

Golden Nuggets

April 2010

Membership Meeting
Tuesday April 27, 7:00 PM
Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society
5380 Elvas Avenue, Sacramento

Dan Carmichael
Presented by Susan Skinner

Susan Maxwell Skinner has dedicated years to photographing that which is beautiful, eccentric and historical in Carmichael. She believes small American towns should be cherished for their reflection -- in Norman Rockwell style -- of the changing face of Americana. In 2008, she served on the Sacramento History and Science Commission. The Rancho Del Paso Historical Society counts the author a valued member.

But Carmichael has no historical organization. A one-woman society, Susan took on research into the community's mysterious founder, Daniel Carmichael. The native Georgian's achievements and failures went far beyond the founding of a colony and prominence in early Sacramento politics. He made millions but died in obscurity, a pauper. Dismayed by lack of knowledge about his life, Susan has laboriously uncovered chunks of the fragmented Danny Carmichael jigsaw. Her search has taken her to Georgia and Bakersfield, downtown Sacramento, Lodi and San Francisco.

Indicative of the community's esteem for one volunteer, the contents of a time capsule buried on Carmichael's centenary included a book, newspaper articles, postcards and a "Carmichael" song written by Susan. Her book *Carmichael- Americana on the Move* won state-wide awards for a unique vision of this Sacramento County colony.

Although the author has discovered a wealth of unpublished photos and artifacts such as Daniel's gold walking cane and fob watch, her quest continues. Local historians who wish to share the story of Daniel Carmichael's namesake colony and the author's recent discoveries regarding the Great Man of Mystery should join us for Susan Maxwell Skinner's lecture. It will be illustrated by pictures, artifacts and - perhaps - a song.

Susan's Carmichael *Americana* book and her *Princess Diana Reminiscence Diana - Memory of a Rose* will be available for signing.



Dan Carmichael

Founded Carmichael, California

Notes from the President

By Patricia Turse

We've had a changing of hats at SCHS (again). I've swapped places with William Burg, who is going to continue editing the Nuggets (published on a bimonthly basis) while I take a turn as President. The intent is to give Bill more time to finish his thesis and survive a temporarily increased workload at his day job. It will also give him a chance to get more experience with publications, a long-term interest. He's not going anywhere and has promised to follow up on all the projects he started. I'm just hoping to help keep the ship afloat by trying to handle some of the day to day organizational aspects.

The SCHS *Golden Notes* began in June 1954 with a reprint of an 1853 letter from Mark Hopkins describing the promising growth of Sacramento to a family friend in New York state. That short city overview (which ends with a few jibes at the young city's mayor) is downloadable at www.sachistoricalociety.org, along with other out-of-print issues. In 2001, the *Notes* were replaced by the *Journal of Sacramento History*, a superb color publication, ultimately too costly to produce regularly.

We're excited about resuming the quarterly *Notes* and pleased with the sales of *Sacramento's Breweries*, which re-launched the series. The next publication will be produced by the Center for Sacramento History with help from SCHS and will be on Sacramento's Underground and Hollow Sidewalks.

Awards Night was a very enjoyable evening. We had 65 people attending, among them former mayor Heather Fargo, who introduced photographers Tom and Sally Myers, recipients of the Special Achievement Award. The mayor wrote the introduction to the Myers' *Sacramento Impressions* book and is well acquainted with their contributions to the photo documentary history of this area. The awards recipients' contributions were inspiring, as usual. Speaker Carlos Alcala hit just the right blend of humor and fact in his "Sacramento Street Whys" presentation. The food from Vallejo's was memorable. Oh, that molé!

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORY DAY 2010

SCHS Special Award Winners

By Dr. Bob LaPerriere

350 Sacramento County students from grade 6-12 participated in County History Day on March 13th, hoping to be chosen to progress to State finals and then National competition. Projects include exhibits, papers, documentaries, performances and websites. In California, fourth and fifth graders may also compete in a poster category. Students are required to follow a theme which changes yearly. Innovation was the selected topic for this year's competition.

In addition to the award for History Day, various organizations give "Special Awards," a certificate and cash gift, in order to stimulate topics beyond the traditional school textbooks. The Sacramento County Historical Society gives an award and a honorable mention for the best projects related to Sacramento History. This year's award went to Caitlin De-Morales from St. Francis High School for her paper on "*Hydraulic Mining: The Hydraulic Monitor*" which examined the dangers and consequences of such mining. The Honorable Mention went to Changchang Liu from St. Francis High School for her paper on "*A Study of the Contribution of the Discovery of Gold on the Improvement of Chinese Immigrant's Rights*". This paper explored the negative and positive effects and showed a gradual improvement of rights over the long term.

Sacramento County Historical Society

2010-2011 Board of Directors

President: Patricia Turse

Vice President: William Burg

Corresponding Secretary: Illa Collin

Treasurer: Dan Winkelman

History Consortium: Dr. Bob LaPerrière

Members-at-Large

Shelly Atkinson, Clare Ellis, Tom Herzog, Carolyn Schimandle, Greg Voelm, Lisa Wire

Membership: Jenan Saunders

GOLDEN NUGGETS

Published bimonthly

William Burg, Editorial & Layout

Email: info@sachistoricalociety.org

Contributions Deadline: 20th of prior month

The Capital City Wheelmen By William Burg



Cycling in Sacramento is a well-established way of getting around, and has been for over a century. The invention of the safety bicycle in the 1880s, along with the electric streetcar, revolutionized the way that people traveled in cities. Bicycle enthusiasts were quick to form clubs, beginning in 1880 in Rhode Island, where the League of American Wheelmen was formed. Sacramento's chapter, the Capital City Wheelmen, was formed on June 25, 1886.

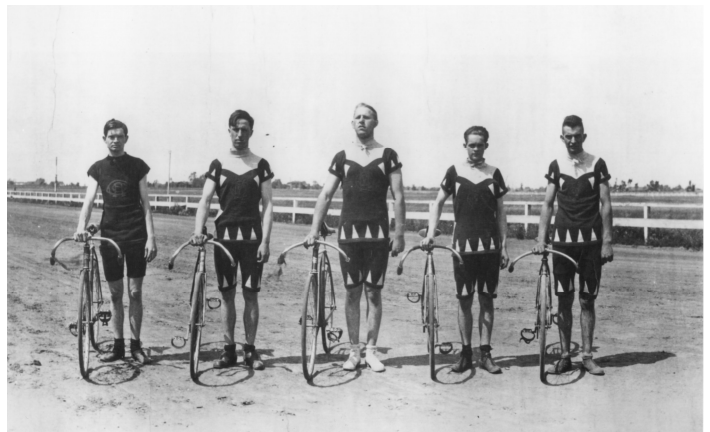
The Wheelmen organized group rides into the country, known as "Club Runs," and competitive events against other cycling clubs. Races were often held on public tracks like the one at Sacramento's Agricultural Park, the state fairgrounds site in the neighborhood now known as Boulevard Park. The Wheelmen also participated in long-distance races between cities, like the 1892 relay race between the Sacramento and Stockton teams. The Stockton team started from Sacramento with a copy of the Daily Record-Union, while the Sacramento team started from Stockton with a copy of the Stockton Mail. Sacramento won the race by eleven minutes.

In 1894, a group of Wheelmen formed their own elite group, the Capital City Scorchers. Members were required to ride over eighteen miles per hour, and membership was limited to ten people. They wore their own club emblem, a winged number 10.

The Wheelmen were also a political organization, advocating for cyclists' rights. Sacramento's streets of the 1880s were mostly of dirt or gravel, muddy in winter and dusty in summer. The Wheelmen advocated road improvement to provide better surfaces for bicycle riding. By the summer of 1896, they helped to create a cycling path, paved with cinders and decomposed granite, between Sacramento and Folsom. This road was funded by private subscription and member contributions.

In response to a city ordinance which required riders to use a lantern, bell or horn at night, the Wheelmen protested by parading through city streets carrying railroad lanterns, ringing cow bells, and blowing off-key horns. When Sacramento improved its street surfaces with asphalt pavement in 1895, the Wheelmen celebrated with a "Lantern Parade." Carrying fancy lanterns through the streets, the Wheelmen held a more dignified procession than their earlier protest ride. They also participated in other city parades, including the 4th of July and the famed 1895 Carnival of Lights.

In the early 20th century, interest in motorized vehicles like cars and motorcycles eclipsed public interest in the bicycle, but in 1974 Sacramento cyclist Doug Klein started another "Wheelmen" club that still survives today. The spirit of the original Wheelmen can still be found in Sacramento, at competitive cycling events, in the voices of cycling advocates calling for better bicycle lanes and paths, or in the hum of bicycles along Sacramento's bike trails and streets.



The Wheelmen at the California State Fairgrounds racetrack, circa 1918.

Out & About

Date	Time	Event	Place & Contact
Tuesday April 27	7:00 PM	SCHS General Membership Meeting: Dan Carmichael, founder of Carmichael Presented by Susan Skinner	Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building 5380 Elvas Avenue, Sacramento
Friday May 7	1:00 PM	SCHS Board Meeting All members welcome	Center for Sacramento History 551 Sequoia Pacific Boulevard Sacramento
Tuesday May 25	7:00 PM	SCHS General Membership Meeting: Sacramento's Underground Sidewalks Presented by Heather Downey	Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Building 5380 Elvas Avenue, Sacramento
Friday June 4	1:00 PM	SCHS Board Meeting All members welcome	Center for Sacramento History 551 Sequoia Pacific Boulevard Sacramento

SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 160065
Sacramento, California 95816-0065
Message phone: 916-443-6265
www.sachistoricalociety.org

Non-Profit Org
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 674 Sacra-
mento, CA

Please deliver by April 19, 2010