



***Little River Improvement Club & Museum:***  
*Built in 1885, it's the last building in Little River with its full historic integrity intact. It was built for the International Order of Good Templars, and became our school, library, 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 were open summer weekends as well as being open all year for meetings, classes, and visitors by appointment. We added to our Pomo Native American exhibit, and our library now houses the original diaries and letters of Rachel and Eugene Sampson as he fought in the Civil war and she traveled to Little River. They're also for sale on a disc.

Our library offers a collection of over 100 history/genealogy books and diaries written about the area by local authors, some dating back to the 1850s.

We received a grant from the Judy Pruden Historical Preservation Fund through the Community Foundation of Mendocino to create a comprehensive exhibit of the Little River Pioneer Cemetery (which is rapidly disappearing due to theft). The exhibit showcases the original map of the cemetery drawn by members of the Little River Improvement Club in the late 60s. Two high school students (thank you Sasha and Violet) volunteered to start our project to document every headstone in the cemetery and we now have a team of 8 volunteers photographing the cemetery. A complete documentation will be made available to you all for genealogy purposes.

## ***Little River Improvement Club & Museum***

*PO Box 273  
8185 Highway I  
Little River, CA 95456*

*LRIC@mcn.org 707-937-2014*

*Serving the community since 1885*

Fall/Winter 2019

Many descendants of early pioneer families visit the museum to discover their roots. We're 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.



*Look up from Van Damme Beach and see **Blanchard House**, another of Little River's historic homes. Built in 1873 by Charles Blair, the deed says it sold for 800 dollars in gold coin. Later owned by Ruel Perkins and Elsie Ledford Perkins who raised their four daughters there. The house received a second story in 1902 to make additional room for the family. It's currently a Bed and Breakfast.*

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**RAFFLE:** This year anyone making a donation will receive a free raffle ticket for each \$10 they donate. Our prizes include a gift certificate for \$100 from Ledford House & Breakfast for 2 at the Little River Inn

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### **A Secret Society**

In 1885 the Museum building was constructed of old growth redwood milled in Little River and measured to the Golden Mean for the secret fraternal organization of the International Order of Good Templars. There's a peep hole in the door and it required a secret password to gain entry to the meetings.

Some years ago the Minutes from the 1885 to 1887 meetings were found; they are written in an early English script, and deciphering them has been a bit of a challenge—but it's happening. They are not what I expected, but still very interesting reading. They'll be ready for our library by next summer.

The goal of the Good Templars was prohibition, which went into effect nationally in 1920. By the early 1930s the Little River Good Templars had dissolved, and the men joined the Masons in Mendocino. The building was left to the women of the Little River Improvement Club to continue to use as a community center. It was Little River's school (we have teacher Dora Zimmer's school bell), its post office, voting site, the first telephone switchboard, and the first library. It was used for an annual Christmas sale, dances and as a (homeland security) base during World Wars I and II. The men walked the headlands spotting submarines. The original blackout shades are still in use.

The Museum has an exciting past, and the interior is an architectural surprise for visitors. We hope you'll visit. The Hall is open summer weekends and by appointment. Also available for small meetings or weddings. 707-937-2014 LRIC@mcn.org

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**LIBRARY:** Over the years the Museum has developed a wonderful library of local diaries dating back to the 1840s, and books written by local historians, There are also books containing interviews with the early pioneer families and descendants, histories of our remaining original houses, Civil War letters, records of ships built at the Little River Ship Yard, and a complete census of the Little River Pioneer Cemetery. Interesting titles include: *Indian Uses of Native Plants, The California Western Railroad, Ships of the Redwood Coast, Big River was Dammed,* and *Pomo Baskets.*



*The Van Damme Monuments were located on both sides of Hwy I as the highway entered the north side of what is now the park. They were removed and dumped in the woods nearby in 1933 when the highway was paved.*

***Warm Wishes for a healthy, fruitful holiday season and New Year.***

- Flora Gordon, President*
- Cally Dym, Vice President.*
- Melody Merriman Sec/Treasurer*
- Robert Zimmer, Trustee*
- Kathleen Cameron, Trustee*
- Ronnie James, Executive Director*