IN THE VEIN...  

I am happy to report that the recent Mothers Day/Springtime event was a joyful experience for all of the families who attended on a most perfect weather day. The parking lot was full but not overflowing, and the attendance numbers were just right and not overwhelming to staff and volunteers. The efforts of many volunteers and Park staff (too many to mention by individual name) made the day a huge success. I especially enjoyed meeting with people who came from faraway places like England and Australia. I also met several family members whose ancestors worked in the Empire Mine during its “golden age.”

As promised, the mineyard had two working displays for the first time in the Park’s history. A two-stamp mill and a full-scale Cornish Pump Engine were on display thanks to the efforts of the “Over-the-Hill-Gang.” I am also proud to announce that the brick walkway leading to Empire Cottage has been repaired, thanks to a donation from EMPA and the diligence of Park staff who made it happen in time for Mothers Day.

As always, the grounds were beautifully groomed by Park staff and volunteers. Happily, the “Gold of Ophir” roses were still in at least partial bloom, and the rhododendrons, aka “rhodies” were in full bloom offering many photo opportunities for Park visitors.

EMPA is fortunate to have Courtney Ferguson as our publicist as well as a volunteer for special events. Using local talent, Courtney organized a wonderful musical entertainment experience throughout the Park on Mothers Day.

In other developments, I am pleased to announce that EMPA has just given $30,000 to the Park to repair the old firehouse roof. This historic building is located just outside the entrance to the Park, and will be a showcase for the benefit of our fundraising efforts. Stored inside this firehouse is a unique historical artifact that I will share with you in future messages, so stay tuned.

I am also pleased to announce that two new members have joined the EMPA Board. We welcome Rick Sweringen and Bob Jennings, who have recently been appointed. Bob is a familiar figure at Empire Mine, and has previously served on the Board. He has also been involved with living history in the Clubhouse and despite a move out of the area last

(continued on page 3)
COTTAGE LIVING HISTORY

CHINATOWN IN GRASS VALLEY

By Caryl Fairfull

Have you ever noticed the plaque commemorating “Chinatown, Grass Valley” on the corner of Bank and Tinloy Streets? I hadn’t either. The plaque was placed by E. Clampus Vitus and states “Of the many Gold Rush immigrants, the Chinese were noted for their honest, sober and industrious characteristics. Each mining camp had its Chinatown and Grass Valley’s was second only to San Francisco’s. Former residents Duck Egg, Georgie Bow, Ah Louie and the pioneer Yuen, Gon and Tin Loy families were an integral part of Grass Valley history 1850-1938.” I imagine that at least some of the Empire Mine miners walked past Grass Valley Chinatown on their way home.

The news of the Gold in California attracted worldwide attention, including the Chinese. Everyone wanted to get rich fast. The 1852 census showed 3,396 Chinese in Nevada County. There were about 320-396 in Grass Valley between 1860 and 1880. By 1880, the Chinese were the largest non-white group involved in mining. The Chinese were confined to the poorest diggings, so many resorted to other livelihoods. Chinese businesses were set up in town to serve the Chinese and local populations. Shops included traditional Chinese foods and vegetables, clothes, laundry, brothels, gambling houses and opium dens.

Chinatown covered the approximate area of the Gold Miners Inn, west to Auburn Street, north to Main Street and south to Wolf Creek. A Chinese temple, the Hou Wong Joss House, built circa 1872, stood near the current hotel site. Uye “Georgie” Bow maintained the Joss House. He was well respected and raised 13 children in Grass Valley. The Joss House burned twice in Chinatown fires in 1877 and 1900. It was rebuilt twice and fell again into disrepair. In 1933 George Starr gave generously for its restoration. It was rededicated on July 4, 1933, and served as a tourist attraction. In 1875, the Chinese purchased a cemetery in Grass Valley for $125, but looking at the historical maps, I could not discern the exact location.

The Chinese were very industrious, but suffered severe discrimination. In 1863 the California Legislature passed a statute prohibiting Asian Americans from testifying in court. This caused them to be unable to testify as a witness to a crime or to testify on their own behalf if accused of a crime or if a crime was committed against them. Despite their low status, Nevada County was pleased to collect $103,250 in Foreign Miners Tax almost exclusively from the Chinese between 1850-1870.

(continued on page 3)
IN THE VEIN (continued from page 1)

year to Quincy, he continues to make valuable contributions as a volunteer at the Park. Rick Sweringen is the brother-in-law of our “own” Steve Sanchez, and Rick’s wife, Jan, is very active in the Cottage Living History Program.

Finally, I feel I would be remiss if I didn’t once again mention the “Mine, Wine & Dine” fundraiser (scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Friday, August 3). This event has received enthusiastic support from the community, with many sponsors contributing money or in-kind donations. Chairman Steve Sanchez continues to work tirelessly toward once again making this a very memorable event. Your support, either by purchasing tickets or volunteering to help at the event, will be sincerely appreciated.

Thank you to all of you for your support toward preserving one of Grass Valley’s most valuable historical “gems.” Until next month…

JIM COE

CHINATOWN IN GRASS VALLEY (continued from page 2)

Discouraged Chinese Miners may have found work with the Central Pacific Railroad and were appreciated there as diligent and steadfast workers. However, they eventually suffered underpayment for their hard work. When the railroad was completed in 1869, many Chinese laborers became unemployed. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which suspended immigration of Chinese and prohibited naturalization of the Chinese. This was not repealed until 1943.

Next month: Learn about the family of Phillip Oyung, whose father worked at Empire Mine over 40 years. Phil grew up here and still lives nearby.

VOlunteer Highlight: MAINTAINING A LEGACY

By Lauren Wilson, Park Interpretive Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator

The flowers of Empire Mine are showing off their color as they bloom in splashes of pinks, purples, oranges and many other colors. Fortunately, in addition to the California State Park employees who maintain the gardens, there is a volunteer group called “Garden Maintenance,” who also help to maintain the gardens and grounds. Members of this dedicated crew come in at least once a week before the Park opens and they rake, weed, prune, deadhead (the roses), and contribute whatever is needed to keep the gardens looking magnificent.

Since they come in before the Park opens, most people won’t see them hard at work. The quality of the gardens, though, speaks volumes about the hard work and dedication that these volunteers contribute toward maintaining the legacy of the gardens and grounds at Empire Mine State Historic Park.
For Immediate Release  
5/21/2018

**KNOW & GO:**

**WHAT:** Gold Panning at Bridgeport 2018  
**WHEN:** Begins this Saturday, May 26  
**TIME:** 12pm to 2pm  
**WHERE:** South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport,  
17660 Pleasant Valley Road, Penn Valley 95946

Docents at Bridgeport provide step-by-step panning lessons, share stories about the history of our area, and describe other ways the precious metal was extracted during the California Gold Rush, such as hard rock mining and hydraulic mining.

Gold panning demonstrations at Bridgeport will go from 12 pm to 2 pm every weekend and holiday, beginning Memorial Day Weekend, May 26 through Labor Day, Sept. 3. Gold panning sessions for private groups and school talks can be arranged at other times by prior reservation.

Gold panning is fun and educational for the entire family and kids get to keep the treasures they find in the troughs.

Due to the anticipated bridge renovation and construction work beginning this summer at Bridgeport, please check our website [http://www.southyubariverstatepark.org/](http://www.southyubariverstatepark.org/) or call (530) 432-2546 to be sure gold panning will be available.

Call the South Yuba River State Park for more information and private group reservations at (530) 432-2546.

Photo by John Field

**Dates to Remember**

- **Thursday, June 7, 10:00 a.m.**  
  Miners Picnic Planning Meeting

- **Tuesday, June 19, 9:30 a.m.**  
  EMPA Board of Directors Meeting  
  Docent Building

- **Thursday, June 21, 10:00 a.m.**  
  Coordinators Meeting  
  Docent Building

**Empire Star Editorial Policy** — All articles submitted for publication become the property of the Empire Mine Park Association (EMPA) and, as such, are subject to editing and/or other modification. In addition, articles may **NOT** be published the same month they are submitted in some instances due to space limitations.
A PROMISE MADE IN DEEP SNOW

By Gage McKinney

(Editor’s note: The Pioneer Monument at our sister park, the Donner Memorial State Park in Truckee, will be re-dedicated on Saturday, June 9. Ceremonies begin at 11:00 a.m. and events continue all day. The monument was originally dedicated June 6, 1918 – 100 years ago.)

“Are you from California, or do you come from heaven?” Those words greeted the seven men of the first relief party to arrive at a frozen lakeside camp in February 1847. They had come through snow up to 18 feet deep, risking their lives to rescue the Donner Party. At the lake, they found the snow as high as the cabin roofs, and bodies outside wrapped in quilts, the survivors too weak to bury their dead. The rescuers themselves were exhausted from the journey. They rested for a few days and shared their precious rations with the starving people in the forlorn cabins and tents.

On February 22, the rescuers started down the slope, bringing with them 3 men, 4 women and 17 children. Even as they followed in the trail the men had broken, the youngest of the children, who were Tommy Reed, 3, and Patty Reed, 8, floundered in the snow. The men encouraged them, but soon the line of marchers stopped.

It was left to Aquilla Glover, leader of the relief party, to break the news to the children’s mother, Margaret Reed. Her youngest children couldn’t keep up, and carrying them was out of the question. The weight of the children would bog down even the stoutest man in the deep snow. The two children would have to return to the camp to await the next relief party.

Mrs. Reed was distraught. To return the children to the horrid camp and grip of starvation seemed like certain death. She pleaded with Glover and the other men. At last, even Mrs. Reed came to recognize her young children would bring the whole party to ruin. But still, how could she consent?

Mrs. Reed had a sudden thought. Her husband, James, was a Mason. Turning to Glover she asked: “Are you a Mason?” ”Yes,” Glover replied. “Will you give me your word as a Mason,” she asked, “that you will come back to rescue my children?” Glover replied: “I give you my word.”

Glover and another rescuer led the two Reed children back to the camp. They then returned to lead Margaret Reed and the others down the slopes, slogging through snow drifts. After several days their deliverance was assured when they met the second relief party coming up the trail.

The second party was led by James Reed himself, who had arrived in California ahead of the Donner Party and had spread word of the tragedy unfolding in the High Sierra. Reed relieved Glover of his vow, and arrived at Donner Lake in time to rescue his remaining children.

Aquilla Glover was the husband of my great-great grandmother Mary Jane Lemon. He survived the ordeal of rescuing the Donner Party, but never fully recovered. Within two years, Glover died in a Gold Rush camp. Mary Jane then married David E. Gish and settled in the Santa Clara Valley near the Reed family. My family remained close to the Reeds and our ancestors lay in common ground at Oak Hill Cemetery in San Jose.
From an interview of Downey Clinch, Surface Gang, Explosives 1937. Interview date 11/21/85.

All of the dynamite manufacturers had wrappers from their competition. That way if there was a fire or strike at their dynamite plant the other plants could use their wrappers so they could fill their orders.

People have a fixation with the dynamite. It is not necessarily unsafe as long as it is handled properly. Probably when it is most dangerous is in the case of a missed hole. When it didn't go off when they blasted someone had to go in there and clean out the dynamite and blasting cap. Sometimes it would end up in the muck pile. All a person had to do was hit that cap with a shovel. It just takes heat, pressure or impact to make dynamite go off.

They had small powder magazines underground. They had certain days when they would take the dynamite underground to stock them. The Penn powder magazine had very small vents. After an hour or so you would get a heck of a headache for the rest of the day just from the nitroglycerine fumes being in the air.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.

From an interview of Alice Lowery Estrada, daughter of William Bourn's chauffeur. Interview date 6/24/90.

At Filoli we had our share of animals, but we couldn't bring children in to play with. There was just one other young person living there but she was much older than us so we just had ourselves to play with.

We lived in the chauffeur cottage that was connected to the garage. The cottage had three bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and a pantry. They had another set of rooms on the other side of the garage for chauffeur number two. They had two chauffeurs.

He did most of the errand running into town for the supplies and things. He took us to school. When he went in the morning he would take us and then he would pick us up when he went for the mail in the afternoon.

By 1934 we had moved into town. They let everybody go because Mrs. Bourn was very ill and they didn’t need chauffeurs. They only needed a skeleton crew. The grounds were going right down.

When Mrs. Roth bought Filoli in 1937 she started building it up again. She had a lot of work to do.

When we moved into town it was quite hard getting used to the crowds. It wasn't really crowded. It was just more crowded than Filoli.
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

Interpretative Coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tour Guides</th>
<th>George Sanford</th>
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</tr>
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<td>273-5510</td>
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<td>Betty and John Lucas</td>
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Administrative Coordinators

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<td>Lise Hinman</td>
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<td>Lianne Werner</td>
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Note: Changes in directory listings on this and the following page should be sent to Lynne Buenz, Editor/Publisher, at la_buenz@hotmail.com
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10791 East Empire Street
Grass Valley, CA  95945
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THE EMPIRE STAR
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On the web at www.empiremine.org