



Frederick Sieg: Founding Druid

Frederick Sieg “planted the Druidic oak on the western shores of the nation.” He founded California Grove #1 of the United Ancient Order of Druids in 1859 and helped found and lead the state organization.

Sieg was one of the earliest settlers in Placerville. He went to work with his gold pan in Cedar Ravine and met with enough success to fund the construction of a limestone building at Coloma and Center streets, where the present city hall is located.

Sieg was a Druid in St. Louis and missed the bonds of his past fraternal life. He got permission to meet with Druids in the Placerville area for the purpose of organizing a “grove.” Only three members showed up at the meeting.

Needing seven voting members to form a grove, Sieg stepped outside, quickly recruited four candidates, and decreed them Druids on the spot. Thus, Druidism arrived in California.

Groves soon organized in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Coloma. By 1899 California hosted 69 groves with a total of 4,000 members.

Sieg died in 1888 at the age of 73. In 1892 the Grand Grove of California erected an obelisk rich in Druidic symbols over his grave in Placerville Union Cemetery.

The “lighted torch” monument at the corner of Cedar Ravine and Main Street was dedicated to Sieg in 1926. To this day, California Druids make annual pilgrimages to both the monument, and to Sieg’s grave in Placerville Union Cemetery.

In 1972 the monument was rededicated to late senator, local undertaker, and prominent Druid H.E. Dillinger. The City of Placerville refurbished it at the instigation of the senator’s widow, Alice Dillinger, herself a prominent local businesswoman. She also had the monument’s stained-glass flume repaired and furnished two bronze plaques to replace drinking fountains which were on the original monument.



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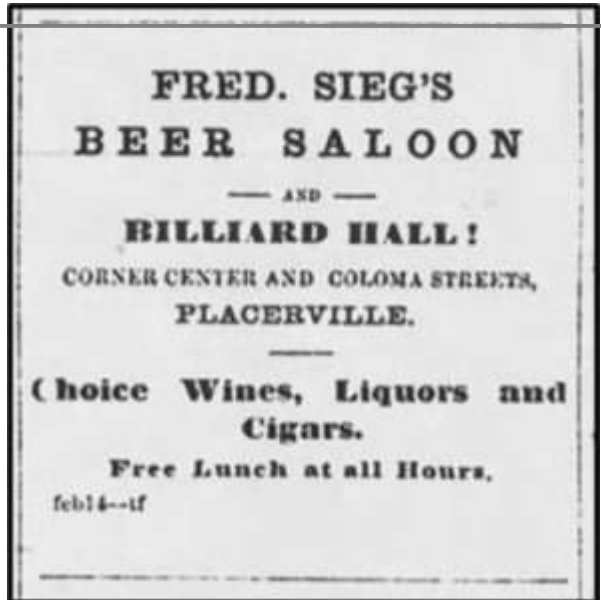
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Sieg Monument



Sieg's Beer Saloon



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1. Fraternals

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