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Slooper Monument Project

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HIGH POINTS: Norwegians ship huge stone to California for historical marker. Individuals and groups in Northern California prepare for its installation and dedication. Dignitaries and singing star coming from Norway. Historical marker will be dedicated at Tulocay Cemetery in Napa on May 15, 2004. Interest in project grows as members of Sons of Norway lodges, historical societies, local dignitaries and interested individuals plan to participate in an active day of celebration and commemoration.

Norwegian-American Immigration Historical Monument Project Grows from a Dream to a Reality

Mad River, CA – April, 2004 -- Most folks in the US know about the English Pilgrims' Mayflower; not many know the story of the vessel "Restauration" which is often called the Norwegian Mayflower. Keith and Peggy Wheeler of the tiny community of Mad River in the mountains of northern California were surprised at Keith's instant celebrity status during a visit to Norway a few years ago. Keith's great great grandparents were aboard that historic sloop that sailed from Norway in 1825. While most of the Sloopers settled in the mid west, Jacob and Serena Anderson kept moving west, eventually settling near Napa, California. The Wheeler's friends in Norway were surprised that more recognition had not been paid to these Norwegian pioneers who were buried on the West Coast.

To rectify this situation, a Norwegian government entity, a regional historical society and the current owners of the Norwegian ancestral farm joined together to ship a Viking like monument stone (called "bautastein" in Norwegian) to California to be placed at their Napa grave site. The ton and a half, nine foot tall stone arrived in the US a few months ago and is now being processed for placement by the Turlock Marble and Granite Works in the San Joaquin Valley. This monument company is owned by a Norwegian-American family. They have been underwriting much of the physical work related to this project. A relief image of the ship is being sculpted on one side of the stone; a bronze plaque sent from Norway will be placed on the other. The finished stone will be on display at the annual Norway Day Festival to be held at San Francisco's Crissy Field on May 8th and 9th.

This monument stone will then be installed at the Slooper grave site in the picturesque and historic Napa Tulocay Cemetery. Saturday, May 15th, will be the day of dedication of this "bautastein." Over 20 Norwegians will be coming to California for this dedication. A San Francisco Norwegian folk dance group will perform in a mid day gathering near the cemetery, followed by a festive procession to the dedication site. There the stone will be unveiled and speeches and proclamations made by dignitaries

from both the US and Norway. That evening this festive day will conclude with a banquet and concert by the popular Norwegian singing star Hanne Krogh. The public is invited to attend all day events at no cost. The evening banquet and concert is by reservation only.

Support for this project has come from the descendants of these "Slooper" pioneers, Sons of Norway Lodges in northern California, other interested Norwegian-Americans and area historical societies. In addition to the support and underwriting of the Turlock Marble and Granite Works, a \$600 grant for the project was awarded by the Sons of Norway Foundation. The San Francisco Consulate General generously provided funding for the Hanne Krogh concert. Fund raising activities are being planned and additional donations are being sought.

An extensive web site has been developed to provide background information for this project as well as details for the dedication day. To access this site, go to www.wheelerfolk.org and click on "Slooper Monument Project." Information can also be requested from: The Slooper Monument Project, SR Box 91A, Mad River, CA 95552.

For information: http://www.wheelerfolk.org/slooper/slooper_monument_project.htm or

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