

of the  
Tuolumne County  
Historical Society  
Sonora, California

## Museum Hours:

Tues. & Thurs. (10-4)  
Wed. (1-4)  
Fri. & Sat. (10-3:30)

## History Research Center:

Tues.—Fri. (10-4)

## Welcome New Members:

Debi Bautista  
Stephanie Beaver-Guzman  
David Carkeet  
Kyle Cox  
Cynthia Doyle  
Dan Hellevig  
Lindsay Laney  
Mike Merritt  
Sheila Shanahan

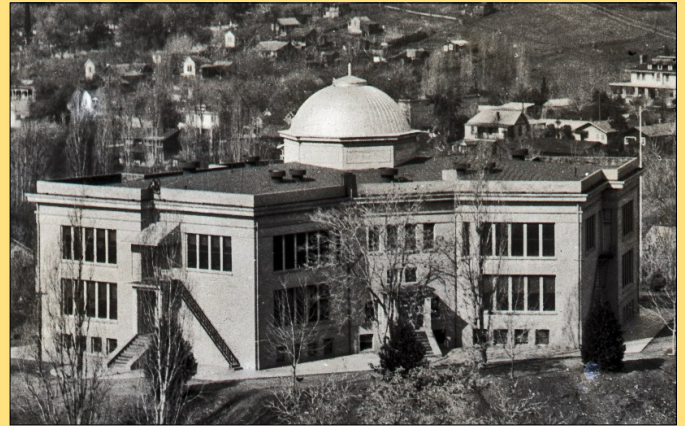
## Letter from the President

### Fellow Members,

I am on an executive committee, along with Jeff Wilson and Charles Segerstrom, launching a campaign to “Save the Dome Roof.” It is in such bad shape that it must be repaired to prevent major damage that would eliminate future restoration options. We are hoping to raise \$250,000 so that we can reach the total amount needed to repair the surface of the Dome and the flat roof. We are planning an event, for May 30, at \$40 per ticket, offering tours of the Dome itself, lunch, and a slide show of the history of the Dome. Please see the QR code below to contribute to the “Save the Dome Roof” fund, or send a check to the Sonora Area Foundation. We are very optimistic that our community will support this cause. The Dome is an iconic structure overlooking our town of Sonora. It has been our beacon since 1909. Now is the time to come forward and “Save the Dome Roof.”

Thank you so much!

Linda Crocker



P40017

Sonora Grammar School “Dome,” 1926



## California's Black Gold Rush Pioneers

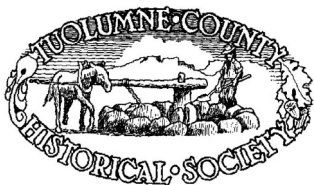
Thurs., June 18, 6:30 p.m.  
**Tuolumne County Museum Courtyard**

The last 2026 Speaker Series—Beyond Gold, Stories Across Cultures—will highlight California’s Black Gold Rush Pioneers, with speaker Sylvia Roberts, a local author and historian. She previously published *Mining for Freedom: Black History Meets the California Gold Rush*, the unknown history of the thousands of Black pioneers who were part of the 1849 California Gold Rush era. Roberts currently writes a monthly newspaper column on contemporary racial discourse.

This initiative is made possible through the collaboration of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, ConAmor Building Bridges, Columbia College, and the Tuolumne County Historical Society.



Sylvia Roberts



## Springfield School

by Sherrin Grout

As the school year comes to a close, I thought it would be appropriate to show the middle and end of the last original building in the Springfield Plaza area—the schoolhouse. Built in 1856 as a Methodist Episcopal Church, it was used sporadically after the first minister, the Rev. George Taylor, held services regularly on Sunday evenings. The building originally had a center door flanked by a window on either side. Over the door, just below the cornice, was an indentation with iron letters reading “1856,” the year it was erected.



TP3985

Springfield School, 1923

It became a school when, in 1864, the trustees purchased it, furnished it with desks, and planted trees. The trustees bricked up the center front door, took out the side windows, and fitted doors in their place, making an entrance on the left for girls, on the right for boys. Each door opened into an anteroom for their wraps. A flagpole was placed at the front peak. This building replaced two wooden shacks previously used as school rooms.

In the summer of 1914, the flagpole was removed from the roof and placed in front of the building, where it remained until the school was closed. In the fall of 1918, the building was found unsafe and the classes were moved to a house on the west side of the plaza. A large timber was bolted between the walls to support and strengthen the structure: then school resumed in the building.

In 1924, the building was condemned, and the school was moved to the office of the Springfield Mining Company, about a mile west of town. In the summer of 1926, the roof was removed from the original school building, and the walls were lowered to the tops of the doors and windows. A new roof like the first was then put on the building. School continued in the building until the fall of 1938, when the building was again condemned, and the schoolhouse was closed in the old brick building. The teacher and pupils were absorbed into the new Columbia School for the remainder of that year. In September 1939, school reopened at Springfield in a house fitted up by Mr. Engler on the east side of Shaws Flat Road just out of Springfield. The school closed for good in June 1940.



2020.141.9

1983 Reunion of Springfield School, class of 1935-36

# Museum Corner



## Cinco de Mayo

Columbia State Historic Park  
May 2 and 3, 10 am—7 pm

By Mercedes Tune

Is Cinco de Mayo Mexico's Independence Day? No, it is not. Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Battle of Puebla, where Mexican forces defeated the French army.

But why is this celebration so meaningful in Columbia, California?

Because the victory in Puebla became a powerful symbol of freedom and hope for Latino Americans in California. In May of 1862, when word of the triumph reached the gold camps, something extraordinary happened. The fiery spirit of independence and camaraderie erupted in Columbia. Mexican American men and women poured into the streets in a spontaneous celebration—singing, dancing, waving flags. That moment became the first documented Cinco de Mayo celebration in the United States, igniting a tradition that quickly spread through California, Nevada, and Oregon.



The celebration traveled through civic organizations known as **Juntas Patrióticas**, formed by community-minded leaders who carried the message of unity, democracy, and cultural pride. That is the spirit at the heart of Cinco de Mayo—the same spirit that surrounded the original celebration and continues to define it today.

The spirit of Cinco de Mayo is a living thing, kept alive by the people of today. Our intention is to share that message, to make it accessible, and to highlight its relevance

in the times we are living.

We are embracing the vision that energized a diverse community in 1862 and carrying it forward into today's celebration. Our research also reveals the remarkable strength and empowerment of Latina women in the Gold Rush era. Many local Latinas owned property and employed workers—rights made possible because Mexico's 1810 independence from Spain established women's legal right to own property. In Columbia and Sonora, it was natural for Latina women to be business leaders.

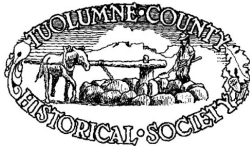


The 5th of May endures as a date of meaning only because an organized, self-assured Latino American community invested it with memory and significance.

We hope this celebration inspires people to reflect on how much of our local history is waiting to be told.

**Come visit the TCHS and TCGS combined booth at the event!**





TUOLUMNE COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
158 Bradford Street  
SONORA, CA 95370-4920

Non-Profit Organization  
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Permit #15  
Sonora, California

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

*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](mailto:info@tchistory.org)

#### **Change in address or contact information?**

Contact Linda Emerson—[memberships@tchistory.org](mailto:memberships@tchistory.org)



**Latest exhibit—North to Columbia**

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