

# Livermore Plaque to be Unveiled Here Tuesday

A second plaque will be unveiled next Tuesday at the old Folsom Powerhouse to honor the memory of Horatio Gates Livermore, whose vision made the historic project possible.

The public ceremony will follow a 12 noon luncheon for living members of the Livermore family, leaders of the California State Historical Society, State dignitaries and invited guests.

The story of the powerhouse began nearly half a century before the plant itself became a reality. It started at Georgetown in the El Dorado county mountains when Horatio Gates Livermore arrived in 1850 from Livermore, Maine.

He was elected to the State Senate in 1854. In his travels to the Capitol, he was impressed by the possibilities of the American river for logging and the development of water power for saw mills and other industrial plants. He dreamed of an industrial city at Folsom like Lowell, Mass., where water wheels had long operated New England mills and factories.

He rolled up his sleeves and went to work to make his dream a reality.

He became interested in the Natoma Water and Mining company, which provided numerous placer mining camps with water, and by 1862 obtained control of the concern. The first step necessary to the dream of an industrialized Folsom was to build a dam on the American river at Stony Bar, where the granite banks formed a narrow gorge.

From the dam a canal was to be constructed on each side of the river to the town of Folsom — the east side for industrial power and the west for irrigation. Only the former was built.

While work on the dam was started in 1867, shortages of capital, lawsuits, political bickering and other obstacles prevented its completion until 1893. Folsom Dam stood for years as a massive tribute in granite to Horatio Gates Livermore; his two sons, Horatio Putnam and Charles Edward, and H. T. Knight, the Natoma company engineer who designed it.

Horatio Putnam gradually assumed leadership of the enterprises started by his father. His brother, Charles, assisted him. While the original plan to create a factory town at Folsom was still held feasible in 1881,

conditions began changing and in the late '80's Horatio realized that direct water power for the wheels of industry would soon be replaced by electricity.

It became obvious to him that power generated at Folsom would find a ready market in Sacramento, 22 miles away. He finally completed the powerhouse in 1895 to generate the current for Sacramento.

Horatio Gates Livermore — who planned a water-powered industrial city at Folsom — did not live to see his dreams materialize. He died in Oakland in 1892, just as the Folsom Dam neared completion.

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