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HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE GOLDEN EAGLE SITE

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INTRODUCTION

A history of the Golden Eagle project area was researched and written by historian Edith Pitti under a separate contract with the Sacramento Museum and History Department. Her work will be distributed by the Department under separate cover from the archaeological report. While the reader is strongly encouraged to read the history and archaeology volumes together, it is realized that this may not be possible in all cases. Therefore, the following edited excerpts from Pitti's work have been included in this report to provide information which is essential to an understanding of the archaeological analysis. Her bibliographies, in history format, are also included here as a further aid to future research.

This section focuses primarily on the Golden Eagle Hotel due to the time limitations and contractual stipulations imposed on the historical research. Included also, however, is a tabular chart with information on other individuals, mainly barbers, blacksmiths and manufacturers, located at 175-179 K Street in the late 19th century and a description of the Golden Eagle Oyster Saloon and West Coast oyster industry during the years that William Cronin's establishment adjoined the Golden Eagle Hotel.

HISTORY OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE HOTEL 1851 - 1874

In 1851 Daniel E. Callahan established what was to become the Golden Eagle Hotel, one of Sacramento's first hostelries.¹ On 19 September 1850, Callahan had purchased James Robinson's lot, a 26'8" by 70' parcel on Oak Avenue;² six months later, he bought the adjoining lot to the east, which fronted on K Street, from Jonathan B. Logan. On these two parcels, Callahan erected what was probably a canvas structure.³ Callahan's Place, as the establishment was apparently known, was probably both a bar and a hotel, which profited by its proximity to the Horse Market.

In 1851 Callahan contracted with the firm of Grant and Voorhies for the construction of a frame building, valued at \$2,000, at 183 K Street.⁴ This building, like the other structures on the block bounded by J, K, Sixth and Seventh streets, did not survive the fire of 1852.⁵ Callahan quickly secured some canvas for a tent, where guests could obtain a bunk "similar to those found on river steamers."⁶

In June of 1853, Callahan mortgaged a portion of his property for \$1,000; with this money, he purchased a parcel that joined his original lot.⁷ On this lot, Callahan constructed the new Golden Eagle, this time out of brick.⁸ The new building, with its granite front and marble lime plaster, reportedly measured 26-1/2' by 100' and contained 38 (perhaps 40) sleeping compartments, a private entrance to the upstairs rooms, and parlors on the second and third floors.⁹ The Golden Eagle dining room, which measured 22' by 70', was reputedly "one of the largest and most spacious in the city."¹⁰ Here, Callahan promised, the table would "be

MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS

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This brief section describes noteworthy artifacts which do not fit into the other chapters of this report.

TRADE BEADS

Among these are two glass trade beads. These beads were examined by Dr. James Bennyhoff, Sonoma State University, whose comments comprise much of the following description.

The bead from Feature 20 is barrel-shaped. A total of four alternating red and green stripes extend along the yellow body of the item. This decoration is apparently not a surface treatment, but rather an element of the glass tube from which the bead was originally cut. The bead is 2.5mm in length by 3.5mm in diameter; the threading hole is 1.3mm in diameter.

The second bead, from Feature 6, is of black glass; it is of a slightly crooked donut shape. This item was made of a straight piece of glass rod which was bent around a metal form of circular cross section; the ends were cut and fused together. The bead is 3mm in thickness by 1.2cm in diameter; the threading hole is, on average, 6mm in diameter.

BONE ARTIFACTS

Three bone artifacts were recovered from Feature 6: one toothbrush (plate 16c), one hair brush (plate 16a) and one handle of an unidentified object (plate 16b). None of the bristles, which were fastened into holes drilled into the head of the brushes, have survived. The toothbrush has four parallel rows of holes, with a total of 65. Indicating this arrangement and the quality of the bristles, "extra hard extra fine" is stamped into the handle, as is "S & Co. London Warranted." Fragments of bone cutlery handles were recovered from features 15 and 20.

Bone was commonly used in the 19th century for the manufacture of knife handles, toothbrushes, babies' teething rings, and a variety of other articles. The shin and "buttock" bones of oxen and calves were almost exclusively used for this purpose. These bones were boiled, bleached, shaped, soaked in turpentine, boiled again, then polished and finally waxed (Lock 1882:521).

OTHER

A rectangular marble washstand attachment, with a scroddled-ware, ceramic handle (plate 16d), and a slate pencil were found in Feature 6. This pencil would have been used on a slate writing tablet, such as that found in Feature 15. This slate tablet was originally rectangular or square and has parallel, horizontal lines incised into the surface as an aid to the scribe.

A broken set of porcelain false teeth, as well as two human canines, were found in Feature 15.