

Grass Valley Elks Lodge 538, Charter Member

1st Exalted Ruler, John Flint Kidder [1830-1901]

History as Collected from Nevada Co. Railroad Museum, the Union, Wikipedia and various Lodge records, gathered by Cj Bryant



John Kidder, 1st Exalted Ruler and one of the founding members of the Grass Valley Elks Lodge was a doer, a thinker, a builder, who knew the importance of being involved, of establishing community, of charitable endeavors. He remains a shining example of Elkdom and Grass Valley

Elks Lodge is proud to have had such a luminary, guiding our way into the twentieth century and beyond.

Kidder began his engineering career in 1849 ending in 1860 with the City of Syracuse, New York before heading west to Nevada, where he worked various commissions. In 1864 after moving to El Dorado, California he served as a Member of [California's 15th State Assembly district](#) during the period of 1865-1867

1875, moved to [Grass Valley, California](#).^[3] Kidder.^[13] In 1874, he was the building engineer on the [Monterey and Salinas Valley Rail Road](#), the first narrow gauge railway in California.^{[1][14]}

Later in the same year, he became chief engineer to construct the NCNGRR, "this section of rail, commonly referred to as the Never Come Never Go" from [Nevada City, California](#), through Grass Valley, to [Colfax, California](#) where it connected with the Central Pacific Railway.^[1] The Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Company incorporated on April 4, 1874, and was headquartered in Grass Valley, California. Passenger and commercial rail services began in 1876 and continued until 1942. The 22.53-mile (36.26 km) line ran northward from Colfax and across the Bear River to Grass Valley and Nevada City, serving farmers and ranchers and lumber operations and gold mines. The Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad was the only railroad in the West that was never robbed, even though it transported \$200M in gold from the hardrock mines. He went on to become the railroad's President in 1884,^[16] along with Secretary, Treasurer, and made his family the Board of Directors.^[17] An excerpt from [The Evening Telegram and Courier](#)



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LIKE A FAIRYTALE John F, Kidder Returns a Multi-Millionaire.

IS A LARGE MINE OWNER Was Once City Engineer of Syracuse, Planned the Great Summit Tunnel—Railroad President..... He next turned his attention to mining: The NCNGRR cost \$670,000 to lay twenty-three miles of track, and some time ago he became sole owner of that rail road. He is its president and general manager and Mr. Brown Is its superintendent and treasurer. This railroad runs between Nevada City and Grafts Valley and in that latter city Mr. Kidder makes hits home. His residence is one of the 11 best in the state of California, Mr. Kidder Is also Debris Commissioner of the State of California.

