



HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Gen. Patrick W. Murphy Immigrant to Emigrant





General Patrick W. Murphy

Patrick Washington Murphy rose to the rank of Brigadier General in the California National Guard in the 1800s and became influential in San Luis Obispo county.

Patrick was born on September 17, 1837 in Frampton, Quebec, Canada to Martin Murphy Jr. and Mary Bolger. Due to a depression and denial of formal schooling to Irish Catholics his grandfather, Martin Murphy Sr., claimed a piece of the 'Platte Purchase' in Missouri for the clan. A malaria epidemic took grandmother Murphy and Patrick's six month old sister, so Martin Murphy Sr. organized a wagon train for religious freedom and opportunity in California.

The Stephens - Murphy - Townsend Emigrant Party of 1844-45 headed west and became the first in history to cross Sierra Summit by wagon. Seven year old Patrick walked the trek that took more than six months. His cousin, Ellen Independence Miller, born on July 4, 1844 at Independence Rock, Wyoming is considered the first child born on the California Trail, while sister Elizabeth was born after crossing Truckee.

Patrick's father purchased Rancho Ernesto near Sutter's Fort in 1845 then established Murphy's Ranch to raise wheat and cattle before founding Sunnyvale in Santa Clara Valley that became the eternal resting place for the Murphy's. Martin Jr. brought the railroad through his property and helped establish the Convent of Notre Dame and Santa Clara College. The city of Murphys is named for Patrick's mining uncles, Daniel and John.

Inheriting 800 acres that included Rancho Santa Margarita, Atascadero and Asunción from his grandfather Gen. Murphy improved them with some 200,000 head of Mexican cattle and farming wheat, preserving vaquero heritage.

Wed on Feb. 23, 1870 to Mary Catherine O'Brien the couple made their home in San Luis Obispo. Mary and baby died at childbirth in 1875. As a widower, Or Kee, a twenty-five year old cook from China and two laborers were part of General's household.

Patrick supported developing San Luis Obispo as a place to live, work and visit. He granted the right-of-way across his property for the transcontinental railroad through San Luis Obispo. His \$10,000 made him a stockholder of the new Andrews Bank, invested in the Southern Hotel Company, and founded the town of Santa Margarita by subdividing ranch land and then held a fiesta in celebration assisted by his vaqueros.

He died of pneumonia on November 1, 1901 at the Lick House in San Francisco, California.

The grand Lick House stood at the southwest corner of Sutter Street and Montgomery. It was owned by James Lick of the Lick Observatory. Lick House was considered the finest and most luxurious hotel west of the Mississippi River. The dining room could seat 400 and was modeled on a similar room at the Palace of Versailles. The hotel was destroyed in the fire following the San Francisco earthquake of 1906.

He was buried in Santa Clara, California.

The Murphy's descending from Martin Murphy Sr. have been called California's Irish first family.

By Marilyn Darnell. The History Center is grateful to Marilyn for her many contributions to local history.



Virtually Tour the Dallidet Adobe!

We are giving virtual tours of the Dallidet Adobe every Thursday at 1:00 pm.

The Dallidet family lived in San Luis Obispo from the 1850s through the 1950s. Hear their stories while visiting the family home.

Please register by noon on Thursday, and we will email you a Zoom invitation to join that week's tour.

[Click here for more information or to register](#)

Miss the Dallidet Gardens?

Even though we can't share the physical space with you yet, we are constantly updating photos of the Dallidet Gardens on our website.

[Check it out!](#)



There's History Underfoot

There's history everywhere in San Luis Obispo, and sometimes we might walk right past it. A group of volunteers is joining the History Center to collect as much information as we can, and we need your help!

Do you have a stone hitching post on your block? Do you know about a plaque or a WPA



This stone hitching post can be found at the corner of Islay & Beach

information sign? Is your street name written in the pavement of the sidewalk? Do you not know what something is but think it might be old? We want to know about it.

Please send a picture and a location to info@historycenterslo.org, and we'll add it to our catalog of history underfoot. Thank you!

Looking for more to do?

- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#). In addition to our regular Theme Monday and Throwback Thursday posts, we'll now be posting every weekday with photos from our collection that will inspire activities you can try in your very own homes.
- Take a [virtual walking tour](#) of historic San Luis Obispo. These video series feature short vignettes about significant local landmarks.

If you have any ideas of content you'd like to see, share it with us! And if you enjoy what we share with you, and if you are able to, would you please consider [supporting us](#)?

Thank you for being a part of our community. Everybody stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Thomas Kessler
Executive Director

History Center of San Luis Obispo County
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