



Little River Improvement Club & Museum, built in 1885, is the last building in Little River with its full historic integrity intact. It was the home of the Good Templars, our school, library, first telephone and post office, voting place, WWI and II homeland security, and now, our community center and museum.

Dear Friends and Neighbors;

A summer hello from the Little River Museum. You may have noticed we're closed this summer. We are, however, open by appointment (phone number in the window or 707-937-2014), and we've had a busy summer acquiring artifacts, setting up our new library, and adding information and photographs to our genealogy base. Our wonderful volunteers are either working from home or alone in the museum.

One of the things you'll find when you're able to visit again is our library of history and research books, all written by early pioneers, their descendants, or current long-time residents. These include journals about trips west in wagons, ships, or on the first trains, picture documentations of the coastal cities and logging camps in their earliest days, and material about individual early settlers and their lives.

We've expanded the Little River Cemetery exhibit, and there will be a new exhibit featuring a series of Little River and Mendocino photos taken in the 1890s along with the antique camera that took them.

An exceptional acquisition this summer is nearly 100 letters from Eugene Sampson to his betrothed, Rachel Stevens, The letters traveled by ship to

Little River Improvement Club & Museum

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

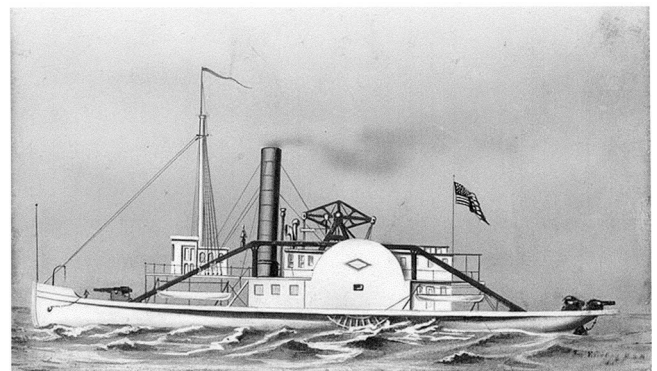
LRIC@mcn.org 707-937-2014

Serving the community since 1885

The Little River Museum is a
501-c-3 nonprofit organization

Summer 2020

Panama, train across Panama, then ship to San Francisco and stage coach to Little River. Today Rachel and Eugene are buried in Little River Cemetery. Of special interest are the letters he wrote while stationed on the war ship, **Calhoun** during the Civil War. The letters took weeks to reach California from the east, and were written on tissue paper. Often when the writer reached the bottom, they turned the page up-side-down and wrote another full page between the lines—on both sides.



The Calhoun

At the end of the war Eugene headed home to Maine on foot. Writing letters to Rachel as he went, he tells of hearing about President Lincoln's assassination—days after it happened. Rachel and Eugene each kept a journal of their lives in Little

River. The letters have been transcribed for easy reading. The transcriptions are available on disc or zip drive (\$20 each includes postage).



Letter from Eugene to Rachel on tissue paper. The red stripe is from a red ribbon used to tie the stack of letters. In those days the name of the town, state and "Please Forward" was sufficient address.

In progress are the minutes from the first two years the International Order of Good Templars met at the building. What is now our museum was built by and for the IOGT in 1885, and the minutes provide a unique picture of the lives of our earliest Little River settlers, 1885—1887.



The Sampson children: Eugene, May and Hazel. May went on to UC Berkeley, one of the first women graduates to become a doctor.

Those of you who have never visited the Museum building are in for a surprise. From the outside you see a quaint white cottage with a red geranium in the window, but as you walk through the door, you're greeted, not with a cozy 1885 parlor, but a large, beautiful meeting hall with a two story domed ceiling of Grand Fir. Each ceiling panel was peeled from the trunk of a single tree—jellyroll-style, no knotholes.

The building was built to the Golden Mean as a meeting hall for the International Order of Good Templars. 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 or LRIC@mcn.org



The Good Templars building was left to the organization's women who purchased it for \$1 and renamed it the Little River Improvement Club. The citizens of Little River cast their ballots here for 100 years.

We'll continue to keep the historic building and its unique contents safe and growing. Admission is free, and our income has suffered without visitors' donations this summer, we hope you'll support our efforts to keep the museum alive and healthy.

Sincerely,

Ronnie James, Executive Director

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