

# *Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation*

December Newsletter, 2021

## **Giving Tuesday and Looking Back at 2021**

The Board, Committee Members, and those who volunteer for the SCCBF would like to offer our sincere, heartfelt, THANK YOU for the very generous donations that were received during this year's Giving Tuesday campaign. If not for your contributions, no matter how small or large, our work would not be able to continue.

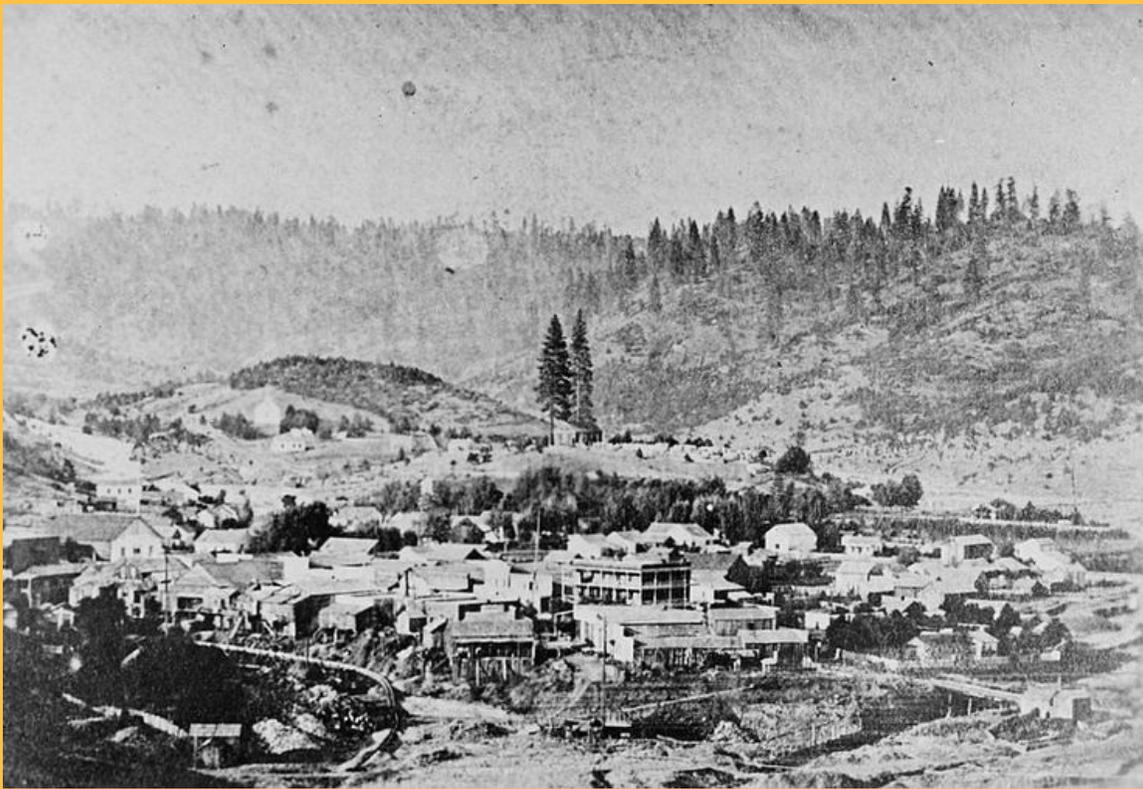
Looking back at 2021, some of the newsletters included the history of the Monteverde Store, Miss Ida Belle Herman (A True Sutter Creek Pioneer), the Historic Sutter Creek Grammar School's 150<sup>th</sup> year anniversary that was celebrated with a flag raising ceremony, Sutter Creek in Ashes, 54 Main Street (A Story That Only A Few May Know), Green Gold (Lumber in Sutter Creek), and A Pictorial Perspective of the Historic Grammar School. All newsletters can be found on our website ([www.sccbf.org](http://www.sccbf.org)).

In 2021 we also awarded three \$1,000 scholarships to high school students and installed 17 new dual-pane, energy efficient windows in the oldest, original section of the grammar school.

Now, for this month's article, we hope you enjoy reading:

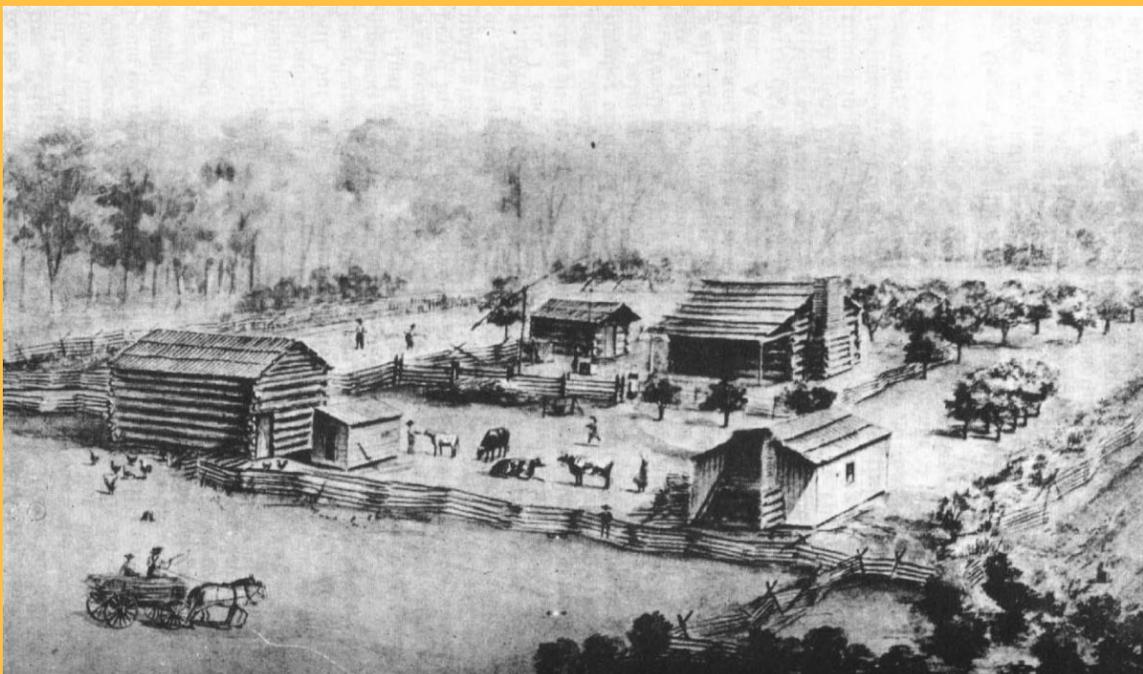
### **The Other "Mother Lode"**

The word "Gold" merely by its mention commands instant attention and visions of fabulous, unlimited wealth. The heavy malleable yellow metal has been lusted after and fought over by mankind for centuries. Amador County has certainly had its share of drama and history brought about by being located smack in the middle of the Mother Lode.



Picture above is Volcano in 1853

**However, not everyone who responded to the cry of "Gold in California" found the promise of easy riches to be anything more than an empty promise. After traveling across the continent by wagon, or halfway around the world by over-crowded, slow steam or sailing ships, most Argonauts arrived to find "it ain't so!" Many immigrants discovered that the cold, wet, backbreaking labor of placer mining was not their calling after all. The prospect of 16 hour shifts deep underground in a hot, dark, and dangerous hard rock mine was not for everybody either. The real gold turns out to be the land itself and the bounty it could produce.**



**Since the Spanish Mission era of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, grapes (among other things) have been grown in California for the magical artistry of turning groundwater into wine.**



**In addition to gold production, Amador County became known for its agricultural abundance including wheat, cattle, walnuts, olives and a variety of fruit. Remember that America was largely agricultural prior to the Industrial Revolution of the 1860's and 1870's.**

**California and Amador were very different in the 1840's and 1850's, in fact, Amador County didn't even exist until 1854 when it was created from pieces of Calaveras and El Dorado Counties.**

# CALIFORNIA

CIRCA 1850



**Sutter Creek had been in Calaveras until then and really didn't exist as a town until 1853 or 1854. The earliest graves in the cemetery date to 1854. The oldest building known in the area is an adobe residence in Drytown from approximately 1846. California in the early 1850's was a very dangerous place. The population at the time was mainly male, mainly young, and mainly armed. Banditry was rampant, targeting isolated ranchos and discouraging population away from protected towns**

and cities. Farms were vulnerable too, but as civilization took hold and former '49ers turned to their roots in agriculture, subsistence farming blossomed into a moneymaking enterprise selling excess produce to townspeople.



One product most in demand was, of course, alcohol. Wine grapes were already being grown in the County by the very early 1850's. Also, as population increased, immigrants relied more on learned skills for their livelihoods. Blacksmiths, butchers, grocers, carpenters, bricklayers, lumbermen, dry goods merchants, teachers, and many others populated the County. Farmers required fertile land and the most promising acreage was quickly snapped up.



**Farms and ranches began to move farther from towns with buffers created by space needed to grow produce. Grapes, apples, pears, and walnuts require a lot of space, not to mention the acres of grazing land needed for cattle and sheep.**



**Land which had been cheap to free became a desirable, limited resource and prices began to soar. A claim to an insurance company in the 1890's for fire damage valued grazing land at a staggering \$2 per acre.**

**Things have certainly come a long way. The legacy of the pioneer subsistence farmers has transformed Amador County into one of the premier wine grape-growing regions in the world.**



Above is Daniel D'Agostini whose grandfather started growing grapes in early 1900's.

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**Land now sells for tens of thousands of dollars per acre and continues upward. It seems the ground we live on and the quest to own as much of it as possible is the real “Mother Lode”. !**



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TODAY**

Do you know someone who would like to receive our monthly newsletter? Send contact information to [info@sccbf.org](mailto:info@sccbf.org) to be added to our distribution list.

The Historic Sutter Creek Grammar School is rich in Gold Rush history. This beautiful building is California's second oldest two-story brick schoolhouse. The Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation has restored the first and second floor making it a wonderful rental for any occasion. There are four rooms within the Historic Grammar School that can be rented.

Contact the City of Sutter Creek for information on rates and availability - (209) 267-5647 ext. 230 or email [info@cityofsuttercreek.org](mailto:info@cityofsuttercreek.org)

*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 Foundation.)*

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