

Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical SocietyVolume XIVJuly, 1966Number 4

## THE GREVE FAMILY By CECILLE VANDEL GREVE MCMILLIAN

John Frederick Wilhelm Greve, born in Hanover of German nobility, was far better known in Calaveras County as Fred Greve, Sr., the potato king of Blue Mountain.

Early in life, Fred Greve revolted against the lack of freedom in Germany. After his graduation from college at 17, his parents enrolled him in a military school to become an officer. Three times he ran away from this school, for he wished to take up agriculture, unthinkable for one of his station in life. He had spent much time following the gardener around his father's estate. The first time he ran away from the military school, they stopped him on the Switzerland bridge, the second time on the border of Belgium, and the last on the French border.

Finally the family decided to send him to America. He signed away all his rights and sailed to America when still but 17 years old. He never returned to Germany.

Grandfather Greve and his companion, a Mr. Lick, landed in Baltimore. He bought a farm in Connecticut, but soon found the ground too rocky. He had met Mary Eliza Dillon in New York. He followed her to New Orleans, where they were married. Their first child, John Frederick Wilhelm Greve, Jr., (Freddy) was born there.

Greve left his wife and son in New Orleans and crossed the plains to San Francisco, where he set up, in a tent, one of the first stores. He later built a wooden one there. In 1849, he had his wife and son brought to San Francisco by way of the Isthmus of Panama. They made the long and dangerous trip across the Isthmus on the backs of natives. Their group was attacked by hostile natives five times during the trip.

Fred Greve was a fluent linguist, master of nine languages. He soon learned about the early discoveries of gold in Mokelumne Hill from Frenchmen who traded at his store. They recruited other Frenchmen there, not realizing that he understood their language.

He sold his store in San Francisco and came to Moquelumne Hill (as it was commonly spelled at that time), and engaged in mining at Middle Bar on the river. His claim was next to that worked by Joaquin Murrietta. He made a special trip, several years later, to see the head that was supposed to be Joaquin's. He always said after



FRED GREVE, SR.

that trip, "The head was not Joaquin's, but that of one of his men."

In 1855 he moved to Glencoe, where he built one of the first quartz mills in the area on what was then known as the Vance Mine but which is now called the Norwich. This mill was a two-stamp affair. The twins, Harry Randolph Greve and Mary Ellen Greve Ham, were born while the Greves were at Glencoe.

From Glencoe Grandfather Greve moved on what is now known as the McCarty Ranch, near Rail Road Flat, which he sold to Dave McCarty in 1857. A son, Charles Edward Greve, was born here. His next venture was at Mountain Ranch, where he conducted a grocery store and butcher shop for a couple of years. At Mountain Ranch were born Aunt Lillian Eliza Greve (Lilly) and Uncle William Gamble Greve.

From Mountain Ranch he moved to Sandy Gulch where the family was enlarged by Rudolph (Rody) Greve and the twins Frank Elsworth Greve and Laura Mabel Greve Vandel Bennett. Shortly after, the Greve family moved again, to what is now known as the Rody Greve Ranch on Blue Mountain Road. Later he sold this property to his son-in-law, Leonidas Ham. Uncle Lee Ham died there.

In 1871 Grandpa Greve made his final move, to the Blue Mountain Ranch near West Point, where he spent the remainder of his life. He was truly a pioneer of Calaveras County, having lived within its borders for 56 years.

#### The Greve Family

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He was a man who took a prominent part in all affairs that were for the good and welfare of the county.

Uncle Harry Greve married Emma McCarty and made his home in Mokelumne Hill. He farmed and also owned the stage line from Valley Springs to West Point. In addition, he ran a livery stable at the Hill. There are two children still living, Myron Greve who lives at Mokelumne Hill and May Greve Main, of Stockton.

Uncle Charles Greve married Amelia Manly Parker and also resided in Mokelumne Hill. He drove the stage from there to West Point. They had five children: Vera Greve James who lives in the home place at Mokelumne Hill; Lyle (Bud) Greve who has a home at Mokelumne Hill but who is now at Stateline; Raymond Greve of Sacramento; Frank (Tot) Greve, deceased, and Charles (Babe) Greve who lives at Mokelumne Hill.

Aunt Mary Greve married Leonidas Ham. They had six children. Two died in infancy; Winnie who died from an accident as a young girl; Creighton Ham who lived for a time in Mokelumne Hill; Charles Ham and Burleigh Ham, both of whom lived in San Francisco.

Aunt Lilly Greve made her home for a time with her sister, Laura Bennett, and later moved to San Francisco. William Greve lived at West Point. Uncle Rody married Louise Phillips Porteous, and they ran the Rody Greve Ranch. Frank Greve never married.

My Mother, Laura Greve, lived in Mokelumne Hill. She married Ernest Vandel and had two children, Cecille Vandel McMillian of Bakersfield and Wanda Vandel Morris of San Jose, both still living. After my father passed away, she remarried and had one child, Bernice Bennett, by her second husband, Charles Bennett.

Uncle Fred drove the stage from Mokelumne Hill to West Point after Uncle Charlie retired. Uncles Rody and Frank were in the cattle business.

Music was a tradition of the Greve family. Uncle Fred played the violin and Rody the guitar. Mother and Aunt Mary had beautifully trained voices. Uncle Frank could say things on a violin that couldn't be put in words. He could take the top line of any classical piece of music and play it on his violin. He could recapture the sounds of the woods on his instrument.

It was the love of freedom that changed the whole life of Grandfather Greve. At his Blue Mountain home he taught the grandchildren to appreciate to the fullest our great American heritage of freedom.

### Forthcoming Meetings

August 2nd—Essay Stapling Party at the Double Springs Ranch Sept. 22nd—Valley Springs Pioneer Families Percy Hunt and Jos. White, co-chairmen Oct. 27th—Dinner Meeting—Place and Program to Be Announced Nov. 17th—Copperopolis Pioneers

Any Society member who wishes a copy of the bibliography, **California in Fact and Fiction—A Select List of Books in the Calaveras County Library,** may obtain one on request to Mary Lou Hawkley, Acting County Librarian, San Andreas.



#### THE HARRY RANDOLPH GREVE FAMILY

In addition to the activities mentioned in the accompanying article, Harry Greve (and his son Myron) owned the historic Leger Hotel in Mokelumne Hill for more than 60 years, until it recently changed hands. The Leger, which was established in the 1850's by George W. Leger as the Hotel de L'Europe, is still in operation and is a popular rendezvous for Calaveras residents and visitors alike.

#### Who Discovered Big Trees?

"Just at dark I came to an enormous fallen tree and tried to go around the top, but the place was too bushy, so I went around the butt, which seemed to me to be about twenty or twenty-five feet above my head. This I suppose to have been one of the fallen trees in the Calaveras Grove of **Sequoia gigantea** or mammoth trees, as I have since been there, and to my own satisfaction identified the lay of the land and the tree. Hence I concluded that I must have been the first white man who ever saw the **Sequoia gigantea**, of which I told Fremont when he came to California in 1844." — John Bidwell, in the Century Magazine, November, 1890.

# THE CALAVERAS COUNTY LIBRARY

#### By AURORA WEST GARDNER\*

In April, 1966, the Calaveras County Free Library in San Andreas reopened for public service after a period of extensive renovation. Although the historic old building retained its full-length iron doors and the hitching rings embedded in the mortar of its stone facade, the interior had been thoroughly modernized. The plastered walls were lined with white steel shelving, a workroom and librarian's office were partitioned off with book walls, and colorful modern tables, chairs and equipment had appeared. The circle of hand-made bricks in the concrete floor, which marked the well used in the nineteenth century, had vanished beneath wall-to-wall carpeting in a striking shade of gold tweed.

Funds from the Federal Library Services and Construction Act, which facilitated the renovation, had also been used for a thorough-going overhaul of the Library's collection and operations. After an extensive weeding of the holdings, six thousand dollars' worth of new books —largely reference and juvenile—had been added to the Library, in addition to purchases which the county regularly budgeted. This work climaxed 27 years of free library service to the people of Calaveras County.

The Supervisors of Calaveras County established a county free library under Sec. 2, County Free Library Law, August 31, 1938. The act of establishment had been preceded by years of work for library service by State Library staff workers. As early as 1917, Mrs. Eddy, the first California State library consultant, visited Calaveras to talk library. She reported that in Angels Camp she was shown a mummified frog which was said to be the original Dan'l Webster, but, although this left a lively impression on her, she was unable to stir imaginations in her cause. Possibly the issue would have remained unresolved indefinitely without the active leadership of Désiré Fricot, who took up the matter of county public library service in the thirties.

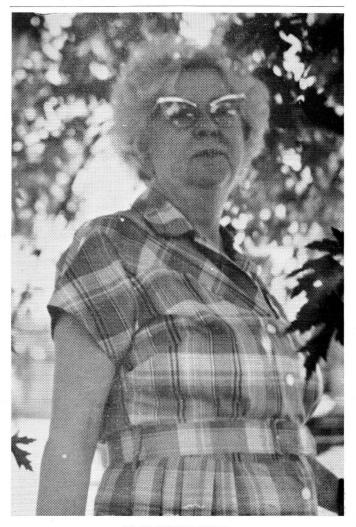
Désiré Fricot, Calaveras County's "most useful citizen," was born in Paris on April 4, 1868. His parents were residents of San Francisco. When his education was complete. Fricot settled in Grass Valley to practice his profession of mining engineering. Later moving to the Sheep Ranch mining district, in 1897 he established his home on the San Antone Ridge. This property is now the Fricot Ranch School for Boys. Fricot's home burned while he was in France during the first World War; he returned, however, to rebuild this home, and to render innumerable services to the county and the state. He founded the Boy Scout movement in the area, led in protecting the Calaveras Big Trees Grove from commercial exploitation, fought to save the mountain water rights for the mountain counties, participated in local organizations such as the Angels Boosters and the San Andreas Progressives, and was for fifteen years head of the Calaveras Chamber of Commerce.

In 1936 Fricot purchased the old American Hotel in San Andreas, completely remodeled and fire-proofed it, and converted it into an historical museum, library, and home for the Chamber of Commerce—a project carried

\*Project Librarian for Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library, 1965-66 through with funds given in his and his wife's name. Said the **Calaveras Prospect** of July 17, 1937:

"The site of the building, now known as the old Jenkins Hotel, was first constructed as a tent for the first eating place in San Andreas by Joseph Zwinge, grandfather of Sheriff Joe W. Zwinge, in 1853. The tent burned down and was replaced by canvas and lumber by Zwinge. Following a third fire, Zwinge rebuilt the structure in 1857 with stone and rock. Wm. H. Zwinge, father of the sheriff, was born on the premises and was the second American child born in Calaveras County. Following the building of the stone structure, Zwinge took in two partners, a brother, Wm. A. Zwinge, and Antone Schachten. On December 29, 1858, the trio sold the property to John Huberty, grandfather of Attorney Joseph H. Huberty of San Andreas. In 1887, the property was acquired by Wm. H. Jenkins, who conducted a hotel and eating place until approximately 20 years ago. It has been idle since that time."

The property was officially deeded to the county on



MISS ROXIE HALL Calaveras County Librarian 1939 - 1964

## The Calaveras County Library

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December 6, 1937. Fricot specified that the building be used only as Chamber of Commerce headquarters, public library and museum, either all or separately.

Meanwhile plans had been going forward to secure establishment of a publicly supported library in the county. Leading the fight alongside Fricot were the educational organizations in the county. These included the Calaveras County Teachers' Association, headed by G. J. Davis, principal at Bret Harte Union High School, and the various units of the Parent-Teachers' Association, led by Charles F. Schwoerer, superintendent of schools. In spite of indifference and opposition, these community leaders were able to present to the Supervisors in the first week of February, 1938, a petition bearing the names of approximately 1,200 Calaveras County residents, requesting a county free library. It was decided that the library question should be put on the ballot in the primary election on August 30th; and on September 3rd the Calaveras **Prospect** was able to report that:

"The question of a county free library for Calaveras County was endorsed overwhelmingly by the voters of Calaveras County at a special election held in connection with the primary. The vote on the county library was 2,349 for and 1,088 against. The supervisors had placed the matter on the ballot to learn the wish of the people in the matter."

At the first meeting of the Board in January, 1939, Miss Roxie Hall was appointed librarian. Born in 1897, Miss Hall was a native of Coos Bay, Oregon, and a graduate of the University of Oregon. After having lost her fiancé in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, Miss Hall had resolved to devote her life to a career in education. Several years of school teaching preceded her entry into library work. When she came to San Andreas, she had been librarian of Tehama County in Red Bluff, and assistant librarian in Ventura and Monterey counties. Disciplined, high-principled, and often acerbic, she set the tone of library service in Calaveras County for a quarter of a century.

During the years that she served as County Librarian, Roxie Hall was active in community affairs, although hampered by a serious hip injury sustained in a riding accident in 1945. She was a charter member of the Calaveras Chapter of the American Association of University Women, and held many offices in that group. She took part in professional associations such as the California Library Association and the American Library Association. A devoted member of St. Andrew's Church, she was active in the Altar Society and stood as godmother to many children of the parish.

Miss Hall loaned the first books from the County Library on Tuesday, January 24th, 1939. Eight students from Calaveras Union High School helped the new librarian with cataloging and arranging the books, through the spring term. When the Library moved into full service, there was a lively response to its offerings. By the end of June, 1939, 635 borrowers had registered (in a county which then numbered 6,000) and had borrowed 3,363 books, pamphlets and periodicals. Branch libraries had been set up in Angels Camp, Mokelumne Hill, Murphys and Valley Springs. Typically, these stations were in homes, stores or post offices.

During the 1939-1940 school year, eleven elementary school districts joined the County Library. Circulation for the year was about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  loans per capita. The following table sums up the growth of the collection and loans, as compared with that of the population:

	1940	1950	1960	1965
Population	8,221	9,902	10,289	11,610
Circulation	21,340	37,665	35,193	38,024
Books	4,779	16,897	28,119	30,405

The Library reached its greatest spread in 1953, when there were 15 community stations and 21 school agencies distributing library books to the county. From this point onward, the network of stations began to diminish. As the population clustered into and around the towns of San Andreas, Angels Camp and Altaville, some of the smaller communities were almost abandoned, and the branches were closed. At the same time, as the schools consolidated into larger units, they felt a growing need for library service closely keyed to their curricula. As in most California counties, school library service was eventually moved to the office of the County Superintendent (July 1, 1955). In 1958 the only incorporated city in the county, Angels Camp, withdrew from the county library system to set up its own municipal library.

A report by Miss Shirley Brother, State library consultant, in 1961, showed the County Library to be inadequate in staff and financing, but above all, in space. As branch service declined, demands on the central library had increased, but the space occupied had remained unchanged since 1939. To meet the 20-year growth needs of Calaveras County in 1961, American Library Association standards called for a library of over 13,000 square feet, but the Library at the time occupied "1,050 square feet, which included approximately 12,000 books, reading and service areas for the public, and work areas to process materials and maintain records for library service to the entire county."

Not only was the Library crowded, it was inadequately lighted and poorly ventilated. Access was through the dark and cluttered Museum, which was separated from the Library by exhibits, cases and shelving. Although the building had a street frontage of 30 feet, the Library was not visible to the passerby, and in fact was often a great surprise to the person who discovered it.

After many years of loyal and devoted service to the county, Roxie Hall died suddenly, on April 14, 1964. Until a successor could be found who met state requirements for county librarian's certification, the Board authorized her assistant, Mrs. Mary Lou Hawkley, to take charge of the department. Meanwhile, the Library Commission, which had been appointed in December, 1961, acted as an advisory group to the Board and presented a number of recommendations for improving the county's library system.

Through the joint work of the Board, the Commission, the State library consultant, Miss Florence Biller, and Mrs. Hawkley as acting County librarian, a plan of contracting for services from Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library was formulated and put into action. Under this contract the services of Mrs. Margaret Klausner Troke were enlisted as County librarian. Mrs. Troke, long a leader in the development of library service in California,

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had served as librarian of the Stockton Public Library for twenty years, and previously as County librarian of Napa County, and assistant librarian in Sacramento.

The contract made it possible for Calaveras residents to borrow directly or through San Andreas from the shelves of the Stockton Public Library, and to call on the Stockton Library staff for reference and research service.

During the fiscal year 1965-1966, \$30,000 in state and federal funds were made available to the County Library in connection with the Stockton contract. One-half of this was used as compensation to Stockton Public Library for its services. \$6,000 was expended on books to enlarge and strengthen the collection, and \$9,000 worth of furniture and equipment was purchased for the Library in San Andreas. In the course of the building renovation, the Museum was put in storage in the old county jail. Plans called for it to be displayed in the Courthouse and Hall of Records when the County offices moved to the new Government Center. The Chamber of Commerce moved to other quarters and the partitions separating it from the rest of the building were removed. The entire 2,400 square feet of the building could now be devoted to the Library. The room was painted lighting improved, a new heating system installed, and every effort made to create, as Miss Brother's report suggested, "an inviting atmosphere . . . through the use of arrangement, color and new furniture."

Completion of the building renovation was marked by the publication of a memorial bibliography by the Friends of the Library, **California in Fact and Fiction: A Select List of Books in the Calaveras County Library.** The bibliography had been compiled by members of the Calaveras Chapter of the American Association of University Women and printed by Paul Quyle, of Murphys. Civic organizations such as the A.A.U.W. and Friends of the Library have been instrumental in recent improvements in the Library's services, and are expected to provide much of the impetus and guidance for future growth, as similar organizations did for the establishment of county library service in 1938.

## **May Meeting**

"Pioneers of Mokelumne Hill" was the subject for the May meeting, under the chairmanship of Allen Peek. Mr. and Mrs. Peek, Mrs. Mary Jane Garamendi, and Mrs. Flo Peek read papers prepared by Mrs. Cecille Vandel McMillian, Mrs. Meta Hutchinson McKenzie, and Mrs. Harriet F. Solari, on the Vandel, Greve, Joiner, Kelton, Hutchinson, Peek, Solari, and Prindle families.

### **New Members**

These new members are welcomed to the Society: Mr. Phil D. Alberts, Mountain Ranch Mr. and Mrs. Raymond E. Neilsen, San Andreas Mr. and Mrs. Bryan Miller, Murphys Mrs. F. J. Solinsky, Jr., San Francisco Mr and Mrs. Stephen Farbotnik, Vallecito Mrs. Helen Zumwalt, San Francisco Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rosenthal, Mokelumne Hill Mabel McKevitt, Murphys

# SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTES

## **County Historical Landmarks Committee**

The Board of Supervisors recently appointed members to the newly-created Calaveras County Historical Landmarks Committee. George Poore was elected chairman of the group, with Ken Castro, vice chairman, and Sadie Hunt, secretary. One of the first tasks of this committee will be to supervise the reestablishment of the County Museum in the old Court House and Hall of Records. May 1st, 1967, has been set as the date for the museum reopening. The creation of this committee testifies to the growing awareness of our supervisors of the county's responsibility in preserving landmarks, marking sites of historical importance, and "hanging on to our heritage."

### **June Meeting**

Mrs. Ruby Taylor, substituting for Harry Buchanan, presented a number of short papers on Rail Road Flat pioneer families. Miss Linda Phelps led off the program with her story of Mary Ann Gauchet Seeman. Mrs. Taylor followed with historical material on the David McCarty, Louis Sandoz, Abraham Pickering, John Doe, Erastus Houston, Edwin Taylor, J. B. Guillemin, Armand Laidet, Orion Sherman Ames, Swen Magnus Danielson, Donald McGary and James Day families. These were compiled by Mary Sandoz, Nellie Seeman, Francis Guillemin, Geraldine Wells, Beulah Yount, Tim Murphy, Daisy Knight, Myrtle Rader, Effie Schaad, Myron Greve, and Carrie McGary Ivans.

The continued popularity of the current Society project of compiling histories of the pioneer and older families of the county calls for additional follow-up meetings on each of the principal communities. Many of the wellknown families who came to Calaveras in the early days have yet to be written up. The schedule of these meetings will appear in **Las Calaveras**. Those wishing to participate in compiling family histories should get in touch with the program chairman in their area.

# **Quarterly Dinner Meeting**

As has been the tradition in recent years, the April dinner was held at Mountain Ranch at the Community Hall. After a fine old-fashioned Italian-style meal prepared under the supervision of Mrs. Norbert Mudd, the prize-winning essays were read by their authors, and prizes and honorable mention certificates presented before a gathering of some 68 members and guests. Mrs. Paul Lewis concluded the program by reading a biographical sketch of Clorinda Domenghini, written by David Bennett.

The prize winning essays were as follows:

#### High School Division

1st: "Morton Avery," by Jacque Chandler.

2nd: "The Man in the Blue Overalls," by Ed Weikum. Honorable Mention: "The Legends of Gus Butler," by Roxanne Miller.

#### Elementary School Division

1st: "Mr. Charles W. Neilsen," by Brenda Burton. 2nd: "John Donnallan," by Roger Shipp.

Honorable Mention: "The Shannon Family," by Bente Christensen.

# OFFICERS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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1st Vice President	
2nd Vice President	Albert E. Gross, Murphys
Secretary	Mrs. Sadie Hunt, Valley Springs
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Las Calaveras is published quarterly by the Calaveras County Historical Society. Individual memberships (\$4.00 a year), Family (\$6.00) and Junior memberships (\$1.00) include subscription to Las Calaveras. Non-members may obtain copies of Las Calaveras from the Secretary. The original historical material in this bulletin is not copyrighted and anyone is invited to use it. Mention of the source will be appreciated.

The Calaveras County Historical Society, a non-profit corporation, meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Grange Hall in San Andreas—except for dinner meetings which are held each quarter at different places in the county.

#### EDITORIAL

The recent renovation and reorganization of the County Library no doubt brings back memories to many of our members of a remarkable man, Désiré Fricot. Highlights of his long and busy career are briefly mentioned in Mrs. Gardner's article in this issue.

Intelligent, well educated, and possessed of a highly cultured French background, Fricot knew only too well of the knowledge and entertainment to be found in books. His own personal library was extensive. In his later years he wished to help his fellow Calaverans share the lifelong pleasure that he found in books. With his Old World heritage, he fully recognized, also, the importance of the preservation of our own brief heritage here in the Mother Lode country. Few persons have been more concerned than he with the future of the community of which he was so much a part. The Fricot Building stands today as a monument to his beliefs and to his hopes for the future.

As we enjoy our improved and rejuvenated County Library, we should give thanks to Désiré Fricot for the service he rendered us more than a quarter century ago. And in his memory, we should continue in the future to improve this very important cultural center of our community.

## **Annual Dues**

Our secretary, Sadie Hunt, wishes to remind members that annual dues are payable as of July 1st.

## **President's Message**

I deeply appreciate the honor of my reelection as president of our Society, and I am looking forward to a busy and interesting year in Calaveras historical work.

The membership of any organization is its life blood. I would like to urge all of you to make known the aims and purposes of the Calaveras County Historical Society to those Calaverans and friends of the county that might enjoy membership in this group. We need more active members for help on current projects and we need supporting members who may not be able to or care to enter into activities, but who, with their dues, provide the financial support for publications and other parts of our program.

I have been gratified by the number of new members this past year and hope that through the efforts of all of us, this trend will continue. We now have some 197 members, a substantial number of whom are from outside the county, ranging from Costa Mesa in Orange County in the south to Alleghany, Sierra County, in the north.

## Annual Meeting—California Conference

Ethelyn and Coke Wood were among those 250 historians attending the 12th annual meeting of the Conference of California Historical Societies at Santa Barbara on June 16-18. The Woods reported that the Conference now has 126 society members and 130 associate members.

Mr. Edwin Gledhill, director of the Santa Barbara Museum, was chosen president for the coming year, and Dr. Albert Shumate as vice president. Dr. Coke Wood was reelected for the 13th consecutive year executive-secretary, and Mrs. Beulah Linnell, of the Hayward Historical Association, was also reelected as treasurer.

Mrs. Ruth Eproson, president of the Tuolumne County Historical Society, was elected regional vice president for the Mother Lode societies (Mariposa, Tuolumne, Calaveras and Amador), replacing retiring vice president Mrs. Evelyn Garbarini.

Three nationally prominent speakers highlighted the program. Father Maynard Geiger, the greatest living authority on the Spanish mission system and biographer of Father Junipero Serra, gave the keynote address, urging the delegates to preserve their heritage from destruction by bulldozer, progress, freeway, and subdivision.

Mr. Earle Newton, director of the St. Augustine National Park, described the work of restoration in this oldest city in the United States. Mr. Jacob Morrison told of his work in preserving the Vieux Carré, old town section of New Orleans, and gave a history of the efforts to write legislation and ordinances that would provide for the restoration and preservation of historically significant buildings and areas.

The by-laws were amended to set up a committee to obtain grants to assist in the creation of the Rockwell D. Hunt Young Historians Conference which would help organize young historian clubs wherever possible throughout the state. The 1967 annual meeting was scheduled to be held at Oroville with the Butte County Historical Society as host.

Don't forget to go to the Cornerstone Ceremony at the new Government Center, San Andreas, on August 20th.