



UTILITAS • FIRMITAS • VENUSTAS

Northern California Chapter
Society of Architectural Historians

The Newsletter

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NCCSAH Autumn Tour of Calaveras County Gold Country Slated for Weekend of October 26-28

NCCSAH invites you to join our autumn tour of Gold Rush towns in the Sierra foothills. A weekend rich with history and architecture will begin Friday evening, October 26, with dinner at a historic house in Murphys and spans the weekend with tours of Mokelumne Hill and Angels Camp, as well as Murphys.

We are very fortunate to have architectural historian and museum director Judith Marvin leading the tour. She has made all the necessary arrangements for the buildings we will visit and will also host the welcoming dinner on Friday.

Ms. Marvin, who holds a degree in history from Cal/Berkeley, has been actively engaged in historic research since 1977. She joined historical archaeologist Julia G. Costello to form Foothill Resources in 1983. The limited partnership, with offices in Mokelumne Hill and Murphys, specializes in directing archaeological, architectural and historical cultural resource management in the western United States and in evaluating historic resources. Company projects also include site interpretation, museum displays, interpretive planning and educational programs.



Tour includes coffee, tea and pastries on Saturday morning, at the historic Leger Hotel in Mokelumne Hill, illustrated here in a 1934 photograph by Roger Sturtevant. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS CAL, 5-MOKHI, 5-1

See page 7 for the full schedule of activities and events. To sign up for the tour, please use the registration form on page 8.

Participants should make their own transportation and lodging arrangements. See www.gocalaveras.com for lodging information.

A feature article related to the Gold Rush Tour begins on page 2.

Mining for Historic and Architectural Treasures in the Gold Rush Towns of the Sierra Foothills

Calaveras County takes its name from the Calaveras River, which courses through its northern half. Reputedly members of the 1806 Moraga expedition chose the appellation *Rio de las Calaveras* ("River of Skulls") because they claimed to have discovered the skulls of Native Americans along its banks. Although successive waves of trappers and traders visited the area over the ensuing years, and evidence indicates that people of Hispanic origin mined for gold there, it wasn't until the discovery of gold on the American River in January of 1848 that Calaveras drew any appreciable numbers of Euro-Americans.

Somewhere between 1,000 and 500 years ago the Northern Me-wuk arrived in the area of today's Calaveras County. Although not the first people to inhabit the region—earliest human presence dating back as long as 12,000 years—it was the Me-wuk who lived in the area when first contact with Europeans occurred. Oriented to water courses, the Me-wuk of the Mokelumne River inhabited villages both in modern Amador and Calaveras Counties and on the Stanislaus River drainages in Calaveras and Tuolumne counties.

With the gold rush, prospectors quickly overran the region appropriating both the water and the land of the Me-wuk, who were forced out of their villages to less favorable areas. Introduced diseases decimated the population, which also suffered the loss of its means of subsistence. Surviving in settlements around today's West Point, the modern Me-wuk still maintain strong links to their ancestral past.

The Gold Rush

Gold was found in Calaveras County along the banks of the Stanislaus,



Murphys in the 1860s, photo Calaveras County Archives

Mokelumne, and Calaveras rivers, and towns such as Murphys, Angels Camp and Mokelumne Hill quickly sprang up around the major strikes. When California became a state in 1850, Calaveras was established as one of its original twenty-seven counties.

The Gold Rush towns of the Sierra foothills followed remarkably similar patterns of development. News of a strike on local streams and creeks quickly drew prospectors, and a community of hastily constructed wood frame buildings grew up to house miners and businesses that provided for their needs. In the 1850s, consuming fires destroyed many of these buildings, prompting fire resistant reconstruction in stone or brick with iron shutters.

Within a couple of years of the initial strikes, placer mining dwindled, and many discouraged prospectors left the area to return home. Others stayed on to work for the mining companies organized to exploit capital-intensive quartz mines, while still others turned to commerce and agriculture for a living. Cycles of boom and bust marked the life of these towns, the economy rising and falling with mining activity.

Following the decline of placer deposits in the Mother Lode after about 1860, ranching became more important to the foothill economy. Crops included cattle and poultry, pasturage, timber and wine grapes. By 1870, Calaveras County was reportedly the fourth largest wine producing region in California. That industry went into decline when the closing of gold mines affected the overall economy

of the region, and Prohibition, following soon after, dealt a crippling blow from which it would recover only in the later 20th century.



Murphys Hotel, photo Calveras County Archives

Murphys

According to most accounts, John and Daniel Murphy, two brothers from Santa Clara County, first mined the country around Murphys in July 1848. The brothers set up a trading post, and were very successful in getting the Indians to mine for them. By the time he left the camp in December 1849 to return home, John Murphy reputedly had more gold than any other man on the Pacific Coast.

Prospectors extracted large amounts of gold from the area around Murphys between 1848 and 1850. In the next few years, however, placer mining yielded fewer and fewer returns. Once the Union Water Company, organized by January 1853, built flumes and ditches to bring water fifteen miles from the Stanislaus River to Murphys, placer mining revived and enjoyed sustained output for another decade.

To provide lumber for its flumes the Union Water Company built the first sawmill in town. Soon many other mills were in operation to provide timbers for the mines and lumber for houses and other buildings.

By the early 1850s, Main Street was lined with one- and two-story commercial buildings that housed hotels, saloons, tinsmiths, carpenters, bakers, general merchandise establishments, liveries and stables. A disastrous fire in 1853 consumed the commercial core of the community. Townspeople quickly rebuilt, some using fire-resistant masonry; the Traver Store (Murphys Museum) was constructed in 1854, and the Murphys (originally Sperry &

Perry) Hotel in 1856. Most of the existing brick and stone buildings, however, date from the period of reconstruction that followed a major fire in 1859.

Stone walls and iron shutters protected Murphys Hotel from all but minor damage in the fire of 1859. Quickly restored, the hotel reopened the following year. The hotel's register lists many famous visitors, including Mark Twain, John Jacob Astor, U.S. Grant, Susan B. Anthony, Henry Ward Beecher, J.P. Morgan and Thomas Lipton.

The red brick Victorian Gothic St. Patrick's Catholic Church (1861) replaced the original 1855 wooden structure destroyed by fire. The white frame Union Congregational Church, dedicated in 1895, occupies the site of the former Union Church.

Murphys also had its share of fraternal organizations. The Masons, organized in Murphys in 1852, constructed their present lodge building on Church Street in 1902. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, organized in 1859, constructed their Main Street lodge, also in 1902. Formed during the Gold Rush years, E Clampus Vitus has its "Wall of Comparative Overtures" on the west elevation of the Thompson Building on Main Street.

Murphys already boasted three private schools by 1855, when the town established its first public school on the site of the present Masonic Hall. In 1860 the school district constructed the wood frame two-room Greek Revival grammar school known as "Pine Tree College," now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is reputedly California's oldest school building in continuous use as a school.

Today Murphys is made up of a homogeneous blend of wood, brick, and stone buildings dating from the early 1850s to the present. A great many historic buildings remain in the core of the town, primarily along Main, Church, Jones, and Scott streets, and Sheep Ranch Road. Many of the historic, typically Classical Revival commercial buildings were built of stone or of brick facades with stone rubble walls. Wood frame commercial buildings range from the Italianate Style of the 1860s through the traditional western style false fronts with recessed doorways and storefront windows, dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The early residences in Murphys were of frame construction, vernacular examples of higher architectural styles found in the Eastern U.S. They included simple Classical Revival Style, Gothic Revival Style, and Italianate Style buildings with horizontal board siding, gabled or hipped roofs and stone foundations. In the last decade of the nineteenth century and continuing into the early years of the twentieth, simple one- and two-story Queen Anne residences began to make their appearance.

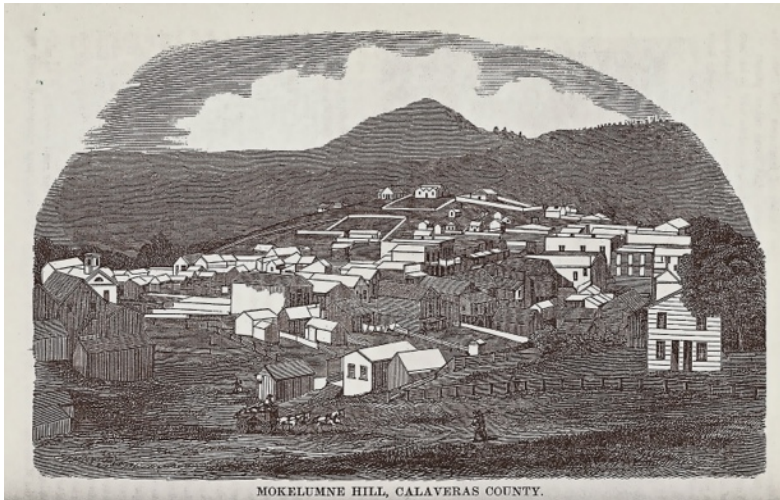


Illustration from Scenes in the Valleys and Mountains of California, 1855

Mokelumne Hill

The village of Mokelumne Hill nestles on a small flat surrounded by hills, within a few miles of the Mokelumne River. The name Mokelumne was first recorded by Father Narcisco Duran as Muquelumnes, in 1817. Some believe the name derives from Yokut Mokelumni, "people of Mokol", or it may be a corruption of the Indian name for "big river".

The first white men to reside in the area were reputedly the French trappers who settled in Happy Valley in the 1830s. The first known miners in the region were Captain Charles M. Weber and a company that mined along the Mokelumne River between Big Bar and Lower Bar in the autumn of 1848. Introduction of a wagon route to bring provisions into the area encouraged the opening of retail businesses in Mokelumne Hill, which became a trading center for prospectors at nearby digs. By 1850, a Mr. Gregoire was operating a general store, and Davidson and Sommers opened a store in 1851 that continued in business until 1914.

During the 1850s, with large quantities of gold coming out of the area, Mokelumne Hill became the leading town of Calaveras County and one of the largest and liveliest placer mining communities of the entire Mother Lode. In later years, quartz mines were discovered around the town. During the 1890s extensive hydraulic mining removed much

gold. The last period of mining activity in the area occurred during the 1930s.

Because of its importance as a commercial center, Mokelumne Hill was chosen as the county seat, in 1852, replacing Jackson. The original wooden courthouse building, located on Centre Street, burned in the fire of 1854, and a new stone building was constructed just north of the Leger Hotel. This building continued to house the offices of county government until 1866, when the county seat was moved to San Andreas. The result was a sharp decline in economic activity in town, and local newspapers were filled with ads offering businesses and homes for sale. The court building became part of the adjoining Leger Hotel.

Major fires in Mokelumne Hill occurred in 1854, 1865, and 1874. The fire of 1854 destroyed everything on Main Street except Gregoire's Store and everything on Center Street except Sturges' Store. After this fire many of the townsfolk constructed new buildings, including the courthouse and several businesses, of fire-proof rhyolite tuff stone



I.O.O.F. Mokelumne Hill, photo by Judith Marvin

quarried nearby on the hill behind the Mokelumne Hill Brewery. After the fire of 1874, when the boom years for Mokelumne Hill as a commercial and government center had passed, many owners of commercial structures did not bother to rebuild. Exceptions to this are the second story of the Leger Hotel (1875) and Muth's Cobbler Shop (c. 1879).

Prosperity returned with the hard rock and hydraulic mining boom of the 1890s and early 1900s, however, and with it an increase in

population and the erecting of new commercial buildings and residences, all of which were of frame construction. Many of these commercial buildings did not survive the economic downturns of the twentieth century. Among those that remain are Gobbi's Saloon and the Town Hall.

After a hiatus during World War I, Mokelumne Hill experienced another period of development, in part due to the advent of the automobile. Gasoline stations and garages were established, traveling salesmen stopped at the hotels, and nearby rural folk joined townspeople to partake of the town's amenities, especially its saloons and restaurants. The Town Hall was refurbished and continued its role as the center of the community.

Today, Mokelumne Hill, with its school, post office, small shopping areas, galleries, saloons, hotel and restaurants, remains the economic and social focus for the surrounding ranches, homes, mines, and businesses. Tourism has become a new industry for the town. The many early homes that remain on the hillsides and the historic buildings downtown offer visitors a tableau of nineteenth-century life in a small community that has withstood the vicissitudes of the boom-and-bust economy of the gold regions of the west.

Angels Camp

The City of Angels Camp, the only incorporated town in Calaveras County, was formed by joining Altaville and Angels Camp in 1912.



Angels Hotel, c. 1890s, photo Calaveras County Archives



View of Angels Camp, 1857. Kuchel & Dresel's California Views

Soon after the discovery of gold in Angels Creek and its tributaries both communities became trading centers. Henry P. Angel, the town's namesake, operated the first trading post there in 1848. Angels Camp had a population of over 300 by the spring of 1849. Altaville, also known as Forks-in-the Road and Cherokee Diggings, took its present name in 1857.

Although not a consistent employer, the mining industry experienced several significant revivals, particularly in the late nineteenth century and again in the early twentieth, and provided the lifeblood of the Angels Camp region. All the mines in the town of Angels Camp closed during World War I, never to reopen. On the western fringes, the Gold Cliff Mine struggled on for a few more years, as did the smaller family-operated mines in the area. Only the Melones Mine at Carson Hill provided steady employment until it, too, closed during World War II.

The historic downtown of Angels Camp contains several 1850s iron-shuttered stone commercial buildings typical of gold country communities. These include Angels Hotel, originally a one-story wooden structure that was rebuilt in stone (1855); the second story was added in 1857. The brick and stone Sam Choy Chinese Store (1860) is the only building that remains from a large Chinese gold rush era settlement. It is now home to a branch of the Angels Camp Museum.

St. Basil Serbian Orthodox Church (1910) was founded by Serbian miners who came to the area in the late 1800s to work the quartz gold mines. It is the third oldest Serbian Church in the United States. The thirty-room art deco Utica House Hotel, opened in 1938 as the Bazinett Hotel, is still the largest in the Mother Lode. It is currently closed.

San Francisco architects Perseo Righetti and E. Depierre designed the two-story classical revival Calaveras County Bank (1900), built of local rhyolite tuff stone. A butcher shop operated out of the building, 1938-1980. It returned to its original use and appearance in 1981.



*St. Basil Serbian Orthodox Church,
Angels Camp, photo by Judith Marvin*

Robert Leeper, one of the owners of the rich Utica Mine at Angels Camp, built the family house known as the Utica Mansion, in 1882. Charles D. Lane, who acquired Leeper's mining interest in 1884, purchased the house, as well, in 1888. Lane made extensive renovations in the 1890s. Its first story is constructed of foot-thick sandstone; the second is wood. Restored in the 1970s and today operated as a hotel, it features Bradbury and Bradbury wallpapers. The E. & G. Stickle General Store, Angels Hotel, Utica Mansion, Calaveras County Bank and Sam Choy Chinese Store are all listed in the National Register.

The coming of the automobile in the 20th century opened the Sierra foothills to increasing tourism, drawn by the region's history and its natural wonders, including Calaveras Big Trees, Mercer's Caverns, Natural Bridges, and Moaning Cave. Although slumbering for several decades, the area, like the rest of the foothills, has recently experienced a rapid growth in population. At present the economy is dependent upon employment in government, service industries, manufacturing, construction, tourism, and agriculture. Wine making recovered in the late 1960s, and today over forty wineries call Calaveras County home.

Judith Marvin, Historian, Foothill Resources, Ltd., Murphys, California

QUEEN ANNE HOMES ON VIEW IN SAN FRANCISCO

"The most impressive cluster of Queen Anne homes left in the City," according to Judith Lynch and Sally Woodbridge (*Victoria's Legacy*, 1978), will be showcased in the 40th annual home tour presented by Victorian Alliance of San Francisco on Sunday, October 21st from 1:00 to 5:00 pm.

This picturesque style of the 1890s will be highlighted, with its curves and bays, towers and balconies, and the whimsical ornamentation of Cranston & Keenan and other Victorian builders. Homes in this popular self-guided tour have proudly retained or regained their original Victorian luster, with beautifully detailed interiors and garden embellishments, often adapted to reflect contemporary lifestyles. At least three homes by Cranston & Keenan will be open, as well as Townsend & Wyneken's 1891 tour de force, shown here to the right.

The featured North of Panhandle neighborhood was developed soon after the creation of nearby Golden Gate Park and its Panhandle Park. Tour homes lie within a relatively flat and compact area, well served by public transportation, and best enjoyed in comfortable shoes.

Discounted advance tickets at \$30 per person, available online before October 15th, will ensure a full afternoon of touring. For further information, and to order advance tickets, see VictorianAlliance.org. Proceeds of the tour will benefit preservation and restoration projects of the Victorian Alliance Grant Program.



*Meditation Center of "Brahma Kumaris
World Spiritual Organization,"
San Francisco*

Spring Stained Glass Tour Sparks Interest



First stop on stained glass tour, St. John's Presbyterian, at Arguello and Lake. (Photo by William Kostura).

Early Saturday morning, June 2nd, saw a dedicated group of NCCSAH members and guests gather for an outstanding tour of ecclesiastical stained glass at five locations in San Francisco.

Ian Berke's enthusiastic interest in American stained glass was the inspiration for this tour. At each stop Ian gave an interesting narrative that explained the various types of glass and the glassmaking processes, and helped the audience to recognize the various types and styles of the art. With Ward Hill, he provided historical information on each church. William Kostura offered insights on the history of St. Mark's and Calvary Presbyterian, and Prof. Paul Turner spoke on the history First Unitarian Church.

The tour included a bag lunch stop at Alta Plaza Park, and at the close of the day Maggie and Ian Berke graciously hosted a reception at their Pacific Heights home, whose American decorative arts collection merits a tour all its own.

Thank you to the following people who helped to make this tour possible: Susie Moore and Rev. John Anderson at St. John's Presbyterian, Alan Nicholson at Trinity Episcopal, Carol Fox and Joe Beyer at Calvary Presbyterian, Kerry Parker at First Unitarian, and Amy Mallor and Rabbi Larry Raphael at Sherith Israel.

A mini-bus from Peninsula Tour, ably driven by Ronald, provided transportation among several of the sites.

Gold Rush Tour Itinerary

Friday, October 26, 5:00 p.m., Murphys

Dinner at Table Mountain Ranch, 961 Pennsylvania Gulch Road. The first residence on this property, erected in 1852, burned in 1870. The replacement house also succumbed to fire, and the present Queen Anne farmhouse was constructed in 1897, for Mrs. Ethel Willard Adams, a descendant of several prominent Massachusetts families. The repast will include appetizers and a chicken-in-a-barrel dinner served with Calaveras County wines.

Saturday Morning, October 27, Mokelumne Hill

Coffee, tea and pastries at the historic Leger Hotel, 8304 Main Street, in Mokelumne Hill followed by a walking tour of the town with its many mid-1850s buildings constructed of local rhyolite tuff stone and residences in a variety of architectural styles. These include the 1854 courthouse, several saloons and business enterprises. Luncheon back at the Leger Hotel.

Saturday Afternoon, Angels Camp

Walking tour through historic downtown Angels Camp with several 1850s stone commercial buildings (including the Angels Hotel, where Mark Twain heard the story that became "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"). For those adventurous types, there will be a tour of the ruins of the Gold Cliff Mine and Mill, which operated from the 1850s to shortly after World War II. Lila and Sage of Murphys, recent winner of "The Cupcake Wars" on the food channel, will cater a buffet dinner at the Hovey Winery in a c.1854 residence on Main Street.

Sunday Morning, October 28, Murphys

A self-guided walking tour of historic downtown Murphys with its 1850s Murphys Hotel and early 1860s masonry buildings; Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne homes, lodges and churches; and thirty-two wine tasting rooms. Luncheon on your own.

Sunday Afternoon, Sheep Ranch

For those who wish to stay later, there will be a tour of the historic Pioneer Hotel in Sheep Ranch, now a private retreat. The Gold Rush came to Sheep Ranch in 1868, and construction of the hotel that year was primarily to serve miners. The original 1868 structure was jacked up in 1899 for the insertion of the lower story and the surrounding two-story porches.

Subjects Of Interest

2012 San Francisco Heritage Lecture Series:

September 13 - Preserving San Francisco's Murals: Lessons from SoCal. At the Women's Bldg., 3543 18th St.

October 18 - The Modern Work of Gardner Dailey. At the Bayside Conference Room, Pier One

November 15 - Then and Now: Preservation in the Tenderloin. 220 Golden Gate Ave.

Tickets for each lecture \$8 for Heritage members, \$12 for the general public. Doors open at 5:30, lectures begin at 6:00 pm.

For more information and to purchase tickets
visit www.sfheritage.org



Calaveras County

National Preservation Conference, “Beyond Boundaries”

October 31 - November 3, Spokane, Washington.
Contact National Trust for Historic Preservation
www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npc/

California Council for the Promotion of History

32nd Annual Conference: "California on the Move",
October 18-20, 2012, Woodland, CA. Explores the
movers and the movements that exemplify and define
our state. For more information:

www.ccphhistoryaction.org/conference.html

Please use form on at right to sign up for the Gold Rush Tour and the form on the last page for membership dues.

Registration for Gold Rush Tour

[please print]

Name _____

Affiliation

Address

City/State/Zip _____

Email address

Registration: \$90 members/ \$100 nonmembers

Total Enclosed

Please make checks payable to NCCSAH and mail to:

Ward Hill
NCCSAH Gold Rush Tour
3124 Octavia Street, #102
San Francisco, CA 94123

For more information please contact Ward Hill
at whill@pacbell.net.

Cost includes dinner Friday and morning coffee, lunch and dinner Saturday. Space is limited; reserve your place now.

☐ Check box if you wish the vegetarian option for Friday's dinner.



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The mission of the NCCSAH is to further the objectives of the Society of Architectural Historians of which the Northern California Chapter is an official affiliate; promote the study and discussion of our region's architectural history and its related fields; visit significant works of architecture; and increase public awareness and appreciation of our architectural heritage. Membership is open to anyone interested in architectural history and its related fields who agrees to pay the annual dues and subscribe to the by-laws of the organization.

NCCCSAH Officers

President, Ward Hill
Vice President, Ian Berke
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Remember you do not have to be a member of the National SAH to become a member of NCCSAH

Join or Renew Now!!

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Please send your ideas or comments concerning The Newsletter to:

Don Andreini
NCCSAH Newsletter Editor
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or to renew your dues return this form
and your dues check for \$20 made out to NCCSAH
to

Ian Berke, NCCSAH
Ian Berke Real Estate
2824 Clay Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

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