

THE AMADORIAN

A Publication of the Amador County Historical Society

President's Corner

Dear Fellow ACHS Member:

It is a privilege and honor to have been elected to serve as President of the Amador County Historical Society. I have had the benefit of serving on the board since 2013 under the tremendous leadership of Phil Giurlani and most recently, Keith Sweet. Both have led several successes for this organization and I hope to continue that momentum.

A few words about me. I was born and raised in Jackson under the roof of Mary and Gene Cova on Bright Ave. with my brother Marshall. We were raised with the mind of community involvement and knowing your roots. I can't think of another organization that fits that description better and I am proud to be part of the ACHS.

They say that a picture tells a 1,000 stories. Please be sure to take a look at the picture collage included in this edition of the Amadorian. You'll get a glimpse of the many wonderful projects and activities that this organization, through efforts of its volunteers, have been up to in 2016.

Lastly, please mark your calendar for Saturday, March 25th; our first event in 2017. We will partner with the Native Sons of the Golden West at their hall in Sutter Creek for lunch and program. Weather permitting, we will have a tour of the newly constructed Miner's Bend memorial.

I look forward to seeing you then!

Best regards, Jeana Hultquist President

Is the Ledger Really Older?

Editor's note: *With the recent change in our local newspaper, I thought appropriate to look back at Historian Larry Cenotto's perspective from 2001 ~ Enjoy!*

It's been years since the writer looked into the history (from 1854) of Amador newspapers or even earlier since our first paper saw print when this was Calaveras. With heavy news coverage of both counties in today's *Ledger-Dispatch*, it seems, journalistically, the two counties are becoming one again.

Perhaps new editor Andy Bird - let's wish him well - and other newcomers to the area should know some of the long history of this now twice-weekly sheet, the *Ledger-Dispatch*. Also, I'm proposing that the paper could be considered two years older than I and others have led you to believe.

Take the *Ledger*, older of its two names. No question the first issue of the Volcano *Ledger* hit that burg's dusty or muddy lanes October 27, 1855, out of the Eagle building. Years ago, when I started questioning the age of the *Dispatch*, the late and venerated *Ledger* editor, Babe Garbarini, warned me not to mess with the *Ledger*. I never had to.

In those halcyon days, Volcano was our most popular town. It came awfully close to winning the county seat in the July 17, 1854 first county election, and even closer three years later in the stage legislature. After that, almost spent, Volcano began that long decline to its present contentment as quaint village and curiosity.

(continued on page 2)

Is the Ledger Really Older (cont.)

In 1857, however, the *Ledger* moved to Jackson, county seat, and never looked back. Its name changed to *Weekly Ledger*. Perhaps proprietors Thomas Springer and Edward C Dangerfield couldn't bear to include the word "Jackson" in their masthead. Soon, though, they opted for *Amador Ledger*, which name it proudly carried until the grand merger in 1989, forming the present paper and name.

The *Dispatch*, in the mean time, for nigh a century carried on its masthead that it was born in 1858. It wasn't. It was whelped in Lancha Plana - that used-to-be-place on the right bank of the Mokelumne river, where Comanche reservoir laps now - in March, 1860, and moved to Jackson later that year. It, too, chose the epithet *Amador* rather than *Jackson*, and was the *Amador Dispatch* until the '89 merger.

Did both papers publish continuously all those years, 134 for the *Ledger* and 129 for the *Dispatch*? Not exactly. Had not man-caused calamity and the civil war interfered. I'm sure they would have. The great Jackson fire of August 23, 1862, destroyed Tom Springer's whole plant. Undaunted, he raced by stage and ferry to San Francisco, bought new type, and press, and had the paper out soon after.

So did the *Dispatch*, under new owners. But that paper suffered an even longer and more ignominious closure in 1865 when editor William Pentry exulted in print upon the news of Abraham Lincoln's death.

The Mississippian was a rabid believer in and supporter of the South. So, the federal army command in San Francisco ordered a cavalry company to visit Jackson before dawn one morning. Perry and his fiery editorial writer

Long Primer Hall were arrested, marched in scorching heat to Ione valley, and taken to Alcatraz to pound big rocks into smaller ones.

Over time, some papers buy out or absorb other papers, often memorializing the merger by including the purchased paper's name. To my knowledge, the *Dispatch* never took over another paper but the *Ledger* did twice. That's why some may decide, after reading the facts, that the *Ledger* part of this paper and hence this whole paper can claim to be older than the sacrosanct "October 27, 1855."

Circa 1921 the *Ledger* acquired the *Amador Record* of Sutter Creek. I'm sure many old-timers remember the paper's name became "*Amador Ledger and Record*." But the first newspaper the *Amador Ledger* acquired was actually older than it was, creating the opportunity to incorporate its founding date as its own. Many institutions do it. Sutter-Amador hospital use the *Amador* county hospital's date in ads even though its ownership was barely started. It seems okay.

Regardless, when Springer and Dangerfield came over from Coloma and Placerville in 1855 to start the *Ledger* the county already had a paper being published in Jackson called the *Amador Sentinel*. Papers in those days seemed to be started for political rather than economic or journalistic reasons. The *Sentinel* was no exception, and when you ponder it, the *Ledger* itself might have been started to promote Volcano's push for county seat through the Legislature.

We're almost certain the *Jackson Sentinel* was started by the immortal Charly Boynton and others in December, 1853, to make one final legislative push to separate this part of Calaveras from the that part south of the Mokelumne.

(continue on page 9)

Amador Central RailRoad by Grant Vogal

Well fellow rail owners. Another year has almost come and gone and much has been accomplished on the Amador Central. It was decided to offer short public runs from 104 to Sunny Brook and return in order to establish a more reliable form of on going income as we always have bills to pay in addition to maintenance. Insurance, PGE, and weed spray are the three that come on a regular basis and our team is trying to regain our self sufficiency. Income from Rail Fair has been declining and last year the rent of school facilities tripled which has put this years Rail Fair in jeopardy but all keep plugging on to preserve our piece of county history. All of the FRA's inspection reports have been cleared, much brush has been cut away as have a few fallen trees. We still have brush to remove and hope the CCC comes through. Most of the water has been diverted around the weir in lone and the balance of work will be done by Spring. A road crossing on the top end needs to be improved for safer passage of rail cars and autos. I do not like to start a year end report with negativity but we do own a railroad and all is not always peaches and creme.

On the good side several excursions were held this year safely and we have had good participation by both owner groups. A special thanks go to Leonard Williams and son Jerry, Gary Reinhoel, Pam Sharp, and Thornton Consuelo, all ACHS members, who when they are able, contribute time and energy to our cause. Much work has been done to improve rail and right of way safety as well as grade crossing safety. We are also trying to sell off some of the duplicate signals from old crossings the state removed while retaining some for spare parts. We have received and put into service some ties.....just think, we only have about 50,000 to go. The search continues for grants to do some of the more costly work.

I never realized that my comment several years ago of "hey, the AMC might be able to be leased as it is being shut down by SPI" would lead to two groups owning 10 miles of this jewel in our backyard. We should all feel very fortunate to have the railroad in our hands and knowing that it will not be scraped or sold off. If you have ever ridden our line you know the scenic beauty it goes through as well as the history it still encapsulates. Yes, it takes work and money to keep it in operating condition but the history that we are preserving is worth it. I also want to thank all of you for the confidence in our leadership team that works tirelessly day in and day out.



New Miners' Bend Historical Park Sutter Creek

Thank you to Frank Cubna and crew as well as Ed Arata for volunteering their time and creative craftsmanship





Historical Matters: A Parisian prince of Poland who'd never been there, but lived in Burlingame instead

by Michael Svanevik and Shirley Burgett
as published on Dec. 12, 2016 at mercurynews.com



LEFT: "Ski Farm," in the hills above Burlingame, was presented as a wedding gift to Andre and Elizabeth Poniatowski. Subsequent owners renamed it "Sky Farm." It is currently the site of Nueva School. RIGHT: Prince Andre Poniatowski's royal pedigree may have been questioned, but he was among the most popular residents of Burlingame during the 1890s. (Photos courtesy of MS&SB Collection)

Although his royal pedigree may have been less than impeccable, Andre Louis Leopold Charles Marie Poniatowski may well have been the closest thing that the Peninsula ever had to a prince of the blood.

Tall, handsome and apparently French, he first appeared in San Francisco in 1890. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, Poniatowski was a bachelor.

According to his story that he delighted in telling, his great grand uncle Stanislaus Poniatowski, for three decades in the 18th century, had been the King of Poland, indeed, the last. Actually, the lineage of Stanislaus cast shadows on Andre's royal legitimacy.

Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia, soon to be the empress and remembered historically as Catherine the Great, had become enthralled with a 23-year-old, apparently viral Polish nobleman. She soon elevated him, making Stanislaus her very personal counselor. But, in 1765, in gratitude for long excellent service, she gave him a crown and shipped him off to Warsaw to rule as King of Poland.

As for Prince Andre, he had grown up in Paris and had never seen Poland. But there were other royal credentials. His uncle, Count Walewski, also a Parisian, was the illegitimate son of Emperor Napoleon I.

A few skeptical San Francisco families looked askance at the young man, some even suggesting that he may have been just another of many down-and-out European noblemen who came to California trolling for wealthy wives.

Still, San Francisco's wannabe society readily welcomed him. Especially Austin Sperry, founder of Sperry Mills in Stockton and the father of two attractive daughters. The eldest, Ethel, had wed banker William H. Crocker, third son of the transcontinental railroad builder, in 1886. Now the family sought an equally good match for Ethel's younger sister, Elizabeth, and Prince Poniatowski appeared to be the perfect candidate.

(continued on Page 6)

Historical Matters (Cont.)

The marriage contract consummated, accompanied by Will and Ethel, the Sperrys headed for Paris. Prince Andre and Elizabeth were married in the Catholic Church of St. Pierre de Charillot, on Oct. 5, 1894.

Malicious gossip that had swirled about before the nuptials was soon forgotten, especially in status-conscious Burlingame, where the couple declared their intent to reside. As a wedding present, Will and Ethel Crocker presented the couple with several hundred acres and a wood-framed residence on the hill above the town where, using the last syllable of the family name of which the prince was so inordinately proud, the couple christened the house Ski Farm. In later years, after the family had gone to reside in France, a later owner of the property renamed it Sky Farm.

Prince Andre dressed impeccably, had a keen intelligence and spoke English perfectly, albeit with a delightful French accent. Thoroughly at home in Burlingame, always aristocratic and athletic, the prince became a “gentleman rider” and engaged in raising thoroughbred horses.

Poniatowski fashioned himself as a “promoter of enterprises.” Before long, in partnership with his banker brother-in-law Will Crocker, who provided financial backing, in Amador County, Poniatowski built the Blue Lake Powerhouse, designed to supply hydroelectricity to the Mother Lode. After that, Crocker and the prince built the Electra Powerhouse on the Mokelumne River, maneuvering to create an electricity monopoly along the San Francisco Peninsula. After a complicated series of acquisitions and mergers, in 1905, this operation developed into the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. While hydroelectricity may have been the source of a new fortune, Poniatowski’s passion was for fast horses. As a promoter of enterprises, when San Francisco was about to outlaw horse racing within the city limits and threatened to close Ingleside race course, one of Will Crocker’s major investments, the brothers-in-law seized opportunity. Crocker designated 200 unused acres already owned by the family in San Bruno, 13 miles south of the city. for the creation of a new racing enterprise.

This became Tanforan race track. Speed was of the utmost import. Crocker and Poniatowski, determined that it be in operation by the opening of racing season of 1899. Thus, they opted to utilize the identical architectural drawings that had been used in the creation of Ingleside. Prince Andre sent personal invitations only to the most fashionable families of the Peninsula upon the track’s opening. It was characterized by sweeping lawns, flower gardens and elegant shrubberies imported from France. Horse racing, previously regarded with some suspicion, now became appreciated as a genteel sport on the Peninsula, and going to Tanforan became the social thing to do.

Andre and Elizabeth Poniatowski became parents of three boys while living at Ski Farm. But in 1903, to the sadness of many fashionable friends at the Burlingame Country Club, the family packed up and headed for Paris. The prince had accepted a position as president of the French Bank of America. Only on rare occasions thereafter did they return to California. Elizabeth, commonly known in France as the Princess Poniatowska, passed away in 1943 at the age of 71. The storybook prince lived until age 90. He died in 1954 while visiting his chateau in Southern France.

ACHS 2017 - Board of Directors

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

Members and friends are invited to attend.

Amador County Historical Society Member Events

2017

- **March 25 - Membership Event at NSGW Hall & Miner's Bend - Sutter Creek - 1pm**
- **Sept TBD - Wine & Cheese Tasting at the Museum - 5 - 8pm**
- **Nov 5 - Annual Dinner at Teresa's Restaurant - 5-7pm**

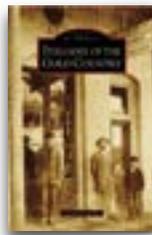
Amador Central Railroad -

- **2nd Saturday of each month (weather permitting) - Work Day & Inspection Run**

ACHS Lunch and Learn

**Saturday, March 25 @ 1pm
 NSGW Hall - Sutter Creek
 \$15.00 Lunch & Beverage
 RSVP: 209-257-1485**

Speakers:



- Author and Historian, Carolyn Fregulia **"Italians of the Gold Country"**
- Ed Arata and Frank Cuhna - **Miners' Bend Park - The Artifacts and Interpretive Signage**





Kennedy Mine Model Tours

Tours of the Kennedy Mine Model are on-going every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the building adjacent to the museum... come on down, bring your friends, see how the "Hardrock Miners" brought the gold up from more than a mile from under the earth.

See the headframe, the Stamp Mill and the Wheel in action with mechanized motors...it is like a little show lasting about 45 minutes, with live narration and tape presentation.

Tours are at noon and 1:00 p.m. or by appointment any day or time (subject to docent availability). Group tours, schools and organizations welcome! Located at 225 Church Street, Jackson Mine Model building in parking lot next to museum.

For more information, call the Amador County Historical Society at 209-257-1485.

ACHS Lifetime Members

Kathy Allen & Frank Axe - Richard & July Allen - Joseph Aparicio Family - Ed & Mary Lee Arata - Caryl Arnese - 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 - Kathleen Du Bois - John Ellyson, MD - Carol Emerson - Katherine Evatt & Pete Bell - Robin Field & Carol Mischer - Wayne Garibaldi - Phillip & Jenny Giurlani - Ray & Cheryl Herndon & Bobby Keeling - Curtis & Denise Hollis - Patricia Huberty - Jeana (Cova) Hultquist & Marshall Cova - Ida Ruth Johnson - Marilyn Jones - Richard & Pat Jones - Gretchen Kingsbury - George & Joan La Ponsie - Gary & Jaimie Little - Stan Lukowicz - Allen & Karen Martin - Jeremy & Shirley McCarty - Frances Melusky - Marshal Merriam - Joe & Alicia Miller (Giurlani) - Jean Mueller - Ron Oliverro - Katherine & William Orescan - 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* - Steve & Linda Stocking - Suzanne Erickson Stroy - Ed & Margaret Swift - Russell & Mary Beth VanVoorhis - Violich Farms - Grant Vogel - Sutter Creek Promotions Committee - Volcano Community Services District - Fraser & Teddy West

*Benefactor

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, Calif.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please check one of the following Membership:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|--|
| ANNUAL | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family (2 or more) \$30.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Students \$15.00 |
| LIFETIME | <input type="checkbox"/> Family (2 or more) \$400.00 | SPONSOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor (\$1,000 up) |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$500 to \$999) |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (\$250 to \$499) |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Is the Ledger Really Older ? (cont.)

Since we don't have a copy of that first issue and the Sacramento *Union* didn't mention the first issue until January 26, 1854, the date is uncertain. Nonetheless, the Dec. 11, 1854 *Union* announced Vol. II No. 1 of the *Sentinel* was in print and its name henceforth would be the *Amador Sentinel*, celebrating in masthead the final triumph of north Mokelumne forces to free themselves from south-river hegemony.

On Dec. 24, 1859, the *Ledger* reported the *Sentinel's* O.D. Availing had sold to the *Ledger*. Curiously, Avaline went to Folsom, bought out William Penry's interest in the *Telegraph*, and died not long after. But Penry came to Jackson after the great fire and was proprietor of the *Dispatch* until his death last century.

Thus, in 1859, you have the *Ledger*, born in 1855, buying out the *Sentinel*, born in 1853. Had Springer named the combined paper *Amador Ledger* and *Sentinel* would he era the right to assume the earlier date of nativity?

If so, the *Ledger-Sentinel-Record*, began its collective life in December, 1853. Hence, this paper you're reading could trace its genesis back 148 years. Let's hope the absentee owners, with resident publisher, editor and staff, can keep it alive and shoot for 200. Even in this digital age, there's nothing like a local newspaper. *Amen.....*

The Amadorian
A Publication of the Amador County Historical Society
P.O. Box 761
Jackson, CA 95642

In This Issue

- *Presidents Corner*
- *“Is the Ledger Really Older” Excerpt from Logan’s Alley IV (A Look Back, 23 May 2001, Amador Ledger Dispatch)*
- *Picture Collage from 2016 Activities*
- *Historical Matters: A unique link to Mokelumne Hill*