



# *Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation*

February Newsletter, 2021

## 2021 IS THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE HISTORIC SUTTER CREEK GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The school was completed in 1871 replacing the original school which was destroyed in an arson fire in May 1870. The 1870's were a very tough time for most of the country. The federal government's efforts to displace the Native Americans throughout the west was in full swing. The effects and prejudices of the Civil War were still rampant. Tens of thousands of men which came out west seeking an easy fortune in gold were now either out of work or forced to work for hard rock mining operations. Yet, despite all this, the local Sutter Creek community came together to construct the new two story two room brick schoolhouse in little more than one year! This type of community support remains a hallmark of the citizens of Sutter Creek.

The Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation is planning to celebrate the anniversary, and milestones in the history of the school, with a series of events, or at least demonstrations (modified due to the unpredictability of COVID restrictions).



The first event is intended to celebrate the raising of the school's first flag in April 1890. We hope to coordinate this date with the re-raising of a flag above the school (the current flag pole must be replaced before this can occur). The original celebration was reported in the April 12, 1890 edition of the Amador Ledger. Below is an excerpt of that article.

The raising of the national flag, 14 by 21 feet, over our school house on last Saturday afternoon was a notable occurrence in the history of Sutter Creek. The weather was all that could be desired, and a great many from Jackson, Amador City, and the surrounding country were present to witness the proceedings. All of the school children, to the number of 300, assembled at Howard's hall, and at 2 o'clock, headed to the schoolhouse, and at once proceeded with the exercises. First on the programme was the dedication and presentation of the flag to the school trustees in trust for the school, by Dr. J. H. Giles, in an eloquent and patriotic speech. He brought the children to honor and love the flag, not for its mere intrinsic value, as it was only a few yards of bunting, but because it was the emblem of the grandest country and the best government enjoyed by man.

Then "Columbia" was beautifully sung by the whole school, after which the flag was raised, it being so arranged that every one of the school children could take hold of the rope and pull. The flag ascended tied in a small bundle, but when it had reached the top of the flag-pole, our venerable seaman, Fred Lamb, who had charge of the rope, gave a pull and the flag spread all at once to the breeze and proudly waved "o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave", at the height of about 110 feet from the

ground, while the shouts and cheers from the children and spectators caused the surrounding hills to echo and reverberate.



The second, or more accurately, ongoing event scheduled for summer is the further completion of the historical photo exhibit throughout the school celebrating the school as well as the local community.



Betty McGee's Grammar School Class  
(Betty is in the front row, fourth from left)



The third major event will be the initial opening of the Sutter Creek Museum, scheduled to open with exhibits by Labor Day. This is intended to coincide with a 150<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion Picnic to be held in late summer...since we do not expect many people from the 1871 class to attend the event will be open to the public.

We are looking for contacts with anyone which attended or taught at the school. We are working to create a written, or possibly oral, history of personal accounts of what life was like for students of the school. If you have a story for us or a contact with someone who may, please let us know. ([Tjmurphy31@gmail.com](mailto:Tjmurphy31@gmail.com)).

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