May has arrived, bringing the start of Cottage Living History (CLH). Thanks to CLH Co-Coordinators Cheryl Balmain and Nancy Koring and to Assistant CLH Coordinator Jane Bland, Cottage Living History docents are organized and ready to begin the season. This year for the first time, visitors may experience the year 1906, just after the San Francisco earthquake when the Bourn family spent an extended time living in the Cottage. While Cottage Living History is seasonal (May–September), many other programs at the Park are year-round, and all docents do a great job of representing the Park and entertaining visitors.

As mentioned last month, May also brings our special Mother’s Day Springtime event, which this year is May 13. This year’s event is being coordinated by Lauren Wilson, Park Interpretive Specialist/Volunteer Coordinator and Jenna Randar, Park Interpretive Specialist. They are being assisted by Bob Jennings (who, incidentally, is coming all the way from his home in Quincy to help), Troy Hammer and many others who are working diligently to organize a very welcoming affair for the families in our community. Courtney Ferguson has arranged for some special music to be played throughout the Park. This event is always a fun time for the whole family, especially mothers, grandmothers and children. Dad, you will be a hero if you bring your family to the Mine on Mother’s Day!

Hopefully the “Gold of Ophir” roses will be in bloom for Mother’s Day. This short-blooming species of rose was discovered by Robert Fortune in Eastern China in 1845 and covers the arbor leading to the rose garden. It also graces the front of the Cottage.

Behind-the-scenes organization work continues on the “Mine, Wine & Dine” fundraiser, which this year is scheduled for August 3. Like last year, tables will be set up on the paved area outside the Clubhouse. We are asking everyone to spread the word and to save the date. Chairman Steve Sanchez is doing a great job of recruiting sponsors, but he could use more. Call Steve if you know of a potential sponsor. He can be reached at 510-673-3741. All proceeds from this event go toward needed maintenance at the Park.

JIM COE
Muckross House sits near the shores of Muckross Lake and is located near the town of Killarney in County Kerry, Ireland. It became the first National Park in the Republic of Ireland when the estate was presented to the Irish nation by William Bowers Bourn, Jr. and Arthur Rose Vincent in 1932.

Muckross House was designed by the British architect, William Burn and built for Henry Arthur Herbert and his wife, the watercolorist Mary Balfour Herbert. This was the fourth house that successive Herbert generations occupied at Muckross over a period of almost two hundred years. (Building commenced in 1839 and was completed in 1843. It is Tudor style and has sixty-five rooms.)

Extensive improvements in the gardens were made in the 1850s for a visit of Queen Victoria in 1861. The cost of these improvements may have contributed to the financial difficulties suffered by the Herbert family, which resulted in the sale of the estate. In 1899 it was bought by Arthur Guinness, 1st Baron Ardilaun, heir to the Guinness brewery fortune, who wanted to preserve the dramatic landscape. He did not live in the house; instead, he rented it out to wealthy groups as a hunting lodge.

In August 1911, Guinness sold the Muckross estate to William Bowers Bourn, Jr. He and his wife Agnes then presented it to their daughter Maud and her husband, Arthur Rose Vincent, as a wedding present. The Vincents lived there and had two children. They loved the gardens and added the Sunken Garden, Rock Garden and the Stream Garden. The couple lived there until Maud’s death from pneumonia in 1929. Arthur and the children lived there until 1932.

In 1932, Maud’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bourn, and her husband Arthur Vincent, decided to present Muckross House and its 11,000 acre estate to the Irish nation. It was called the “Bourn-Vincent Memorial Park,” and became the first national park in the Republic of Ireland and formed the basis of present-day Killarney National Park. In subsequent years, the Park was substantially expanded by the acquisition of land from the former Earl of Kenmare’s estate.

Are you up to the challenge?

You can visit the four Bourn residences: 1) 2550 Webster Street, San Francisco, California (no admittance); 2) Filoli Historic House and Garden in Woodside California; 3) Bourn Cottage at Empire Mine in Grass Valley, California; and 4) Muckross House and Gardens in Killarney, Ireland.
VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Garden tour season begins!

By Lauren Wilson, Park Interpretive Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator

Garden tours for the season have begun! Garden Tour Coordinator and tour guide Marsha Lewis kicked off the start of the season on a beautiful Saturday in April. Empire Mine State Historic Park has tiers of historic gardens, including a timeline of historic roses. The estate gardens are landscaped in the arts and crafts style and include plants and trees brought in from all over the world.

The gardens change regularly with the season and time of year, so every tour is a new and different experience. Private garden tours may also be arranged throughout the entire year. Come join the well-versed garden tour guides every Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 a.m. until September 30 and learn about the history and the plant life in the historic gardens and grounds.

SPRING BIRD WALKS AT SOUTH YUBA RIVER STATE PARK

(Reprinted from SYRPA Newsletter, April, 2018)

Spring at SYRSP is the time of the year when a large number of birds arrive to nest and raise their young or, in some cases, to just rest and then continue their migration. Some of the more notable arrivals include: Bullock's Oriole, Yellow-breasted Chat, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow Warbler and several varieties of Swallows. Resident Western Bluebirds, Spotted Towhee, California Quail, and several species of Woodpeckers are also often seen this time of year. It may also be possible to see our annual pair of nesting Bald Eagles and their young as well as the elusive American Dipper, John Muir's favorite bird.

Bird walks with park docents are offered at SYRSP's Bridgeport location the second Saturday of each month (April 14, May 19 and June 9). There is also a walk at the same location on Friday May 4. Typically, we should see 20 to 30 species. All of the walks will begin at 8 a.m. except for June which will begin at 7:30 a.m. The walks last about two hours over mostly flat terrain. Meet at the Bridgeport north parking lot (where the Buttermilk Bend trail starts). Bring binoculars and wear good walking shoes. For more information contact South Yuba River State Park at (530) 432-2546.

Visit the website http://www.southyubariverstatepark.org/ for more information and brochures.

By Robert Slyker
FUN FACTS FROM THE PAST
(From the Files of the Research Group)
Submitted by Barbara Jarvis, Coordinator

The sounding of the Penn mine whistle caused alarm. A calamity like that of the Empire Mine last week was feared. Flames were seen mounting high over the hill beyond which are situated the Penn and W.Y.O.D. mines. Word reached town that the W.Y.O.D. hoisting works were on fire. How it happened is unknown, but it is supposed to have been of incendiary origin.

The engineer lowered the night-shift men and, as usual, went underground to help put in a set of timbers.

Feeling a heavy draft, and on looking up seeing the light, he notified the man at the bottom of the shaft to tell the miners that the hoisting works were on fire. Thus being informed, (they) made an effort to reach the surface but were driven back by the smoke.

They then tried the tunnel, but found on nearing the end that it had caved. One of the miners then said: “Boys, if we have to die, let us find a dry place to die.”

One of the men happened to remember a shaft in which there was a ladder, and they escaped that way.

The W.Y.O.D. is owned and worked by five young men and they had just finished the hoisting-works, and this calamity will probably throw them six months behind. The loss is about $6,000.

*The Record-Union (Sacramento, CA) - Thursday, March 22, 1888, pg. 1*
LAURA WENTWORTH IN THE ACCOUNTING REVOLUTION

By Gage McKinney

On a frosty morning, bookkeeper Laura Wentworth walked briskly across the mineyard and climbed the office steps. Inside, a fire already blazed in the fireplace, and wood was stacked in a box by the window. Laura hung her scarf and coat and sat down to work. By 8 a.m., Miss Lobecker, the stenographer, was seated facing Laura across a double desk, and Mr. Bernard, the chief clerk, was at a desk nearby. No time for pleasantries this morning – there was a payroll to get out, less than a week to prepare checks for 600 men.

Already Superintendent Rowe had delivered his time sheets, listing the men underground, their hours and functions – miners, timbermen, chute tenders, etc. Laura reviewed the sheets carefully, verified the addition, and applied appropriate rates to the hours. Similarly, she reviewed the time cards for the surface workers. Every figure was double- and triple-checked. Accuracy was all.

Laura and her companions worked in an office crowded with ledgers, file cabinets, two safes, an adding machine and a small desk supporting a wide-carriage statistical typewriter. On Mr. Bernard’s desk was an upright telephone, the only one in the office. The office smelled of ink pads and carbon paper. The keys of the Marchant Millionaire, the electro-mechanical calculator, crackled through the day.

Within a few days the entire payroll was verified to the penny, typed in duplicate, distributed to the local managers and mailed to Newmont headquarters in New York. The checks were typed, and double-signed, and distributed by the shift bosses.

In the week between payrolls, Laura continued her usual work of cost accounting, tracking every cent in regularized reports, sheets of numbers, which could be easily compared with earlier reports. The cost per gallon of pumping mine water, for example, was calculated to thirteen places right of the decimal point, and a fractional increase would prompt an engineer to investigate.

In the 19th and early 20th century, America experienced successive stages of an industrial revolution. It was also an accounting revolution. Men like John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Mellon, to name but two, were famous not only as industrial titans but as accountants. They made money by squeezing pennies out of processes on an ever-enlarging scale.

Laura Wentworth was an insurgent in this revolution. Her accounting skills contributed to the success of the Empire as surely as did pneumatic drills and cyanide vats. And her role was valued. She was a single woman, a divorcee, who had been orphaned at age eight. She earned a salary less than men in the office, but comparable to a miner’s, and with it came a house on the mine property. In 1929, Laura got a $240 bonus. General manager George Starr named the “Wentworth vein” for her. On the occasion when she was given an underground tour, the men below greeted her as a member of the crew.

Laura Wentworth worked six days a week at the Empire from 1915 to 1931. She died on one of her rare holidays, the July 4th weekend in 1931, when the car in which she was riding went off the road. We can imagine what her workdays were like, because 30 years ago, EMPA volunteers interviewed people who remembered her. On living history days at the Park, Laura is portrayed in the mine office by Joanne Sweeney, a former office manager and teacher, who remembers the workplace before computers. “If I had lived in the 1920s, working in the Empire Mine office would have been a great fit for me,” Joanne told me. “I feel a great deal of respect for Laura and the work she did.”
Mother’s Day Springtime Event

Where: Empire Mine State Historic Park

When: Sunday, May 13th 2018 from 11:00am-4:00pm

What: Enjoy complimentary tea in the garden, live music throughout the park, the gardens in bloom, docents in costume, children’s activities and a day the family will not forget.

Standard entrance fees apply. Grandmothers get in for free. Well behaved dogs on a leash are welcome. For more information, contact the Visitor Center at: 530-273-8522.
From an interview of Frank Mack, Miner at Empire Mine in the 1930’s; Leaser at Empire Mine 1946, 47, 48. Interview date 4/7/88.

I enjoyed working at Empire. It had lots of ledges (veins of gold bearing quartz). Pretty near every ledge carried values. I leased there in 1946, 47 and 48. I worked on the lease with three other guys.

We worked several months and didn’t do so well. We were following a ledge up there and were only making $50 a month. And then a horse got in there. A horse is where the ledges split with a waist in the middle.

On the right was a hanging and footwall right together. There was a seam in there like a piece of paper but it had gold in it. My partners weren’t for bothering with that. I was suspicious of what we might find.

I had a friend there. An old country Italian. I asked him if he would take a look at it. He looked through his bifocals and over them and under them. He saw that gold and he said, “Follow it.” So, I put the stopper in and just slabbed off about four feet.

We went in there and after about 10 or 15 feet we hit a bonanza. We followed it for over 150 feet and it paid all the way. If you mine, you have to take an interest. You never know what you will see. We didn’t get paid for milling rock. You only got paid on sulfides.

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 Clarence “Lightning” Thomas. Machine shop and blacksmith shop, 1935 to late 1940’s. Interview date 1/9/83.

I was nominated for the mine safety team. When we were training we would wear these air breathing packs and would have to trot a couple of miles. Because they burned wood for heat we would take old timbers and use a 2-man crosscut saw and cut the beams for the winter wood while wearing the breathing apparatus.

It sure gets hot inside there when you are wearing that thing while cutting wood.

I served a 4-year apprenticeship in the machine shop. When it was completed you got a letter spelling out that you had completed the program. I feel the training I got at Empire was invaluable in several jobs that I had after leaving the mine.
A VISIT TO THE GEEVOR TIN MINE—PENDEEN, CORNWALL

By Terry Armstrong  (All photos courtesy of Terry Armstrong)

Eileen and I, with our dog Maggie, recently did a seven-day inn-to-inn walk along the Southwest Cornwall Coast Path from Padstow to St. Ives. We passed dozens of closed and abandoned tin and copper mines along the way. Artifacts found on the tin sites indicate that the industry was established as early as 2000 BC and the extraction of tin on the Cornwall coast continued without serious interruption from about 1500 BC to nearly the present day. There was a well established tin trade between Cornwall and the Mediterranean by the 4th century BC and tin mines and smelters were developed all along the Cornwall coast. Starting about 1850, when foreign competition depressed the prices of tin and copper, hundreds of mines were abandoned and many of the miners and their families emigrated to mineral fields around the world, including the Empire Mine in Grass Valley. The legacy of tin mining is a unique coastal landscape studded with empty engine houses and it was granted the status of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site in 2006.

The last operating tin mine in the Penzance District of Cornwall was the Geevor at Pendeen and it was worked from 1911 to 1986 when the tin market crashed. The closed mine was set up on a care and maintenance basis, but the pumps kept going in the hopes of a recovery in tin prices. It was permanently closed in 1990. The relatively recent closure and the creation of the Geevor Tin Mine Museum preserved the buildings and equipment and the 67-acre site is open for visitors all year. The site is dominated by a steel headframe above the main Victory Shaft, named in 1919 at the end of WWI. The tin dressing mills stretch from the shaft down toward the Atlantic Ocean and the milling equipment is intact. The buildings include the reception and interpretive center at the entrance, the compressor house, the winder house, the hard rock museum, the drill shop, the dry, the sample house, the small stores, the union hut, the landing house, the shaft masters, the rescue room, the first-aid room, the huge mill complex, and the mine shop and café at the exit.

When we entered the Geevor Mine complex, we were greeted with bins of hard hats that we were required to wear during our entire visit. We were free to wander through almost all the buildings on our own with useful interpretive signs and displays in each of them and interactive activities for children at every stop. Many of the buildings were set up as though the mine was still operating and the miners had just stepped out for lunch, or just stepped into the shower as there were some butts showing down the line. The highlight was an underground walk through the Wheal Mexico shaft that was dug totally by hand tools, probably in the 1700s. We chose a rain coat from a rack of them and went through the shaft at our own pace. There were three volunteer guides who were former Geevor miners at strategic spots in the shaft to remind us to keep our heads down or to hurry through the spots where dripping water was heavy. The shaft was narrow, dark, twisting and turning, very wet, and only about five feet high in many places. The need for the hard hats was apparent the first time I bumped into the top of the shaft. The three guides were familiar with hard rock gold mining in California and I had a very interesting conversation with the guide in the middle of the shaft about the Empire. It was quite a thrill to talk to a former miner while underground with him.
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

**Interpretative Coordinators**

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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
Empire Mine Park Association

Thanks to these folks for taking the lead in making the Empire Mine State Historic Park such a unique and enjoyable experience!

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THE EMPIRE STAR

This Newsletter is a Cooperative venture between the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the Empire Mine Park Association.

On the web at [www.empiremine.org](http://www.empiremine.org)