from Mexican rancheros at Rio Abajo south of Santa Fe. From February to July, he traveled to Fort Laramie. He drove the sheep over the south pass to Salt Lake City. They crossed many desert miles to the Carson River and followed it to the Carson Valley in early August. No one knows the exact route he took from Carson Pass, but probably down what is now Highway 88 and through Volcano, arriving in Sacramento in late August. A Sacramento paper reported him passing through Sloughhouse on August 28<sup>th</sup> and selling his flock of sheep and cows in Sacramento on September 13, 1853, for \$32,000.

Here is a little history of the Kit Carson Mountain Men who are the organizers of the Wagon Train and responsible for bringing back the Kiddie's Parade:



Kit Carson Mountain Men gather at their cabin located on Jackson Gate Road, Jackson.

The Kit Carson Mountain Men is organized for educational and charitable purposes by providing educational opportunities to its members and the public about life, times, and historical events of the North American Mountain Men of the 1800's. They accomplish this by research and involvement of its members in historically accurate re-enactments, encampments, seminars, and demonstrations to which the public is invited. They encourage this heritage by providing scholarships to graduating high school students interested in early American history and related fields of study. They are a non-profit organization.

They were established in 1936 in Jackson, California, where they are still located. The City of Jackson granted them a clubhouse in 1940 where they now have monthly meetings and plan their next outings. They have had many recognizable names in the club such as John Wayne, Ken Curtis, Jimmy Durante, Ronald Reagan, and others. Their members share the passion and interest for the history of the Old West including its wagon trains, rendezvous, traditional muzzle loaders, blacksmithing, primitive camping, and related events.

(cont'd on page 11)



A wagon sponsored by the City of Sutter Creek rolls in the Days of Kit Carson Wagon Train (date unknown). (Photography by Larry Angier)



The City of Jackson sponsored wagon is part of the 2014 wagon train organized by the Kit Carson Mountain Men. (Photography by Larry Angier)

Included in this issue is an article from the *Amador Ledger Dispatch*, dated September 26, 1986, written by Harold Cummins about the history of the days of Kit Carson Celebrations. The Kit Carson Mountain Men are excited to bring the Wagon Train to Amador County again and revive the Kiddie's Parade.

## Harold Cummins' Column in the *Amador Ledger Dispatch*, September 26, 1986, Covers The Days of Kit Carson

The Days of Kit Carson was an event looked forward to by many people living in Northern California. Entries by the hundreds were mailed to the Kit Carson Mountain Men who sponsored the event. There was something for everyone in this big three-day celebration. Most everyone in town grew a beard and dressed western. Those who refused to do so were thrown in the hoosegow and fined. A beard contest was always on the program and trophies were awarded the best growth. A fast draw contest drew those speedy with the six-shooter. **Don Howard** and **Dan Popovich** saw that this was run in proper style. A horse show in Detert Park, where the baseball diamond is now, drew many entries. Water fights with the antique hand-pumpers splashed lots of water. **Clyde Grandbois** was the cheerleader for this event. Baseball games were always on the agenda, and a pet show for the children found all types of kids' pets on the entry list.

The 18-30 Club sponsored a kiddies' parade which was outstanding. The town was packed Saturday night to view the many colorful entries. A junior Kit Carson was selected for this parade. There were dances for all, the teenage dance, square dances, and folk dances. Some of the dances were held outdoors where the Coast to Coast Hardware Store and parking lot is now located. Sometimes the dancers were right on Main Street.

Each year a Grandfather of the Year was selected and rode in the parade in a special car. He was awarded a special trophy. A Queen of Days of Kit Carson was selected. Over the years dozens of beautiful and talented young ladies rode horseback or in convertibles near the head of the parade. Some very outstanding men held the title of Honorary Parade Marshall and led the parade.

When **Ward Anderson** was working at Preston (school for boys), he arranged boxing matches that were held in the high school gym. Those Preston boys put on some wild fights.

The Lions Club breakfast started off Sunday, the day of the big parade. You could count on a square meal for this big day. The Mountain Men fed all the parade contestants, hundreds of them, after the parade, upstairs in a hall on Main Street. **Pete Cassinelli** handled this very important event in high style.

For many years we had a carnival. One year we had a big barbeque at Jone's Flat where the Safeway (now Grocery Outlet) is now. The town was colorfully decorated; flags and bunting were everywhere. A judges' platform was set up in front of the National Hotel, and the store windows held displays of early times. On Sunday afternoon, after the parade, **Harvey Vinciguerra** staged games for the kids. Races and games drew kids aplenty, and the crowds enjoyed the fun. Aside from the many beautiful trophies awarded, silver dollars in buckskin pouches were first prize awards. Some of these pouches held up to \$100. The Sacramento County Sheriff's Posse won this \$100 prize several times. When the parade was over, they would throw the pouch with the \$100 on the bar and drink it up. **Johnny Huberty** oversaw the awarding of the trophies, and you could depend on Johnny to have everything come out just right.

One year we salted the Jackson Creek with fake nuggets. The nuggets were made by melting brass and letting the drops fall in a bucket of water. They sure looked real. We had a gold panning contest, and the creek was full of barefoot people. (cont'd on page 12)

Throughout the years, different cattlemen donated steers. Raffle tickets were sold, and the money used to help put on the celebration. The Mountain Men sold honorary memberships, and this too was a source of income. The City of Jackson donated \$500 to the cause, and the businessmen of Jackson all contributed. **Ed Richardson** handled the collecting of the donations for many years. Then **Sid Smith** and **Chuck Trammel** took over. **George Bonnefoy** did the collecting in the later years. Putting on a celebration of this caliber involved a lot of people and a lot of work. All this labor was for free; no money (was) involved. It was just to show the people of Amador County a good time.

During the first years of Kit Carson days, **Bill Davis** of Jackson was the big wheel that kept the wagon rolling. The time and effort Bill put in was unbelievable. The Kit Carson Mountain Men sponsored the celebration and put on the parade, but the service clubs and county organizations were all a big help.

As parade director for 19 years, I ran into many problems, but when parade time rolled around, we were ready. At the first of the year, we started to work on Days of Kit Carson. We had to have insurance, buy trophies, have invitations and entry slips printed, appoint 10 parade judges, put up three loud speakers, and get three parade announcers. Over the years, some of the parade announcers were **Chuck Lindekugle, Hoffman Siebe, Jack Scapuzzi, Frank Kane, Chet Barley, Norm Neilsen, Lee Ide, and Vern Hatfield.**

We always held a press day for the newspapers and television. Many pictures were taken and used for publicity. We usually had 10 divisions in the parade with 20 entries in each division. Each division had a Mountain Man for a leader. It was sure a lot of work, but when the band began to play, the flags began to wave, and the big parade came down Main Street, it was worth it.

One year Governor **Pat Brown** was Parade Marshall. We had a fine convertible spotted at the head of the parade for him. We always started the parade when the fire siren went off at 11 o'clock. Never were we one minute late. This day it was four minutes to 11. The first division leader told me, "We can't start. The governor has not shown up yet."

"The hell with the governor," I said. "This parade leaves when the siren blows."

"You tell 'em," a voice said from the sidelines. Sitting on the log fence, wearing a cowboy hat and dark glasses, the fellow stepped down. He pulled off the dark glasses. It was Governor Brown. He had a big smile on his face. "You're right," he said, "we wait for no one." He climbed in the car, the siren went off, and the parade was on its way.

The year **Dan Vukailovich** was Kit Carson, we wanted him to ride a horse in the parade. Now Dan knows all there is to know about running a bar and restaurant, but when it comes to riding a horse, he has problems. I gave him a fine looking, well broke pinto horse that had been in many parades to ride. Dan climbed on, grabbed the saddlehorn and the reins, and started out. When he came to the first bar, a bunch of Dan's friends waved at him. Dan unknowingly leaned that way and queued the horse toward the bar. He finally got him back in line. At the second and third bars, it was the same thing. Dan's friends would yell and wave, Dan would lean and knee the horse in that direction, and the horse would head for the bar. After the parade, I asked Dan how he made out. "I got along fine," he said, "but I couldn't keep that horse away from the bars. I think he's a damn alcoholic."

In 1971 a gang of Hell's Angels came to Jackson two weeks before the parade. They caused much trouble in bars and strutting around town. In one bar, they broke all the glasses and roughed up the bartender and are now in jail for murder. The Amador County Board of Supervisors, fearing an invasion of motorcycle gangs like the bunch that ruined the Angels Camp Frogjump, took an unusual step, at the request of **Sheriff Babe Martin** and **Police Chief Paul Pietronave**, in appealing to the state for extra law enforcement aid. They said they had received reports that 1,000 to 1,500 cycle riders were expected to stream into Jackson. (cont'd on page 13)

Because of this scare, few kids showed up Saturday night for the kiddies' parade, and about one-third of the entries in the big parade stayed home. The bars, restaurants, and merchants worried that the outlaw gangs would tear up the town and voiced concern that the celebration should be abandoned. The city hired extra police, which cost a big sum of money. The Sheriff's Posse and the Mountain Men were determined to put them out of town and to maintain order, but the cycle hounds did not show up.

In the wake of lack of interest shown by the businessmen, the police, and the city council, I resigned as parade director when the parade was over. The city withdrew its support, so after 34 successful celebrations, the Days of Kit Carson was dead.

For the last three years, the Jackson Businessmen have been attempting to revive the Days of Kit Carson. With the help of Mountain Man **Tomy Pohmajevich** and **Sid Smith** as parade directors, the parade is again coming down Main Street. Some day it might be back in full bloom. (Originally published in the *Amador Ledger Dispatch*, September 26, 1986, as "Cummins Comments" column by Harold Cummins)



The Kit Carson Mountain Men are excited to bring the Wagon Train to Amador County again and revive the Kiddie's Parade.

**On the next two pages are fliers advertising**

- **Kit Carson Mountain Men Wagon Train and celebratory activities, April 26 – 30, 2023**
- **Kiddies' Parade, Sunday, 11 a.m., April 26, 2023**

# DAYS of 49 CELEBRATION

## Kit Carson Mountain Men Wagon Train April 26 – 30, 2023

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26 ---- PLYMOUTH

Tour the Shenandoah Valley, encampment at the Amador County Fairgrounds

THURSDAY, APRIL 27 ---- PLYMOUTH TO DRYTOWN

Wagon Train on the Move with a stop in Drytown

FRIDAY, APRIL 28 ---- AMADOR CITY & SUTTER CREEK

5-8 pm Italian Picnic Grounds  
Music, Entertainment, Dancing, BBQ dinner available

SATURDAY, APRIL 29 ---- JACKSON

Laughton Ranch, (90 Clinton Road, Jackson)  
1 - 7 pm Visit the Wagon Train and a Working Ranch  
Family Activities, BBQ, Music, Vendors

SUNDAY, APRIL 30 ---- MAIN STREET, JACKSON

9 am Pancake Breakfast & Pre-Parade Entertainment, 11 am Parade

9 - 4 pm Days of 49 "Street" Celebration  
Entertainment, Living History, Vendors and Kid-Filled Fun!

11 am Parade

Wagon Train and Kiddies' Parade!

Info: [49erWagonTrain.com](http://49erWagonTrain.com)  
Email: [49erWagonTrain@gmail.com](mailto:49erWagonTrain@gmail.com)





Kit Carson Mountain Men Wagon Train  
 And the "Days of 49 Celebration" introduce the

# Kiddies' Parade

Sunday, April 30, 2023, 11am

--- ALL KIDS ARE INVITED TO BE IN OUR PARADE ---



9 - 11AM PANCAKE BREAKFAST

11:00 AM PARADE ... MAIN STREET, JACKSON

WIN  
TROPHIES!

SIGN UP NOW ... FREE TO ENTER

The **Kiddies' Parade** leads the *KCMM Wagon Train* down Main Street!  
 Costumes in any theme... Floats...Bikes... Pets & Livestock welcome!

DETAILS & Parade Applications Available:

**49erWagonTrain.com**

FOR KIDS  
AGES 0 - 18

CONTACT: Dianne Oneto, Event Coordinator  
[49erWagonTrain@gmail.com](mailto:49erWagonTrain@gmail.com) 916-769-4468



## ***ACHS Life Members***

Eugene & Christina Ammann ~ Kathy Allen & Frank Axe ~ Richard & July Allen ~ Joseph and Iris Aparicio ~ Ed & Mary Lee Arata ~ Caryl Arnese ~ Dan and Pat Asvitt ~ Evan Bass ~ Michael Bell ~ Heidi Boitano ~ Mark, Lorie & Matthew Bowlby ~ Ray & Barb Brusatori ~ William Burger ~ Paul & Claudine Burnett ~ Jerry Cassesi ~ Robert J. & Susan L. Chandler ~ D.E. Collins ~ Thornton & Paula Jo Consolo ~ Robert M. & Lorraine M. Cooper ~ Mary Cowan ~ Jeannine & Patrick Crew\* ~ Jean Louise Dahl ~ Robert Davis ~ Christopher & Cori Dover ~ Kathleen Du Bois ~ Sue Duncan ~ John Ellyson, MD ~ Carol Emerson ~ Katherine Evatt & Pete Bell ~ Brian Ferdani ~ Robin Field & Carol Mischer ~ Wayne Garibaldi ~ Phillip & Jenny Giurlani ~ David & Linda Gonzales ~ Jim & Teresa Guidi ~ Ray & Cheryl Herndon & Bobby Keeling ~ Curtis & Denise Hollis ~ Patricia Huberty ~ Jeana (Cova) Hultquist & Marshall Cova ~ Judy Jebian ~ Ida Ruth Johnson ~ Marilyn Jones ~ Richard & Pat Jones ~ Gretchen Kingsbury ~ George & Joan La Ponsie ~ JoAnn Levy ~ Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Little ~ Gary & Jaimie Little ~ Stan Lukowicz ~ Jeremy & Shirley McCarty ~ Doug & Susan McElwee ~ Barbara McMahon & Michael Oldt ~ Allen & Karen Martin ~ Frances Melusky ~ Marshal Merriam ~ Joe & Alicia Miller (Giurlani) ~ Jean Mueller ~ Ron Oliverro ~ Mary O'Neal & Gary Arnese ~ Katherine & William Orescan ~ Alan & Peggy Piccardo ~ Hazel, Jeffrey & Amy Powell ~ Marian & Leonard Randolph ~ Jeanne C. Russ ~ Martin Ryan ~ John H. & Patricia Scott ~ Norm Seid ~ Beverly Smallfield ~ George P. Smith ~ Rose Marie Smith ~ John Solaja\* ~ Marie-Louise Solaja ~ Audrey Souza ~ Charles J. Spinetta ~ Ray Stacey\* ~ Jesse & Denise Stephens ~ Steve & Linda Stocking ~ Suzanne Erickson Stroy ~ Keith & Gail Sweet ~ Ed & Margaret Swift ~ Karen Vaira & Steve Gallant ~ Russell & Mary Beth VanVoorhis ~ Violich Farms ~ Grant Vogel & Pam Sharp ~ Fraser & Teddy West ~ Sutter Creek Promotions Committee ~ Volcano Community Services District \*Benefactor

***Welcome to new members Susan Martinek and Mary Rickey***



**Our list of donors is growing, making the new Livery Building Project possible. Listed are donors of \$500 or more:**

Amador Community Foundation ~ Joe and Iris Aparicio ~ Evan Bass ~ Paul & Claudine Burnett ~ D.E. Collins ~ Marshall Cova ~ Jean Louise Dahl ~ Barry & Sue Duncan ~ Wayne Garibaldi ~ Phillip & Jenny Giurlani ~ Linda & David Gonzales ~ Larry & Jeana Hultquist ~ John James ~ Don & Judy Jebian ~ Richard & Pat Jones ~ Ron & Kris Katzakian ~ JoAnn Levy ~ Marla Lowe ~ Stan Lukowicz ~ Kim & Cathy McGowen ~ Atul Patel ~ Jeffrey & Hazel Powell ~ Beverly Smallfield ~ Charles Spinetta ~ Anders Stenstedt ~ Karen Vaira & Steve Gallant ~ Russell Van Voorhis ~ Violich Farms

*Your generous donation will help build the New Livery Building which will replicate the California-style of rural agricultural buildings. Learn more at [www.amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org)*

**Amador County Historical Society Board  
of Directors**

***Society Officers***

Sue Duncan, President  
Teresa Guidi, Vice President  
Judy Jebian, Secretary  
Wayne Garibaldi, Treasurer

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Phillip Giurlani  
Teresa Guidi  
Jeana Hultquist  
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Leonard Williams

*Board Meetings are held on the 3rd  
Wednesday of each month at 3:00 p.m.  
225 Church St., Jackson (Amador County  
Museum).*

*Members and friends are invited to attend.*

**ACHS Mission Statement**

The society was formed for the purpose of identifying and preserving items of historical interest of Amador County for its residents and the general public and to educate and increase public awareness while at the same time enlisting public support for historical preservation in Amador County.

The Amador County Historical Society has also partnered with the Recreational Railroad Coalition Historical Society in owning and operating the Amador Central Railroad, a great part of the county's history.

*The Amadorian Editors:  
Cathy McGowen,  
Hazel & Jeffrey Powell*

## *About the Amador County Historical Society*

The Amador County Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the research and preservation of Amador County heritage and history.

The organization brings together people from diverse backgrounds to work towards these goals. We invite all interested persons to attend our monthly meetings and encourage your suggestions and active participation in Society events and endeavors.

We also welcome guest articles for our newsletter. Unfortunately, due to limited space we can accept only those pertaining to local history. If you have any questions regarding ACHS please contact the office at (209) 257-1485.

**If you would like to become a member of the Society**, please fill in the membership form below and mail along with the appropriate dues to the Amador County Historical Society, P.O. Box 761, Jackson, CA 95642-0761

-----  
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check one of the following Memberships:**

**ANNUAL**     **Individual \$25.00**     **Family (2 or more) \$40.00**     **Students \$15.00**

**LIFETIME**     **Family (2 or more) \$400.00**    **SPONSOR**     **Benefactor (\$1,000 up)**

**Patron (\$500 to \$999)**

**Associate (\$250 to \$499)**

**Other** \_\_\_\_\_

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