

Summer 2016



**May is National Historic Preservation Month**



The City of Arcata has joined with communities across the US to celebrate historic preservation. The National Trust for Historic Preservation sponsors this celebration annually with the theme *This Place Matters*, a national campaign that encourages people to celebrate the places that are meaningful to them and to their communities.

The City of Arcata’s Historic Landmarks Committee and HSSA members joined

forces to showcase Arcata at the Farmer’s Market on May 14<sup>th</sup> and May 21<sup>st</sup>. A map highlighted Arcata’s historic areas, including the Phillips House. Shown above are Bob Felter, Claudia Israel, Karole Ely and Kel Loughmiller.

**Arcata: Place or Idea?** The Phillips house museum hosted its first HSU student art show, coordinated by Brianna Goldstein, and entitled *Arcata: Place or Idea?* HSSA hopes this is the first of many collaborations with HSU.



**The City of Arcata** honored Arcata’s history during Arts! Arcata. Bob Doran and Steve Lazar put together a photographic display at City Hall. It included books and postcards as well as a borrowed (from HSU) statue of Alexander von Humboldt. The lobby display included posters describing historic Arcata neighborhoods, locally famous and cherished people who contributed to the story of Arcata, and some practical advice on repairing old wood windows.



*Photos courtesy of Alex Stillman*

**Museum Facility Update**

HSSA appreciates that the city of Arcata, as part of its plan to eradicate invasive plants, removed the large bush in the front yard. They also agreed to mow our lawn on a trial basis for several months. And, so far this year, the deer have not discovered our pretty roses! After a hiatus of several months, a very capable person has been hired to keep the museum clean and fresh on a monthly basis. Hurrah!

HSSA continues to maintain the exterior of the Phillips House on a regular basis. We are working with a local painting contractor who is helping us prioritize painting projects.

As always, we owe a debt of gratitude to Bob Felter who comes to our aid when something needs "fixin". He replaces rotten window wood, broken fences and gates, stair railings, dehumidifiers, etc. He’s our guardian angel with a tool belt!

The Phillips House Museum at 7th and Union Streets preserves the atmosphere of a typical farmhouse found in Arcata. As a living museum, Arcata’s best example of Greek Revival architecture shows the daily life an Arcata resident between 1854 and 1932. Free tours of Phillips House are available 2 - 4 p.m. every Sunday and by appointment.

*Submitted by Jaffa Dugan, Board Member*



**Board Members**

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 Shelley Mitchell  
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Mission  
 Historical Sites Society of Arcata shall promote recognition of cultural heritage of Arcata and its environs, to identify historical and architecturally significant structures and sites within Arcata planning area and to encourage their preservation.

**P.O. Box 4521  
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[www.arcatahistory.org](http://www.arcatahistory.org)

This newsletter is published quarterly. Articles or photos may be submitted to [sdm2@humboldt.edu](mailto:sdm2@humboldt.edu)

**Welcome new members!**

Charline Crump, Kel Loughmiller, Alyson Hunter, Don Tuttle Julian and Nadine Berg, Daniel Fuller, Jon Hansard, Stephen and Dottie Lewis, Connie Stewart

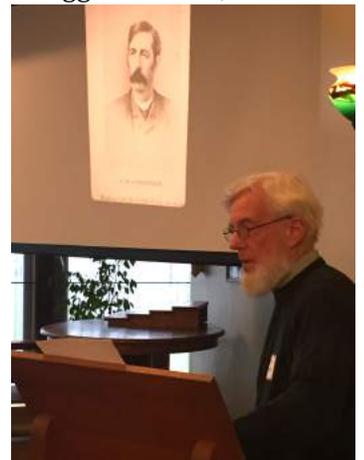
**President’s Message**

*From Alex Stillman.*

**Minor Theater:** Katie Belknap and Solomon Lowenstein, owners of the Sanctuary at J and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets have been working at the Minor Theater doing restoration work. They invited the HSSA Board to observe the restoration. Josh Neff, new owner of the Minor Theater and Merrick McKinlay, manager and owner of Richards Goat, will be giving the HSSA board a tour of the building on June 1st. Jeff and Merrick are interested in the HSSA board’s input.

**School tours are back:** The Union Street Charter School’s 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders enjoyed their visit to the Phillips House on May 18. Bill Chandler recently restored the HSSA’s vintage typewriter, and Kel Loughmiller was a grand success demonstrating it for the students. (see the typed thank you note from the students on Page 5). Charline Crump, a former teacher who brought her classes to the museum, and Karole Ely, who has portrayed Mrs. Phillips planned the morning. Dick Wild and Uri Driscoll demonstrated how mules were packed to make the trek to Humboldt and Trinity County gold mines. The pack trains came up 7<sup>th</sup> Street, by the Phillips House. Dick asked the students what they would pack. The students suggested food, clothes and a first aid kit. The mules carried those items plus mining supplies and even pianos.

The annual HSSA luncheon was held on March 19. The featured speaker, Dr. Jack Irvine (pictured at right), shared information about the history of medical care in Arcata. Bob Felter was honored as the Preservationist of the year. He is pictured below, being presented with the award by Karole Ely.



Don Tuttle presented the Preservation Award to Julian Berg, project architect, for the Lindsey House (1851) rehabilitation. Owners Howard and Jan Hunt restored the house, located on 7th Street

## Lumber Mills

The timber industry in northwestern California has experienced major shifts since its early beginnings in the 1850s. That first industry was dominated by an old-growth redwood resource and enterprising men, who became the owners of thousands of acres of virgin forests, built the mills to convert those forests into marketable products, and developed the infrastructure needed to move both logs and lumber, i.e., roads, railroads, and ships. Thousands of laborers from around the world worked for these men in the woods, on the railroads, and in the mills, making their bosses wealthy and earning a minimal living for themselves and their families.



Photo from *Remember in Arcata...* Facebook Page

Coming out of the Depression, winds of change began the first tentative hints that this industry was going to change, but World War II put everything on hold for five or six years. Then a gale began to blow and what happened from about 1947 throughout the 1950s and well into the 1960s can only be described as a hurricane. Statistics about numbers of loaded rail cars and the board feet they carried each year give a dry account of what was happening, but understanding what took this region, and very importantly, Arcata, by storm is rooted in not only economics and exploited resources, but an unprecedented social phenomenon that changed forever the physical and cultural life of this community. .

Beginning in 1947 and continuing until the late 1960s, the *Humboldt Times* produced a Sunday feature called “Log and Saw.” Those first features were one page with local mill news and advertisements. In the 1950s, “Log and Saw” sometimes covered four pages and included syndicated articles about the timber industry and many advertisements for logging supplies, equipment, and services. A piece in a 1952 *Log and Saw* provides a good overview of what was happening locally, observing that 340 sawmills were then operating in Humboldt County, as opposed to 20 a decade earlier. Timber men and mill operators from Washington and Oregon were migrating in droves to Humboldt County, attracted by its timber reserves of Douglas fir, which had been frowned upon by the earlier lumbermen, but was now recognized as among the region’s greatest assets (*Humboldt Times* 13 Jan. 1952).

The *Arcata Union* provided statistics on the number of railcars shipped and the amount of board feet exported from local mills, with the reports from the NWP railroad station agency in Arcata. In the early post World War II years, strikes and railroad car shortages hampered the industry’s ability to export its products. For example, during the third week in July 1946, lumber shipments through the Arcata station of the NWP RR and the Arcata and Mad River RR totaled 40 cars per day, averaging 20,000 feet and setting an all-time record. It was suggested that the number would have been perhaps 50 or 60 cars each day if it were not for the shortage of rail cars (*Arcata Union* 23 Aug. 1946). In contrast, during the month of January 1947, 1000 cars of lumber and other forest products rolled through the Arcata station (*Arcata Union* 20 Feb. 1947). And while production continued to rise, so did the County’s population. The California Taxpayers’ Association reported that Humboldt County had a population of 77,100 as of January 1950, an increase of 68.3% over the 1940 population (*Humboldt Times* 25 Dec. 1949). Arcata with its close access to timberlands and an established railroad system was touted as the “Lumber Capital of the West” (*Arcata Union* 25 Dec. 1947).



While this phenomenal production was first controlled by some of the redwood company holdovers from the past, the increasing influx of men from the Pacific Northwest changed the picture, bringing their mill equipment, expertise and/or capital. Another group, with little money but an eye for the possibilities, was loggers and mill workers from elsewhere. With ingenuity and seat-of-the-pants financing, they started what became known as “gypo” operations. (The word was apparently associated with a type of power saw, as indicated in an advertisement in the *Humboldt Times* 18 May 1947). And lastly, there were laborers from not only the

Northwest but Arkansas and Oklahoma, as well, who came for the job opportunities.

A 1952 Directory of Humboldt County Lumber Mills listed 258 sawmills and related enterprises, employing more than 8,639 persons with an estimated daily lumber output in excess of 8,250,000 board feet. Things continued to boom well into the 1960s, but the inevitable was bound to happen—the resource was not infinite and forests were finally recognized as being much more than logs for the mill.

Problems with sustainability and social and environmental impacts, all of which were present throughout the boom, finally rose to the surface. One problem that was highly visible and damaging to the local community was the sawdust, smoke and ash emitted by the many burners (Plate 11). These burners are known in the vernacular as “teepee” burners, but were never identified as such in period newspaper accounts.

Complaints from Arcata residents were brought to the City Council and the Board of Supervisors, as residents described clogged gutters, health problems, and houses, cars, yards and line-drying laundry covered with sawdust. Efforts by the industry to forestall regulation were undertaken. Combustion experts were hired, surveys taken and new technologies applied, but the reality was that the problem continued even into the 1970s, when Arcata’s “teepees” were finally abandoned.



**Teepee burners in Arcata in the 1950s. photo from Remember in Arcata...Facebook Page**

Other problems plaguing the industry were the logging trucks that used roads not built to serve both the trucks and passenger vehicles. Overweight loads were commonplace, as were dumped loads. In fact, periodically, salvage operations were made to clean up logs alongside Humboldt County’s roads.

As the balloon began to leak air, the small operations faded from the scene and the industry became concentrated, once again, in the hands of the large companies. This time, though, the companies were generally corporations as opposed to individual families. The one major exception is Sierra Pacific, started by the Emerson family and still under its control. Hammond became Georgia Pacific and later Louisiana Pacific; Pacific Lumber Company, now in its death throes, was taken over by Maxxam; Arcata Redwood was incorporated into Simpson Timber Company. Two lumber mills operated in the Sunset area: Twin Parks Mills and Speier Mill B complex .



**Twice a day, the janitors swept the ash from the exterior hallways of Arcata High School. Photo from Remember in Arcata...Facebook Page**



*Archaeological Survey Report for Proposed Foster Avenue extension project, City of Arcata. Prepared by Janet P. Edisness, M.A., Registered Professional Archaeologist with Roscoe and Associates. 2008.*



Dan Tanquey and Bob Gajic hang 6 historic photographs in the hall way to the Arcata Main Street office by Willow and Libation as a long-term exhibit in honor of Historic Preservation Month.



Phillip's House Museum May 19, 2016 2016  
 lower case May 1 May 19, 2016  
 " 1 " is the number one or L 1

Union Street Charter School 2 school tours.

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Typist is Mrs. Kel Loughmiller

We have home-baked cookies to eat after tour today. We have our 2nd house or mansion tour right now. The mule, "Bucky," is outside being shown to the students.

Gia "Gaia" My my name is gaia.lv e museum.  
 My name is Willow I love the youe tour.  
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Thank you note typed by school visitors on our vintage typewriter. This was the first typewriter experience for most of them.

## May is the month to renew your membership.

To renew, complete and return the form below with your check. Please consider making an additional contribution

### Membership Form: Historical Sites Society of Arcata

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_(\$25) Individual \_\_\_(\$35) Family \_\_\_(\$100) Preservation Partner

\_\_\_( ) Additional contribution

My gift is ( ) in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide contact information so we can notify honorees.

To join HSSA send your dues to :  
 Historical Sites Society of Arcata  
 PO Box 4521  
 Arcata, CA 95518



PO Box 4521  
Arcata, CA 95518

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## Who was Dolly Varden?

Upon hearing that the Foster Ave. extension was partially built on the site of the Dolly Varden Mill, many of us found ourselves wondering who Dolly Varden was and why a local mill and road are named after her. A little research, thanks to *Wikipedia*, uncovered the story. Dolly Varden was actually a species of trout!

David Starr Jordan, while at Stanford University, included an account of this naming of the Dolly Varden Trout in one of his books. "My grandmother's family operated a summer resort at Upper Soda Springs on the Sacramento River just north of the present town of Dunsmuir, California. She lived there all her life and related to us in her later years her story about the naming of the Dolly Varden trout. She said that some fishermen were standing on the lawn at Upper Soda Springs looking at a catch of the large trout from the McCloud River that were called 'calico trout' because of their spotted, colorful markings. They were saying that the trout should have a better name. My grandmother, then a young girl of 15 or 16, had been reading Charles Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge* in which there appears a character named Dolly Varden; also the vogue in fashion for women at that time (middle 1870s) was called "Dolly Varden", a dress of sheer figured muslin worn over a bright-colored petticoat. My grandmother had just gotten a new dress in that style and the red-spotted trout reminded her of her printed dress. She suggested to the men looking down at the trout, 'Why not call them "Dolly Varden"?' They thought it a very appropriate name and the guests that summer returned to their homes (many in the San Francisco Bay area) calling the trout by this new name." (*Wikipedia*)

