

The Scruffy Post

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Smartsville Church Restoration Fund, Inc.
www.smartsvillechurchrestoration.org
P.O. Box 374, Smartsville, CA 95977
Tax Exempt I.D. No.58-0412321

Handrail Baluster Donations

We sincerely thank the donors who contributed \$25 or more toward our baluster fund. Those white Victorian handrails give the town a new look!

We've purchased more material to continue work on the front porch. With 120 balusters needed, we have a good start on this goal and are grateful to those of you who were moved to send a donation. If you'd like to purchase one @ \$25 per baluster, please contact Kit at (530) 743-0413.

Thanks to: James Hapgood, Friends for the Preservation of Yuba County History, Sharron Perkey Freeman, Skip and Carol Gebel, Bill and Soledad O'Brien, John Waterman, John Mulligan, Red Sagraves and Sarah Morgan, Heidi Moore, Steve Pauly and Artis Obert, Ray Raffety, and Brad and Evelyn Allis. You're appreciated!



James Hapgood



Pioneer Day, 2015 scene with unfinished porch railing

A True Story From Kit Burton's Gold Rush Era Family

Kit, our SCRFI president, was surprised to discover that his great uncle had been a stage coach and freight driver in our area. Enjoy the reading!

What follows is an excerpt from an article written by my great grandfather and published in the South Pasadena Record in 1916. My mother's grandfather James Foster Washburn (Foss) and two of his brothers John Wesley Washburn and Abijah Wellington Washington, Jr. were re-united in 1916 after the whereabouts of John became known. At their tearful reunion in the state of Washington, John, then 82, told his younger brothers the following story of his life in the west. I was surprised to learn that I had a relative that was active in our area during the gold rush.

---- Kit Burton

BROTHERS ARE UNITED AFTER SIXTY-FOUR YEARS APART

By James F. Washburn

June 29, 1916

In the year 1852, a beardless youth of twenty years (John Wesley Washburn), dwelling at the little village of Hebron, Illinois, bade farewell to father, mother, four brothers and three sisters to join a company forming an emigrant train (as they were then styled), to cross the desert plains and mountain ranges, for the far off and far famed land of the setting sun and glittering gold, California.

There followed many months of weary travel, suffering, great privations, and danger from hostile bands of Indians who sought their lives or captivity and to stampede their cattle teams and drive them away. It took heroic efforts and undaunted courage with constant vigilance. Often they were compelled to make hasty breastworks out of their wagon trains, forming a circle within which they sheltered their stock and fought the foe.

Finally reaching the North Platte River they followed it to its head, up in Wyoming, then crossing down over the Wind River Mountains to Green River. Here some of the men were killed by the Indians and they put the youth of this story on a fleet horse and sent him back to bring up a Missouri train in the rear to help out.

From this point they aimed to follow down the Green River and cross the lower part of Utah and the lower part of Nevada into California. But here this young man, with two men of their train and one man from the Missouri train, separated from the trains and crossed over to Salt Lake City. From there they crossed down over the great American desert into Nevada.

In crossing this state they suffered intensely for water and their provisions ran low, death staring them in the face. But finally, footsore and weary, they reached Carson City, Nevada.

Resting up here a little they went to Donnerville, California, where they got work in the mining camp. Here they all took the Smallpox and one of the party died. They had reached the land overlooking the placid waters of the great Pacific.

Disappointed, reduced in health and finances, the bubble had burst. The gold that had lured them from their homes and loved ones lay hidden deep within the earth and who knew where? From this place they went to Marysville, Calif. where this youth took up stage driving.

John worked in the mines and was engaged on the Nevada Ranch by Switzer and Deling to look after the large herds of cattle and break wild horses. He was there several years. Then, driving stage from Marysville he ran from Auburn to Colfax, also from Virginia City in the palmy days of the Virginia mines. Several times the stage he was driving was held up and robbed. One time he had left Nevada City and was headed for Marysville and was out quite a ways when robbers shot down the lead horse and then went through the stage robbing several miners, among the rest, of all their gatherings for two or three years, taking every cent.

This he concluded was "too perilous to be safe," as he expressed it, and he gave up stage driving. He then took up driving freight from Marysville into the mining towns and camps up and down the Feather and Yuba Rivers and even to Salt Lake City.

From this he went to Portland in 1859 where he drove for the Star Sand Company, which he held until steamboats were started on the upper Columbia River above The Dalles. He went to The Dalles and engaged with the Oregon Steamship Company to drive an eight-mule team transferring freight from The Dalles to Celio above the falls.

In 1862 he went back to Portland, having bought the eight-mule team outfit. These he traded for ten city lots, a good bargain. Then he went into the butcher business buying beef cattle for Johnson and Perkins. Later he followed the same line of business for the noted John and Joe Openheimer.

About this time they began to boom the Klickitat country and he sold out his holdings in Portland and came to the valley in which their home is now located.

In 1916 he had a small farm just outside the town of Goldendale, Washington and a home in the city embracing eight lots. At that time he had a wife, one daughter, and one living son.



The three Washburn brothers, 1916



Smartsville (courtesy of UC Davis)

SCRFI's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, October 14th at 5:30 pm at the Rose Bar School. Please feel free to join us!