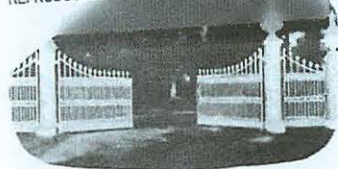


REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



WITHIN THIS GATE IS
A GARDEN OF MEMORIES

STOCKTON RURAL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

1750 LUCERNE AVENUE
STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA
PHONE HO 5-5213

L 58

SINCE 1861

NON-PROFIT

NON-SECTARIAN

ENDOWED CARE

Robertson

CEMETERY GROUNDS AND OFFICE--
END OF CEMETERY LANE. OFF
HARDING WAY ONE BLOCK EAST
OF CALIFORNIA STREET

T. H. CARPENTER, PRESIDENT
G. A. KENNEDY, SECRETARY
M. W. KENNEDY, MGR.-SUP'T.

March 28, 1961

U.S. Senator Thomas Kuchel
U.S. Senate Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Kuchel:

This being the Civil War centennial year, we of course are hearing much about it on the radio, television and through the press and magazine articles.

Few people realize that out on the West Coast there is the grave of, and a monument erected to the memory of, a man who did much to relieve the suffering of the Union soldiers.

Enclosed is a picture of the monument and the story behind it. It would seemingly be worthy of national recognition at this time, with national monument possibility.

We thought you would be interested in knowing about this unusual memorial in your own home State, even though it is far from the scenes of the actual battle. As the battle cost lives, this man helped to save lives, truly a self-sacrificing patriot at a time of need.

Respectfully,

Robert A. Kennedy
Secretary of the Board

YEARS

1861 OF COMMUNITY SERVICE 1961



REUEL COLT GRIDLEY

Reuel Colt Gridley and his sack of flour are credited with saving the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War.

The untiring effort of raising \$275,000 through the sale and resale of the sack cost Gridley his modest fortune and his life. In 1870 he died in poverty and was buried in the Rural Cemetery in Stockton, California, with only a board to mark his grave. Immediately there arose a clamor urging that something be done to memorialize Gridley.

Rawlins Post, Grand Army of the Republic, took the leadership. Citizens of Stockton, put together enough money in 1887 to replace the weather-beaten board with a 50-foot high statue of Gridley and his sack of flour. It stands on a tiny knoll in the GAR section of the cemetery, overlooking the hundreds of Union soldiers for whom he gave his life.

inscribed on the monument is this epitaph:

The Soldier's Friend, Reuel Colt Gridley.
Erected by Rawlins Post, Grand Army of the
Republic and the citizens of Stockton...
in gratitude for services rendered Union
soldiers during the War of the Rebellion
in collecting \$275,000 for the Sanitary
Commission.

The incident which later won such prominence took place quietly in the tiny town of Austin, Nevada, in 1864. The event was a simple municipal election in Austin, yet it was lifted into a prominent niche in history by the wager of a sack of flour.

Gridley lost the wager, and on April 20, 1864, he paid the bet. He was required to carry a sack of flour from Austin to Clifton, a distance of a mile and a quarter. He shouldered the sack, gaily decorated with flags and was followed on the march by a band and a large crowd. At Clifton the crowd had drinks and there was much joking concerning Gridley and the 50-pound sack of flour.

Then Gridley spoke - saying - "You've had your fun at my expense. Let us see now who will do the most for the sick and wounded soldiers. We will put up this sack of flour at auction to be sold for cash, with the understanding that the buyer is to return it, to be sold again for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission."

Throughout the North, the Sanitary Commission--Red Cross and Medical Corps of its day--had been hard-pressed by the war between the States. Although most of the northern states had contributed, more money was needed or the commission would collapse.

The sack of flour was sold and re-sold for \$4,400, to the crowd gathered in Clifton. Then Gridley began a tour of more money-raising for the Commission. Gridley left his business, and paying his own expenses, made a tour of the Pacific Coast and then the Eastern States, selling and re-selling the famous sack of flour. After turning the \$275,000 to the Commission, he returned to Nevada, a sick man. He was brought over the Sierra Nevada Mountains to California on a bed, on account of his health. He died a few years later of consumption, the result of overwork and exposure during his travels with the sack of flour.

Information furnished by
Stockton Rural Cemetery
Stockton, California
March 27, 1961

APR 28 1961

Return 4/28

L58-18H

Hon. Thomas H. Kuchel
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Kuchel:

Thank you for your letter of April 12 transmitting the communication from Mr. Glenn A. Kennedy of the Stockton Rural Cemetery Association concerning the monument to Russel Colt Gridley.

Gridley's story is indeed an interesting one, and the monument is a striking commemoration of it, as well as a tribute to the spontaneity of the residents of Stockton whose affection for him caused them to erect it. Across the Nation communities erected memorials to honor their brave sons who participated in the war. The Federal Government has not attempted to take any of these in its custody.

The Federal Government has concerned itself with the great battlefields such as Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Antietam and the homes of the great leaders, Lincoln and Lee.

The preservation and interpretation of America's historical heritage is a job that must be shared by the Federal Government, State and local government and other agencies. It is a task far too vast for any one agency. From the report and the picture enclosed in Mr. Kennedy's letter it would seem that the Stockton Rural Cemetery Association is doing a fine job in maintaining and presenting the story of Russel Colt Gridley and the Sanitary Commission. We are delighted that this is being done and congratulate them upon their efforts. Mr. Kennedy's letter and the enclosures are returned herewith.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) HERBERT E. KAHLER

Herbert E. Kahler
Chief Historian

California

Enclosures

Copy to: Regional Director, Region Four (with copy of incoming)
Mr. Ben Thompson
Branch of History