

E A R L Y       H I S T O R Y

PLACER GOLD BRANCH #37  
SONS IN RETIREMENT  
by  
CARL I. MELANDER

Something to crow about -- that's the way 150 Auburn area men feel about their monthly luncheon club -- SIRS.

SONS IN RETIREMENT is the formal name of the organization and their emblem, the crowing rooster.

The symbolism was explained by the organization's founder, the late DAMIAN L. REYNOLDS thus:

"Because one of the principal areas of Sons In Retirement concerns itself with the well being, youth and happiness of the retired man. Of all the creatures on earth, none expresses independence and dignity with more sureness and aplomb than the rooster. The majesty of his presence is felt in every barnyard and when he crows he can be heard for miles, not in a faint-hearted crow but with a noise that calls attention to his majestic being."

SIRS is basically a luncheon club composed of men retired from full-time gainful employment. Locally, the Auburn Chapter #37 will be 9 years old in October, 1981. Our Placer Gold Branch #37 received its charter, October 12, 1972 through sponsoring Branch #14 of Sacramento, James Eva, Big Sir. The official charter was presented by Sir James W. Schofield, State Vice President. SIR Lee Perryman installed our first panel of officers, namely:

Officers:

Big Sir ..... Elmer S. Clendenen  
Little Sir ..... Lauren B. McCann  
Secretary..... Robert W. Powers  
Ass't Sec. .... Linton B. Bradley  
Treasurer ..... Gene C. Musseiman  
Ass't Treas..... O. R. "Slim" Bogart

Board of Directors:

Harold B. LaForge  
Carl I. Melander  
August E. Gleisberg  
L. H. Reynolds  
Ramon A. Cayot  
Horace "Bud" Thalls



# History of SIRs Founding

Presented By Harry S. Moyer Governor Area I, 1976-1978

The preparation of this history would not have been possible without the painstaking efforts of the officers of Branch No. 1 when

known as the original Peninsula Branch from 1950 to 1970 who had maintained excellent minutes of the organization in its founding stages - and which were compiled by their branch historian John J. Brauner in 1968.

It was in April 1958 when the idea for the founding of the SIRs Organization was first casually discussed during a luncheon meeting in San Francisco of the the Royal Order of Jesters, Court No. 4, an auxiliary of the Islam Temple of the Shrine.

Those sitting together at one luncheon table were Damian L. Reynolds, Claus J. Hink and Lorenz Hansen.

Damien, who had retired from an executive position with The Columbia Steel Co., knowing that his fellow Jesters would also soon retire, suggested that it would be an excellent idea to establish an organization for retired men in the community in which they resided. Probably they could have a luncheon program with regular meetings for the purpose of maintaining old friendships, making new acquaintances, and promoting a general interest for retired men, he suggested.

Both Claus Hink, who was soon to retire from Standard Oil of California, and Lorenz Hansen, with a long experience in banking and finance, expressed general interest in the possibility offered by Damien's proposal and agreed to assist him in furthering the project and agreed to meet again to discuss the matter.

Toward the middle of June 1958, Mr. Reynolds had the initial staffing pattern for the proposed organization worked out. For the purpose of getting the club on an operating basis he had determined to ask Mr. Hink to serve as his immediate

assistant. Mr. Hansen was to be designated treasurer because of his extensive financial background.

In the meantime since the first meeting in April, Mr. Reynolds discussed the proposal with Wallace C. Plummer, who had been secretary, recorder, and trustee of the Peninsula Consistory (now Burlingame) Scottish Rite. Mr. Plummer assured Mr. Reynolds that he was interested and would cooperate completely.

Toward the end of June 1958, by which time Mr. Hink had returned from his travels immediately following his retirement, Mr. Reynolds called a meeting of these men to meet at his home in Hillsborough and discussed with them his proposed assignment of duties of each officer and the designation of their group as the Founders Executive Committee.

At this meeting and other informal discussion meetings came tentative understandings and agreement, many of which serve the club to this day.

The first luncheon meeting of the four founders was held at the Clairmar Restaurant in San Mateo on June 23, 1958. At this meeting, the matters that had been previously tentatively agreed to were reviewed and steps were taken to prepare working rules and regulations, the formulation of by-laws.

They decided another luncheon to which friends of the founders, who were eligible for membership, under the basic guidelines agreed to, would be invited.

As a result of this agreement the founders extended invitations for a luncheon to be held at the Clairmar on July 23, 1958 to 10 men. Nine men attended.

In addition to the four founders, the other five men attending this luncheon meeting, along with the founders have been designated "Charter Members." They were George Rogers, Conrad Lange, L.E. Cartmill, Clarence E. Johnson and William Torello.

After this first meeting there was much to be done: Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Hink devoted their full time and attention to promoting the club - meeting frequently at their homes - discussing operating problems, prepared membership forms and notices, and the organizational structure, with the club's by-laws and proposed rules and regulations.

On August 12th the four founders met to select a suitable name for the club. Mr. Reynolds read off a list of suggested names which had come to his attention as follows:

- Ancient and Honorable Sons of Rest
- Work Dodgers Luncheon Club
- Faithful Old Fellows
- The Honey Dews
- League of Aimless Fellows (L.O.A.F.)
- Fellow Olsters
- Young Olsters
- Restful Sons
- Sons in Retirement

On motion of Larry Hansen, seconded by Wally Plummer, the committee unanimously agreed to propose at the next luncheon that "Sons in Retirement" be adopted as the official name of the club. Mr. Hansen suggested that this name seemed appropriate to give dignity to retirement, the inevitable lot of most men.

The term "Sons in Retirement" originated with Claus J. Hink, who pointed out that the term could be abbreviated to "SIR," a salutation indicating maturity and respect. From there it was but a short step to designate the top officer of the Club the "BIG SIR" and the second in command the "LITTLE SIR."

At this same meeting which also included the other charter members and new stalwarts Joe Weber and Harry Brown, the idea evolved to finance the club

through voluntary contributions.

It was decided that at the next meeting scheduled for September 18th to give this matter a trial run and at that meeting the practice of "Passing the Jug" was born, by dropping \$39.00 in Claud Hink's hat. There were 36 men in attendance at this meeting.

At the September 1958 meeting of the club it was decided a larger meeting place was required. Little Sir Claus Hink submitted a report covering places available at several locations and it was decided that the next monthly meeting would be held at Kim's Restaurant on Donnelly Ave. in Burlingame.

At the fourth meeting of this club in October 1958 there were 42 members in attendance. \$35.00 was contributed. Two additional executive committee members were appointed - a membership chairman and an attendance chairman.

The executive committee meeting in December 1958 decided to have a news sheet or bulletin. Damian Reynolds, Big Sir, was designated Editor of the Publication. He named it YES SIR and Volume 1 - No. 1. was published during February 1959. There had been only \$29.02 in the club treasury on January 1st, 1959 but they were going to have their newsletter.

At the first meeting of the Executive Committee of Sirs in Jan. 1959 thought was given to adopting an emblem which would be appropriate in promoting the pride, independence and dignity of retirement.

Little Sir Claus Hink suggested the rooster as having these attributes. His suggestion was adopted by the Executive Committee in January 1959 - and made part of our identity with the rooster on our Masthead of the first issue of YES SIR in February - with the following explanation:

In commenting on the adoption of the rooster as the emblem of the club, BIG SIR Reynolds said, "One of the principal areas of Sons in Retirement concerns itself with the well-being, youth and happiness of the retired man. Of all the creatures on earth, none expresses independence and dignity with more sureness and aplomb than the rooster. The majesty of his presence overshadows all other barnyard creatures, and, when he crows he can be heard for miles, not in a fainthearted manner, but with a noise that calls attention to his majestic being."

The extent of work involved - the devotion of these founding members in particular, and the milestone of events that took place within the short period of one year or 12 months, have been just partly related to you so far.

In February 1959 the first roster printed listed 108 members, with members' name, address, telephone number, previous business affiliation and a number assigned to each member from cards made when he joined the club.

In March 1959 - the Executive Committee arranged for the first liability insurance coverage.

With the advice of an attorney, Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Hink completed all preliminary and legal requirements for the Articles of Incorporation and forwarded the application for incorporation with proper sworn statements attached, to the Secretary of State on February 3, 1959. The original file in Sacramento shows endorsement dated February 11, 1959.

So, now we're in business.

(History of SIRs Founding to be concluded March 1979 Issue.)

#### No. 1 Big Sir Honored

At Placer Gold Branch No. 37, Auburn, they have retired badge No. 1 in memory of their first Big Sir.

**ELMER CLENDENEN**

1972 - 1974

# Placer Gold Chapter Club Begun By Auburnite Celebrates Twentieth Year



**SIR's Officers** — From left, Cecil D. Lonergan, Little Sir; Dr. Byron W. Bailey, Big Sir and James R. Campbell, treasurer, plan activities for the Placer Gold Chapter of

Sons In Retirement. The organization celebrates its twentieth year in 1978. Not pictured is Claude L. Kistner, secretary.

An organization started by an Auburn native will celebrate its 20th birthday in 1978. For a birthday gift it will welcome new branches of the club to the states of Oregon, Washington, Hawaii and Nevada.

Sons in Retirement (SIRS), a statewide group of retired men that boasts 18,000 members in Northern California alone, was started in 1958 by the late Damian L. Reynolds, who grew up in Auburn.

Reynolds conceived the idea of a club for retired men in San Mateo where he moved after college. The club started with 18 members July 23, 1958.

Members formed the rules for the SIRs when the club was incorporated in 1959.

According to its regulations, SIRs, a club for men retired from "gainful employment," charges no dues or fees other than expenses. The group espouses no political or religious views and meets once a month for luncheon with a featured speaker. Any

member may invite another member to join the club.

SIR's copyrighted emblem is the rooster, which Reynolds once said "expresses independence with dignity," as befits a club devoted to the "well-being", youth and happiness of the retired man."

Auburn Area Placer Gold Branch No. 37 of SIRs recently installed of-

ficers for its anniversary year. Henry A. Duryea of Auburn will preside over the group of 175 members as Big Sir for 1978.

Placer Gold branch meets on the second Thursday of each month.



## Around The City

Nevada City  
The Auburnite  
sent, mo.

STAMP



Officers Of SIRS, newly-formed local chapter of Sons In Retirement, are shown at their luncheon meeting last Thursday noon at Walker's restaurant. From the left are Gene Musselman, treasurer; Harry Hughan, a new member; Horace "Bud" Thalls, director and greeters chairman; Carl Melander, director and program chairman;

Col. C. S. Brooks, chairman of photography; Linton Bradley, assistant secretary; Elmer Clendenin, Big Sir; Lauren McCann, Little Sir; Harold B. LaForge, director; A. G. Chausall, tours chairman; O. R. Bogart, assistant treasurer; Telfer Heather, badges; Herb Trittenbach, special events chairman; and August Gleisberg, director.

—AUBURN JOURNAL—

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 1973



Heading Activities for SIRS this year are Elmer S. Clendenin, left, Big Sir, and Lauren B. McCann, Little Sir.



Happiness Is Their Business — Frank P. Kovarik, assistant Sunshine chairman, and John Robinson, chaplain, have a brief conference.



James R. Campbell, left, is treasurer for SIRS, aided by Oswald (Slim) R. Bogart, right.



Getting The Word Out is the combined job of Cecil Lonergan, left, bulletin editor, and Jack Shields, secretary.



Sometimes There's Lively — and unplanned — discussion at SIRS, as evidenced here by Little Sir Lauren McCann, left, and Robert E. Dahlberg.



Putting It There are members of SIRS golf group. From the left are A. G. Chaussee, golf chairman; Horace A. Thalls, director; Col. Al Rhoads, assistant golf chairman; and Harry Sternberg, music chairman.



## SIRS Have First Annual Picnic

The weather was ideal, sunny and warm with just a little fall breeze, for the first annual SIRS (Sons In Retirement) picnic October 1. One hundred twenty six SIRS, their wives and guests attended the affair which was served under the trees at the Auburn Recreation Park.

Entertainment was furnished by the SIRS quartet with Harry Sternberg singing lead; Jack Shields, baritone; Carl Melander, base; and 82-year-old Joe Cummings singing tenor. The group, which gave renditions of old favorites, has

been singing together for many years and any funds derived from their vocal endeavors have been donated to aid children with speech defects.

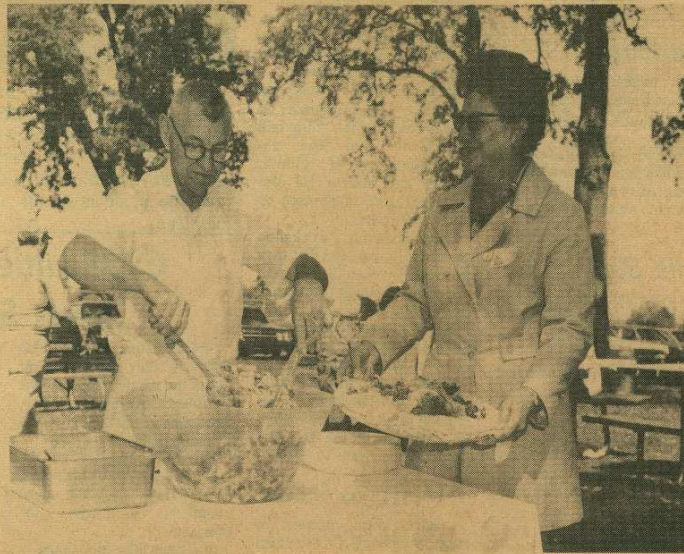
Horse shoes, cards, checkers as well as just getting acquainted were all a part of this first SIRS picnic.

One Hundred Twenty Six SIRS attended the first annual Sons In Retirement picnic held in the Auburn Recreation Park.



RITA T

JOE CUMMINGS



Food Was Set Up by ↑  
Thomas Dale of the SIRS  
33 of Sacramento and  
Mary Robertson of  
Auburn.



Mr. And Mrs. Bernard Haines were served coffee  
by Rhea Trittenback.



"Little SIR" Lauren McCann, did a fine job of cutting the watermelon for the first annual SIRS picnic. →



Mr. And Mrs. Arthur Morts, Auburn residents for the past 28 years, attended the SIRS picnic.



Taking A Little Of Everything were, from left, Mrs. Cecil Hayes and Dr. Hayes, Mrs. Florence Anderson and Cecil Lonergon.



"Big SIR" Elmer Clendenin, right, welcomes Mr. and Mrs. Roy Edson of Meadow Vista to the Sons In Retirement picnic.

*Photos By Jean Davis*



## *New Officers*

Discussing plans for the year are the newly elected officers of the Placer Gold Branch 37 of the Sons in Retirement, from left, Cecil Lonergan, Big Sir; Kenneth Stanton, Little Sir; Claude Kispner, secretary and James Campbell, treasurer. The officers were elected at the club's October meeting and will be installed in December by district governor Kenneth Casper.

SIRS BRANCH #37 HIGHLIGHTS.

1972-1973-1974

SIRS Branch #37 was started by Big Sir Elmer Clendenin who was ambitious hard working and very friendly. With the help of members Harold LaForge and Carl Melander he soon recruited enough members to form a SIRS Branch. 37 applicants were recruited by Feb 23, 1972 and the number grew ever since. Big Sir Elmer did a great deal of administrative work himself. He knew almost all members by name and kept a file of form #2 (Applications for membership) to refer to in making assignments. He frequently took a member or two of branch<sup>37</sup> to visit a neighboring branch for comment and comparison. He made up the badges and kept a attendance roster for his own use.

Elmer's son Jon Clendenin confided that the family history relates that Elmer did not learn to speak until he was 5 years of age but since that time has never stopped talking. Elmer was later named "Placer County Senior Citizen of the year" (1974) The first anniversary picnic was held July 16 1973 at the Auburn Recreation Park to include wives The Picnic lunch which was catered cost \$2.50 Ladies Day was Dec 6 1973 and was held at the Home Ec Bldg Auburn Fair Grounds. at which time the State Vice - President Lee Perryman installed the Officers for 1974

During 1974 our first roster was completed and passed out to the members. A new area was set up comprising Grass Valley #11 Auburn #37 and Paradise Pines #43 under area Governor John Sorenson.

As of Feb 1974 Branch #37 was at the authorized strength of 150, with 5 on the waiting list The March waiting list increased to 14.

The April meeting was Ladies day at the Lake of the Pines. Regular meetings were held at the Auburn Hotel otherwise. The Sept 1974 meeting was the SIRS Picnic which was held at the Fair Grounds.

1975: Big Sir Rufus Richardson was at the helm during 1975. The membership was held at 150 and we had 12 on the waiting list. Member groups interested in golf or poker have been meeting regularly for some time while dominos, craps, and trapshooting faded out. Tours to Reno and ball-games have been having some success.

Ladies day June 12 1975 was held at the Sunset Whitney Ranch where two harmony groups put on the program, one of which was the Placer Gold SIRS 284. Our meetings were changed to the Casa Adobe Feb 1975 where more space was available. Another Ladies day was held Sept 11 1975 at the Whitney Ranch at which time the Auburn Area AARP bicentennial entertained. Our Christmas party was Dec 17 1975 also held at the Whitney Ranch. As of December we had 24 on the waiting list and a full membership of 150.

1976: Big Sir Wilson Platt was elected and at the first Executive Board meeting increased the membership to 160

Whispering Pines was our meeting place effective August 1976.

Sir Hal Moore has been active in the Radio Communication SIRS Net, and has recruited Jack Shields as a student.

Ladies day Christmas party was Dec 9 1976 at the Whitney Ranch Mr Walker and the Sierra College Choir entertained.

1977: Big Sir Robert Slangerup was elected for 1977. Our authorized membership continued at 160 with a luncheon attendance varying from 115 to 126. During March the Executive Board upped our membership to 175 and it was filled in April with 8 on the waiting list.

Ladies day was Dec 8 1977 at Sunset Whitney Ranch. The Rock Creek School Carolers entertained.

1978: Dr Byron Bailey was elected Big Sir for 1978. The SIRS 20th anniversary picnic was held in the Nevada County Fair Grounds in Grass Valley for the SIRS and ladies of area II Chapters on July 11 1978

A good time was had but the crowd was somewhat large to be efficient.

The Executive board expanded the branches membership to 200 in Sept 1978 which was soon filled.

Bowling seems to be in the spotlight at this time.

The yearly christmas party was held Dec 21 1978 at the Sunset Whitney Ranch with the Placer Shrine Club Band for our entertainment

1979 Our Big Sir for 1979 was Cecil Lonergan and the format for the SIRS Bulletin was changed. Kenneth Casper was our Area Governor.

As of March 1979 we had 7 on the waiting list. We were having a problem of crowding at our meetings and a new branch was proposed. The new off spring was to be called Sierra Hills branch #79 which soon took 38 of our members who resided in the eastern part of Auburn near the new branch's meeting place. Curtis Roth acting Big Sir and John McBean acting Little Sir to organize the new branch.

As of Sept 1979 15 new members were admitted to Branch #37. which depleted the waiting list brought our strength up to the new limit of 150. Our former Big Sir Byron Bailey was elected for Area Governor for the coming year

Dec 13 was the annual Christmas Party again held at the Sunset Whitney Ranch where the SIRS President R.A. Millard was speaker and Ken Casper as our installing officer.

We were sorry to lose Byron Studebaker as our bulletin editor who was followed by Bob Cannon

1980: Kenneth Stanton was the Big Sir for 1980. Since we reduced our authorized strength from 200 to 150 a number of badges had to be renumbered for those who remained in branch #37 and had badges with numbers over 150. These were given numbers remaining from the transfers to branch #79.

On Jan the 22 the golf group stated they had the largest turnout ever and our Sir Jerry Leither was the winner. The Poker group has been calling for volunteers as many are away on vacation. Dr Bailey who was the main winner served the group New York cuts at his home. In bowling branches #37 & #79 won the greater share of prizes at the last tournament.

Staffing with the July 1980 Bulletin a picture of the Gold Discovery Chana was placed in the masthead and used since.

Sir Al Amere arranged the annual Christmas party Dec 11 1980 at the Sunset Whitney Ranch. Colleen Walker conducted the entertainment the Sierra College Choir and the new officers for 1981 were installed. George Yates was elected as Big Sir. Dave Pfeiffer was appointed as Bulletin Editor in place of Bob Cannon. Also our meeting place was changed to Lou Bonte as we have had complaints of the mileage to Whispering Pines.

As the end of 1980 came to a close we still had 28 charter members still with us. Some of the early records of branch #37 were lost when Big Sir Elmer died and his son discarded them before someone called to claim them. This is why we had to request a duplicate charter certificate.

1981:

H.J.Witte



1981 - E. George Yates, Big Sir

Branch 37 returned to Auburn for lunch at Lou La Bontes restaurant. The price of gasoline was rapidly approaching \$1.50 per gallon and since the management of the Whispering Pines were in a period of indecision as to what price would be charged for lunch, caused the necessity to make a change after 4 years.

The facilities at Lou La Bontes were adequate, but not as comfortable as Whispering Pines. Luncheon price was \$6.00.

The Executive Committee breakfast meetings were continued at Mary Belles Restaurant in old town Auburn on the first Thursday of each month. This very fine practise was initiated by Big Sir Rufus Richardson in 1975. From 28 to 30 officers and committeemen regularly attend these meetings.

Ladies Day was held at the Auburn Elks Lodge, May 21st and a barbaque prepared by the Little Sir Leroy Hyde, was greatly enjoyed. The Christmas party was held December 9th at Sunset Whitney. The Branch undertook to invite as their guests, as many SIRS widows of Branch 37 as possible. Harry Sternberg did a very commendable job of coordinating this program.

The State office requested, as near as possible, a complete history of Branch 37. This was prepared by Carl Melander and presented to the State office through Dr. Byron Bailey, as Area Governor.

Dr. Byron Bailey of Branch 37 served his 2nd term as Area Governor. Ken Casper of Nevada City was State President. Membership state wide was approaching 20,000 members in 100 Branches.

For the year, exclusive of our May Ladies Day and Christmas Party, attendance averaged 126 members and guests. Our total regular membership was 150. This figure of 150 being the maximum capacity of our luncheon area at Lou La Bontes.

1962 - LEROY R. HYDE, BIG SIR

The membership was held at 150 and we had as many as 25 on the waiting list. We were lucky, as we were solvent during the entire year. We organized a Committee, with Mark Collins as Chairman. The R.V. Club was started with Lew Sheffer as Chairman. The club did not survive due to so many other R.V. clubs in the area. The fishing club was started. Mike Brock was chairman. The annual Ladies day picnic was held at the Auburn Elks Lodge and our annual Xmas party was held at the Whispering Pines restaurant in Roseville.

The monthly meetings were held at Lou La Bontes restaurant, except in November, where it was held at the North Fork Dry Diggings Restaurant. The place was too small for our Branch and the food was very poorly prepared.

BRIEF HISTORY OF PLACER GOLD BRANCH #37, SONS IN RETIREMENT, FOR THE YEAR 1983.

We started the year out by changing our meeting place back to Whispering Pines Restaurant in January. This move seemed to work out very well. The food was good, the price reasonable, and the attendance fairly good. We had an attendance of 1,213 persons at our regular monthly meetings, an average of 121.

Because we could handle a larger group at Whispering Pines, our Board of Directors at their March meeting voted to increase our membership from 150 to 175. This permitted us to make full fledged members out of some 25 on our waiting list.

Our June meeting was our Spring Ladies Day held at the Auburn Elk's Club, with some 150 people in attendance. A very nice lunch was enjoyed by all.

In July, many of our members and guests travelled to Grass Valley for a very pleasant day attending Area 11 Silver Anniversary Picnic. Some 400 members, wives and guests from the 7 branches of Area 11 were present.

Our December meeting was our annual Christmas Party and Ladies Day with 200 in attendance at Whispering Pines. Our special guests were Dr. Byron Bailey, Past Area Governor, and his wife Carrie - and Kenneth J. Casper, State President in 1981, and his wife Evelyn. After a very nice lunch, Past President Kenneth Casper installed the 1984 officers of Placer Gold Branch #37.

Before the installation, Big Sir Elect, Bob Cannon, presented Branch #37 with a beautiful plaque he made listing all of our Past Big Sirs on brass plates. At the end of each year, a brass plate with the name of the outgoing Big Sir will be added. It will be the duty of the Junior Past Big Sir to display the plaque at each meeting, and keep it in his custody during that year.

1982, Leroy R. Hyde was Big Sir for 1982. The membership was held at 150, and we had as many as 25 on the waiting list. We were lucky we were solvent during the entire year. We organized a Comforter Committee with Mark Collins as chairman. The R.V. Club was started with Lew Sheffer as chairman. The club did not survive due to so many R V Clubs in the area. The Fishing Club was started with Mike Brock as chairman.

The annual Ladies Day picnic was held at the Elk's Club and our annual Christmas party was held at the Whispering Pines, Roseville. The monthly meetings were held at the North Fork Dry Diggings Restaurant. The place was too small for our branch and the food was very poorly prepared.

1958

1988

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A Non-Profit Organization For Retired Men  
Devoted to the Promotion of Independence and Dignity of Retirement

NON RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION: All tours, trips and other activities arranged or by Sons in Retirement, Inc. and its branches are for the pleasure and enjoyment of the members and their guests who desire to participate in the well-being or safety of the participants. Sons in Retirement, Inc. and its branches do not assume any responsibility for any matters pertaining to said tour, trips or other activities.