



A Nonprofit Organization
The Public is Invited to Attend our Meetings
SVDB Web Site http://www.sacramentovalleydetectingbuffs.com/
Issue Date October 2012

Sacramento Valley Detecting Buffs

2012 Elected Officers

President: Open

Vice President: Open

Secretary: Barbara Anderton
lcrbean@aol.com

Treasurer: Charlotte Key
moxieroxie@msn.com

2012 Volunteer Positions

Hospitality: Al & Linda Woltman
looking4au@live.com

Hunt Master: Open

Librarian: Tom Schweppe
coottom@aol.com

Membership: George Magann
gcmagann@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Steve Timmons
stimm_99@yahoo.com

Raffle Table: Mary Ann Meji, Don Ivers & James Neeley
nightdustr@aol.com

Web-Site Editors: Bob Meneely
bmeneely@starstream.net

Join the Sunday Hunts.
Find amazing things.



September Meeting Minutes

- In preparation for the November Officers' Elections, the meeting was conducted by candidate for President, Al Woltman. The meeting was called to order at 7:30.
Three new members introduced themselves, Mr. Palmer and Mr. Bennett using White's detectors and Mr. Stewart using a Bounty Hunter.

Secretary's Report: Barbara Anderton

- Barbara noted that James Neeley would be operating the club's gold tester and diamond tester at break time and for a short while after the close of the meeting for members wanting to test their finds. Also beginning October 7th, the time for Sunday hunts will be later by one hour. Breakfast at 8:00 am and off to the hunt at 9:00 am. There are no more Saturday Hunts.

Treasurer's Report: Charlotte Key

- Due to the cancelled meeting in July, Charlotte recapped expenses from June through August:

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Rows include June Balance (\$6,079.86), Income - June (1,447.92), July (.00), August (1,126.00), Cash Available (\$8,653.78), Expenses - June (\$3,023.46), July (2,115.00), August (1,915.52), Total Expenses (\$7,053.98), and Net Cash 8.31.12 (\$1,599.80).

Membership Report: George Magann

- No report.

Library Report: Tom Schweppe

- Tom will be away for the next 2 meetings.

August 2012						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

September 2012						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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30						

October 2012						
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28	29	30	31			

Calendar Legend: SVDB Monthly Meetings
 Planted Hunt (None until New Hunt Master)
 Sun Day-in-the-Park Hunts
 Foresthill Heritage Metal Detecting Booth 1st & 2nd

New Business:

- The only other declared candidate for President for the November elections is the Club's Secretary, Barbara Anderton. She will preside over the October meeting so club members can see her in action as we did with Al Woltman last month. There are no declared candidates for Vice President.
- Don Dunn gave an evaluation of the Mine Lab Pro Pointer 25 compared to the Garrett. His assessment was no comparison, the Garrett is still the gold standard for hand held pointers. Don is stepping down as the web-site editor due to time constraints. We wish to thank Don for all he has done for the Club and again remind everyone that all of the positions with the Club are filled by volunteers who also have other responsibilities in life. So we would also like to thank all the volunteers for their time in making the SVDB a great club.
- There was a discussion of the Show & Tell. Al stated that you need to be signed up (sign in at front desk) to be eligible to win the drawing. Art won the drawing with 2 small rings and a small diamond ring. Other finds included a Barber dime, 2 Eisenhower dollars, other rings and misc. jewelry. Odell Landers won the membership drawing.
- Brent Bombola shared a story of finding a class ring in 1989. He started searching for the owner and narrowed it down to 2 possible schools in Michigan, but couldn't get any help from them. He recently tried again and found someone that would help him and found the owner who had lost the ring in Alaska in 1985. That is one mobile ring.

- Bob Harrison reported that he had set up a SVDB booth at the Foresthill Gold Panning Championship but there wasn't much traffic by the booth.

SVDB Meeting Time and Location Information:

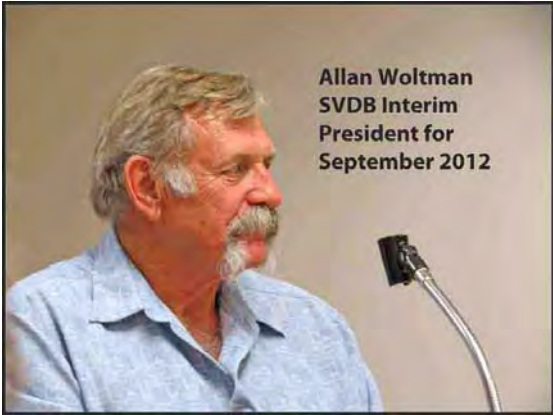
- SVDB Meetings are held at **7:30 pm** the **first Thursday of each month** at the Sacramento County Sewer District's Building in North Highlands, located at the intersection of Elkhorn Blvd. and Don Julio Blvd. Our meeting room is held in a large room facing Elkhorn, close to where all the cars are parked in the parking lot near Elkhorn Blvd. (Mapquest address is 5026 Don Julio Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95842).

Day-In-The-Park Hunts:

- There are 3 day-in-the park hunts per month. The hunts are on the first, second and third Sundays. Breakfast is at 8:00 am with departure to the hunt site at 9:00 am. The hunt ends at 12 noon. The meeting places for the hunts:
 - 1st Sunday Hunt: Meet at Denny's Watt and Auburn
 - 2nd Sunday Hunt: Meet at Denny's at Sunrise and Zinfandel Dr. (2474 Sunrise Blvd)
 - 3rd Sunday Hunt: Meet at Lumberjack's at Howe Ave. and Enterprise Dr.

Odds 'n Ends:

- The raffle brought in **\$867.00**. **Rick Costello** won the night's 1/10 oz. gold Krugerrand
- If you have any questions or concerns for the candidates for president (Al Woltman and Barbara Anderton), feel free to corner them at tonight's meeting and see where they stand.



Allan Woltman
SVDB Interim
President for
September 2012



Barbara Anderton, Interim President October 2012



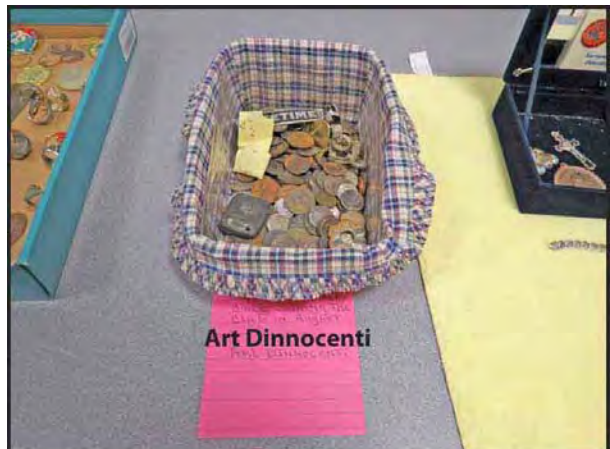
John Hainlen



Rick Costello
Gold Coin
Winner



Kris Wilson



Art Dinnocenti

By Jerry Eckhart

How To Search Pioneer Farms and Homesteads

Most pioneer homesteads no longer have buildings remaining. If there are, they will be in a tumbled down condition. Sometimes the exterior walls have fallen and only a rotted roof remains where the house was.

With that in mind, let's consider the average homesite as having no visible remains so you need to have a few guidelines to find them.

Each square mile is generally, or was at one time, divided into four sections of 160 acres each. They are called a "quarter section." This was the standard government homestead as determined by the Homestead Act.

Each homestead was required to have a structure erected. These may have been dugouts, sod houses, or frame structures. Most of the time they were located at the corner of the homestead that bordered an intersection. Look for what you would consider a good building site.

Most of the pioneers looked for the same things we do: somewhere protected from the wind, ground flat and level, with easy access to the site. Look for bare spots, squared stones about a foot square and six inches or more in thickness (these would be foundation stones), areas of broken glass (especially colored glass), and windbreaks of low, thick evergreen trees.

Windbreaks almost always indicate a homestead. During the twenties and thirties, the Federal Government encouraged the planting of trees to break the wind from around those poorly insulated houses, and to slow down soil erosion. The homesite will be on the downwind side of the windbreak.

Once you find a homesite, and secure permission, there are a number of clues to look for, even if no buildings remain.

Traffic Patterns

Most country folk followed routine patterns while going about their daily lives. In the morning it was from house to barn and back again. While there, they fed the livestock, milked the cows, and made sure everything had water.

After breakfast, the man went into the field or worked on his farm equipment. The wife began her daily routing of cooking, cleaning and washing. These regular paths of travel became well worn and vestiges of them still remain today.

When you first spot these paths, you might think they are rabbit or game trails, but look closely and you will see that they usually go straight to another point, whether it is the well, the barn, or the chicken house. Rabbit and game trails weave around obstacles.

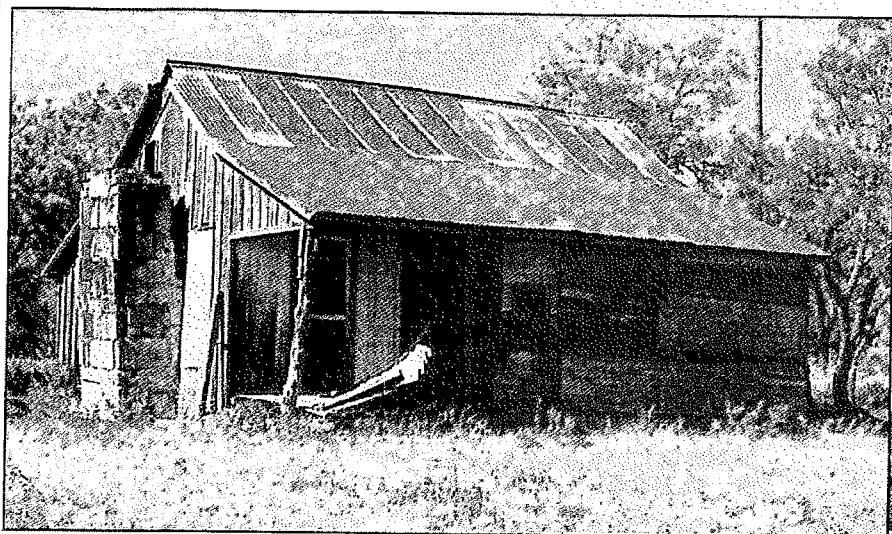
Wash Day

Most laundry was done behind the house at a distance far enough away from the house so wood smoke from the boiling fire wouldn't blow into the house. If possible, the fire was built in the shade so the lady of the house could have a little cooling as she worked.

Check the prevailing winds to see from which direction the wind would have to blow in order to carry the smoke away from the house. Here in the West, that is usually from the west or southwest. In your part of the country it might be different.

After the job was over and the wash pots had cooled, they were tipped over and the water poured

How To Search Pioneer Farms and Homesteads



Old tumbled buildings offer great chances for finding treasures.



out in a flood. Sometimes water was dipped out of the pots until they were light enough to tip. This excess water was used on the garden or flowerbeds.

The water that was left in the pot often held buttons, coins, or jewelry that came from the clothes. Because farm folks worked with the soil and often wore their clothing a week at a time, there was naturally a lot of dirt in the bottom of the wash pot. The goodies were mixed in with the dirt and hidden. When the pot was tipped over, whatever was there went with the water.

Bushes and flowers grew profusely where the abundance of water was. Some still grow in that same area today. As ashes from the repeated wash pot fires melted into the earth, short scrub brush often sprang up and lived for years. It seems certain types of brush grow profusely in wood ash. Watch for those spots.

Not too long ago, I was searching a homestead where only a slight vestige of house remained, but some 50 yards behind the house was a small cluster of Four O'Clock flowers. These live for years. Within five feet of them I found two overall buttons and a wedding band, all victims of the wash pot.

Drying Time

After each batch of clothing was washed and rinsed, it was hung on trees, fences and shrubs to dry. Towels, rags, and sheets were spread out on the grass and weighed down with sticks. It wasn't until after the turn of the century that farm wives began to use clotheslines regularly. The early pioneers didn't have time to build a set of fancy clotheslines. They were too busy trying to feed their growing families.

Lone Trees

Always check out lone trees. They were popular for children to play around and for adults to gather. There were no air conditioners, so trees were the only cool spot around. Wherever people gathered there is the chance of something being lost. Trees were the most favorite of gathering places.

Once, I was searching an old homestead and I spotted a lone tree

some quarter of a mile away. It was sitting on top of a small hill. I thought that might be an excellent place for someone to stop and cool off. Although it was a hot day and uphill, I trudged to that tree. I was rewarded with a single coin, a 1912 Barber Head dime.

The East Side

The east side of the house was used for family gatherings in the afternoons and evenings. It provided shade from the hot sun. When neighbors came over, it was on the east side where they gathered to talk, make ice cream or eat.

People often moved their beds outside during the summer and slept under the stars, enjoying a respite from the heat trapped inside the house. Again, they put their beds on the east side of

How To Search Pioneer Farms and Homesteads

the house so the rising sun would provide a natural alarm clock. Even when I was a kid in the 1940's, we still moved our beds outside in the summer and I spent many a night under the stars.

I soon learned to check around the bedpost in the morning for my pocketknife. It was famous for dropping out of my overall pocket. The only problem with sleeping outside was the dogs. We used the beds at night, but the dogs slept on them during the day. That meant we encountered an occasional flea and lots of grass burrs.

Mama always slept inside in spite of the heat. She insisted she wasn't going to sleep where any dogs slept. It didn't bother us boys in the least and it sure was a lot cooler.

Where Would Kids Play?

I already mentioned lone trees, but remember children like to get out of sight of their parents' watchful eyes. Use your imagination to search out those hidden areas where children might have played. They are often loaded with old time toys or relics.

Favorite spots were the orchard where they could climb trees and hang by their heels, behind the barn, or any other outbuilding. The older, more adventurous children would get as far away from the house as they could.

If there are any ditches or ravines within a hundred yards of the house, be sure to check them out. If the kids could get out of sight of Mama's watchful eye, they did so.

The Back Porch

The back porch was more popular for sitting and gathering than the front. Usually, the front porch was reserved for company. Some old houses had porches running all the way around the house so people could follow the shade. Porches with overhangs also helped keep the house cool. Often portions of the porch were removed and the lumber used elsewhere.

Trash Dump

Don't forget about the trash dump. Look for slopes, ditches or ravines on the downwind side of the house. They were located downwind because trash stinks. On the plains, there were few slopes and ravines so trash was often dumped and burned far from the house, or out behind the barn. If the landowner had one or could borrow one, he would often use a horse drawn grader to cut a ditch where he could dump his garbage.

Fence Rows

Check out old fencerows. Remember washday? Old fence posts were often used as banks. A post was

removed, cash placed underneath, and the post reset. These posthole banks weren't as common as the storytellers would like us to believe, but they are there and the old fence posts do bear checking.

The late William Gregory, a long time treasure hunter during the 1950's, told me a story of how he went out to check one of these cache sites. A relative of the man who originally buried the cache told Gregory about them so the two went out together.

At the time, Mr. Gregory was using a World War II mine detector, as the modern metal detector was not available then. The first fence post gave a signal. Gregory asked the man how they were going to divide up whatever they found. The man replied, "You get half." Gregory said, "Well, get your shovel. I've done found something."

The two dug and about a foot down and recovered a one-gallon fruit jar. It was half filled with wine. The next post also hid a jug. When they finished, the pair had recovered five-gallon jars of home made wine. They took it back to the house and decided to taste it.

"That stuff had set there so long," cackled Gregory, "it was almost pure alcohol. Before I stopped I was so drunk I almost couldn't drive home. When I got home, my wife found it and poured all of it down the sink."

You never know what you will turn up when you start to search.

Flowerbeds

Most flowers will have died over the years, except for Iris and Four O'Clocks. They live for many years and seem to be able to live through the coldest of winters and driest of summers. Have you ever seen Iris growing in what seemed to be an empty corner of a field? Chances are there was a flowerbed there at one time and nearby will be a home site. The exception is that Irises were sometimes planted over a grave.

Four O'Clocks were popular by the back door. They were hardy plants and lasted for years with little water. Their hardiness appealed to the frontier wife. She had little time to tend them and little water to use, so they had to fend for themselves.

You can expect to find more relics than coins, although caches are still being found at old home sites today. I have searched hundreds of old places and usually find one or two stray coins at each one, but only about one in 10 have really good finds of old silver.

Most early day settlers had little hard money and what they did have they carried with them. The majority of their commerce was carried on by trading their goods for other things they needed.

I do believe there is no other aspect as exciting as searching the old places and hope these few tips will help you improve your finding. **Tf**