

SEPTEMBER 2017

VOLUME VI ISSUE 3

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2017 Lantern Tours

2017 Lantern Tour tickets go on sale September 1 and this year's event promises a Wild Ride. Many of our permanent residents met their demise or had unusual encounters with trains, planes, automobiles, buggies, horses, boats or other modes of transportation. All stories are strange but true.

Be prepared to meet some of our residents who are eager to tell you of their experiences but beware of others who may appear unexpectedly!

You may wish to bring a flashlight as you travel through time. Guests are encouraged, but not required, to wear Victorian-era costumes. Please no Halloween costumes. There will be four tours each evening for four evenings. Light refreshments will be served.

Funds raised at the Lantern Tours are used to support the city's efforts to repair broken headstones and monuments. Tickets typically sell out quickly, so don't wait. This year's Lantern Tour volunteers wish to remind visitors:

THE DEAD ARE MORE ALIVE THAN YOU THINK!

Volunteer Appreciation

The Lantern Tours and other events and activities in the Historic City Cemetery require support from an active cadre of volunteers. During the last fiscal year, 9,695 volunteer hours were recorded—equivalent to more than four full-time positions.

One activity the OCCC performs is to formally thank the many volunteers who spend their time in support of cemetery activities. This year, volunteers have been invited to participate in an appreciation event to be held on September 30. The work of the Old City Cemetery committee cannot be accomplished without support from our many cemetery volunteers. Thank you!



OCCC Board

Judy Eitzen, President
Kris Klein, Secretary
Connie Bettencourt,
Treasurer
Jeanne Baldwin
Steve Bartel
Anita Clevenger
Lin McNamara
Cassandra Musto
Marcia Robers

President's Message

Greetings to OCCC members and friends. In July I was privileged to become President of the organization for the current term. Connie Bettencourt, our outgoing president will serve as Treasurer while Kris Klein serves as Secretary. My special thanks to Connie for all her efforts on our behalf. I will do my best to fulfil my duties and I encourage members to let me know what I can do to be of assistance.

The OCCC Board of Directors is the guiding force for our organization. As we presently have vacancies on the Board, I urge members willing to participate and those who know someone who might do so, to let me or another Board member know.

One task we are working on is a plan to increase membership in the organization, and we look for new ideas and methods to do so. It's time to review and perhaps revise our by-laws—currently five years old—again, new ideas would be useful.

Board members also work to develop volunteer opportunities in support of the cemetery; assisting visitors, fundraising, gardening, and community relations. I want to thank all volunteers for their work over this past year and encourage volunteers to attend the Volunteer Appreciation event on September 30.

I look forward to a busy and productive year.

Judy Eitzen, President, OCCC
verlaine@citlink.net

Our Storytellers

You may recall Viola Davis' thank-you speech at the Oscars:

"Thank you to the academy. You know, there's one place that all the people with the greatest potential are gathered. One place and that's the graveyard. People ask me all the time, what kind of stories do you want to tell, Viola? And I say, exhume those bodies. Exhume those stories. The stories of the people who dreamed big and never saw those dreams to fruition. People who fell in love and lost. I became an artist and thank God I did because we are the only profession that celebrates what it means to live a life."

Our Lantern Tour storytellers are some of the people 'digging' up the stories and sharing "what it means to live a life". They put a lot of effort into finding interesting tales of early Sacramento and figuring out the best way to share those tales with our visitors. It takes a lot of planning and creativity to find and develop these special stories. Thanks to all Lantern Tour participants, and to Anita Clevenger for taking the lead this year.

In Memoria**Dr. Irma West**

Dr. West had a long a varied career and was a valued member of the Old City Cemetery's cadre of volunteers. After successfully working as a computer for military aircraft research at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (forerunner to NASA), she was able to achieve her dream of attending medical school. After graduation, internship and residency in San Francisco, she received a Master's in Public Health and began work with California's Department of Public Health. Her work focused on health and safety of agricultural workers, including the effects of pesticides.

During the course of her career, she married and raised a son, continued her work in occupational health, published more than 30 scientific papers, contributed to various books, and participated in several medical associations.

After retirement, Dr. West joined community organizations, including the Sacramento County Historical Society. She continued to research and write about medical history, served as a docent for the Museum of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Association and gave tours at the cemetery for which she received numerous awards.

Remembrances can be directed to the Medical History Museum of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society, Sacramento SPCA or Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento.

Upcoming Events

History Tours

Sept 16—From Farm to Fork to Grave
 Sept 23—Special Tour—Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Docents
 Oct 7—The Walking Dead
 Nov 4—World War I and Beyond

Garden Events & Tours

Sept 9 - Rose Propagation Class
 Sept 30 - What's Blooming in Hamilton Square
 Oct 28 - What's Blooming in Hamilton Square
 Nov 18 - Fall Color in the Historic Rose Garden
 Nov 25 - What's Blooming in Hamilton Square

Early Sacramento Gaming

Judy Eitzen

Though California does not now have full gaming casinos, gamblers do have a variety of options; card rooms, the state lottery, Indian casinos, and pari-mutuel horse race betting. In early Sacramento, gaming grew as fast as the gold rush drew immigrants to the city. Gambling was not confined to Sacramento, but spread among mining camps and towns that sprang up in the foothills.

While ordinary merchants constructed basic, practical structures for doing business, gamblers erected elaborately decorated, if outwardly plain structures. A simple 15x25' tent cost \$40,000 per year for an operator to rent; the profit was such that speculators were more than willing to pay in gold dust in advance for the privilege of running a gambling hall. Gaming was also an equal opportunity affair in that women and those of all races were admitted (i.e., encouraged) to gamble.

The first such place of public gaming in Sacramento appeared in June of 1849 and consisted of a few poles stuck in the ground roofed by a canvass sail. It was located on J Street between Second and Third, kept by one James Lee, and was appropriately named "The Stinking Tent."⁽¹⁾ In July, a shanty appeared, erected by Locke & Waterhouse, on the south side of J Street between First and Second streets. This was followed by Z. Hubbard's famous "Round Tent" on Front Street between I and J Streets. This tent was some 50' in diameter and included good music, an elaborately decorated bar, and a gallery of 'obscene' pictures.



Subsequently, a number of such places were constructed – Gem, a frame building on the corner of Second & J Streets, owned by Joseph McKinney (who eventually became the county Sheriff) was followed by The Humboldt, Mansion, Empire, Lee's Exchange, Diana and many more.

Those who established such places included the organizers and leaders of the city. Those who frequented such places were often men who came west to make their fortune, leaving dependent wives and children behind. Many such were ruined, having gambled away the very livelihood they came west to pursue. Gaming and drink created public nuisances as well, and the

town fathers began to discuss solutions. As women joined their husbands, moving west with their children, public opinion began to turn against gambling.

This perspective was forwarded by ministers preaching against the evils of gaming as churches began to be built in the growing city. Gaming house owners fought to keep city government loose, but did not prevail, and in the fall of 1849, voters approved a new legal structure for the City of Sacramento. People began to demand respectability and to recognize the social ills which accompanied gaming, so laws against gambling began to be enacted in California. At first, laws against gaming were weak, primarily banning specific games which made enforcement problematic and carried light penalties. Over time, laws were gradually strengthened and in 1860, all banking games were banned in California.⁽²⁾ Laws tended to penalize those who ran the games, not the players, but by 1885 it became illegal to play and by 1891, penalties for playing increased to equal those for running the game.

Of course, gaming did not disappear entirely from California. After all, the slot machine was invented by Charles August Fey in San Francisco in 1894 – but that's a story for another time.

1) Thompson & West, *History of Sacramento County*, 1880, 1960.

2) Banking games are those where the player bets against the house.

Games of Chance

What games were popular in the early Sacramento gaming establishments? Arguably the most popular banking game was Faro. ⁽¹⁾ A simple card game requiring a box, or shoe, from which cards were dealt by the banker. Players bet on one or more cards, or 'high card'. Winning or losing occurs when cards turned up match those already exposed.

A popular game often mentioned in movies about the old west was Mexican Monte. It derives from a Spanish card game that came to the United States via Mexico. It used a deck of 40 cards (from which the 10's, 9's, and 8's were removed). A banker dealt a card from the bottom of the deck, placed it face up on the table; a second card was placed face up, dealt from the top of the deck. Players bet on which card will match the third card shown when the deck (called the monte) is turned over. In some versions, the banker must have enough funds to cover all bets on the table. After a specified number of hands (coups) the bank passed to the next player.

Blackjack is the contemporary name for Vingt-et-un ⁽²⁾ which was introduced by the predominately French community of New Orleans. It is a simple card game played against a bank in which players are dealt one card at a time and attempt to get 21 or beat the dealer's score. Cards count at face value with honor cards at ten and aces as either one or eleven depending on the hand.



Of course, the most iconic game was American Poker. It developed from an 18th century bluffing game. It is similar to card games played in various European countries, but the betting system is uniquely American. There are various forms of the game. Most popular in the 19th century were straight poker or draw poker (cards dealt face down) and several forms of stud poker (some cards dealt face up). Stud poker, or stud-horse poker is said to have derived from a card game in a saloon somewhere in the wilds of Ohio when a game of draw poker was dealt. With three kings, the opening bettor bet all his money; various increases were made and the opening bettor put his cards face down on the table, ran outside and came back leading a spirited stallion and tied it to his chair. He guessed that the others had peeked at his hand while he was out of the room, so he said, "You fellows know damned well what I'm betting on and I've got all my money up on it. Now I propose that to make it fair all around each man turns three of his cards face up, discards two, and draws two more face down. I'll gamble this here thoroughbred stud horse on my chances." ⁽³⁾

Craps was a popular game based on the British game of 'hazard'. It was popular in gaming halls because the only equipment it required was a pair of dice. Nowadays, craps tables are diagrammed to promote betting. Roulette ⁽⁴⁾ was popular, but required equipment, and thus not every gaming hall could offer the game. Likewise, keno ⁽⁵⁾ required printed sheets of paper, plus numbered balls and some sort of device from which to draw the numbers.



- 1) Shortened from "Pharaoh," an image that often appeared on the back of the deck of cards.
- 2) French for 'twenty-one'.
- 3) Los Angeles Times, September 07, 1985 (online edition)
- 4) French for 'little wheel'.
- 5) Form of lottery or bingo developed by the Chinese.

SAM at the California State Fair

Anita Clevenger

The Old City Cemetery Committee is a member of the Sacramento Association of Museums. SAM was founded twenty years ago to increase awareness of local museums through ongoing collaborative marketing and promotion.

Members actively promote public interest in the Sacramento region's art, science, history, wildlife and cultural treasures. For some years, OCCC volunteers have participated in SAM's Museum Day (first Saturday each February), attracting many new visitors to the cemetery. Next year Museum Day is scheduled for Feb 3, 2018.

OCCC representatives attend monthly SAM meetings to share what is going on with the Old City Cemetery Committee, to participate in SAM planning, and to gain ideas from other member organizations.

For the past two years, we have helped staff the SAM booth at the California State Fair. Melanie Howard was one of our volunteers, and enjoyed helping children and adults play with the hands-on displays and learn about area museums. Many people are surprised to learn that there are nearly 30 member museums in our area, and that the cemetery is one of them. We will continue to inform the community about our beautiful, historic cemetery and gardens!



The Epitaph Needs You!

Here at the Epitaph, we're always on the lookout for good stories. Something interesting to share with members describing Cemetery activities and events and a little historical information about early days in Sacramento. The Epitaph is published three times a year (January, May and September)

If you (or someone you know) has a story or event to share, please submit it to:

Judy Eitzen, verlaine@citlink.net

19th Century Gambling & Saloon Slang

Judy Eitzen

Many terms still in use today, came out of the old west and were commonly heard in early Sacramento's gambling halls and saloons. Some terms derived from limited resources or cash that was available. Here are some of my favorites.

A shot of whiskey.

In the old west, virtually every man carried a shooting weapon of some type; shotgun, rifle or revolver. These were useful tools for defense against predators or bringing meat to the table. Typical were the Colt Paterson Revolver, developed in the 1830's and Sharps Carbine rifle. Popular in California were also Colt's Dragoon Revolvers, a heavy and powerful revolving horse pistol.



One story is that cartridges for various weapons cost about 12¢ as did a single shot of whiskey. If a man was low on cash, and had no gold dust or other means, he could give the bartender a cartridge in exchange for a drink. This exchange became known as 'a shot of whiskey'.



Another tale is based on an incident in a small Indiana town when a local man tried to open a saloon against fierce local temperance opposition. The first barrel of whiskey arrived by train and sat on the freight platform awaiting pickup when a local temperance supporter fired his rifle, shot a hole in the barrel and drained the contents. Afterwards, though the town had no saloon, men would call for, "a shot of whiskey."

A final story is that small glasses were placed on a table in dining halls so that men could spit out any remaining shot from the game they consumed. The glasses thus became 'shot glasses'.

Passing the Buck or The Buck Stops Here

In addition to shooting weapons, most men carried a jack knife made by the Buck company. Often, one of these knives was placed on the poker table to designate who was to be the dealer. The knife was passed from man to man as the deal moved around the table.



Tinhorn or Tinhorn Gambler

Those who have watched old western films have heard someone referred to by this epithet. "Tinhorn gambler" was a term referring to small-time operators of games of chuck-a-luck, whose patrons ("tinhorn sports") played for small stakes. The term comes from the time when a cone-shaped chute (called a horn) was made by the operator who could not afford a more expensive device to shake the numbered balls. Tin was cheaper than leather, thus 'tinhorn'. Over time, the term became used as a disparaging term for anyone held in contempt.



**Old City Cemetery
Committee, Inc.**

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Mission Statement

To join hands with the community to restore, beautify, preserve and protect the Historic City Cemetery, while maintaining access by descendants of the deceased, and to provide educational services to all visitors to the Historic City Cemetery of Sacramento.



**2017
LANTERN TOUR
FUNDRAISER**

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OCTOBER 20-21 AND
RIDAY AND SATURDAY
OCTOBER 27-28**

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