



Little River Improvement Club & Museum

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Serving the community since 1885

Fall 2018

*Little River Improvement Club & Museum:
Built in 1885, it's the last building in Little
River with its full historic integrity intact. It
was the home of the Knights or the Good
Templar, our school, our library, our voting
place, and now, our museum.*

Dear Community:

It's been a good year as the Little River Improvement Club and Museum continues to maintain its unique role in Little River. We have a much-needed new roof and a fresh coat of paint, the building was home to a number of meetings and classes, as well as being open to visitors by appointment and summer weekends. We established a Natural History exhibit featuring Woodlands Wildlife's education materials, an excellent donation of local animal skulls, and a beautiful collection of taxidermy local birds.

Additionally our library received a collection of over 100 history/genealogy books written about the area by local authors, some dating back to the 1850s. A complete map and information about the residents of the Little River Cemetery will soon be framed and on display. Descendants of the early pioneering families often visit the museum, and we are hopeful the expanded genealogy and cemetery exhibits will help them discover their roots. We are open summer weekends and by appointment all year (707-937-2014)

Little River is small; we consider you—the community—our membership. You are creating our history, and we depend on you to support our work in preserving and expanding that history.



Then

In 1873 Isaiah Stevens' daughter Emily Etta, married Wilder Pullen, and together they built what is now Heritage House. Looking west, you'll recognize that curve of Highway One around and in front of the property. The eucalyptus trees now hide most of the view.

Today





Bricks: Yes, there was a brick factory here on the coast, but many of those found in patios and walkways up and down the coast came over as ballast in the holds of Schooners bringing supplies from England, around the tip of South America, then up the coast to the mill in Little River. The bricks were sold for local residents as timber was loaded for the return trip to England. This brick was made by Foster & Co. Ltd in Newcastle on Tyne, England around 1895. It was used in the blacksmith's forge in Little River.

Elma Bryant



Museum Board President, Elma Bryant, passed away this year at 105. The building exists today as our community center and museum as a result of Elma's efforts over the last 50 years.

Those of you who have never visited the Improvement Club & Museum building are in for a pleasant surprise. From the outside all you see is a quaint white cottage with a geranium in the window, but as people walk through the door, they always stop and stare in surprise as they see, not a cozy 1885 parlor, but a large, beautiful meeting hall with a two story domed ceiling, one of only two on the coast. An architectural wonder with each ceiling panel peeled from the trunk of a single tree—jellyroll-style.

The building was originally built to the Golden Mean as a meeting hall for the Fraternal Order of the Knights of the Good Templar, a temperance organization. We hope you'll visit when you see our sign out again next summer. The Hall is also open by appointment and available for small meetings or weddings. 707-937-2014/LRIC@mcn.org

A 1900s version of life in 2018 involved balloon-supported lake-walking.



A few of the books recently added to our library include the civil war diaries of Eugene Sampson (1840-1885) and his betrothed, Rachel Stevens (1846-1911) in Little River. Eugene eventually settled in Little River and he and Rachel raised their family here and are buried in the Little River Cemetery. *Indian Uses of Native Plants*, Murphey 1959; *Diary of Patrick Breen, One of the Donner Party* 1910; *The California Western Railroad* Borden 1945.

**Warm wishes for a healthy, fruitful holiday season and New Year,
Flora Gordon, President
Ronnie James, Executive Director**