



Fact Sheet

California Statewide Museum Collections Center (SMCC)

About The SMCC

The Statewide Museum Collections Center forms an important part of California State Parks, and the preservation of our cultural resources and history. The Center serves in many capacities, including:

- Preserving and Protecting California's Cultural Heritage
- Archaeology
- History
- Museum Services

The New Facility in McClellan Park:

- Holds over 1 million artifacts between the statewide archaeological and museum collections combined
- Dedicates 160,000 square feet to the care of the archival, archaeological and museum collections of California State Parks
- Has a museum collections storage and processing area totaling 120,000 square feet
- Is LEED Silver Certified
- Has an energy efficient museum collections storage vault that uses only 25% of the energy typically consumed in comparably sized buildings, thus resulting in significant savings to the State
- Has more than 12 miles of shelving and 2 ½ miles of pallet racking dedicated to storing historic collections
- Cost \$15 million (Prop. 84 bond funds)
- In the last four years, SMCC has provided over 3,000 museum objects for use in exhibits and educational programs at State Parks throughout California

The Collections

Whisker-growing trophy:

- The first curator at Sutter's Fort, Harry C. Peterson, was a colorful personality with a wide-ranging interest in Gold Rush history. In 1922 Peterson helped organize Sacramento's "Days of '49" Festival, celebrating the Gold Rush. Peterson suggested a beard growing contest: "The Days of '49 Whisker Club" also known as the Whiskerinos. J.S. Jacoby's beard was judged most impressive, and he was given a trophy for "The Most Impenetrable Cootie-Garage, Defies



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Earthquake, Fire and Time, Sacramento's Champion Brush Hound of the Days of '49." Jacoby's trophy (but not the beard, unfortunately) is stored at SMCC

Volcano Hearse:

- California's gold was used to fund the Union war effort. When Confederate sympathizers threatened to seize a gold shipment in Volcano, Union supporters smuggled a cannon into town hidden inside a hearse. When confronted with the cannon, the Confederates backed down. The cannon, known as "Old Abe" is on view at Volcano; the hearse, which dates to about 1850, is on display at SMCC (Sutter's Fort Collection #6069)

Firefighter equipment:

- There was a friendly competition between firefighting companies of the 1800s: each tried to outshine the others with the most elaborately decorated equipment. The ornate 1850s hose cart on exhibit in the SMCC lobby is a prime example

Dairy collection:

- The California Dairy Association donated a collection of historical California dairy objects that includes:
 - Over 1100 milk bottles from 1910 to the 1960s
 - A dozen butter churns designed to be powered by hand, water, and motors. There is even a treadmill made to run a butter churn by dog power!
- Branding irons:
 - Almost 200 branding irons can be seen at the Statewide Museum Collections Center
 - Each ranch had its own brand design to establish ownership of roaming cattle

Saddles:

Over 2,000 objects from the Roscoe Hazard Collection preserve late 19th and early 20th century Western memorabilia, including:

- 52 saddles in the Hazard Collection, including a pre-Civil War U. S. Army
- Officer's saddle that has a saddle horn in the shape of a bald eagle's head
- Included in the Hazard collection are western objects once owned by former State Parks Commissioner and actor, Leo Carillo

Gold Rush Objects:

Representing the main obsession of the "days of '49" are several tools used in the mining and processing of gold:



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- Gold rockers were used to separate gold from rocks and dirt. The gold rocker that belonged to James Marshall (who discovered the gold that set off the rush) is on display at SMCC
- The statewide collection includes gold scales of varying sizes. The smallest is 6" tall, and the largest, used at the Maryland Mine in Grass Valley, is 3 feet tall
- Other mining and gold processing tools in the statewide collection include miner's lamps, assayer's crucibles, and monitors used in hydraulic gold mining

Governor's furniture

Governor Ronald Reagan lived in a residence rented and furnished by the state of California after the Historic Governor's Mansion was opened for public tours. The statewide museum collection includes several pieces from that rented residence, such as:

- A piano made in London in the early 1800s and strung with harpsichord strings
- A small chair and a smoke stand carved with fanciful bear decorations by craftsmen in the Black Forest of Germany
- Also in the statewide museum collection are office furnishings of Governor Earl Warren and the dining set of Governor Gray Davis

Works of Art

There are more than 2,600 pieces of art in the statewide museum collection, including:

- John Sutter's Portrait:
 - This portrait of John A. Sutter, painted with oil on canvas by William S. Jewett in 1853, is 9 ½ feet tall. The painting shows Sutter in full figure and in older age
 - The portrait hung over the Speaker's dais in the California State Assembly chamber at the California State Capitol from the 1870s to 1907. It was replaced in the chamber by a portrait of Abraham Lincoln
- William Smith Jewett (1812-1873) was born in South Dover, New York on August 6, 1812. Jewett abandoned a promising art career in New York to join the Gold Rush of 1849. Upon his arrival, he became California's first professionally-trained portrait painter. After a few months at the mines, he was soon busy with portraits of Sacramento's politicians and influential residents
- New Deal Art:
 - More than 500 sketches, drawings and paintings, created by artists working for the Depression-era Works Progress Administration, are part of the statewide collection
 - The artwork was created to develop public exhibits depicting the natural and cultural history of Mount Diablo and Big Basin State Parks
 - Several pieces have recently undergone conservation and have been once again on public exhibit in various state parks



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- Native American artists:
 - The statewide collection includes works of art by renown California Indian artists Frank La Pena and Judith Lowry

Native American Collections

The largest collection of basketry caps *in the world* is housed at the Statewide Museum Collections Center. In the collection of Native American objects there are:

- Over 4,500 examples of Native American basketry; 3,500 are from California
- The world's largest collection of basketry caps
- A 26 ½ foot long dugout canoe built around 1885 by Billy Bainbrige, Pit River
- A loaf of 100 year old mesquite bread, preserved in a tin

Donner Party Items

The Statewide Museum Collections include several objects from the survivors of the Donner Party. The harrowing experience of the Donner Party – the group of American pioneers snowbound in the Sierras in the winter of 1846-1847 - is one of the best-known tragic stories of western settlement. Many are aware that Patty Reed's doll is on exhibit at Sutter's Fort SHP, but several objects in the statewide museum collections show us the full lives that were led by Donner Party survivors.

- The 1858 wedding dress and gloves of Frances Donner Wilder
- Religious objects, postcards and letters of Virginia Reed Murphy
- The piano and music stand used by Patty Reed Lewis
- James Reed family furniture

Trunks of the Pioneers

Sutter's Fort was the State Historic Museum before it was a State Park. For that reason, Californians donated the relics of their pioneer ancestors to the Fort's collections. Many of these heirlooms are stored at the SMCC.

- There are 83 trunks on view, most of which belonged to early settlers and were brought "around the Horn" on ships or overland on wagons. The diverse backgrounds of California's pioneers can be seen in this group of trunks



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Wagons, Carts and Carriages

Gold Rush Era Freight Wagon:

- One of the largest objects at the SMCC is the “Huffman Wagon.” This wagon has been part of the Sutter’s Fort Collection since 1894. It was built in 1854 for Charles H. Huffman, and was used to haul freight to Placerville and the Southern Mines
- Back wheels are almost 6’ tall
- Wagon bed is 21’7” long, but only 50” wide
- Huffman paid \$2,700 to have the wagon built

Stanford Carriage:

- This stately carriage was used by railroad magnate Leland Stanford while living at his Sacramento mansion during his term as California Governor in 1862 and 1863

Fire Hose Cart:

- This elaborate 1850s cart was used to bring additional hose to the site of a fire, and was pulled by team of men

Civil War Objects

DID YOU KNOW that a Civil War Skirmish was fought in Volcano, California?

- California’s gold was used to fund the Union war effort. When Confederate sympathizers threatened to seize a gold shipment in Volcano, Union supporters smuggled a cannon into town hidden inside a hearse. When confronted with the cannon, the Confederates backed down
- The cannon, known as “Old Abe” is on view at Volcano; the hearse, which dates to about 1850, is on display at SMCC (Sutter’s Fort Collection #6069)