

Sacramento

John Augustus Sutter left his native Switzerland to escape debtor's prison and in 1839 landed on the banks of the Sacramento River. He built his trading post on higher ground about a mile from the landing site, and named it New Helvetia (New Switzerland). Sutter envisioned a haven for European immigrants.

In January 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Coloma sawmill. Businesses sprang up along the waterfront providing supplies for fortune hunters setting off for the gold mines. Old Sacramento's population grew into the thousands.

California was admitted to the Union in 1850. Sacramento continued to prosper and became the state's capital in 1854.

Sacramento still retains its charm of those Gold Rush Days. The restored Old Sacramento historic area, Sutter's landing site, pays tribute to a frenzied and most important chapter in California's history.



Monitor Lodge 218

On April 6, 1912, Monitor Lodge 218 was instituted. Organized by Bernhard Anderson, it was the sixth lodge founded on the West Coast and the fourth in Northern California.

Monitor Lodge was named in honor of John Ericsson, the famous Swedish-American inventor.

The Lodge's first meeting was held in the old Pythian Castle Hall at 9th and I Streets. Thirty members were initiated. Theodore Erickson was elected chairman and he went on to become District Master in 1919.

In those early years, meetings were held twice a month. A dance usually accompanied one meeting. In the fall, a masquerade dance highlighted the year's calendar. The Pythian Castle Hall, a building constructed to resemble a castle, was old enough to be infested with bats, and the appearance of those nocturnal creatures during the meetings lent excitement to the ritual.

Picnics were held in the summertime, the first ones at Smith Mount

Grove, six miles north of town on the east bank of the Sacramento River. A barge pulled by a steam-powered stern wheeler river boat was rented for the trip to the park. Dancing and singing accompanied these picnics. Music was provided by a Danish violinist named Walter. His last name may be forgotten, but his fiddle music lives on in Monitor's history.

In the 1930s the site for the picnics was changed to the Wood Lake Park in North Sacramento, and later to Wilton near Elk Grove and in West Sacramento where the Sacramento-Yolo Port District now stands.

The Lodge was nearly a fatality of World War I. Immigration stopped during the war and most of the Lodge's young men were drafted. Membership dropped off to less than ten persons. With the armistice came a renewal of immigration quotas and the membership quickly built up again.

The Lodge moved its meeting place a number of times. From the Pythian Castle to Redman's Hall in 1914, then to Foresters hall in 1920. About 1925 meetings were held in the Odd Fellows Hall in Oak Park until December 1960 when the Lodge moved to Norway Hall on Darina Avenue in North Sacramento. Currently the Lodge meets in Wisteria Hall.

Smorgasbords were first held in the early 1940s under the guidance of Fredericka Carlson. Following an interruption by World War II, the smorgasbords were resumed in 1946 and have been held ever since.

Monitor's Singers, a men's glee club, was organized in 1947 and met and sang for many events until 1955. Eighteen to twenty members sang at concerts and community events under the direction of David Olson. The Scandinavian Folk Dance Club, under the direction of Adolph Benson, performed at several of those events. Wives of the singers in the men's glee club formed a group called the Merrimacs and met once a month for many years.

A drill team was organized by Jack Johnson in 1948 and performed for that year's District Convention in the Masonic Hall.

In 1949 Monitor's Youth Club was organized by Daryl Fredrickson. Meetings were held at Mr. Fredrickson's home under the guidance of Doris Larson. Following a short lapse, the club was reactivated under the direction of Ruth and Arlie Veis in 1962. Six of Monitor's Youth Club members have been awarded Grand Lodge scholarships. For many years the Youth Club has put on an annual Lucia Fest and has participated in the annual District Sweden Day picnic.

The Valley Spring Golf Tournament has been sponsored by Monitor Lodge since 1970. Monitor's members have also been very active in the annual District Golf Tournament, begun in 1969 by Arlie Veis. Two team trophies, as well as a number of individual trophies, have been won.

Monitor Lodge has been active in the Sacramento Camellia Festival for many years and has won the Camellia Parade's Grand Sweepstakes Trophy seven times. The Lodge has hosted the International Friendship luncheon on several occasions, and has participated in the ethnic portion of the Camellia Society Show with a Swedish display since 1960.

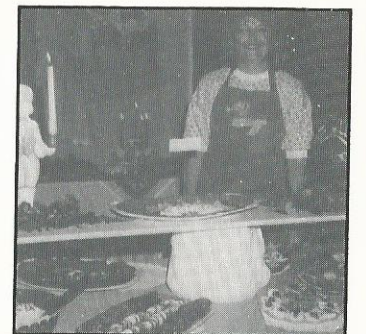
Lodge records show that Monitor's meetings were held and minutes recorded in Swedish until January 1941. A considerable amount of money has been paid out in sick benefits and other relief purposes to its members throughout the years. The Lodge's membership has shown a steady growth for the past 20 years and stood at 186 members as of its 70th anniversary. It currently enjoys the largest membership in the District.

Monitor Lodge 218 meets the first Friday of each month, except July and August, at Wisteria Hall, 3830 U Street in Sacramento.

"Tack till Paul Gullans" for the information provided for this article.



**Meagan Barney
Lucia for 1989**



Smörgåsbord 1989