

Sacramento's Cooperative History

**Economic Resistance From
the Gold Rush to the
Present**

Defining cooperation

Co-ops: owned and controlled by the people who use them. Benefits and surplus returned to members.

Includes food co-ops, credit unions, marketing and purchasing co-ops, housing and worker-owned co-ops.

Modern form took shape in 1846, Rochdale England.

Idea might have been imported during the Gold Rush.

Disclaimer: Not always what we see as co-ops.

The First Peoples of this Land



Ninesan, Miwok and Patwin lived on high ground.

Communal economy based on managing the land.

Watershed-based clusters of family groups.

Conflict through ritual warfare to restore balance.



The Wild, Cooperative West

Rugged individualism of American Frontier is a myth.

American pioneers needed each other, and needed an economy of some sort – often based on mutual aid.

Mormons presented the most highly evolved system.

Many immigrant parties organized along mutual lines.

Miners also organized collectively to develop claims.



DRAWN DEC. 20th 1849 BY G. V. COOPER.

LITH. OF WM. ENDICOTT & CO. N. YORK.

- A Hensley, Bedding & Co
- B People's Market
- C T. M. Dowell & Co
- D S. Taylor
- E General Store (S. Weeks)
- F Montgomery & Nichols (Linn Store)
- G Myrick, Nelson & Co
- H The Gem
- I Deporter Brothers
- J Machonkins
- K Oregon Bowling Saloon
- L Cotton House & Co

SACRAMENTO CITY CA

FROM THE FOOT OF J. STREET,
 SHOWING I. J. & K. STS WITH THE SIERRA NEVADA IN THE DISTANCE.

- M R. M. Cooper & Co
- N Robert M. Folger
- O Burns Hotel
- P Van Buren Hotel
- Q Gardner
- R H. R. Robinson & Co (Post Office)
- S Empire
- T Mansion House (formerly S. Brown's Store)
- U United States Hotel
- V J. B. Starck & Co
- W Jackson's Hotel
- X Lunt & Co Express Office

NEW YORK, PUBLISHED BY STANGER & TOWNSEND 222 BROADWAY.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1849, by J. Stanger & Townsend in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern Dist. NY.



425.
 Deposited in the Clerk's Office So. Dist. of New York March 2. 1850.

19-21/4 K30

Sacramento as a Microcosm

The city grew rapidly and unevenly.
Social, economic and political chaos.

People formed geographically-oriented groups.
Provided link to home, and (usually) some trust.

Economy based on speculation and exploitation.
“Mining the miners” was common business strategy.

“Great Speculators” set up government to consolidate
wealth and enclose the Commons.

NOTICE TO IMMIGRANTS!!

As there are in our City a number of men with remarkable principles, who go among those who have newly arrived and offer to sell or lease to them the *Public Land* in and about this place, thus imposing upon the unsuspecting. The latter are hereby notified that the vacant land in Sacramento City and vicinity, is open for *ALL*, free of charge ; but, they can make either of the following gentlemen a present of a few thousand dollars, if they have it to spare. Such favors are eagerly sought and exultingly received by them. In fact, some of them are so solicitous in this matter, that, if they are not given *something*, they will *almost not like it*, and even threaten to *sue* people who will not contribute to their support. Those who have made themselves the most notorious, are

Barton Lee,
Burnett & Rogers,
Hardin Bigelow,
Pearson & Baker,
Thomas M'Dowell,
R. J. Watson,
J. S. Hambleton,
Starr, Bensley & Co.,

Prettyman, Barroll & Co.,
A. M. Winn,
S. Brannan,
Hensley, Merrill & King,
Conn. Mining and Trading Co.,
Paul, White & Co.,
W. M. Carpenter,
R. Gelston,
John S. Fowler.

Warbass & Co.,
J. Sherwood,
James Queen,
Dr. W. G. Deal,
Eugene F. Gillespie,
T. L. Chapman,
Dewey & Smith,
E. L. Brown,

Sacramento City, June 14, 1850.

"Sacramento Transcript" Print.

By order of the Settlers' Association,

The Settlers' Association

Mutual aid network with as many as 1200 members

Consensus-based with rotating meeting leaders

Created rival land office for surveys and titles

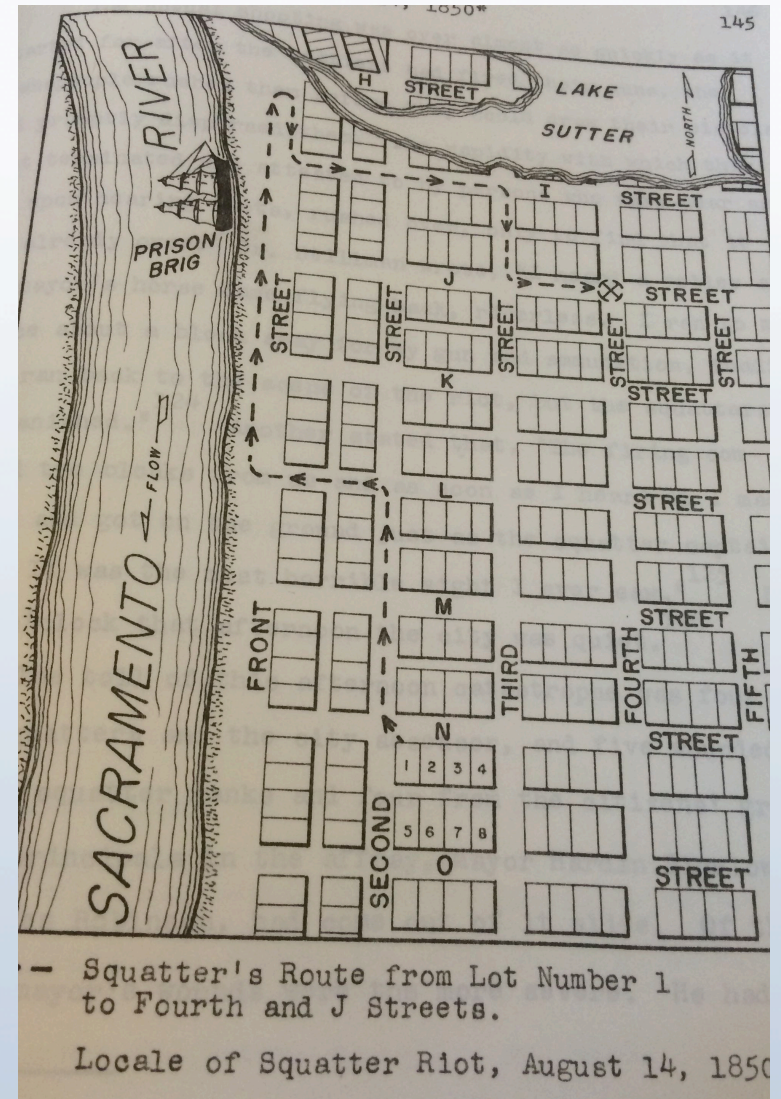
Challenged city in the courts and the streets

River City Revolution!

“Squatter Riots” is a poor name:
Rival militias met in combat.

The mayor was shot off his
horse at 4th and J.
Eight people killed, including
the city sheriff and assessor.

Martial law declared.
Economic & population collapse.
Land values down for decades.



What was the People's Market?

Sold meat and vegetables.

Sat on prime real estate at the embarcadero (near Front and I).

Labeled in both of the most common depictions of the early Sacramento waterfront (1849-50).

Whatever it was, it was apparently very important at the time.



DRAWN DEC. 20th 1849 BY G. V. COOPER.

A *Hensley, Redding & C^o*
B *Peoples Market*
C *T. M^c Dowell & C^o*
D *S. Taylor*

"Little is known..."

Little is known of the People's Market other than what is depicted in Cooper's lithograph of 1849 and the Sacramento 1850 flood lithograph. These illustrations show a frame structure on the site. The lot was 20 by 70 feet according to the Sacramento Map Books of 1851, 1852, and 1853. During those years Maurice Morrison owned the property, a portion of Lot No. 1. Later in the 1850's a brick building occupied the site.

It is recommended that the People's Market be reconstructed as a compatible concession operation.

Was the People's Market a Co-op?



It was managed by the Cornell brothers (or cousins).
Property listed as owned by Maurice Morrison


But the people wanted a market on the waterfront.
Could have been a toehold to counter evictions.

High-stakes address next to Hensley, Redding & Co.

The People's Line

“Opposition Steamers” sought to break chokehold of the California Steam Navigation Company.

Loose alliance of companies with a shared brand, engaged in some degree of collaboration.



PEOPLE'S LINE.
For San Francisco, touching at Benicia.
Leaving Sacramento daily at 2 P. M., (Sundays excepted,) from alongside back Elm, foot of K street.

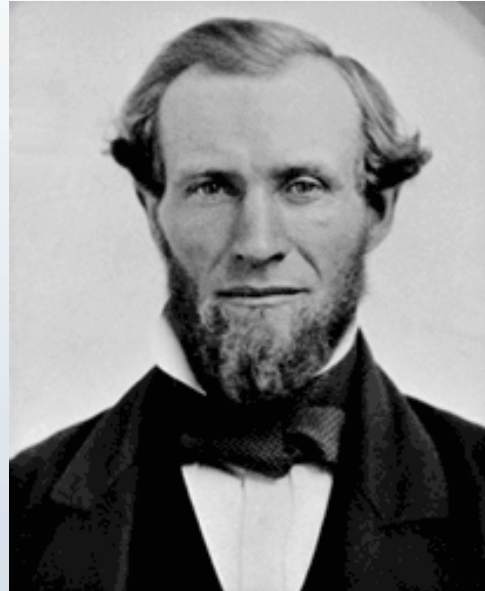
THE SENATOR.
Capt. BARNES, Esq., Commander, the pioneer steamer of the Sacramento, having received her new boiler, and been thoroughly refitted, has resumed her place on the Sacramento waters, and will leave Sacramento regularly every
TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND SATURDAY.
Her saloons are unsurpassed in finish and elegance, and every arrangement has been made to add to the comfort of forward cabin passengers.

NEW WORLD.
Wood HERRING, Esq., Commander. This splendid boat has resumed her place on the river, and will leave Sacramento every
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY.
The New World has been furnished with new boilers, and fitted up in a style of elegance and comfort unequalled by any boat in the country.
For freight or passage apply at the office on board alongside Elm, foot of K street.
W. C. WATERS, Agent.



Trivia Break!!!

Co-ops: not just for little people



The Settlers' uprising marched by the city's prison ship, where the movement's chief salesman was being held. He was later the city sheriff and a newspaper mogul.

Trivia Break!!!

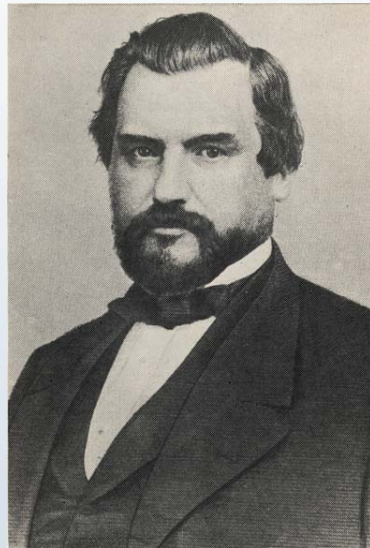
Co-ops: not just for little people



This physician was a key guide for the Settlers' Association.
He was elected to legislature while in prison after revolt.
Later elected first governor of the state of Kansas.

Trivia Break!!!

Co-ops: not just for little people



This rail baron was greatly inspired by collective mining. His university was intended as utopian training ground. He introduced co-op legislation to U.S. Senate in YEAR.

Trivia Break!!!

Co-ops: not just for little people



These half-brothers were successful ethical merchants. Their second career, inspired by one's pilgrimage to Palestine with mom, was developing farmer co-ops.

The Farmers vs. the Railroad

Shipping back east required minimum of six rail cars.
Farmers organized co-ops to negotiate and pool.

Lubin organized farmers, preached "Raiffeisen Plan."
Weinstock was first leader of State Market Commission.
Tried to organize a statewide co-op federation in 1917.



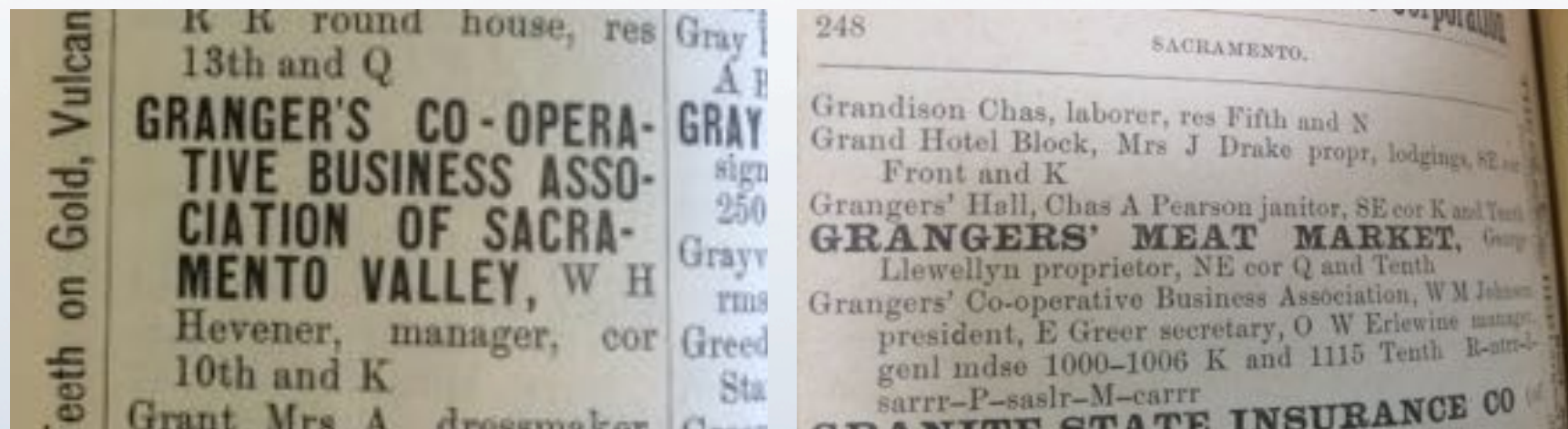
Grand Cooperative Edifices

Farmer co-ops made architectural impact in town.
Fruit Building (1915) at 4th and J was first skyscraper.
Blue Anchor Building (1931) is across from Capitol.



SNFC's Agrarian Ancestors

Late 19th Century: Grange co-ops from HQ at 10th and K.
"Granger's Co-operative Business Association!"



Grange co-ops also built 3-story building at 10th and X.
700 people at dedication of building.

Site hosted multi-day conference in 1902.
Two ministers were among the speakers.

SNFC's Agrarian Ancestors

Sacramento Rochdale Company in network of 50 stores.
Sacto co-op collapsed after power struggle ended in court.

1905 Rochdale Building on 11th in old R St. industrial zone.



Co-ops in the Great Depression

Community Chest pooled charity until 1932 collapse.

Homeless lived in camps like Shooksville, near B Street.

California Cooperative Producers fired 150 workers.

Failed in 1931, sold to Bercut Richards.



Cooperative Finance

Hebrew Free Loan Society pooled money, no interest.
Helped start Levinson's Books and other businesses.

Credit Unions



Co-ops and the West End's End

"Urban Renewal" wiped out communities downtown.

Sacramento Gardeners' Association helped dispossessed Japanese-Americans – only disbanded last year.

NAACP helped launch credit union to access home loans.



Cooperation Saved the Heart of Chinatown

Chinatown transformed but survived through collective action rooted in family associations.

Each developed a portion of the two-block area bounded by 3rd, 5th, I and J streets.



Cooperative Arts



Royal Chicano Air Force art collective supported its members and struggle to regroup Latino community.

During the 1990s, the punk scene had various collective performance spaces including Hindenberg! & The Barn.

Artists' Collaborative Gallery recently moved to Old Sac.

Cooperative Living

Informal collective houses: Jesus People, P Street House in 90s and present-day I Street Co-op.

Southside Park Cohousing launched in 1993.
Fair Oaks EcoHousing was just approved! Congrats!



The Co-op “Counterculture”

Beginning art co-op was started at 17th & L.

Other stores to research: Sunrise Leather, Arts and Crafts Guild, Artisans & Craftsmen, Rumpelstiltskin, Arareity Jewelers and Earthworks.

Mysterious “Gay Art Co-op” reported by *MGW* in 1979.

Terra Firma Garden started by CRC students, later became Ron Mandella Community Garden.

You Are Here

Sacramento Real Food Co. started 1973 at 15th and Q.
Moved to Freeport Blvd. near McClatchy HS, then here.



Are Co-ops Countercultural?

**Or are they an essential part of
who we are, at our best?**

Now what?