

Golden Nuggets

SACRAMENTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Sacramento Historical Society Presents David Stuart

Native Peoples of the Sacramento Region: Prehistory and Early History

Tuesday, September 24 7:00 PM (Doors Open 6:30)

Columbus Hall, 5961 Newman Court, Sacramento

We invite you to a compelling program by guest speaker David Stuart, anthropologist and former director of the Sacramento (now Powerhouse) Science Center, Sacramento History Museum, and the San Joaquin County History Museum. He will present an illustrated lecture summarizing the remarkable history of the American Indians who have lived in what is now the Sacramento region for more than 10,000 years.

In this California heartland, the Native peoples developed rich cultures that spread into the Bay Area and the Sierra foothills. Stuart will address some of the common stereotypes about the cultures of the many Nisenan (southern Maidu)-speaking nations whose homelands are along the Yuba, Bear, Feather, Sacramento, and American Rivers; the many plains Miwok-speaking nations along the Cosumnes, Mokelumne, and Sacramento Rivers; and, to a lesser extent, the northern Yokuts-speaking nations in the Calaveras, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin River areas.

Stuart will also provide highlights of early California history that tell the stories of the California Indians as well as answer questions about the cultures of Native peoples from the region. Don't forget to [RSVP](#) today to reserve your seat for this fascinating program.

About David Stuart: A fourth-generation native of the California heartland, David Stuart began his interest in California Indians and history as a seasonal employee at Caswell Memorial State Park on the lower Stanislaus River. He studied anthropology at Fresno State and the University of Colorado, served as the first Assistant State Archaeologist of Colorado, and was a cultural resources specialist and planner for the National Park Service. Stuart developed museums and programs for the City of Ventura before coming to Sacramento in 1988. He lives in the Pocket neighborhood.

A Legacy in Brick and Iron: Sacramento's Central & Southern Pacific Railroad Shops

by Mary A. Helmich with Kevin V. Bunker



Welding supplies being driven to their destination by a female employee of the Sacramento Shops' Stores Department during World War II.

Photo by David L. Joslyn. Courtesy Shirley L. Burman Collection

Provided below are selected excerpts from the new book, [A Legacy in Brick and Iron: Sacramento's Central and Southern Pacific Railroad Shops](#). Nine years in the making, the book provides a comprehensive review of the development of the historic Sacramento railroad shops initially constructed by the Central Pacific Railroad and then fully developed by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

She's Been Working on the Railroad

Women originally could not find employment at the Sacramento Shops. It was an all-male work force, typical of most industrial complexes in the 19th century. Time would change that, but it would require a couple of World Wars in the 20th century and ensuing labor shortages caused by male enlistments and drafts to make railroad management realize women really had the capabilities required

(continued on page 2)



To support the Sacramento Shops' recycling program, a woman sorts and organizes washers for their reuse in 1917.

Courtesy California State Railroad Museum

would evolve with time. Women coming from railroad families often were given priority in hiring, as it was thought they would better understand the operations. An indicator of the respect women had earned in the Shops was reflected in a 1921 union agreement, which considered them equal to men and to receive the same pay rate for the same job. As women had only gained the right to vote in 1920, this was a significant recognition of their capabilities.

Unlike previous generations of female railroad workers, during World War II women had a wider array of assignments, including many occupations formerly restricted to them. Some obtained skilled niches in the Shops, excelling at especially meticulous work, as in the Pattern, Upholstery and Mechanical Departments or the Railroad Hospital, where attentions to detail were especially critical. Others found work as painters, machinery operators, riveters, locomotive and coach cleaners, on laundry and commissary crews, or worked at locomotive and car construction or maintenance. In the process many women won the appreciation and respect of fellow employees for jobs well done.

During World War II, the tag "Railroadette" was applied to women working in railroad shops, just as "Rosie, the Riveter" became synonymous with female shipyard employees. In January 1943 the *Southern Pacific Bulletin* reported that in the previous year, 2,000 Rail-

for employment in the Shops.

At first tasks assigned to women in World War I were not very challenging—car and locomotive clean-

ing, sorting scrap or organizing railroad stores, but this

roadettes held jobs at the Sacramento Shops. While the quality of their work was high and they cooperated well with their male counterparts, many left the Shops at war's end (some to marry other employees), but a few remained on the payroll. To make room for returning soldiers after 1945, but having less seniority, women were transferred by the Company to mostly "pink collar" positions, as office clerks or secretaries. The historical evidence is clear that females employed in the railroad trades during the war years were proud of their work, their skills, and their paychecks.

Getting employment at the Shops was not easy. And some claimed after the war, "women never desired to secure those types of jobs." One was told after she applied for work at the Shops in the early 1950s, the position "wasn't open to women" even though she had the mechanical experience from her wartime position at a shipyard. She noted that at the time "they weren't taking women for mechanical at all." After her husband, a railroad employee, intervened on her behalf, she secured the job. While women were not accepted as apprentices after the War, they would again gain positions in heavy industry with the recognition of women's rights in the 1970s. Former male employees recalled seeing or working with women at the Shops as machinists, electricians, or as a boilermaker's apprentice, like one seen in a 1978 issue of the *Southern Pacific Bulletin*.

Railroad Dining Cars

Initially train travelers packed their own meals or disembarked for 20 minutes at stations for quick refreshments before continuing their journeys. (On Front Street in Sacramento, CPRR's Silver Palace was once an early efficiency diner.) Technological advances made food service on trains possible by the late 1870s and a decade later, dining cars became part of the long-distance travel experience. Enjoying a meal prepared to order while viewing an ever-changing landscape held great appeal.

Dining cars, however, were a challenge—expensive to build and furnish and to manage when on the move. Meats and produce had to be kept cold and meals served



All seats were filled when this SP dining car was photographed in the 1920s.

Courtesy Union Pacific

Excerpts from *A Legacy in Brick and Iron* (continued from page 2)

hot. Breakfasts, lunches and dinners were handled by a small, able staff of cooks, waiters and a steward, who were mostly African American. Consider the efficient, narrow galley kitchen for cooking, the compact pantry stocked with perishables, and the dining room set with chairs, tables, tablecloths, napkins, crockery, glassware, silver service, flatware, and menus—most produced or maintained at the Sacramento Shops.

Long before today's "Farm to Fork" movement, fresh fruits and vegetables were touted on Southern Pacific's dining car menus to promote Western agriculture. In the late winter months, passengers could enjoy: Pismo Valley green peas, Half Moon Bay artichokes, Sacramento River Delta asparagus, Coachella string beans, Imperial Valley eggplants, Watsonville berries, Riverside oranges, Oregon cabbages and cauliflower, and Arizona lettuce. From the 1920s well into the 1940s, Southern Pacific paid attention to the quality and freshness of the produce it served, considering them valuable Company investments.

From Railroad Ambassador to Museum Icon

In 1863 Danforth, Cooke & Company of Paterson, New Jersey produced the *C.P. HUNTINGTON*, a small locomotive that would become a symbol for the new railroad and later a museum. It had one driving axle and really was too small to be of much use in railroad construction. Nevertheless the Central Pacific Railroad had to settle for what was available in the midst of the Civil War. The 4-2-4T locomotive was 29 feet long, had 54-inch drivers and 11 x 15-inch cylinders, weighed 39,000 pounds and, with 125-pounds of boiler pressure, could produce about 3,600 pounds of tractive effort.

Disassembled and shipped aboard the *MARY ROBINSON* for the long 19,000-mile voyage from New York around Cape Horn to San Francisco, it arrived on 12 March 1864 with another CPRR locomotive, the *T.D.*



The newly-built Castle Craggs Dining Car sits on the Sacramento Shops' transfer table.

Courtesy California State Railroad Museum

Judah. The river steamer *Pat* transported both up river to Sacramento, where they were readied for service. The Central Pacific Railroad's new No. 3 *C.P. HUNTINGTON* and its shipmate No. 4 *T.D. JUDAH* proved too light for most transcontinental railroad construction duties, so were reassigned to other duties. (No. 4 was scrapped in 1912.)

Transferred in 1871 by the Associates to the newly-organized Southern Pacific, the *C.P. HUNTINGTON* became SP's locomotive No. 1. It was rebuilt several times over the years, including after a head-on collision in 1872 that nearly destroyed it. The diminutive engine worked on construction projects around San Jose and Hollister, then serviced in Oakland and the San Francisco Bay areas, concluding its "career" burning weeds to clear tracks in Sacramento. However, this would not be the end of this little locomotive's story.

For many years the *C.P. HUNTINGTON* made numerous notable appearances as Southern Pacific Co.'s "ambassador," then was cared for by the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, before becoming the beloved icon of the California State Railroad Museum.



Some of the California State Railroad Museum's prized Southern Pacific locomotives: Cab Forward No. 4294, SP prototype GRIP II diesel 7400, and SP No. 1 *C.P. HUNTINGTON* photographed in the Sacramento Shops' yard.

Courtesy Shirley Burman, photographer

Before display at the California State Railroad Museum in 1981, the *C.P. HUNTINGTON* was carefully restored at the Sacramento Locomotive Works' Unit Shop (formerly the Sacramento Shops) to reflect its appearance at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Today it remains the sole-surviving standard-gauge 4-2-4T in the United States, and is the second oldest locomotive owned by the Museum.

Now available for purchase through the [Sacramento Historical Society website](#).



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OUT & ABOUT

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION & OTHER INFO
Sep 15	10 AM To 4 PM	<i>Preservation Sacramento Historic Home Tour Featuring the Woodlake Neighborhood</i> Noted for its Tudor Revival cottages and mature trees, Woodlake is tucked between Highway 160 and Arden Way. North Sacramento Land Company founder Carl Johnston, an unabashed Anglophile, developed Woodlake in the 1920s.	Woodlake Neighborhood www.preservationsacramento.org \$30 in advance, \$35 day of event
Sep 24	7 PM Doors open 6:30 PM	<i>Native Peoples of the Sacramento Region: Prehistory and Early History</i> Anthropologist David Stuart shares the remarkable history of the American Indians who lived in what is now the Sacramento Region for more than 10,000 years. His illustrated lecture will elaborate on their rich culture as well as detail early California history from the California Indian perspective.	Columbus Hall 5961 Newman Ct, Sacramento www.sachistoricalsociety.org Members free, Non-members \$5
Oct 11-26	Varies	<i>Ghost Tours: Murders, Mayhem & Tragedy</i> Witness villainy, treachery, and murder most foul- all true stories wrenched from headlines more than 150 years ago. Tours take place 6 times nightly Friday and Saturday evenings. Not recommended for children under 8.	Sacramento History Museum 101 I St, Sacramento www.sachistorymuseum.org \$18 per person