

## OPERATION SAVES AGED COTTONWOOD

**Tree Was Standing When  
Captain Sutter Established  
New Helvetia In 1839**

A mighty California cottonwood, which was standing when Captain John A. Sutter established New Helvetia in 1839 and constructed Sutter's Fort in the Summer of 1840, is undergoing a major operation.

It stands just inside the sidewalk in Sutter's Fort Park at Twenty-seventh and K Streets, shading the historic old fort which was the goal of tens of thousands of pioneers when Sacramento was young.

The tree is 6 feet 11 inches in diameter and 18 feet 6 inches in circumference. It is more than three stories high.

Another giant cottonwood stands close by, but this one has been able to withstand the ravages of time. It is not diseased. There was a third tree there once, old timers recall, but it was destroyed years ago.

### **May Be 140 Years Old.**

Harry C. Peterson, the curator of the fort, estimates the two pioneer sentinels are between 120 and 140 years old, based upon the cottonwood's normal growth of one-half inch a year.

In the early days these trees stood on the edge of a slough, which ran from McKinley Park past Sutter's Fort down to about Fourteenth and K Streets and out to Southside Park.

### **Ferry Employed.**

Peterson has old documents which show a ferry first was employed to transport pioneers and adventurous gold seekers across the slough to the fort. Later, a wooden bridge was constructed.

For many years the slough by Sutter's Fort served as the old swimmin' hole until it was filled in just before the turn of the century.

### **Saves Tree.**

Joe Beard, who is doing some tree surgery for the state, is given the credit for saving this ancient tree, which was attacked by dry rot. It is the first time in about thirty years that disease is known to have attacked the specimen.

Beard found it necessary to dig from the heart of the tree approximately seventy cubic feet of rot, making a hole large enough for four men to stand in.

Exercising the utmost care to prevent further infection, Surgeon Beard is treating the wound against fungus and insects. Next, he will paint it with a preservative and then he will fill the hole with concrete, five yards being required.

Nature will do the rest. In time, the wound will be healed and new bark will grow over several inches of the concrete.

Then the tree, which is far older than the city herself, will be sound and healthy again.