



News Release

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Sutter's Fort SHP

Sutter's Fort to Present "Hands on History: Wagon's West" on September 16

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Continuing a popular series of fun and interactive "Hands on History" activities offered each month, Sutter's Fort State Historic Park (SHP) and Friends of Sutter's Fort will present a special "Hands on History: *Wagons West*" event on Saturday, September 16, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fort visitors will be delighted to see the recently completed restoration of the historic walls, gates and blacksmith shop – along with new restoration efforts underway – plus have the opportunity to step back in time to when Sutter's Fort was considered as the ultimate destination for thousands of overland emigrants lured by the idea of inexpensive land, rich soil, beautiful weather and boundless opportunity, followed by tens of thousands of fortune seekers in 1849 and 1850 during the Gold Rush.

The 1,000-mile overland journey to California by wagon was a perilous undertaking fraught with danger from inclement weather, bad or non-existent roads, scarce food and water for both people and animals, and the constant threat that animals or supplies may be stolen in the dead of night. The wagons were small farm vehicles about the size of today's minivan with no seats, brakes or shock-absorbing springs. The only items in the wagon were supplies – hopefully, enough to complete the journey with some left over to start a new life in California. There was no room for people in the wagon so everyone walked beside it, including children.

"Hands on History" guests will learn about John Sutter's vision to command an empire, how he enticed emigrants with offers of cheap land and the safety of a Fort, and his role in helping to organize rescue parties for emigrants trying to cross the Sierra – some ultimately successful and others not. Visitors will be able to participate in fun games that could be played along the trail such as Game of Grace (ring toss), bean bag toss, card games, and board games like checkers and shut-the-box. In addition, they'll enjoy other hands-on activities such as corn husk doll making, learning techniques to lasso a steer head, using a spinning wheel, and viewing rare coins and other historic oddities. In addition, guests will see how ironware was used in wagon camps and enjoy demonstrations of black powder weaponry in action including the crowd-favorite firing of Sutter's cannon.

All "Hands on History" activities are included in the cost of admission. Sutter's Fort SHP admission costs are as follows: \$7 per adult (18 and older), \$5 per youth (ages 6 to 17) and free for children 5 and under. For more information, call 916-445-4422 or visit www.suttersfort.org

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