



*Chico Heritage Association—CHA—since 1981 a volunteer not-for-profit
Organization dedicated to the preservation of Chico's cultural heritage*

FEBRUARY 2018

▪ **CHICO HERITAGE ASSOCIATION** ▪

CHA ANNUAL MEETING

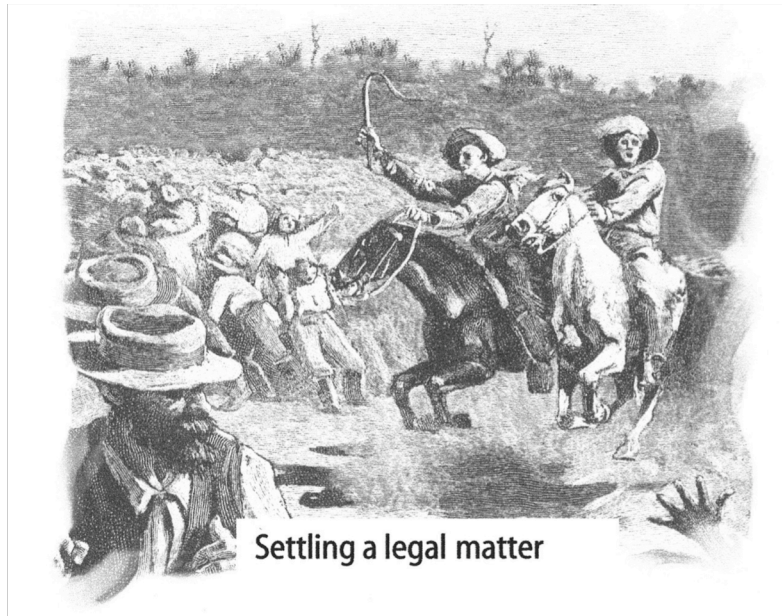
2PM Sunday March 4, 2018

1200 Park Ave. at West 13th St.

PROGRAM:

THROUGH THE LENS OF THE WRIGHT-PATRICK HOUSE

A glimpse into the earliest days of Butte County



Settling a legal matter

Why is the preservation of the Wright-Patrick House so important to our understanding of local history? Come to our annual meeting and discover how this house and its occupants have helped enrich our knowledge of life in Butte County from the Gold Rush to the 1950s. Speaker Adrienne Pustejovsky will share some of the many interesting surprises uncovered by the work of the Chico Heritage Association in its attempts to stabilize the house and document its colorful story.

CONTINUING THANK YOUS

Since our last newsletter went out before our fundraising campaign's deadline, and not all names were available at that time, we are adding the following names:

Verda MacKay, Barbara Rupp, Richard Macias

So our total for the entire campaign was a whopping **\$6,265!**

Also our yard sale in October produced another \$1,000 to help out with our mission.

Chico 1877-78

What was Chico like in 1877-78? The answer to this question can at least partially be found by reading the newspapers of that era.

One of the first things that stands out for these years is the strong anti-Chinese feelings that were felt in at least a portion of the community and the divisiveness that these generated.

Two events highlight these. One was the burning of a barn belonging to Melissa Virginia Wright Patrick. The other was the murder of five Chinese workers at a ranch just east of the town of Chico. The two events were related because some of the same men were responsible for both.

Melissa Patrick, in 1877, was the widow of William Garrison Patrick. She and William Garrison had come to California in 1858, following her brother who had come in 1849. Thomas Shelton Wright had come to California for the gold rush and after having made some money mining at Bidwell's Bar with John Bidwell had purchased land just south of John Bidwell's new town of Chico. When he returned to his native Missouri in 1858, he persuaded his sister, Melissa and her family, to join him on the return trip. When Thomas Shelton died in 1863, Melissa inherited some of his property. By 1877 she was widowed and living there with her three youngest children. Because she employed Chinese workers on her farm, she was targeted. Her barn was burned. This event occurred on March 8 of 1877.

About a week later an even more shocking event occurred. Some of the same young men who had targeted Melissa because of her farm workers, visited a farm on the Eastern outskirts of Chico, just off of Humboldt Road. There on a farm belonging to a man named Christian Lemm, five Chinese workers were murdered. Five of the perpetrators were eventually tried, convicted of second degree murder and served time in state prison.

While the organization was never directly linked to these events, operating openly in Chico in this year was an organization called the Order of Caucasians. They advocated for the employment of white workers rather than the Chinese.

Threats were made against several Chico businessmen including, John Bidwell, saying that if their Chinese workers were not discharged that they would also be targeted. In addition to Bidwell, at least two of the hotels in Chico were named in notes from 'the committee.' Chico Sash company, later in that year, did execute a plan whereby all of its Chinese workers were replaced with white men.

If anyone with a strong interest in history has not discovered the treasure trove of historical information available in old newspapers, you have missed a real treat. Chico newspapers can be found by going to the Meriam Library website. From the home page follow the quick link to newspapers, go to historical newspapers. Two links there provide valuable information. The Butte County Newspaper link will take you to a selection of local papers between the 1850s and the 1920s. Another useful link is the California Digital Newspapers. While these are for major cities, some contain a remarkable lot of Chico news and have the advantages of having a search feature which works better than that in the local papers.

But all was not negative, the newspapers give a picture of a town (population about 4,000) with a thriving social scene. The newspapers are filled with comments about new businesses opening, merchants going below (Sacramento and San Francisco) for new merchandise. The topics of sermons at churches regularly made the news as did reports of injuries at the various businesses, especially the mills where accidents with saw blades must have been a fairly common occurrence; as were incidents involving carriages or wagons, or injuries inflicted in encounters with horses or mules.

The local news is dotted with references to visitors in town. If a former resident stopped in for a visit, the editor might make a note, If a merchant had received a new shipment of goods you could read about it. The meetings of the town council and of the County Board of Supervisors were covered in detail, including lists of expenditures. School honor rolls were given. Occasionally the papers noted items lost or found, usually with the notice that the item could be claimed or information given at the newspaper office.

There were occasional jokes: What is the grasshopper's favorite hymn? "This wheat by and by."

The house that Melissa Patrick inherited from her brother, is what is presently known as the Wright-Patrick house. Yes, built in 1852, it's still standing. For more than ten years, CHA has invested time and resources into preserving this historic treasure for the community. The property is in private ownership and CHA continues to try to reach a solution which would allow for the preservation of the house and make it accessible to members of the community.

Here is a further selection of items found in newspapers from 1877 and 1878.

Starting with one final item references the problems mentioned on the other side of this insert.

Denial

“The following has been handed us for publication. It was telegraphed to the press below, and will probably appear in the papers received this evening.

The people of Chico are amazed at the brazen misrepresentatives put forth by P. S. Dorney and others, to account for the assassination of the Chinese near this place. There is not the least iota of truth in the assertion that white men were discharged in a sash and blind factory here and chinamen put in their places. So far as known, no one anywhere has discharged white men to make places for Chinese. At the outrages committed in this vicinity were as, Mr. Dorney admits, directly or indirectly brought about by Caucasian influences, no one can doubt. Neither is there excuse on the score of poverty or want of employment. Since the Caucasians here became bold and defiant many idlers, by invitation or attraction, crowd our streets. Their presence bodes no good. Cases of real want are rare but when known they received immediate attention from the Chico Relief Society.”

John Bidwell
Of Citizens' Executive Committee

On lighter notes:

A Handy Wheelbarrow

“Officer Goodrich had the occasion to take a drunken man, late last night, to the city Prison, but as the liquor he had imbibed made him limber, the officer placed the inebriate on Clark & Trimble's wheel-barrow, and wheeled him to the lock up. He paid his fine this morning.”

Mite Society

“The Ladies Mite Society will meet this Monday evening at the residence of Mrs. W Z. King. Division second will furnish refreshments.”

(Not sure just what the Mite Society was, but almost every paper included either a notice of a future meeting or a report of a past one.)

A Huge Potato

“Louie Reese brought up from his ranch last evening a huge potato, monstrous in size and worthy of mention. There seems to be eleven small potatoes attached to a main body, the mass is solid and weighs between three and four pounds.”

(Large farm products seemed newsworthy. Another article gave the dimensions of a large lemon and still another of a giant egg.)

Each edition included a list of Deaths, Births and Marriages.

Deaths

PICKNELL - At Butte City, Colusa county, Nov. 17, Wat Picknell, deceased. Was formerly a resident of this county, having resided at Cherokee Flat.

CHILDERS - Near Butte City, November 23. J. Childers, aged 71 years

ELMORE Near Chico, November 25, Nora Elmore, age 8 years.

ELMORE - Near Chico, November 21, Georgie, son ***(actually daughter)*** of Mrs. Elmore, aged 3 years and 6 mo.

Sad Amiction *(word cannot be read)*

“We are sorry to have to record under the appropriate heading, another death in the Elmore family, living near Edgar Slough. Nora, a beautiful child of eight years, died this morning, making the third bereavement the family has suffered within eight days. Diphtheria is a terrible scourge, and seems to baffle the best of medical skill.”

The above notices were the initial cause of the search of early newspapers. A scrap of paper with the death notices was part of a collection of material recently acquired at the Patrick Ranch Museum. Research determined that the three children in the Elmore family were nieces of Mrs. Cornelius Bryant. Since the Bryant's home was under construction about this time and George Elmore, father of these children was a brick-maker and mason, the search was begun in hopes of showing that he was involved in the construction of the home. No evidence of this has been found.

In a column called Local Briefs - not all from the same edition.

“The individual who entered the A. M. E. Church and stole the curtains, is politely asked to return them and he will be remembered in the prayers of the congregation.”

“The Marshalls are preparing the list of delinquent taxpayers for publication. Those who wish to save further costs better pay and immediately, and keep their names off the list.”

“E. Knapp is building a two-story brick house at the Corner of Third and Ivy.”

“24 to be initiated into the Order of Caucasians.”

Chico has the best hotel accommodations of any town its size in the state.”

“J. V. Flint lost his pocket ledger. Will pay a reward for its return.”

“Abrams and Sweeney are pushing the Bryant home along with great rapidity.” ***(April 2, 1877)***

This insert prepared by Margaret Siemsen

CHICO HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP - FEBRUARY, 2018

Memberships are due at the first of the calendar year, or if you wish, you may pay in any of the last three months of the preceding year for the following year. Our membership dues and donations provide our day to day expenses, which include our office rent, telephone, insurance, newsletter printing and mailing, photocopying and photography for research. We receive **NO** government funds, and have no paid staff.

Please help us save Chico's heritage by your membership and/or donations. Simply fill out and mail this form to:

Chico Heritage Association, P.O. Box 3517, Chico, CA 95927

Name _____ new member: _____ or renewal: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

_____ \$20 Individual _____ \$35 Family _____ \$50 Supporting _____ \$100 or more-Patron

Please note if any **ADDITIONAL** donation is for The General Fund _____ or Other _____

ITEMS FOR SALE AT THE OFFICE

Oil paintings of local "Storybook" homes
(8x8) by local artist - \$45

Historic Chico scenes on refrigerator magnets - \$2

Wood burnings by local artist of some local
attractions - \$35

Some local books:

Michele Shover's "California Standoff" \$35
& some of her other earlier publications

1877 and 1888 Birds Eye View map prints of Chico
- \$35 or to members for \$25 (30"w x 20"h)

Some china pictorial plates of Butte Co. \$10



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<p>British Foods Teas • Candies Groceries</p>	<p>Handcrafted Jewelry Cards • Gifts</p>
<p>Brambley Cottage 530•342•9035 www.thebrambleycottage.etsy.com</p>	

CHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Meeting is the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm, at the Garden Walk, 225 Main St., Ste.

Paul Lieberum, President	Margaret Siemsen, Treasurer	Shelley Hutchens	Frank Roberts
Richard Macias, Vice President	Nancy Deter	Eric Norlie	Lucy Sperlin
Liz Stewart, Secretary	John Gallardo	Adrienne Pustejovsky	Randy Taylor

OUR WATCH LIST ITEMS IN THE NEWS

THE WATER TOWERS:

Thanks to Mike Magliari for taking the lead on saving our Historic Water Towers! He has been working with Cal Water to explore alternatives such as federal and local preservation tax incentives and use of the California State Historic Building Codes to hopefully save those Chico icons. At present, Cal Water is exploring the options but has heard the outcry from Chico citizens and they will hopefully arrive at a solution to benefit all. Thanks also to local papers and TV for publicizing the issue and also to the Save Our Chico Water Towers Facebook group, which now claims nearly 500 followers for its Facebook page!

THE EL REY THEATER:

Fortunately the El Rey is being saved as an entertainment venue, thanks to some out-of-towners who saw the value of one of our iconic structures. It isn't back to original facade, but the inside murals are being preserved.

OTHER CURRENT WATCH LIST ITEMS

Bidwell Bowl Amphitheater

Rock Walls

Humboldt Wagon Ruts

The Esplanade

Mansion Park Houses

Bridge Replacements

Anna Barney House

Faculty Row Houses

Downtown Post Office

Heritage Trees

Relocated Gothic House



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DONNI DAVIS, OWNER

IN THE GAZEBO AT
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CHICO, CA 95928

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Chico, CA 95927
Phone 530-345-7522

Street Address:
THE GARDEN WALK
225 Main Street, Suite D



www.chicoheritage.net
E-MAIL: infochicoheritage.net

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OFFICE HOURS:

12 Noon to 3pm

MONDAY:

Margaret Siemsen
Sandy Lieberum

TUESDAY:

Shelley Compton
Nancy Deter

WEDNESDAY:

Randy Taylor

THURSDAY:

John Gallardo
Liz Stewart

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy 2018! It's been a great year for Chico Heritage thanks to all our members and supporters. With our move into our more expensive digs in the Garden Walk and with the passing of the Annie B's fundraising program, we were concerned that we would have to reduce services. But thanks to you all and the tireless efforts of our Board members in getting the word out (especially you, Margaret Siemsen) we have dodged any bullets and are entering the New Year in pretty good shape. Thank you all!

We have a lot coming up that will need our attention; we are monitoring the status on several endangered historic structures and elements including the Rock walls, the Humboldt wagon ruts, the Wright/ Patrick House, the Water Towers and the Gothic Revival House that was moved from 5th to Humboldt Sts., to name a few. We also will be giving walking tours, awards and a Historic presentation for Historic Preservation Month in May. And, as always, we will have our office and volunteers available for historic research. -- Paul Lieberum

RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT OFFICE

Historic books and pamphlets
Old Chico newspapers
Polk Directories
Sanborn Insurance maps & some other maps
Butte County Diggins
Many Preservations-homestyle magazines

CHICO HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Chico Heritage Association is to encourage and support the preservation, maintenance, enhancement, restoration and protection of buildings, neighborhoods, monuments, artifacts, and natural resources that exemplify or constitute a part of the historic, architectural and cultural heritage of the greater Chico area.