



The Placer

2023 January-February

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Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

I hope everyone had a terrific Holiday season and will have a great 2023! For the Museums, especially our Bernhard Museum, big changes are afoot. Beginning right away, the Bernhard Museum will be closed for most of January as Building Maintenance is replacing the entire Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system. These units are so old, Building Maintenance had to manufacture some broken parts themselves to fix them when they broke down. This will greatly improve the interior environment for our volunteers, the public and, of course, our objects. Sometime in late February or in early April, permanent security cameras will be installed at the Bernhard Museum. And, after Heritage Trail in June, the Bernhard Museum will get a brand-new roof. Until they were recently patched, there were holes large enough for small mammals to enter the attic of the museum.

Aside from preparing for projects at the Bernhard Museum, we're getting ready for our Gold Rush Program to kick off this winter at the Gold Rush Museum and preparations are also underway for Spring Living History at both the Bernhard and Fruitvale Schoolhouse Museums. We think 2023 will be a busy, fun year at the Placer County Museums!



Harry Rosenberry, Berenice Pate, and Bob Robinson at the Bernhard House, pre-renovation, 1975.
 Placer County Museums, Richard Wyatt Collection.

Editor's Note

by Kelsey Monahan, Editor & Staff Writer

Happy New Year and welcome to our January-February edition of The Placer newsletter! February is Black History Month, which began as a weeklong celebration in 1926. The week encompassed the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass with an aim to expand the celebration of these two men while encouraging Americans to study the contributions of African-American individuals. In 1976 it was officially expanded to a month-long commemoration.

In honor of Black History Month we bring you three stories of individuals in Placer County's history you may not have heard of before. If you are interested in learning more about them or the resources mentioned feel free to contact the Placer County Archive and Research Center at (530) 889-7789 or email me at kmonahan@placer.ca.gov.

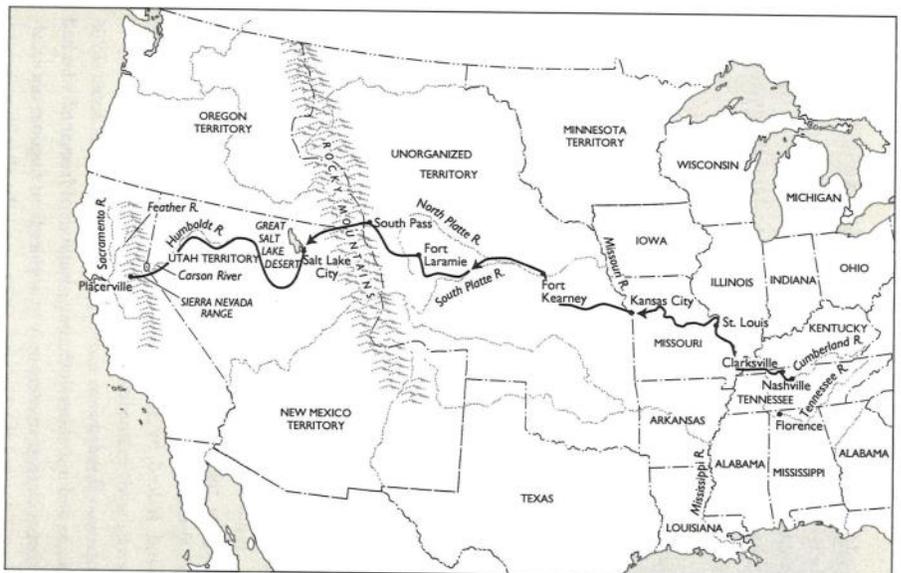
An Affable Gentleman – Richard Rapier in Auburn

by Katy Bartosh, Curator of Education

Many individuals traveled to the gold fields with hopes for wealth and new opportunities. While these dreams spanned cultural and racial divides, their lived realities differed dramatically. For some Black individuals, California was a continuation of their enslavement, but for others, moving West offered newfound freedom. Many of their stories are still buried in the historical record, but recent scholarship has helped illuminate the diversity of early California, giving us a better understanding of our community. One such story is that of Richard Rapier, a Black business owner in Auburn.

Richard G. Rapier was born in 1831, the oldest of three brothers born to John Sr. and Susan. After being freed in 1829, John married Susan, a free born woman from Baltimore and the two settled in Florence, Alabama. There he opened a successful barber shop. Richard was sent to live with his Uncle Henry in Buffalo so he could attend public school. Upon completion, he moved to his grandmother's house in Nashville.

In 1850, Richard joined the company of Madison Berryman Moorman. Though free, as a Black man, Richard could not legally invest in the company and was hired as an "Outsider" to tend mules. They departed April 27, 1850. Richard arrived in Placerville in September and carried out a short-lived mining career of about six weeks. After the company disbanded, Richard purchased land in the valley and began farming. His brother Henry joined him briefly, but amidst disagreements, they parted ways.



Richard Rapier's Trip to the West

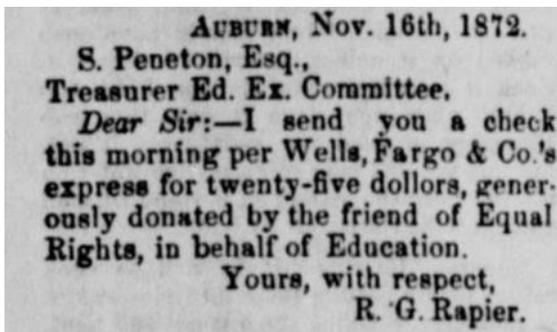
Taking advantage of his ability, as a free Black man, to pursue social and economic independence, Richard changed professions in the 1860s. John Bradford, a Black man from Virginia, owned a barbershop and bathhouse near the intersection of Lincoln Way and Sacramento Street in present day Old Town Auburn. Rapier bought the property in 1865, though he had likely rented since Bradford's death in 1862, and became a barber like his father and two uncles before him.

In 1868, Richard married Henrietta Stans, and by the 1870, the two were living together with Henrietta's daughter, Mary Stans, and a son, John Rapier. Not much is known about Henrietta, her daughter, or the fate of their son John. By 1880, Richard was still married, but listed alone, boarding at the American Hotel across the street from his barber shop.



Rapier's Barbershop and Bathhouse on E Street, 1875. Placer County Museums, Placer County Historical Society Collection.

In 1872, he was appointed by the *Elevator's* Educational Committee to help raise money for legal counsel. The *Elevator* was a San Francisco publication advocating for black suffrage, citizenship, and educational opportunities. In 1872, their Education Committee fought California's unconstitutional "separate but equal" school law. While they were ultimately unsuccessful, Richard remained involved in the attempt. In 1878, Richard was elected to serve as a delegate for the Placer County Convention held at the Courthouse in Auburn. A year later, he served again as an elector for the Republican County Convention.



The Elevator, November 23, 1872.

Richard continued to improve and run his establishment until his death in 1887. While never particularly wealthy, he had formed a successful business of over 20 years and made a name for himself in the community. Upon his death, his obituary lauded the man as well read, intelligent, and gentlemanly. On February 9, 1887, he was laid to rest in the International Order of Odd Fellows plot in the Old Auburn Cemetery.

While aspects of his personal life currently remain unknown, Richard's journey from the Antebellum South to his life in California expands our knowledge of the diversity of experience in early Auburn.

For further information on Black history during the Gold Rush, I recommend Sylvia Roberts *Mining for Freedom*. For further information about the Rapier family, I recommend *The Search of the Promised Land: A Slave Family in the Old South*, by John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweininger. I also highly recommend John Knox's article, "Black Landowners in Auburn."

Caroline Jackson

by April McDonald-Loomis, Placer County Historical Society

Most of us familiar with Auburn history know the story of how local murderer Adolph Weber's crime changed the law in regard to how inherited money could be used when a crime was involved. But there is another case, that at the time, also influenced laws. That case centered on a Black woman who lived in Auburn, Caroline Jackson.

Caroline was born a slave about 1828 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Her father was named Anthony Waddy and her mother's name was Rachel. As slaves they were all considered property. When Caroline was about five years old, she and her mother were sold to John Scott, a well-known attorney and congressman from Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. It is thought that Rachel died shortly after they were sold. Around 1852, Caroline was sold to John Scott's daughter, Catherine, and his son-in-law Siffroid E. Roussin.

Roussin came to California in 1849 and then returned to Missouri to fetch his family. On this return trip, Caroline accompanied the family. Since slavery was illegal in California, Roussin made a contract with Caroline; he would pay for her way to California in return for three more years of her service to the family. Not slavery exactly but certainly servitude.

Before her three years were up, local goldminer and farmer, Chesterfield Jackson, a man of color, met Caroline and was smitten. The newspaper recorded that because he was "a courtly gentleman" he did the "fair thing" by paying Roussin \$300 to release Caroline from her contract before they married.

In the meantime, Caroline's father, Anthony Waddy, had managed to purchase his own freedom and came to California in 1852. He stayed one year then returned to Missouri to retrieve his second wife, Maryanza and their daughter, Elizabeth. Waddy was very successful in San Francisco. He was president of the State Convention of Colored Citizens and belonged to the American Freedman's Union Commission. He and his wife attended the local A.M. E. Church in San Francisco and were very involved in local politics. Waddy was even a member of the "first colored jury ever impaneled on the Pacific Coast." They owned a house and lot at 128 Pacific Street in San Francisco. Maryanza Waddy died in 1887, and later that same year Anthony died at the age of 92.

The legal issue came up when it came to the estate of Anthony. The problem was whether Caroline could be considered a legitimate heir since the first marriage of Anthony and Rachel happened during slavery and was thus not considered "legal." Caroline's half-sister Elizabeth had died before Anthony in 1878. A suit was brought by the son of Anthony's dead sister. He claimed to be the only "legitimate" heir.

The case was headline news in 1889 and caused quite a bit of controversy. Judge Levy who ruled on the case, came down on Caroline's side, declaring "I have endeavored to reason out a result which is imposed as a moral obligation by the natural law. The conclusion which must be reached from the foregoing reasoning is that Caroline Jackson is entitled to the inheritance."

The court case was precedent setting as it defined the rights of a daughter of slaves to inherit.

Caroline died the very next year in 1890.

This article was informed by the research paper by John Knox, "A Few Observations on the Black Population in Early Auburn."

Devoted to Service

by Kelsey Monahan, Curator of Archives

In the 1960s the Civil Rights movement and the War on Poverty brought attention to the inequality that many Americans faced. In an effort to combat poverty, President Johnson signed the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act. One of the results of this act was the formation of local Community Action Agencies, and here in Placer County, one of the founding board members of one such organization known as the Placer Community Action Program was Richmond Jenkins, a man who was dedicated to serving his community and advocating for human rights.

Richmond Jenkins was born in Dumas, Arkansas, in 1908. His family moved from Boston, Massachusetts, to Placer County around 1946, first living in Colfax but eventually settling down in the town of Foresthill. While in Foresthill Richmond worked for the American River Pine Company and operated a small store and pool hall there. Sadly, a fire destroyed their home and belongings in 1952 and the Jenkins family decided to move to Auburn. Richmond worked for the Placer Gas Company there until his retirement in 1967.

In the early 1960s Richmond became involved with the Placer Community Action Program that handled Placer County's federal grant money for anti-poverty initiatives. Some of the programs that were funded included employment programs, literacy programs, Meals on Wheels, and Operation Head Start. When the Placer Community Action Program became a county agency, Richmond assisted with the transition and served on the board of the new Human Relations Commission. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, poverty rates in Placer County steadily declined, from 14.8% in 1960 to 11.7% in 1970, and 8.6% in 1980.

Richmond also found the time to volunteer at the Volunteer Bureau of Placer County where he served on the board, helped fundraise, repaired vehicles, and drove seniors and the disabled to medical appointments. He was chairman of the Placer Afro-American Association, board member for the Placer Area Red Cross, and board member for Placer Senior Services.

For his contributions to the community Richmond was recognized as an outstanding volunteer by both the Volunteer Bureau and the Community Services Administration. In 1979 Richmond was also honored by the Board of Supervisors and the Human Relations Commission as the first recipient of the "Richmond Jenkins Good Citizenship Award" for his devotion to volunteering and his anti-poverty work. The award would be given annually to county residents who volunteered their time to community service projects unselfishly and without material reward.

Richmond continued volunteering and in 1988, on the occasion of Auburn's centennial, was named one of the 100 people who most influenced the community. In 1991 he passed away at the age of 83 and is remembered for his dedication to serving those less fortunate for much of his life.



Richmond Jenkins, 1966. Placer County Museums, Auburn Journal Collection.



COMMUNITY ACTION programs are shown in displays by Placer County Human Relations Commission (HRC) Executive Director Steven Pomerantz (left) and commission chairman Richmond Jenkins, Auburn. Displays are open for public view at HRC office, DeWitt Center, Highway 49, Auburn.

Human relations group spearheads struggle by county against poverty

Roseville Press-Tribune, August 23, 1979.

News from the Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

april.pchs@gmail.com (530) 823-2128

Greetings and Happy New Year!

2023! Doesn't it seem like we were all just getting ready for the big change to 2000?

Unbelievable how fast time goes by. This year I am concentrating on paring down possessions, too much stuff! Like all resolutions it will be interesting to see how long this lasts. I hope whatever goals you have set for yourself in this new year will be successful!

The Society continues pattering along. We have a good line-up of speakers for the year starting with Alfred Corral for February 2, 2023. Alfred is always a fun and informative speaker. We are hoping to get the number of attendees to the dinner meetings up a bit, it is hard to get a caterer when the numbers are low. If we want to keep having speakers and dinner meetings, please help us by trying to attend whenever possible.

At the last dinner meeting of 2022, we were proud to participate in honoring Carmel Barry-Schweyer with the Placer County History Award. I can't imagine a more well deserving person for this honor. Carmel was an outstanding Curator of Archives for many years and is credited with bringing the Archives into a usable and functional department of the museums, she is solely responsible for getting many of our civil buildings put on the National Registry of Historic Places. That process is time consuming and demanding of the person doing the work and all of Carmel's submissions have been accepted at the state level. Quite a feat since many are rejected because of the rigorous demands of the submission rules.



Carmel Barry-Schweyer receiving the Placer County History Award.

Auburn State Theatre Features Film as Benefit for New Museum

On Sunday, January 29, 2023 at 2:00 p.m., the Auburn State Theatre will present a special showing of the documentary, "They Crossed the Mountains: The History of the Western States Trail." The afternoon presentation will be a benefit for the new Western States Trail Museum, slated to open in 2023-2024. The showing will be followed by a question-and-answer session hosted by a panel of Western States Trail experts. The theatre is located at 985 Lincoln Way in Auburn, California. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the door or online at AuburnStateTheatre.org.

As a bonus for movie-goers, sign-ups will be available for museum-volunteer-led walks and hikes along the trail. An Auburn State Recreation Area volunteer will answer questions about flora, fauna, and wildlife found along this historic route.

For more information on the new Western States Trail Museum, visit wstrailmuseum.org.

Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society

Jay McIntyre, President, (530) 346-8599
colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest, (209) 606-6859
donnersummithistoricalociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Annie DeMaria-Norris (916) 206-4479
foresthillhistory.org

Fruitvale School Hall Community Association

Mark Fowler

Gold Country Medical History Museum

Lynn Carpenter, (530) 885-1252

Golden Drift Historical Society

Sarah Fugate, (530) 389-2121

Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard, (916) 747-1961

Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center

Larry Finney, (530) 305-9380

Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen, (916) 645-3800
laamca.org

Lincoln Highway Association

Trey Pitsenberger
vice.president@lincolnhighwayassoc.org

Loomis Basin Historical Society

Karen Clifford, (916) 663-3871
ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html

Maidu Museum & Historic Site

Kaitlin Kincade, (916) 774-5934
roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum

The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics

David C. Antonucci, (775) 722-3502
tahoemuseum.org

Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor #59

Dave Allen, (530) 878-2878
dsallen59@sbcglobal.net

Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association

Mario Farinha, (530) 269-2412

North Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Phil Sexton, (530) 583-1762
northtahoemuseums.org

Placer County Genealogical Society

Diane Fishburn
pcgs.pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society

April McDonald-Loomis
 (530) 823-2128
placercountyhistoricalsociety.org

Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Craig Norris

Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

Chuck Spinks
Psrhs.org

Rocklin Historical Society

Jim Hammes (916) 624-3464
rocklinhistorical.org

Roseville Historical Society

Denise Fiddymont, (916) 773-3003
rosevillehistorical.org

S.N.O.W. Sports Museum

Jill Short Milne, (415) 254-5686
thesnowmuseum.org

Calendar:

Please confirm all meeting times and locations which each organization

Foresthill Divide Historical Society Meeting: Monday, January 16th at 6:00pm

Golden Drift Historical Society Meeting: Monday, February 6th at 7:00pm

Historical Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, February 15th at 5:30pm

Historical Organizations Committee Meeting: Tuesday, February 7th at 9:00am

Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting: Wednesday, January 18th at 6:00pm; Wednesday, February 15th at 6:00pm

Placer County Historical Society Meeting: Thursday, January 5th at 2:00pm, **Dinner Meeting:** Thursday, February 2nd at 6:00pm

Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society: Tuesday, January 24th at 7:00pm; Tuesday, February 28th at 7:00pm

Placer Genealogical Society Meeting: Monday, January 23rd at 7:00pm; Monday, February 27th at 7:00pm

Rocklin Historical Society Meeting: Monday, January 9th at 6:00pm; Monday, February 13th at 6:00pm

Roseville Historical Society Meeting: Tuesday, January 10th at 4:00pm; Tuesday, February 14th at 4:00pm



PLACER COUNTY MUSEUMS

101 Maple Street
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