French tricolors abounded as California State Parks celebrated the influence of French immigrants who came to this country for a new life, and while seeking their fortunes, found their way to the “Diggins” at Humbug during the California Gold Rush.

The event was kicked off by Archaeologist Mark Selverston, who revealed the little known story of the many French in the gold rush, their accomplishments, and the great effect they had on California history. Mark belied his insistence that he was not a trained public speaker, by keeping the audience in rapt attention as he interpreted the French saga while nonchalantly displaying his talent and humor as an adept, stand-up story teller. Mark introduced Dr. Claudine Chalmers who surprised park staff with two rare “Talkin Plates”, which were painted with scenes of the Crimean War, in particular the siege of Sebastopol and capture of the Malakoff tower. That exploit is credited with providing the name of the diggins at Humbug: Malakoff.

She hopes to obtain more of the set so they may be displayed together in the park museum.

The interlude was pleasantly filled with French ballads performed by Beaucoup Chapeaux.
French Consul General, Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens based in San Francisco, gave a discourse on the long relationship between the American and French people and emphasized continued inclusiveness of immigrants. He was impressed at the levels of public involvement in our pursuit of better times for state parks.

Fifth District Supervisor Hank Weston, revealed he has a long passion for working with and for the preservation of Malakoff. He ended with a tribute to citizen involvement in keeping Malakoff open and a promise that, “Malakoff Diggins will never close!”

Dave Anderson, Executive Committee director thanked everyone involved in making the special day happen as did Sierra District Chief Ranger Matt Green, who also noted Malakoff Diggins will soon be the first California State Park to be completely solar powered. He singled out Mark Selwertson, Dr. Claudine Chalmers and Syd Brown as the driving force behind the French Connection.

Marianne Bryant helped staff the food booth which offered tasty cheeses and delicious quiche to be accompanied by fine wines including an excellent Chardonnay.

E Clampus Vitus 10 provided transportation via the indomitable Clementine.
Holly Mitten adroitly answered all questions and sold brochures, memberships & T-Shirts, while Mark Michalski has a gold claim he’d be happy to sell you.

Visitors rode or hiked to see the newly installed Malakoff Village Interpretive Panel.

After a long hot summer, Supv. Ranger Dan Youngren finally hit the wall.

“Quiche? Rangers Don’t Eat Quiche!”
The lucky winner was Jill Wiggens, from Grass Valley. Jill said she had been planning a trip to Europe for next year and that she has never won anything before. She was otherwise, speechless.

Judy Arbuckle helped coordinate the Raffle drawings which featured a 'GRAND PRIZE' of one week in VENCE Villa La Grisette, on the French Riviera, donated by Dr. Claudine Chalmers.

Chief Ranger Green doffed his hat to Syd Brown for a job well done.

It wasn't television, I-Phones or Lap-tops that captivated the fascinated crowd, but old fashioned wooden puppets on strings, acting out their version of The French Connection Story

(Photos by John Field, Janet Peters, L. Clark)
BRIDGEPORT FALL FESTIVAL

SOUTH YUBA RIVER STATE PARK

SUNDAY OCTOBER 22, 2017
11am - 4pm

Barn Tours * Gold Panning * Hayrides * Live Birds
Children’s Games & Crafts * Food & Drinks * Pumpkin Painting
Live Music * Ghosts of Bridgeport * Root Beer Floats

FREE ADMISSION
Parking $5.00

17660 Pleasant Valley Rd, Penn Valley, Ca 530-432-2546

http://southyubariverstatepark.org
A Remarkable Man for All Seasons

He was the champion of the mining population, and in Nevada County, it was all about mining. A friend of the workingman as well as friend to the capitalists who provided the resources to develop the mines; to the miners his death was greatest calamity that could have happened.

Mine owners and businessmen alike respected Watt, and they listened to his levelheaded counsel and sound judgment in regard to the policies that concerned the interest of the miners. Being an early pioneer, William Watt had years of experience as a miner and mine owner, which is why he was able to relate to both groups so well.

When the big mine owners talked of lowering wages, it was Watt who was first to step in and use his influence to defend and protect the workingman when the mines were slow and the economy was depressed.

Watt was born July 14, 1826, near Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a marine engineer until he came to the United States, arriving in California in the summer of 1852 and settling in Grass Valley. He was Director of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad and owner of the Grass Valley Telegraph, the first newspaper in that town. He and his brother Robert became partners in several ventures, including gravel mining on Pike Flat and quartz mining on Gold Hill, the Boston Ravine, the Massachusetts Hill (known as the Watt Mine), and the Eureka Hill. In 1866, the Eureka was known as “the best gold mine around.”

From 1861 until 1863, he served as California State Senator from Nevada County. He served as University of California Regent from 1868 until 1871, when he became a Democrat candidate for Governor of California.

Watt’s last mining endeavor was the Watt and Derbec Gravel companies, located between North Bloomfield and Moore’s Flat. He was superintendent of both companies. It was there he had gone for business when he met with an unfortunate accident: cont.
After leaving the Derbec Gravel Mine at 5 a.m. on July 3, 1878 and heading to Nevada City, his buggy approached **North Bloomfield**. The horses apparently became spooked and took off at an increasing speed, going around several curves and dips until Watt was thrown from the buggy and dragged.

When the news of Watts’ death spread, a general gloom spread over the county where he was so well-known. His death was mourned as that of a great statesman; all public buildings, as well as privately owned businesses, were draped in mourning and closed for the services. Work was suspended in the mines as the entire mining population turned out to pay their respects and honor the man who had been their representative for so many years.

The funeral, held July 9, 1878, at the old Masonic Cemetery in Grass Valley, brought several thousand friends and admirers from throughout the Northern Mines. Fire companies of Grass Valley, led a procession to the depot, joined by the Nevada Fire Companies, Nevada Commandery and Marysville Commandery, Knights Templar, Masonic Orders, San Francisco dignitaries and the Governor’s private secretary. But it was the common man, miner and merchant, who swelled the crowds to such numbers.

William Watt’s monument is located in the Old Masonic Cemetery, off Kidder Street, from Bennett Street. Take Kidder to the top of the hill, there it enters the place.

Look immediately to the right. The monument is visible about 100 yards from the entrance road.

Also on the stone:
His wife Emily Celia 1824-1907,
James Watt (Son ?) 1846-1916,
James’ wife, Alison Finnie 1855-1941

*L. Clark, Ed.*
STATE PARK VOLUNTEERS

Twenty five highly motivated and involved state park volunteers mustered at North Bloomfield on Sunday, September 24, to enjoy good food and “thanks” from the appreciative park staff, represented by Supervising Ranger Dan Youngren, Ranger Ryan Randar, Ranger James Carey, Park Interpreter Jenna Randar, Malakoff Volunteer Coordinator Brooke Betz, Park Maintenance Worker Tom Stark and Park Aid Emily Baxter.

Staff emphatically thanked the gathering for over 800 hours of volunteer time, worth over $60,000 in wages, that has been realized so far this year.

Special Golden Poppy awards were presented to Chris Stark (above) and Marianne Bryant (right) for their extensive involvement with the visitor center staffing, sales, inventory and reorganizing of that place, often at a moment’s notice.

Barbecued chicken, salads, casseroles and desserts rounded out the fare, of which, as official representative of the Humbug Herald, I was obliged to sample, and found it excellent.

The success of Malakoff’s interpretive & educational program is the result of the dedication and expertise of these valuable folks. A job well done, indeed.

Editor

Ice Cream Social

Sixty seven campers and day use visitors screamed for ice cream at the annual Labor Day Social in downtown North Bloomfield. Park staff and volunteers doled out the frozen delight. Sponsored by Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins.
French nationals were as captivated as the rest of the world by the discovery of gold in California, and were among the first to swarm the gold fields of the Sierra Nevada. News of the discovery reached France virtually simultaneously with the Revolution of 1848, encouraging a migration to California, where some 30,000 had arrived by the close of 1851. About a third of them headed to the northern mines by way of Marysville.

French Consul General Guillaume Patrice Dillon, appointed to San Francisco to assist with the influx of French gold seekers, was also influential in helping them get established and move onward to the mines. He did it by organizing French merchants to form the Société Francaise de Bienfaisance Mutuelle (French Mutual Benevolent Society), which aided the needy in moving to various parts of the interior—to the Feather and the Yuba River diggins and to Marysville. Dillon personally escorted one party to Marysville, even paying for lodging and food along the way.

Charles Covillaud, a Frenchman born in Cognac, was overseeing a ranch in the late 1840s and was one of the first to hear about the discovery of gold at Sutter’s mill on the American River. He made his way to the discovery site to see for himself before striking it rich on the lower Yuba River. When it came time in 1850, to lay out a town at the site of the ranch, he named it Marysville for his wife, Mary Murphy, survivor of the infamous Donner Party.

Antoine Chabot passed through budding Marysville in the autumn of 1849. Born among the French-speaking population of Quebec, Canada, Chabot immigrated to the eastern seaboard of the U.S. as a young man. Chabot and his partners, E. E. Matteson and Eli Miller, built ditches and flumes to bring water for sluicing to their dry diggins. By the spring of 1853, they had developed hoses and nozzles which allowed them to wash down the hillsides while keeping the operator a safe distance back from collapsing banks. With this, Chabot and Matteson are credited for inventing hydraulic mining.

(A philanthropist, he is known today via Chabot College, Chabot Lake, etc.)

cont. in next edition, Ed.
In the summer of 1851 Mrs. B.D. Bates traveled to Bridgeport with her ship captain husband on a holiday excursion to visit the gold camps. She and her husband sailed from San Francisco to Marysville, and then drove a horse and carriage to French Corral. The following is taken from Mrs. Bates’ personal diary:

“Finally, we came to a little mountain town called Bridgeport. It consisted of three little shanties and a toll bridge, which spanned the Yuba River. The setting sun was just gliding over the tops of the surrounding mountains, as we halted in front of one of the dwellings to inquire the distance to French Corral. They informed us it was about 5 miles. They told us there was pretty high mountain just beyond, and advised us to discontinue our journey for that night. They seemed so particularly solicitous for us to remain all night, [but] their shanty was so filthy dirty, and they themselves were such savage, hirsute-looking objects, that I entreated my husband to go on. I thought, out of the two evils, we were choosing the least by proceeding. I came to a different conclusion, however, before we reached our destination. My husband paid one dollar and a half toll, and we crossed the high bridge, under which rolled the Yuba. At this place, it was rapidly rushing stream. It went foaming and dashing over the new innumerable rocks, which intercepted its progress, over every barrier, acknowledging no superior power. Directly after crossing Yuba, we commenced the toilsome ascent of the highest mountain we had yet encountered. At the commencement of the ascent, my husband alighted to walk up the mountain, and I was to drive up. The poor horse started with all the energy he possessed, in the hope, I suppose, of speedily gaining the top. I quickly lost sight of my husband, who was trudging on in vain in hope of overtaking me. Soon I began to perceive evident signs of exhaustion in the horse. I tried to stop him, but could not. The buggy drew back so, that, if he attempted to stop, it drew him back too. And oh, what an awful road it was! cont.
Deep gullies worn by streams of water, which had flowed down when the snow had melted, deep enough to hide myself in! I tried several times to get the carriage cross wise the road, but could not on account of those gullies and huge rocks.

On the return trip we reached Bridgeport, we were accosted by the toll gatherer with, “Well, I reckon as how you had a right smart heap of trouble that night, afore you reached the top of the mountain. I allowed you would be for turning back; but I have always heard say, ‘them Yankee women never would give up a beat.’”

**Provocative French Connection Questions:**

In 1917, Alfred Kneebone proprietor of the old Bridgeport Stage Stop, and son of renowned mule-skinner, Andrew, married Miss Lucy Moynier of **French Corral**. One cannot help but wonder if she was a descendant of the “unknown” Frenchman who, in 1849 erected the infamous mule corral that gave name to that place?

*The Union*, June, 1917 - Horse thieves on the Ridge steal two horses and a wagon from Mr. Moynier of French Corral. (More speculation: is Mr. Moynier also a descendant of the Fabled French Founder of French Corral? and....is he Lucy Moynier’s father?...Brother?)

According to *The Union* archives, the name of the place derives from a corral, built by a Frenchman who worked the diggings at Frenchman’s Bar on the Middle Yuba River.

.........which gives to further speculation that the corral may have been a holding place for mules used to change out teams hauling up and down the San Juan Ridge, to and from Frenchman’s Bar, etc. .........or Not!  

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Old French Corral - Unknown Date
Join Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins  
or Renew Your Membership - See Last Page  
Secure Sign Up: www.malakoffdigginsstatepark.org

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FRIENDS OF NORTH BLOOMFIELD & MALAKOFF DIGGINS

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins (FNB&MD) is a non-profit organization assisting the California Department of Parks and Recreation in the operation of Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park.

Your tax-deductible membership in FNB &MD will

- help preserve, protect and enhance the man made and natural resources of Malakoff Diggins SHP
- support interpretation of the park’s rich biological diversity, geologic features, historic and cultural resources
- provide you with a quarterly newsletter and other notices of Park activities
- include a 10% discount on purchases from the Malakoff Park Store.

Membership Levels

☐ Annual Senior/Student ($15)
☐ Annual Individual membership ($20)
☐ Annual family membership ($35)
☐ Lifetime individual membership ($150)
☐ Lifetime family membership ($200)

Name__________________________________________
Street Address__________________________________________
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I am interested in:
☐ helping the park organization financially
☐ becoming a trained docent
☐ becoming a park volunteer
☐ other

Mission:

We enhance the interpretive experience for visitors, promote park-based education for learners of all ages, and support and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Malakoff Diggins SHP. We also assist other cooperative associations and the State Park System mission for the benefit of the public.

for more information call 530.265.2740 or check out our website:

www.malakoffdigginsstatepark.org