

Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation

June Newsletter, 2020

This article is intended to celebrate the life of Dr. Philip Sheridan Goodman, one of Sutter Creek's earliest and most colorful personalities.

Dr. Goodman was born in 1867 in Springfield, Missouri. He became a physician in the late 1880's, whereupon he married and relocated to West Point, Calaveras County with his wife Thela and son Claude. Within a couple of years, Thela left him and took young Claude home to Arkansas. In 1895 or '96 he moved to Sutter Creek and established the "Sutter Creek Sanitarium".



In the late 19th and early 20th century it was not uncommon for physicians' offices to serve as makeshift hospitals. The sanitarium was located in the two story building one lot southeast of the corner of Randolph and Main St. The first floor rooms served as the operating suite, the second floor as the hospital proper. The basement served as a storeroom and home to a collection of preserved animals and medical specimens. Dr. Goodman operated the sanitarium from 1896 until shortly before his death in 1927. During that time he provided house calls, office visits, and surgeries to local residents as well as to patients within a day's buggy ride up and down the region.

Dr. P. S. Goodman's Sanitorium

Sutter Creek, Amador Co. Calif.

Located in the Foothills

Where It Never Snows

X Ray, Hot Air, Vibrators, Hot and Cold Baths. General Treatment for all Diseases Medical and Surgical, except Contagious Diseases.

Terms in advance, \$15 per week and up.

The appearance of the building is unchanged, and is currently occupied by the Old West Antiques (next to Sina's Backroads Cafe).



SUTTER CREEK SANITARIUM

1895 - 1927

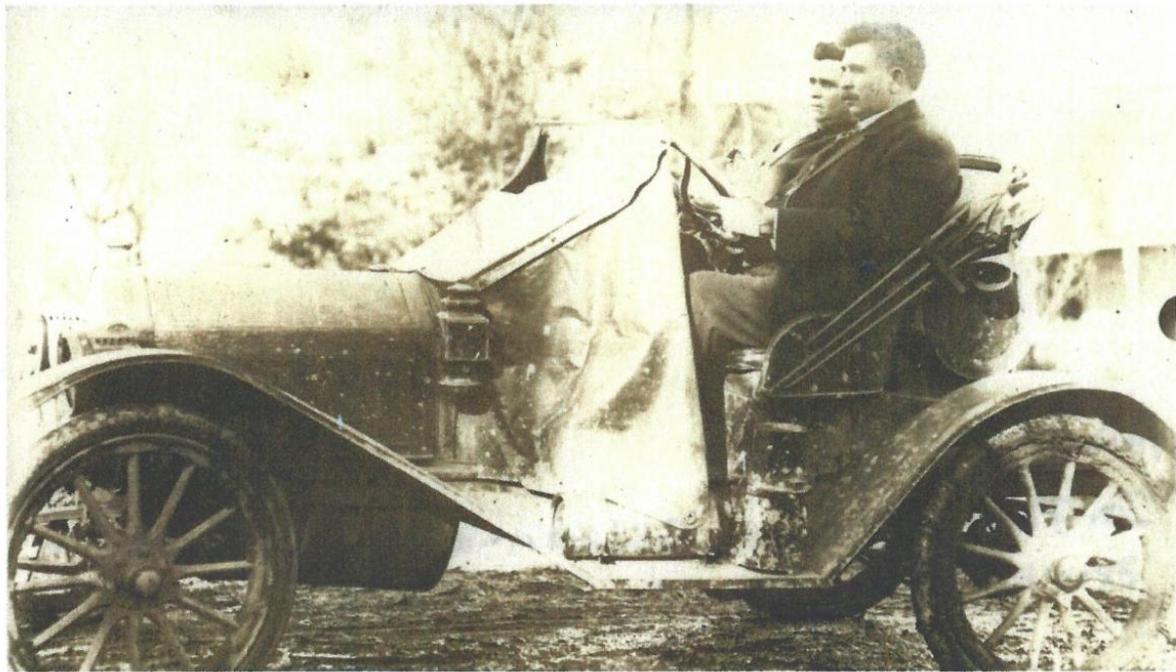
Medical Offices, Surgery and Hospital of
Dr. Philip Sheridan Goodman. (1867 - 1927).
Office and surgery on ground floor, hospital upstairs.
Miraculous and unconventional, a true
Sutter Creek Character.

Amador Sesquicentennial 2004

Dr. Goodman was not the only physician in Sutter Creek at the time, but by all accounts he was the most colorful and perhaps unorthodox. He is remembered to have been a large man known for his compassion, and larger than life personality and habits, including tobacco juice staining his vest and large walrus mustache.

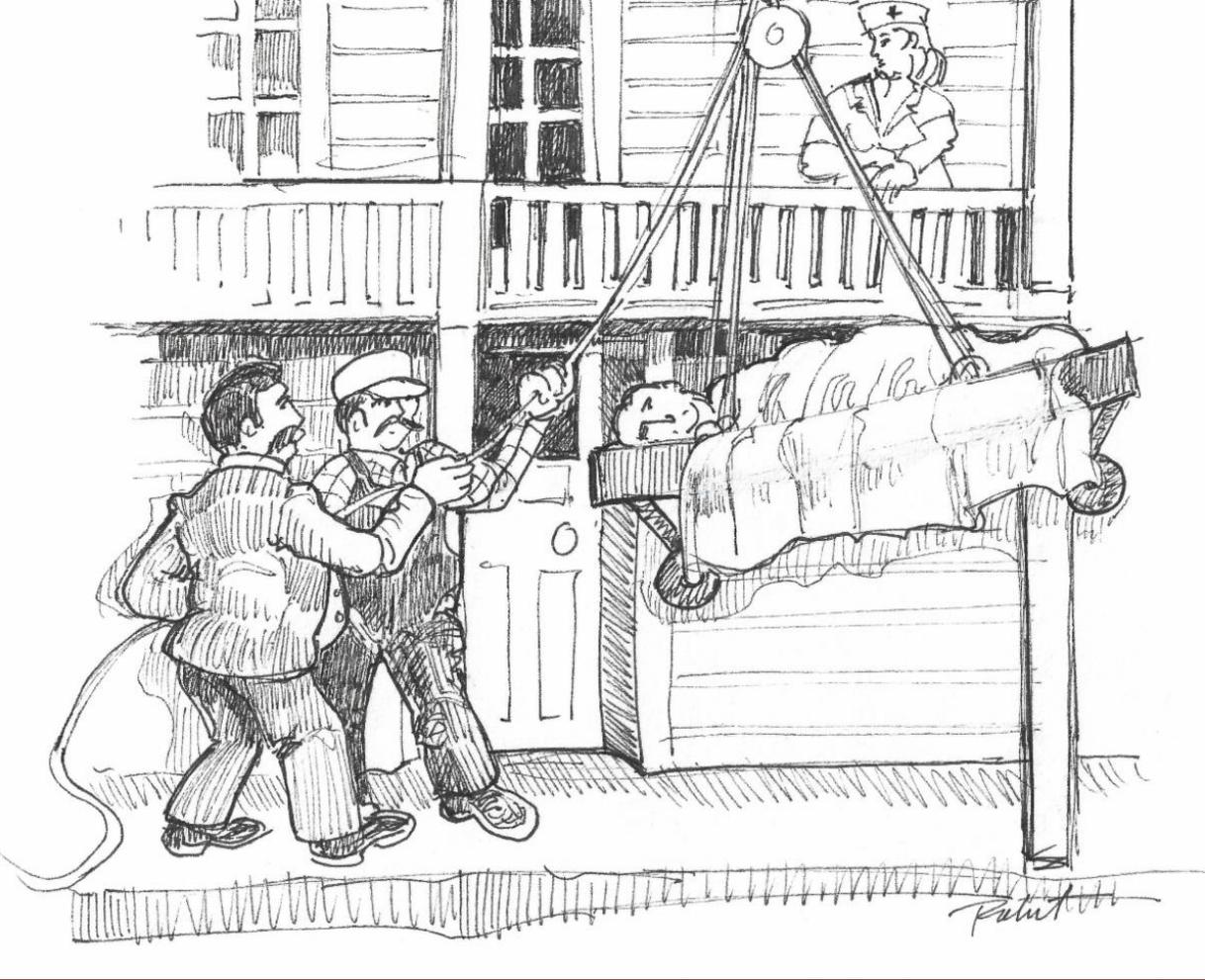
Initially he traveled to his house calls in a buggy pulled by a large black stallion which he prompted along by firing shots from his ever present six shooter (handed down to him by his U.S. Marshall father) as he raced down Main St. He apparently found street lights, water troughs, saloon lights and such to be irresistible targets for his six shooter as he raced along his route throughout the region.

Although he is most remembered for his Old Crow whiskey fueled escapades with his horse drawn buggy and pistol, Dr. Goodman was also the proud owner of a 1911 Metz automobile (one of Sutter Creek's first automobiles). It is unclear if the car replaced or supplemented the horse and buggy.



One of the most popular accounts of his lore is related to the fact that his operating suite and hospital beds were located on different floors of his sanitarium. Undaunted, Dr. Goodman developed a unique solution to this unique problem. Since there was no elevator, patients and gurney were lifted by an external hoist system from the first floor operating suite, outside over the balcony into the second floor main hospital.

This effort was aided by his faithful assistant Lawrence Cuneo. Mr. Cuneo also served as assistant to nurse Allen and Dr. Goodman during surgeries. Mr. Cuneo's true profession was that of owner and operator of a successful plumbing business down the block from the hospital. It is unclear how Mr. Cuneo's plumbing and surgical assistant skill sets overlapped, but it is clear that he provided a critical service to Dr. Goodman and his patients.



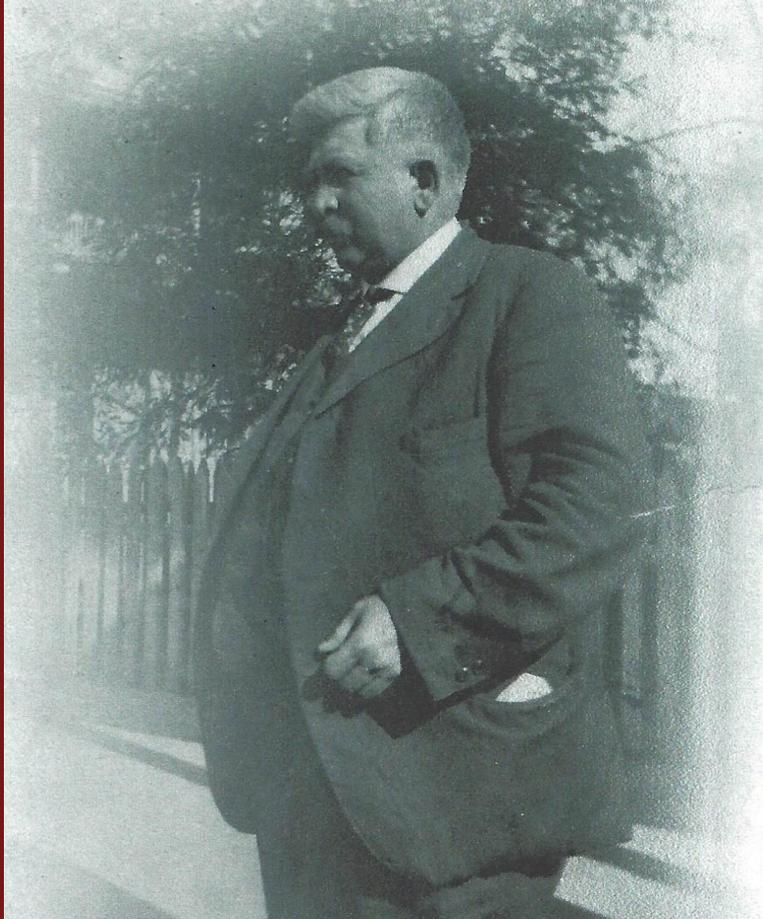
Another interesting recollection regarding this important figure was that Dr. Goodman apparently preferred to concoct his own medications and only very seldom took advantage of the local pharmacy located at the southwest corner of Fiefield Alley and Main St.

According to legend, Dr. Goodman's prescriptions relied heavily upon doses of Old Crow whiskey and various poultices concocted in his onsite laboratory. He apparently also relied heavily upon whiskey as an anesthetic during his surgical procedures as well as a personal elixir to the daily stresses of his busy practice.

There are many accounts of Dr. Goodman successfully treating patients who had previously been ruled beyond help by the more conventional medical practitioners. Very little about Dr. Goodman could be termed "conventional"!

Dr. Goodman was by all accounts a very colorful, hardworking, hard living and dedicated professional who worked very hard to provide for the healthcare needs of Sutter Creek and surrounds.

He passed away on October 9, 1927 in a Hanford, CA hospital after living for a short time with his daughter in Westhaven. He was returned to Sutter Creek to be buried in the Odd Fellows cemetery. Dr. Goodman was mourned by 3 wives and families and was missed by many local residents and patients.



If you would like to know more about this important local figure, please refer to “Tales of Sutter Creek” and “Sutter Creek Sawbones” by local author and historian Robert Richards.

Whether it's a love of our heritage, a special connection to our town's diverse, deeply rooted cultures, or a desire to improve your community, every donor's passion for Sutter Creek is unique. A gift to Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation is the perfect way to fund your passion and watch it prosper. By connecting people who care with causes that matter, we help ensure a stronger, healthier tomorrow. We provide a simple, powerful and highly personal approach to giving. (Donations to SCCBF are received through the Amador Community Benefit Foundation.)

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