



THE

HUMBUG HERALD



FRIENDS OF NORTH BLOOMFIELD & MALAKOFF DIGGINS

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WHAT IS FNB&MD?

FNB&MD is an acronym for Friends of North Bloomfield and Malakoff Diggins. It is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide interpretive and financial support for Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park (MDSHP). FNB&MD will operate under the South Yuba River Park Association (SYRPA) cooperating agreement with the California Department of Parks and Recreation. FNB&MD will be a separate entity managed by an Executive Committee and whose finances will be separate from those of SYRPA. All FNB&MD financial resources including donations, dues, fees, and sales income shall be used in support of MDSHP and its volunteers.

The Executive Committee has been formed although additional members are being solicited. The current members of the Committee are: David Anderson – past president of SYRPA, Ron Ernst – past president of SYRPA, Caleb Dardick – Executive Director of South Yuba River Citizens League, James Berardi – Superintendent, Twin Ridges School District, Marianne Bryant – past member of MDPA, and Paul Keasberry – member of SYRPA Board. Others interested in serving on the Committee should apply. Applications will be provided on REQUEST.

Now that Humbug Day is over, the Committee is working hard on organizing and planning for the future. We are looking for volunteers for membership, park volunteer recruitment, publicity, events/fundraising, website, and perhaps others in the future. If you would like to participate, please contact any Executive Committee member.

Members of MDPA who have paid their dues for 2015 will automatically be members of FNB&MD through the end of the 2015 calendar year. If you have not yet paid your dues for 2015, we strongly encourage you to become a member of FNB&MD.

A membership application is included in this newsletter.

The FNB&MD Executive Committee is excited about the future of MDSHP and will be working hard to enhance the Park. We are anxious to hear from you and any suggestions you may have.

See you in the park.



Humbug to North Bloomfield *a curious journey*

As legend has it, in 1851 or 1852, a prospecting party consisting of two Irishmen and a German, discovered a rich deposit of gravel on the north bank of a creek, about 15 miles from Nevada City and three miles up from the South Yuba River. After a short time their supplies began to diminish and it was decided that one of the Irishmen would go to Nevada City for food and equipment. Before departing, the man pledged total silence to his friends as to the whereabouts of their claim. When he arrived in Nevada City, with several hundred dollars worth of gold dust, many of the townsfolk took notice at the size of the poke. After procuring the necessary goods, the miner stopped at a local tavern and discussed his good fortunes with local miners, but even free liquor could not pry the information from the miner as to the whereabouts of his claim. The prospector left town before sunrise, however his leaving did not go unnoticed. He was tracked and followed by more than a hundred eager miners, waiting for him to show the way to these well hidden riches. After the miners arrived, a tent city arose on the banks of the creek and expectations of untold wealth were envisioned. The pickings were disappointing and the disgruntled miners labeled the area as a “**Humbug**”, meaning a lousy claim. Many of the prospectors returned to Nevada City. However, a few remained and referred to their settlement as Humbug or Humbug City and the creek as Humbug Creek.

After several years, following the introduction of Hydraulic Mining, the residents submitted “**Humbug**” as the name of their town in order to get a post office. The Postal Service, having many applications for that name, refused all requests. The name “**Bloomfield**” was then submitted but there already existed a town by that name in Sonoma County. They finally settled on the name of “**North Bloomfield**” in 1857. *From the park's Unit History. L. Clark, editor*

FNB&MD STRIKES GOLD WITH NEW PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

John Field brings decades of experience and sums-up his Profile as a, “Behind the scenes” Director and Technical Director in the TV Production business for the past 50 years. As for Kathy, the same applies as a Hospice Volunteer and Pre-School Special Needs Aide.

We have a son and a daughter and they both have two children, better known as our grand children. Three girls in college and the boy is a sophomore in high school.

We moved to Lake Wildwood in July of 2013 from Thousand Oaks, Ca. We are active in many clubs and volunteer work for the state parks associations including SYRPA, EMPA and now FNBMD.

John Field, Kathy Field
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What is North Bloomfield Anyway?



An enjoyable and relaxing way to discover North Bloomfield or re-orient yourself to the park is to take in a Town Tour, given at 1:30 daily. Gaze in amazement at the myriad of potions that masqueraded as “medicine” during the gold rush (often containing laudenum, cocaine, arsenic, etc.); “cures” sold, or traded “over the counter” at the Smith-Knotwell Drug Store.

Then crane your neck to review all the “goods” hanging from the ceiling of the McKillican-Mobley General Store or marvel at the cubby that served for decades as a U.S. Post Office. Peer through the bars separating the office and learn why they were a necessity, along with a pit bull. Peruse the Brand Names of the canned goodies lining the shelves after completing a two week trip by freight wagon (in good weather) to reach the town from Grass Valley. Down the street take in the view through the hallway of the “shotgun house” built by Dick Skidmore in 1852. Chuckle at the origin of the term, “sleep tight”, and contemplate the reason the kitchen was built onto the rear of the place.

Back across the street, heave open a huge dutch-door that accesses the Ostrom Stable. A moderate collection of wagons and tack are exhibited within. One may pick up a few words of today’s jargon that have morphed from their precise usage in an 1860s stable. Depart with the reminder to, “Whip light, Drive Slow, Pay Cash before You Go.”

It’s time to pop open your picnic basket at a table near the Gazebo or walk a short ways up to the ever idyllic Blair Pond for another choice lunch and nap spot.

Before leaving be sure to stop at the Visitor Center/Museum to collect any maps, brochures or souvenirs to help remember the occasion and to find your way back to the park another day.

Whatever you call the place, be it Humbug, North Bloomfield, or simply, The Diggins, it is here to preserve the history of hydraulic mining, its effects, and the story of the people who lived life on the frontier for the chance of seeking a fortune in gold, as miners or merchants. The spirit of Humbug City, is revealed here at N. Bloomfield in Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park. *Ed.*



Ranger Report

by Dan Youngren, Supervising Ranger

As a few of you may know, Seasonal Ranger, Jon Burgasser, has accepted a new position with the National Park Service as a Seasonal Interpretive Ranger at Yosemite. He will be starting this new assignment during the first part of August. We wish him all the best and thank him for all of his hard work and dedication in keeping Malakoff Diggins a living, breathing park.

I have some very exciting news for the present and future of Malakoff Diggins. You may or may not have known that Malakoff has not had a full time Ranger in a few years and the biggest reason has been that our department did not have the necessary funds to fill the vacant position. Our situation is not unique with this problem since this has been very common throughout the department. Having Ranger Jon as our seasonal Ranger has been a relative “bandage” to the bigger problem of not having enough of a Ranger staff to cover patrol shifts. Well...I am extremely happy to announce that Malakoff Diggins SHP will have a “new” ranger assigned as of August 1st. Through creative shuffling at the District level, we now have Ranger Ryan Randar as a Sierra Gold Sector Ranger with a duty statement that will cover Malakoff Diggins as a primary focus. Ranger Randar is joining us from the Lake Tahoe basin. Stay tuned for a “meet the Ranger” bio. With this addition to our Sierra Gold Team, Malakoff Diggins SHP will now have the much needed, year around attention it has so desperately needed.

Malakoff Diggins SHP is alive and well....

Camping & Scheduled Activities

Campgrounds, Group Camp and Miner’s Cabins available via [Reserve America](#) through 9/27/15.

Town Tours: 1:30 Daily / Gold Panning 3pm Sat.

Museum / Visitor Center Open:
10am-4pm Sun-Thurs / 10am-8pm Fri & Sat

Park Fees

Day Use / Veh. \$8

Campsite \$35
Extra Vehicle \$8

Group Camp \$165

Miner’s Cabin \$40

Ice & Firewood
for sale at
Visitor’s Center



For those of you that missed Humbug Day on June 13, you missed a really great event. The Park received over 500 visitors who enjoyed great entertainment, wagon rides, good food, demonstrations, activities, and good weather. It was kicked off with a flag raising ceremony by two Rangers (Supervising Ranger Dan Youngren and Ranger Jon Burgasser) accompanied by Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth Hudson, USN (Ret) on the bugle. The pledge of allegiance was led by Girl Scout Troop 1999 from Davis, CA



There was something for everyone. The children especially, enjoyed candle making, tin punching, and face painting. Demonstrations included Hit-and-Miss engines, weaving, the Tommy Knocker Cloggers, and blacksmiths (there was opportunity to even make your own J hook). Gold panning and wagon rides were popular with everyone.

Appetites were satisfied by the Clampers BBQ, Lazy Dog Ice Cream, and root beer floats in the saloon. Music was available through the day provided by Alkali and by the Stepside Band.



The highlights of the day were: The Gun-fighters Incorporated who put on two shows.

The worlds shortest parade which included two CalFire engines, the Clydesdales and their wagon, the Clampers "Clementine" and of course one of our Ranger's vehicles with lights flashing. To make up for lack of length, the parade went around twice. And, the always anticipated big event was the firing of the water cannon.



Be sure to be here next year for another enjoyable day of excitement, relaxation, or both!

BULL PINE



Scientific Classification

Pinus ponderosa
Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Pinophyta
Class: Pinopsida
Order: Pinales
Family: Pinaceae
Genus: Pinus
Species: *P.ponderosa*

Bull Pine, Blackjack Pine, Yellow Pine, is a Ponderosa Pine with a coat of many names. Where does the “Bull “ come from? Maybe the size, some well over 200 feet, or the large cones, or from a long forgotten guy who tied his bull to one? But....the same guy may have tied his bull to a valley Bull Pine, actually a “Gray Pine”... formerly known as “Digger Pine”.... a term no longer in vogue as it suggests certain North American Indians ‘dug” or grubbed in the ground for roots etc, which they did, but that term is considered a slur. So “Gray Pine” it is. Anyway, with more than one kind of pine nicknamed “Bull Pine”, the real truth may be just that....a lot of Bull.

First described by David Douglas (of Douglas Fir fame...which is not a fir, but we’re on the subject of Bull today), in 1826, Ponderosa can be identified by its characteristic 5-10 inch needles usually found in bundles of two. The needles are ideal for making pine needle baskets... a practice handed down by Native Americans to their replacements during and after the gold rush.

To wit: Pine Needle Basket Weaving Class offered twice yearly, since 1991, in the spring and fall, at the South Yuba River State Park Visitor Center at Bridgeport. Fee \$20

The class is taught by docent Judy Nichols whose baskets are on display at the Gene Speck Silver State Art Gallery in Reno, Nevada. All participants can expect to complete at least one small basket in class.



Call Judy at 530-274-3608 to register.

cont.



Tommy Knockers have secreted their special formula for preparing pine needle tea to the Clampers: Put a handful of pine needles in a pot..... add hot water..... boil for 10 minutes.

No bull! As history records.....

In 1535, French explorer Jacques Cartier and his men were in desperate condition after a particularly severe winter in New Foundland. Already 25 lay dead and not one of the remaining survivors was not suffering from the ravages of Scurvy. Fortunately for history a group of local Indians took pity on them and told Cartier that their medicine man had the perfect cure. Shoving their prejudices aside, they went to the medicine man. The miracle brew of this wise man was so simple that Cartier and his men nearly rejected it at first. Without any hocus-pocus, the medicine man simply plucked a handful of pine needles from a nearby tree and boiled them in a pot for a few minutes. Then he gave each one a cup of “soup”. Although skeptical, they did as they were told and the soup transformed their health in a matter of 6 days. This is recorded because they lived to tell the tale in the epic account: *Voyages to Canada 1534-35 J. Cartier*

To go with your tea you may want to pick some miner’s lettuce and mix in some pine nuts. Ponderosa’s are prickly” is one way to recognize the sharp cones.

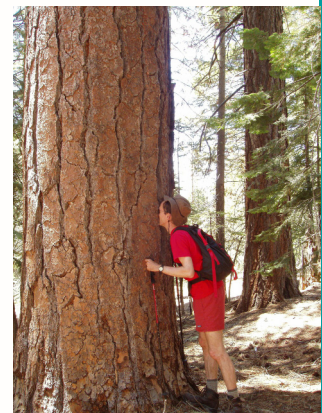


How people harvested pine nuts is speculation, but Murph and Dooley would be inclined to pile cones up in the center of a clearing, cover them with pine needles and light the pile. The firing process doesn’t open the cones, but removes the sticky pine pitch, roasts the nuts and makes the cone easier to split. Splitting the cone is accomplished with a rock, hammer or by dropping a handy anvil on the mess.

For further pine tree dining excellence as well as many other unique outdoor recipes, refer to the late Euell Gibbons’ book, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*.

However, if one sneaks up on a suspected Ponderosa Pine, but is unable to discern from the appearance whether it is the correct tree, try sniffing the bark. If it smells like vanilla it may be a Ponderosa Pine....then again, it may be a Jeffrey Pine.

No Bull!



McKILLICAN-MOBLEY GENERAL STORE

“Always watch his thumb”, grandma would caution me. He’ll put the meat in a paper on the scale and lift his hand to distract you. The other hand will slip under the edge of the paper and he’ll press his thumb down to add weight to the sale. Thus, my first lesson in the pitfalls of the marketplace, was on a similar, *Standard Computing Scale*, mfg. in Detroit, Michigan, c. 1910 *Ed.*



Edited from the Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park Unit History:

The McKillican-Mobley General Store was built circa 1870 in the settlement of North Bloomfield. T.P. Crandall was the first storekeeper and also served as postmaster. Crandall later took on a partner, R. D. McKillican and the store operated under both names until Mr. Crandall moved to San Francisco. McKillican retained two-thirds interest in the store with Walter Mobley acquiring one-third ownership and eventually the named changed to its current title.

As you approach the building you’ll notice six vertical columns partially painted with a dark gray paint. The pillars were painted this color simply because it permitted horseback riders to tie directly to the columns. White would have attained a soiled look much sooner. The two gray boards with pointed tops on the front of the building are bulletin boards where election notices and returns, hunting regulations, theatrical presentations and other miscellaneous information was posted. A letter slot at the post office window served as a mail drop.

Steel bars over the windows are an original security feature. To further protect the place, an employee, generally the freight driver, served as a night watchman and was required to sleep in the eight foot x eight foot room in the north part of the building. There was also a large, white, pit bull watchdog to further discourage thieves. The store not only had valuable and much needed supplies, but also served as a gold exchange and a drop off point for gold shipments.



A locking Dutch Door
and barred window
separated the office and
bedroom from the store proper.

Ed.



The proprietor made two trips each year to one of the major supply centers. This was generally accomplished in the Fall and Spring. To enhance his inventory between purchasing dates, the owner would order by mail. When doing so, the freight would be shipped from either Sacramento or San Francisco to Colfax by Southern Pacific Railroad. From Colfax the merchandise was transferred to Nevada City by the Narrow Gauge Railroad, then hauled by freight teams to North Bloomfield.

cont.

The store had a wide variety of goods from which to select. The Levis on the shelves are of historic influence as Levi Strauss manufactured the first of its kind for the miners of the California gold fields. The store also sold kerosene for lamps, ammunition, hardware, mining supplies, stationery, soap, kitchen utensils, paint, some medications, eggs, oranges and bakery goods such as cookies, chocolate eclairs, fig bars, gingersnaps etc. Canned meat, corned beef, deviled ham and dried foods were also available and were considered to be a staple part of the diet of this region. Mr. McGagin had milk cows which supplied fresh milk to the community.

Vegetables were not sold at the store since they were bought or bartered at the China Gardens for a minimal price. Fresh meats were available at the butcher shop across the street.



Ladies would meet at the post office inside the front door and exchange further tidbits of gossip.

High doors and ceilings were so designed to aid in ventilating the building during the warmer summer months. Door handles are low according to today's standards, but perhaps this was the standard height in the mining days.

Aside from the owners, there were normally five additional employees; a teamster who drove four, six and eight-horse teams in delivering freight from Nevada City; a driver for local delivery who drove a two or four-horse wagon; a full time mail clerk; a stock boy who swept, cleaned and stacked the shelves; and a young woman who distributed the mail and performed the clerical work in the post office. Historians claim the arrival of the daily stage was one of the more exciting moments of the day for residents of North Bloomfield. Men and women would gather at stage time to wait for the mail to be distributed and talk about news of the day. Later, the post office was also responsible for selling fishing and hunting licenses to sportsmen in the area.

There was a marked decline in business following the Sawyer decision of 1884, but the store continued serving the region throughout the 19th and the first few decades of the 20th century. The store officially closed in 1942, during World War II, with Noni Landsburg serving as the last post mistress.



Miners would help themselves to free beverages the storekeeper generously provided.



1960s

Before & After
Renovation
by
California
State Parks



1990s

Rattlesnake Dick

Richard Barter also known as Rattlesnake Dick, Dick Woods, and the Pirate of the Placers, was the son of a British Officer, born in Quebec, Canada around 1833. Though little is known of his early history, he was said to have been a reckless sort of boy. He migrated west in 1850 during the gold rush, accompanied by an older brother and an old man who was some sort or relative. After settling in at Rattlesnake Bar, a small mining camp on the American River in Placer County, the brother and the other man soon returned to Canada. But, Dick remained at the camp working for other miners and doing a little prospecting on his own.

However, Barter was unsuccessful in his quest for gold and soon decided to turn to a life of crime. He began with rustling horses but was as unsuccessful at that as he was at finding gold. In no time he was arrested and sent to prison for two years.

When he was released he formed a gang made up of brothers, Cyrus and George Skinner, who along with several others, began preying on gold shipments from **Nevada City**.

In 1856, Barter learned from a drunken mining engineer that large gold shipments were being sent down Trinity Mtn. from the Yreka and Klamath mines.

Barter sent George Skinner and three others to intercept the gold shipment, which was packed on mules. The gang stopped the mule train outside Clear Creek, at gun point. Meekly, the men turned over \$80,600 in gold bullion without a shot being fired. The bandits struck off to meet up with Barter and Cy Skinner at Folsom.

However, they found it next to impossible to take the heavy gold down the mountain passes without fresh mules. They were also concerned about obvious brands on the mules, should they encounter anyone on the way. George Skinner decided to lighten the load by burying half the gold while still in the Trinity Mountains.

Arriving in Auburn, the gang was intercepted by a Wells Fargo Posse. In the ensuing gunfight Skinner was killed and his confederates fled.

The lawmen recovered \$40,600 of the stolen loot and though they searched diligently, failed to find the remaining \$40,000. In the meantime, Rattlesnake Dick Barter and Cy Skinner weren't at the rendezvous point in Folsom, as they had been jailed for stealing mules. (Presumably for hauling the gold.) When they were released, Barter immediately sought out George Skinner only to learn he had been killed. He and Cy spent the next several weeks trying to find the treasure before giving up.



1856

Both men went back to robbing stagecoaches but their luck soon ran out. On July 11, 1859, Sheriff J. Boggs trapped Barter and Skinner in a mountain pass near Auburn. Boggs shot Barter through the heart, killing him instantly. Skinner was wounded but lived to be taken into custody and given a long prison sentence.

The treasure has never been recovered and is said to be somewhere on Trinity Mountain, part of which is in Trinity County and part in Shasta County. The gold is believed to have been buried about 12 miles south of the scene of the Clear Creek hold up.

Condensed from: [Legends of America](#) by Kathy Weiser

Editor: Rattlesnake Dick is buried in the Old Auburn District Cemetery off Fullweiler Ave. in Auburn. Rattlesnake Bar is under water in Folsom Lake, marked only by a boat launch ramp. A monument to the gun battle is next to the Raley's Store at the Forest Hill exit off I-80, just east of Auburn.

California Admission Day 1850

California situated its first capital in San Jose but the winter of 1850 - 1851 was unusually wet, causing the dirt roads to become muddy streams. The legislature was unsatisfied with the location, so former General and State Senator Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo donated land in the future city of Vallejo for a new capital. But after just two meetings the legislature found those facilities unsuitable and the capital was soon moved three miles away to the little town of Benicia, inland from the San Francisco Bay. A lovely brick statehouse was built in old American style complete with white cupola. Although strategically sited between the Gold Rush territory of the Sierra Foothills and the financial port of San Francisco, the site was too small for expansion, and so in 1854 the capital was moved further inland past the Sacramento River Delta to the riverside port of Sacramento, gateway to the Northern Mines.

Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins Membership Application

Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins (FNB&MD) is a non-profit organization assisting the CA Department of parks and Recreation in the operation of Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park. Our mission is to provide financial support for the park's interpretive and volunteer programs.

Your membership in FNBMD will:

- Help preserve, protect and enhance natural & cultural resources of Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park.
- Support Interpretation of the park's history, cultural resources, geologic features and biological diversity.
- Members receive a periodic newsletter and other notices of activities, plus a 10% discount on purchases at the Park Store in North Bloomfield.

Please fill out this form and mail to the address below or bring to the Malakoff Diggins Visitor Center with your tax deductible donation.

ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP: \$20.00

ANNUAL FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$25.00

LIFETIME INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP: \$150.00

LIFETIME FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$200.00

ANNUAL BUSINESS SPONSOR: \$100.00

ANNUAL SMALL BUSINESS SPONSOR (less than 5 employees): \$50.00

Name _____
Street Address _____
City / State / ZIP _____
E-mail address _____
Telephone _____

I am interested in:

- helping financially
 becoming a trained docent
 becoming a state park volunteer

Make check payable to:
FNB&MD P. O. Box 1658
Penn Valley, California 95946