

## **Knight Foundry**

Knight Foundry is one of the nation's earliest foundry-machine shops remaining in operation and is believed to be the only remaining water-powered foundry and machine shop in the United States. It was established in 1873 by Samuel Knight (1838 – 1913), an inventor and engineer, who developed unique methods to cast complex metal parts for the gold mines of the region. His greatest invention was the Knight Water Wheel which helped power mining equipment, hydro-electric generators, sawmills and the Foundry itself. His patented efficient "water wheel" came to dominate the field prior to the introduction of the Pelton turbine in the mid-1880s. Knight turbines drive most of the machinery here. Samuel Knight died in 1913, and the foundry was taken over in the late 1940s by Herman Nelson, who operated the plant until his death in 1970. From 1970 to 1991, in addition to supplying new and replacement equipment to the mining and timber industries, it produced machine parts for other manufacturers of pumps and agricultural equipment. It also produced reproduction architectural iron work for the California state capitol restoration and restoration projects in Old Sacramento.

Knight Foundry is nationally recognized as a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark and is a California Registered Historical Landmark. The Foundry is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and was once named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of America's eleven most endangered historic places.