

of the
Tuolumne County
Historical Society
Sonora, California

Museum Hours:

Tues.—Sat. (10-4)

HRC:

Tues.—Fri. (9-4)

Letter from the President

Fellow Members,

I would like to encourage you to take advantage of one or more of our upcoming variety of programs. The recent, very well received, program on August 14 by Max Wheeler about “Underground Sonora” filled the presentation room at the library with an audience of some sixty people.

Coming up, on September 11, is our regular Wednesday program, followed by three more programs in October. All of these interesting presentations are described in detail elsewhere in this *Historian*.

If you have been putting off visiting the Museum to see the outstanding banner display on “Mexican California History,” created by the Cinco de Mayo Committee, there is still time to do so. These banners were formerly on display in the Columbia Museum during the Cinco de Mayo celebration. They were so popular that we arranged to have them replace the California Historical Society exhibit *Telling Stories of Mexican California: Real Life and Myth Making* when it had to move on to another venue. Accompanying this second banner display are two *Alebrijes* that were created by members of the Sierra Art Council.

(If you don’t know what an Alebrije is, then you have another good reason for visiting the Museum).

Chuck Holland

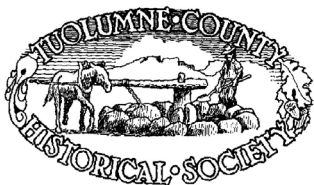
U.S. Forest Service - Past and Present

Wed., Sept. 11, at 6:00 p.m.
Tuolumne County Library

Join **Ranger Eugenie Moore** for a presentation about the history of the US Forest Service. Discover influential historical events and people that helped shape the Forest Service agency and the Stanislaus National Forest. You will also hear about current activities happening in the Stanislaus National Forest. Eugenie Moore is the Visitor Services Manager for the Miwok and Summit Ranger District. Earning a degree in Environmental Science from UC Santa Barbara and her Masters in Teaching from the University of San Francisco, she has developed and implemented education and interpretation programs for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Forest Service for twenty-five years.



*Bennett Juniper in the
Stanislaus National Forest*



California Folk Music Project Records of Sidney Robertson Cowell

By Sherrin Grout

When I am looking for subjects for this column, I often stumble across ideas while looking for something else. And this time was no exception. While doing research on the Library of Congress online archive, and getting frustrated yet again, I tried another tack—looking through the records of Sidney Robertson (who married composer Henry Cowell in 1941). Robertson worked on the California Folk Music Project (1938-1940), a collaboration of the Work Projects Administration, Library of Congress, and the Music Division of the University of California, Berkeley.



Source: <https://staging.itma.ie/blog/sidney-robertson-cowell/>

Sidney Robertson Cowell

was recorded playing “The Arkansas Traveler” on his harmonica in 1939, but was also known for his fiddle playing.

Other Tuolumne County residents Robertson recorded were Leon Ponce of Columbia, Sam Bell at the Cliff House Lodge on the Big Oak Flat Road, and John McReady of Groveland.

This article borrows heavily from Otheto Weston’s research and a new book on the California Folk Music Project, *California Gold*, by Catherine Kerst. You can listen to some of the recordings on the SoundCloud website: <https://soundcloud.com/uc-press/sets/california-gold> or the Library of Congress website.

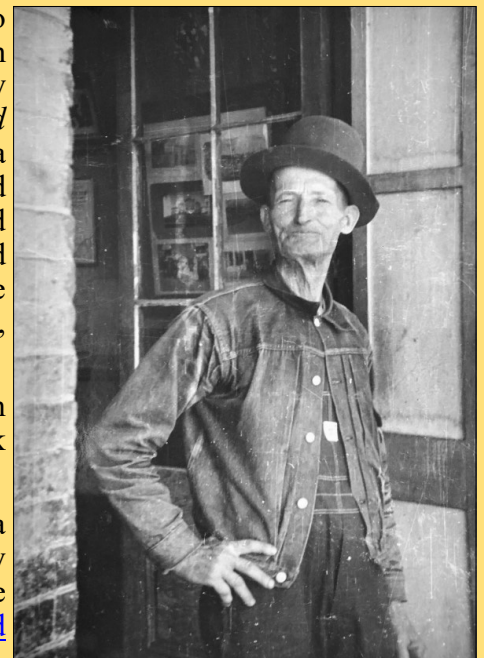


Aaron Morgan and Irene Ponce, P36614

Robertson was one of the most active researchers in 1938 and 1939, traveling all over California, including Tuolumne County. She recorded singers and musicians playing little-known songs, gathering information and taking photographs. She documented songs from all traditions and cultures throughout California—from Icelandic singers in the Bay Area to the Pala Band of Mission Indians to Portuguese singers from the Azores in Watsonville. In Columbia, two of the people she recorded were the men pictured here.

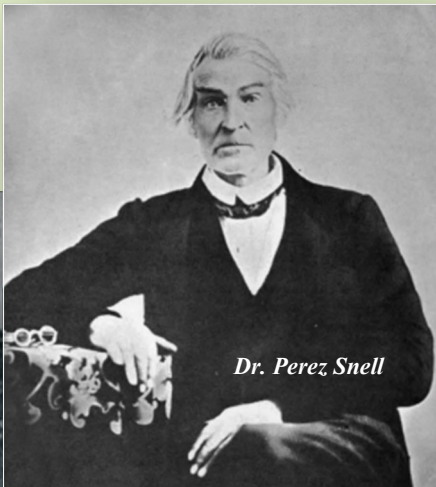
Aaron Morgan was born in Columbia in 1861, describing himself as a second generation resident. He lived in a cabin at the west end of State Street, and he was recorded playing “Root, Hog, or Die” and “MacLeod’s Reel” on his harmonica.

According to Otheto Weston, Johnny Stone lived at the Experimental Mine. Robertson reported that when Stone came to Columbia for food, he stayed in one of the shacks left behind by Charlie Chaplin’s movie *Gold Rush*. Stone came to California from Texas via Colorado around 1931, with a varied background that included playing and singing for medicine shows. He



John Stone, 2023.23.484

Museum Corner



Dr. Snell's Cabinet of Curiosities

Presentation by David Allen Simerley

Wed., Oct. 9, at 6:00 p.m.

Tuolumne County Library



During the gold rush, miners were not only digging up gold, but digging up other things as well. Pioneer scientist and physician Dr. Perez Snell was often the first to see these discoveries as they were brought to his Sonora assay office to be identified.

With help from these miners, Dr. Snell's "Cabinet of Curiosities" grew until it was heralded as the largest and most complete collection of natural history on the Pacific Coast. Among the rocks, minerals, and fossils were relics from an ancient past, which spurred a debate over the arrival of the first people in California. The debate still continues today.

HISTORICAL REENACTMENT

The Sonora Aero Club 1857

Sat., Oct. 12, 2024 - 1:00—4:00 p.m.

Tuolumne County Museum Courtyard

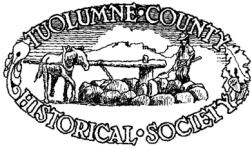
FREE to the Public!

AERO GOOSE flying machine on display

STARSHIP TUNA STRING BAND

The Sonora Aero Club allegedly fixated on aircraft soon after stories of the first flying dirigible balloons emerged in Europe in the 1850s. The club's mission was to design and build the first navigable aircraft. These flying machines were called "Aeros." Fact or fiction? No proof has ever been found to verify its existence, but the afternoon promises to be a lively event!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1003436511484117>



**TUOLUMNE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

158 Bradford Street
SONORA, CA 95370-4920

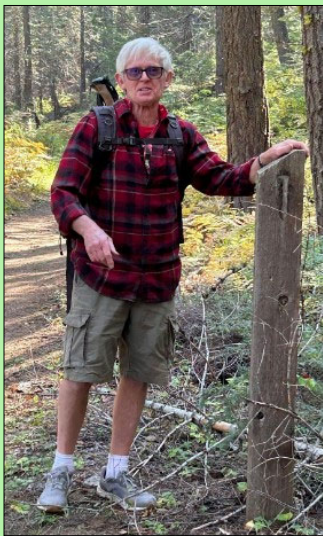
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Sonora, California

*The Mission of the Tuolumne County
Historical Society shall be to discover, collect,
preserve, and disseminate knowledge about
the history of Tuolumne County and
the State of California.*

The *Historian* is published several times a year by the Tuolumne County Historical Society, 158 Bradford St., Sonora, CA 95370-4920 for the benefit of the membership. There is no charge for the *Historian*. (In compliance with Public Law 103-123, 39 U.S.C. 3656 subsection [j].)

Tuolumne County Museum & History Research Center
158 Bradford Street, Sonora, CA 95370
Museum: 209-532-1317—History Research Center: 209-532-4227
<http://tchistory.org>, info@tchistory.org



Ross Carkeet

A Walk with Ross Carkeet

TCHS Members ONLY

Sat., October 5, 2024
10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Join us for a leisurely stroll with Ross Carkeet up the scenic and historic old Sugar Pine Railroad Grade. Information will be presented on the Sugar Pine logging railroad history, South Fork Stanislaus River history, the Stanislaus Experimental Forest, local lore, and natural history.

The group is limited to 20 Tuolumne County Historical Society members. Meeting location will be provided to the first 20 members to sign up. Contact Brad Fisher at 209-532-4227 or coordinator.tcmuseum@gmail.com.

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Change in address or contact information?

Contact Kathy Boone—

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