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Mark S. Allen
Little Known Facts about the Fourth of July

Justifiably, you’re undoubtedly wondering what possible connection the topic of this page has to do with “Cottage Living History.” You’re right – there’s little real connection – except that the people we portray at the Cottage would certainly have celebrated the birthday of our country’s independence – and, quite possibly, they would have enjoyed activities very similar to what we enjoy today – with parades, games, picnics, and even fireworks filling their day! However, the typical holiday menu of hamburgers or hot dogs we enjoy today might have been tweaked over the years – see below.

So, with that explanation out of the way, here are a few “little known” facts that I found interesting – and so might you!

Anyone for Turtle Soup?

"According to legend, on July 4, 1776, John Adams…and his wife, Abigail, sat down for a celebratory meal of turtle soup, New England poached salmon with egg sauce, green peas and boiled new potatoes in jackets. They followed the meal with Indian pudding or Apple Pandowdy," wrote Justine Sterling for Delish.com.

American Bald … Turkey?

In a letter to his daughter in 1784, Benjamin Franklin wrote that he was displeased that the bald eagle had been chosen as the symbol for the nation. "He is a bird of bad moral character. He does not get his living honestly," he wrote. "You may have seen him perched on some dead Tree near the River, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the Labour of the Fishing Hawk.” A turkey, Franklin went on to argue, is a far “more respectable” bird. The Turkey is a true original Native of America, Franklin wrote. “He is besides, though a little vain and silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on.”

The “State of Independence”

Is Pennsylvania the country’s most patriotic state? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the so-called “State of Independence,” where the Declaration of Independence was debated and signed, is home to 11 places with the word “liberty” in their name and 33 with the word “union” in them, leading the country for the number of places with such names.

Only one place in the nation has “patriot” in its name – Patriot, Indiana is said to have an estimated population of 209!

Hot Dogs Galore

July 4 is the biggest hot dog holiday of the year according to TIME magazine with Americans reportedly consuming about 155 million of them on Independence Day alone. But despite a nationwide love for the salty snack, no one really knows where the hot dog came from. According to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, it is “likely that the North American hot dog comes from a widespread common European sausage brought here by butchers of several nationalities.”
Summertime
By Ranger Greg Sherr

It’s heating up at Empire Mine State Historic Park. Cottage and Clubhouse Living History have been going strong since May and visitors have had many compliments regarding the outstanding interpretation from each. In addition, our Saturday and Sunday morning garden tours have been attracting many eager visitors. Well done!

As with all summer seasons, special events are also in full swing at Empire Mine. We have had two to three weddings/receptions per week starting in May and will continue through the first week in October. Ranger Michele Green, Park Aide David Townsend and Park Aide Kevin Schmidt have been doing a fantastic job with this extremely demanding program.

Jack Laird has once again been working tirelessly on our Annual Miners Picnic. Posters and event flyers are available at various locations including the Visitor Center at Empire Mine. This year’s poster looks great and I welcome everyone to come celebrate with us on August 29th from 11 am – 4 pm.

After a short delay due to a work-related injury, the Two-Stamp Mill project is once again progressing. The Over-the-Hill-Gang has figured out how to keep the drive belt tracking on the flywheel and they are closing in on project completion. This will be an extremely important interpretive piece in the park and we all look forward to watching it run!

While visiting or volunteering at the park during the summer months, please remember to drink plenty of water and take rest breaks. This is the time of year that we see an increase in heat-related illnesses.

I hope to see all of you this summer at beautiful Empire Mine!

The Earliest of Celebrations

Americans began observing the Fourth of July as early as 1777, when the first-ever major celebration in Philadelphia included a parade, a thirteen-shot cannon salute and fireworks, but Congress did not make it official until 1870 when it was part of a bill passed to recognize major state holidays at a federal level – like Christmas and New Year’s Day, according to TIME magazine.

The Liberty Bell

Due to concerns about cracking this iconic instrument, the Liberty Bell has not been rung since 1846. Instead, every year, to mark the Fourth of July, the 2,000-pound bell is tapped 13 times to signal for bells across the country to start ringing.

Happy Fourth of July!!!
Special thanks to Erin Thiem for "liking" us so much!

Submitted by Courtney Ferguson

Nevada City’s Outside Inn owner/manager is a stalwart supporter of Empire Mine State Historic Park – as well as the annual events EMPA hosts. She’s been a local resident since she was 11. Today she enjoys exploring Empire Mine with her husband Dan and their two boys (aged 7 and 9). Erin frequently features us on her website, on her blog (http://outsideinn.com/blog) and on her Facebook page (www.facebook.com/OutsideInnNevadaCity). "The Outside Inn welcomes travelers from all around the globe," she said, "and so many rave about their visits to Empire Mine. They are fascinated by our local history, and impressed by the breathtaking grounds. I’m glad to play a small part in encouraging them to make Empire Mine a key part of their travel plans."

Thanks for all you do, Erin - and to the many other local business owners who help spread the word!

Erin Thiem, owner/manager of the Outside Inn recommends Empire Mine as a "must see" to her guests from all over the U.S. and all over the world.

Attention Any and All Volunteers!

Submitted by Carol Bordeau, Silent Auction Chair, Miners Picnic

I am asking for gently used or new donations for the 2015 Silent Auction that is part of this year’s Miners Picnic on August 29. You must have some interesting item stuffed away in one of your closets that you don’t use any more! Don’t allow it to take up precious storage space in your home – instead, drop it off at the Smurf Room no later than August 25 – so I have time to make the proper signage for it. EMPA has made as much as $2,000 in previous years from this activity – this is a great way to make a donation and get a tax write-off too! Include your name, address, and phone number as well as an approximate value of the item you are donating.

Thank You!
SMOKE FROM THE SMITHY
By Bill Blount

Well, they are over!!! The last of the school tours for the year passed through our portal about two weeks ago and we all gave a big sigh of relief. The kids are great and the tours are really kind of fun to do, but they do raise havoc with work schedules and yard tours and getting stock built for the gift shop and, and, and ... They are over!

Some of the new docent trainees are working into the schedule and are progressing nicely. Of course, having one of our prime Smiths out with an injury hasn't helped at all, but we are working it all out.

Heat is a bit of a problem this year with the attached humidity. The afternoon shifts are often a bit sticky, but we will just need to put the fires out and talk to the guests without sparks and flame.

Planning for our part in the Miners Picnic is moving along with fire trucks, smokers, injured miners and hero blacksmiths all lining up to perform as needed. This is, I believe, the 120th time we've done this so maybe we'll get it right. Of course we will!

We are looking forward to a busy summer season with weekend schedules starting, higher staffing levels approaching, more stock in the building available for the guests and more guests showing up. Always fun with our foreign guests and the minor problem of language differences. We always hope that someone can translate a bit.

We know that we are hot and dirty, but any of the docents from any of the areas are always welcome to come visit. Please just don't wear your beautiful white costumes – but do come and see “our side of the Park.” Have a great summer season.

NEXT VIP EDUCATIONAL TOUR: GARDENS AND GROUNDS

Submitted by Lynne Buenz, VIP Tour Coordinator

Thursday, July 23, from 3 to 5 pm is the date and time of the next educational tour intended to broaden the knowledge of active park docents (aka VIPs). This tour will feature the beautiful estate grounds surrounding the Empire Cottage and Clubhouse. Participants will learn about significant plants and trees in the garden as well as the lesser known structures and other features on the grounds.

Don’t miss out on this special opportunity! Call the Visitor’s Center at the Park TODAY (273-8522) to make a reservation. Group size is limited to 30 persons, and the deadline is Monday, July 20.
DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, July 4
Independence Day Parade
11 a.m. Grass Valley
(call Bev Skinner or
Jack Laird to participate)
(contact information on pages 9 & 10)

Thursday, July 16
Coordinator Meeting
10:00 a.m. in the Docent Building

Tuesday, July 21
EMPA Board of Directors Meetings
9:30 a.m. in the Docent Building

Wednesday, July 22
Tour to Kentucky Mine Historic
Park & Museum
Meet at the Kentucky Park at 11 a.m.
Sign up with Leanne Werner
or Bob Jennings
(contact information on page 9)

Thursday, July 23
V.I.P. Garden Tour
3 - 5 p.m.
(reserve a spot at the
Visitor’s Center by July 20)

FUN FACTS FROM THE PAST

George Starr Donated Pool to Local Park

Good Man for Community: George Starr achieved wealth at the Empire mine, but he was always willing to spend it on the community. He built the present Memorial Park swimming pool at an outlay of $20,000. He was of financial aid in the present Nevada County Golf Club, and an enterprising backer of the Bret Harte Inn.

There was never a worthy local charitable enterprise to which he did not contribute heavily, for he had the welfare of the community at heart.

From the Grass Valley Daily Morning Union, 23 Jan 1940.
From an interview of Clarence “Lightning” Thomas, Machinist and Blacksmith, 1935 until late 1940’s. Interview date: 1/9/83.

When I first started, Charlie Lucas was the boss in the machine shop. He passed away and then Phil Keast took over as general foreman up on the surface and I worked for him for the remainder of the time that I was at Empire.

There was a leader in each of the shops overseeing what was done. In the machine shop it was Gerald Decody. We called him “Bud.” He was the one that gave me the name “Lightning.”

When I went to work there, I was so bored of working out in the public so I worked like a maniac. About the second day we were eating lunch and Bud said, “That new kid works like lightning. He must be afraid of his job.” The nickname stuck to this day.

I would occasionally have to work over in the blacksmith shop. It was nothing but hard work.

From an interview of Orlo Steel, Mucker, summer of 1950. Interview date: 5/5/94.

The miner would carry what looked like a small canteen with a large lid on it that he would fill with oil from a dispenser at the collar of the mine before going down. He was always constantly using oil on his drill.

He would also carry these plates that had a handle on it that had about 12 or 16 drill bits screwed onto it. He would drop them off at the head frame in the morning and they would take them in and sharpen them. We would also take down dynamite and dynamite caps.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.
June Educational Tour at the North Star Mine Property

Submitted by Bob Jennings

Tuesday, June 23rd, proved to be a fun, educational and exceptional day for a large group of Empire Mine and North Star docents. Jim Simmons, Manager for the North Star Mine property, was our tour guide for this area, now owned by Newmont Mining Company.

Our first stop was the North Star Central Mine shaft area. Jim enlightened us with the history of the North Star Mining Company. A tour of the existing buildings was followed by a short hike to view the concrete foundation of the spectacular stamp mill. This area, originally consisting of 48 stamps, is an incredibly large, breathtaking structure that continues to speak today of the mission and focus of the mining era.

Next, a tour of the North Star Museum was enjoyed – led by two very informative docents, Rolf and Tony. This historic structure is packed with photos, information, equipment and the world famous 30-foot Pelton wheel. Following this wonderful experience, we enjoyed lunch at the North Star House. This beautiful and historic structure was designed by Julia Morgan who designed over 700 well-known buildings in her lifetime. Carole Miller, North Star docent, relayed the history of this home including the legacy of the Foote family. A tour of the home and ongoing restorative work followed. This important piece of Nevada County history is open every Saturday during the Farmer's Market.

Much gratitude is extended to the North Star docents, Jim Simmons, and all the participants in this very interesting and educational day.

Coming Attractions!!!

Our next tour will be on Wednesday, July 22, and will be a visit to the Kentucky Mine History Park and Museum in Sierra City. This Sierra County Historic Park includes a tour of the gold mine and its operations, a working stamp mill, a wonderful museum, and a chance to see a colony of Townsend Big-Eared Bats. You will be taken through the incredible day-to-day experience of hard rock mining in the Sierra City mining region during the latter part of the 19th century. We will meet in the Kentucky Mine parking lot above Sierra City. The tour begins at 11 am and takes about 90 minutes. The cost is $7.00. After the tour, enjoy your picnic lunch on the grounds or there are restaurants in Sierra City. After lunch, local attractions are Sardine Lake (bring your kayaks and fishing poles!), many hikes and small town fun.

Please sign up with Leanne (273-0704) or Bob Jennings (274-2834) or rw3jennings@yahoo.com.

Another tour, later in the year, will be planned to tour the new Donner Museum. Watch for details in The Empire Star!!!
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

Interpretative Coordinators

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tour Guides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mine Yard Living History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mine Yard Stations</td>
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Rose Garden                           | Ellen Hamlin        | 272-3248| ellen@hamlin.net                          |
Garden Tours                          | Jeanne Powell       | 271-2138| ipowell1st@msn.com                        |
Trails                                | Lianne Werner       | 273-0704|                                               |

www.empiremine.org
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