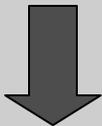


THE PLACER

A Voice of History

July – August 2012
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Administrator's Notes

Melanie Barton

The 5th annual Heritage Trail Museum Tour on August 11th & 12th is fast approaching. Each of the 18 participating museums is different, highlighting “what happened here” through artifacts and displays. Some museums include living history opportunities, which may appeal to families, while others are more focused on displaying actual artifacts and interpreting local history in static displays.

Transportation is a theme that ties the county and museums together. When the Central Pacific Railroad constructed the western portion of the first transcontinental line in the 1860s, the agriculture, clay, and granite quarry industries expanded. After the turn of the

20th century, a movement to link former wagon roads as one great highway across America was touted. In the 1920s U.S. Hwy 40 would follow the same alignment. Currently I-80 runs through the same corridor. Reliable transportation made possible the county's great success in marketing products to other regions.

If you choose to become a Trail Traveler, I'm sure your route will be less precarious than the one shown below of two autos ascending Donner Summit in 1926. If you would rather leave the driving to a pro, we are offering one bus tour each day. For detailed information about the bus tours and the event, go



to theheritagetrail.blogspot.com or call 530-889-6500. We hope you will join us on The Heritage Trail. Trail Guides will be available in participating museums and the website www.placer.ca.gov/museums in July.

Participating Museums:

Valley Museums – Located in South Placer

Lincoln Area Archives Museum
Maidu Museum & Historic Site (Roseville)
Roseville Historical Society
Carnegie Museum
Rocklin History Museum
Griffith Quarry Museum (Penryn)

Auburn Museums – Within one mile of the Historic Courthouse

The Benton Welty School Room
Bernhard Museum Complex
Gold Country Museum
Placer County Museum
Joss House Museum
Gold Country Medical History Museum

Mountain Museums – Located in the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe

Forest Hill Divide Museum
Colfax Area Heritage Museum
Golden Drift Museum (Dutch Flat)
Donner Summit Historical Society Museum (Soda Springs)
Western SkiSport Museum (Boreal)
Gatekeeper's Museum (Tahoe City)
Watson Cabin (Tahoe City)

Yankee Jims

By Kasia Woroniecka

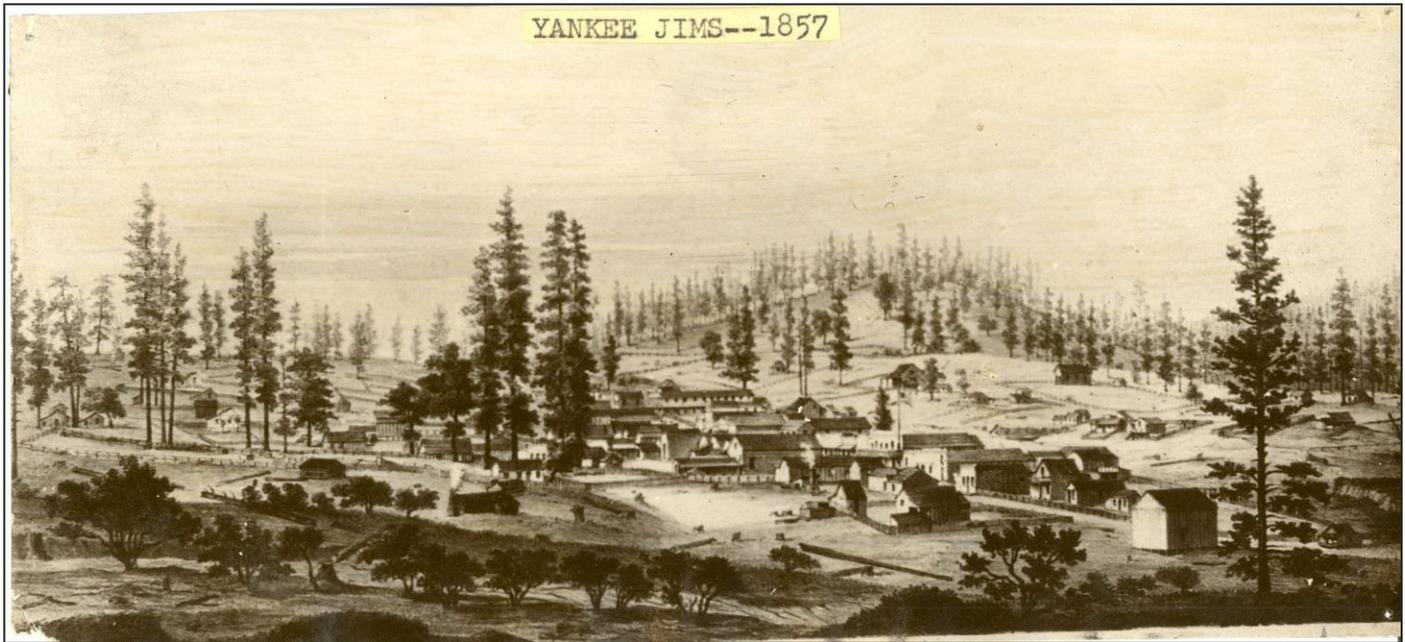
Yankee Jims is located on the road from Colfax to Forest Hill. The origin of the name Yankee Jims, like names of many other mining region towns, cannot be easily interpreted or understood. Next to Dutch, Yankee was the most common nickname used for mines and camps in California. All Americans who came from the east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio were called Yanks or Yankees. Yet according to the *Directory of Placer County 1861*, Yankee Jim was an Australian from Sydney named Robinson. He was a notorious character who was hanged in 1852 for stealing horses. John E. Ross, who wrote the *Narrative* in 1878, claimed Yankee Jim was a member of Ross' party that discovered the diggings. Ross described Yankee Jim as a "very bad man" who was very able and knew several languages perfectly. Other sources describe Yankee Jim as a "son of the Emerald Isle" who struck it rich and became known as Yankee Jim.

Nevertheless, the town of Yankee Jims sprung up and became famous as a rich mining center. In June 1852 the *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that a gold nugget worth \$2,700 was found at Yankee Jims. \$2,700 in 1852 had the same buying power as about \$80,000 today. In 1897, A.W. Poole recalled his days as

a miner in Placer County for the *San Francisco Call*: "Near the town of Yankee Jim's Placer County, I once saw 93 ounces and a fraction of gold washed from one pan of gravel. I helped clean out the crevice in the bedrock from which it was taken, saw it washed out and weighed the gold dust myself. The gold dust of that section was, as I remember, worth about \$18 per ounce, making a total of nearly twice the value of Klondike's best up to date."

The Yankee Jim's post office was opened in 1852. The telegraph line was extended to town in 1860. The region was known for its orchards and in 1859 a collection of fruit grown in Yankee Jim's was exhibited during the California Horticultural Society's Fair in San Francisco. The region was known for its plums and nuts, like walnuts, chestnuts and almonds.

With the increase in population and construction came fires. *The Daily Alta California* reported on a fire that took place in June 1852: "Yesterday morning, about three o'clock, the village was aroused by the cry of fire. The flames burst forth from three different places at the same time. The most serious one was from a building situated between the Lafayette Hotel and King and Co. store; another was from Clippinger's Express Office; and the third a short distance from the latter spot. The flames soon connected and laid about one-half of the village in ashes." The losses were estimated at \$40,000. Many believed the



fire was arson. Miners in town and surrounding hills rushed in to extinguish the fire, which proved “a hard blow to our flourishing town, but a few days will witness the rebuilding of a large portion of it, and probably with improved appearance.” In 1857 several new stores were built in town and more were planned, indicating the stability and permanency of the town and its trade. But in 1862, another fire burned all wooden buildings on the north side of Main Street as well as the Herrick Hotel and the stables. The Wells Fargo office and the telegraph office survived.

In 1857 Yankee Jims was considered important enough to be the host city for the county Democratic Party convention. Between 1851 and 1857 over 80 children were enrolled at school in Yankee Jims. By 1890 that number dwindled to 21. The importance in Yankee Jims diminished steadily as the surrounding towns, like Foresthill and Colfax grew.



This Yankee Jims house was built in 1850. It was called the Old Norton House and it was a honky-tonk for several years before it was remodeled in 1934 and became the residence of Edna Eddy, the donor featured in the *Artifact Highlight* on page 6.

Yankee Jims is located 2.5 miles (4.0 km) west-northwest of Foresthill. It lies at an elevation of 2,582 feet (787 m).



Museums Intelligence

Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

We've been pretty busy at the museums and things will only get busier as we go through the summer. We completed another successful season of Living History with over 3,200 students participating in the program.

Right now, we're gearing up for the Heritage Trail and we're working on a couple exhibits. We're going to freshen up the *History on the Go* case in the Placer County Museum. This case currently focuses on cemeteries and we're going to keep the same focus, but replace the four existing cemeteries with four new ones. This new exhibit will highlight the Todd's Valley Cemetery, the Colfax Cemetery, the Rocklin Cemetery and the Lone Star Cemetery, which is located in Auburn.

Another exhibit we're working on is for the stained glass courthouse display in the Placer County Museum. We'll install a pony-rail with text that will interpret the history of our courthouse and include some information about the two prior courthouses.

We're also getting ready to recruit new volunteers. Training will begin this fall, so if you know of anyone who might be interested, please have them give me a call (530-889-6502).

For the Heritage Trail we will once again have Alma Bell grace the Women's Jail beneath

the steps of the historic Courthouse. Many of you are familiar with Alma's story, but I bet a lot of you are only vaguely aware of what happened after she was acquitted. Below is an article that ran in the January 12, 1910 *San Francisco Call*:

WILLOWS – Alma Bell, who was recently acquitted of murdering her lover, Joe Armes, in Auburn, has again lost her reason and twice attempted to commit murder, according to members of the Bolton family. In both cases a tragedy was prevented by disarming the young woman. Although she is at times rational, it is feared that her mind is seriously affected. Miss Bell came to this city recently to visit the Bolton family. She has seemingly been enjoying herself and had gone out on several occasions to places of amusement.

It came to light this afternoon that she went insane Sunday night and tried to kill Bolton's young son.

On this evening a stranger, giving his name as Birch, arrived at the Bolton home to see Miss Bell. The couple remained in the parlor until Monday morning 3 o'clock when one of the Bolton family informed them that it was time Birch left. After he had gone, Alma Bell went to her room and soon appeared with a pistol. She attempted to shoot young Bolton, but he grabbed the revolver and wrested it from the girl. She then quieted down and seemed to be sane.

The following morning, Birch again appeared at the Bolton home, this time before the family had arisen. He talked a long time with Alma and then departed. After he had

gone, she went into a room and picked up a rifle and, it is said, attempted to kill the entire family.

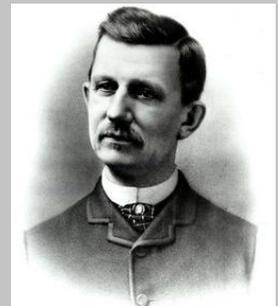
Another struggle ensued and she again quieted.

Since her last insane outburst she has been rational and Bolton thinks she may regain her senses, although if no change takes place she will be compelled to go to the home for the weak minded.

News of the girl's state did not come to light until her mother was telephoned for.

One of Alma's brothers picked her up and brought her back to Auburn soon after the incident was reported.

James A. Folgers came to California in 1850. A skilled carpenter, he was hired by William H. Bovee to build the Pioneer Steam Coffee and Spice Mill in San Francisco. After saving enough money to buy a claim he headed for the mines and the town of **Yankee Jims**, taking along several bags of pre roasted and ground coffee from the mill. Commercially roasted ground coffee was still a luxury, since people roasted and ground their coffee at home. He returned to San Francisco in 1865 and bought Pioneer Steam Coffee renaming it J.A. Folgers and Co.



Placer County Historical Society News

President's Message

*Michael Otten,
President*

Help! Heritage Trail weekend is right around the corner. August 11th and 12th is when 18 of Placer's finest museums open their doors with special programs. The Placer County Historical Society is responsible for the acclaimed Benton Welty Classroom in the 1915-built Auburn Grammar School. Except for special tours this is the one weekend of the year this hidden jewel is open to the public. We need tour guides for this increasingly popular stop. All we ask is a minimum of two hours of your time. The museum will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. That means shifts begin at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m., although it is a good idea to be there early. Feel free to bring a team mate. To help, please contact co-chairs Jean Allender (530) 217-9922, Bonnie Parodi (530) 885-4246 or myself at (530) 888-7837. Today we know the building at 1225 Lincoln Way as the seat of city government, where the City Council meets in the old school auditorium that has a new plaque, "In God We Trust." The building goes by three monikers: City Hall, Auburn Civic Center and Auburn Community Center. It is also Placer County's newest listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Many know it as the Lincoln Way School or the Auburn Grammar School. If you or someone you know

attended the school, chances are you might find your photos in the Benton Welty classroom. Get a rare sense of the 1920s school days. There are scrapbooks, maps and old school books. Try your hand at string games and penmanship. It is the go-to place with a free drawing just for kids to win a basket of back-to-school and other items sure to please. Since I believe celebrating our history is about connecting the dots from yesteryear, we will have a special display about a pioneering Placer educator who came here after graduating from Harvard, following in the steps of his fortune-seeking parents who came "around the Horn" and spent their final days in Yankee Jims.

It took the City of Auburn about 30 years to finally produce a Register of Historic Places. The register was authorized by a unanimous Council vote in 1982 when George Beland was mayor. How many more years before we have an official city plaque? It looks like 19 addresses are involved with the last listing in 1996. The first was in 1977 with the designation of The White House, 130 Maple St., which houses Latitudes.

After much prodding by Vice Mayor Mike Holmes, city officials recently produced a listing after a review of City Council actions. Here it is: Historic Buildings, White House; Irene Burns Home, 405 Linden Ave.; Vogler House, 1293 Lincoln Way; East Auburn RR Depot, 601 Lincoln; Auburn Grammar School, 1225 Lincoln Way; Auburn Hotel,

853 Lincoln Way; and Tuttle Mansion, 163 Center St. Points of Historic Interest: City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way and Masonic Temple, 956 Lincoln Way. Historic Land Sites: Historic County Courthouse, 101 Maple; Lawyer's Row, 299 Commercial; Commercial St., 301, 321, 337, 343, 351; Old Post Office, 1583 Lincoln Way; Chinese Joss House, 200 Sacramento St.; and Travelers Rest (Bernhard Museum complex), 277/291 Auburn Folsom Road.

otten@ssctv.net



The Yankee Jims California Historical Landmark # 398 plaque was dedicated on August 20, 1950.

Pictured: Harold Henderson, Clement De Maria, Victor Henderson, Ed Duncan, Mrs. Victor Henderson, Mrs. Bess Duncan Delmue, and Mrs. Lorene Davis.

Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society
Helen Wayland,
(530) 346-7040
www.colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society
Bill Oudegeest, (209) 606-6859
www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society
Gerda Percival, (530) 367-2366
www.foresthillhistory.org

Fruitvale School Hall
Community Association
Lyndell Grey, (916) 645-3517

Golden Drift Historical Society
Jim Ricker, (530) 389-8344

Historical Advisory Board
Glenn Vineyard, (916) 747-1961

Joss House Museum and
Chinese History Center
Richard Yue, (530) 346-7121

Lincoln Area Archives Museum
Shirley Russell, (916) 645-3800

Lincoln Highway Association
Bob Dieterich, bobd@iname.com
www.lincolnhwy.org

Loomis Basin Historical Society
Karen Clifford, (916) 663-3871
<http://www.ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html>

Maidu Museum & Historic Site
Glenie Strome, (916) 782-3299
www.roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum

Native Sons of the Golden West, Parlor #59
Dave Allen, (530) 878-2878
dsallen59@sbcglobal.net

Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association
Aileen Gage, (530) 885-9113

Old Town Auburn Preservation Society
Lynn Carpenter, (530) 885-1252

Placer County Genealogical Society
www.pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society
Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837
otten@sctv.net

Placer County Museums Docent Guild
Sandi Tribe, (530) 887-9143

Rocklin Historical Society
Jean Sippola,
(916) 652-1034
www.rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Historical Society
Phoebe Astill, (916) 773-3003
www.rosevillehistorical.org

North Lake Tahoe Historical Society
Javier Rodriguez, (530) 583-1762
www.northtahoemuseums.org

Artifact Highlight

Bootjack



This cast iron cricket bootjack, donated by long time Yankee Jims resident Edna Eddy in 1949, probably dates back to the early to mid 1900's. It's difficult to determine the origin and the date of manufacture without the maker's mark, which this boot jack and many like it do not have. Bootjacks very similar to this one were sold by Sears and Roebuck in 1902 for \$0.11. There were 239 bootjacks patented in the United States between 1852 and 1995. The "cricket" design is the most common. Another common form of bootjack is the "Naughty Nellie", a risqué item in the shape of a woman, and a heart shape that was often found in both cast- iron and wood.

2012 Calendar of Events

July

- July 7th, 8:00- 10:00 pm** Community Education Program: “*Campfire Storytelling*” at the Bernhard Museum.
Contact 530-889-6500.
- July 10th, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum. 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- July 16st, 6:00 pm** Forest Hill Divide Historical Society business meeting at the Forest Hill Divide Museum.
Contact: 530-367-2366.
- July 18th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- July 26th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library.
Contact 530-885-2216.

August

- August 11th & 12th
10: am – 4:00 pm** The Heritage Trail – Placer County Museums Tour
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- August 13th, 6:00 pm** Forest Hill Divide Historical Society Dinner meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.
Contact: 530-367-2366.
- August 14th, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum. 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- August 15th, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Winery.
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- August 15th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- August 23th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library.
Contact 530-885-2216.

Placer County Museums
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603

