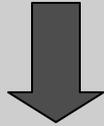


THE PLACER

A Voice of History

Mar. – Apr. 2010
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Administrator's Notes

Melanie Barton

The Great Depression Gold Rush is our topic for this issue of *The Placer*. While struggling with how to approach this topic in a way relevant to us all, I was drawn to the on-going community efforts to develop an interpretive vision and plan for the Streetscape project in Auburn. Before Christmas I was invited to lead a theme development meeting for the SHAAC (Streetscape History & Art Committee). After much thought and input from all, the committee members settled on the following theme: *Discover Your Own Gold in the Unique Auburn Adventure*. In a sense, the rush or search for gold continues.

What the SHAAC proposed was that we all can find our own "gold" in Auburn and the surrounding area. Whether you are looking for museums, art, shopping, wine tasting, or recreation, "gold" is available to the seeker. During the Gold Rush, the size of a claim varied - the richer the area, the smaller the claim. Committee members are staking their claims based on what is most important to

them. In Auburn the claims are rich and varied. At the end of the day, I hope all "miners" are represented so that the seekers will find their unique Auburn gold.

Please join me in celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Native Sons of the Golden West in Placer County. In April we will be opening a new exhibit in the Treasury at the Placer County Museum that recognizes this organization for their many contributions in the areas of restoration, preservation, parading and celebrating. This is an exhibit that you won't want to miss.



New Gold Rush

Ralph Gibson

By 1931, the Great Depression was in full force. Many people were out of work, out of money and some were out of their homes. But there was a movement afoot in California's Gold Country. With little to nothing in their pockets, people went to the rivers, creeks and gravel beds to mine for placer gold. On a larger scale, mining companies seeking quartz-bound lode gold opened hard rock mines on the Forest Hill Divide and in Ophir. Some referred to 1932 as the "New Gold Rush". But just like the Gold Rush of '49, the work was harder than most people thought it would be and the rewards little. An article in the November 3, 1932 *Auburn Journal* tried to quell the rush to the gold fields:

Magazine Articles on Gold Rush of '32 Condemned

Articles recently published in national magazines painting rosy pictures of the "Gold Rush of 1932" in California were called "cruelly misleading" in a report by Daniel H. Blood, director of natural resources to Governor Rolph this week.

"Some of these reports – and one movie news reel in particular – were unfortunate in that a bright picture was painted of golden fortunes," said Blood.

"The recoveries of gold by these hand operations have been exaggerated. The

average has in reality not exceeded 40 to 50 cents per day."

However, people still rushed to the gold fields – 40¢ to 50¢ per day was better than nothing. A December 15, 1932 *Auburn Journal* article described the new rush:

New Gold Rush to Old California Fields

Another Gold Rush is in full swing in Northern California in the same areas to which the world and his brother flocked in 1849.

Thousands of prospectors – they're called "snipers" now – are frantically hunting pay dirt on the banks and sandbars of rivers and creeks that yielded fortunes in the old days.

With so many prospectors in the field, gold buyers have resumed operations at several points. They give the "sniper" cash for his dust and nuggets and resell to the mint. Auburn, for example, has two gold buyers – Dr. W.F. Durfee, an optician by profession, and Charlie Yue, an American-born Chinese who for years has run the Shanghai Restaurant. Both take to gold buying naturally, for their fathers were in the business in the old days.

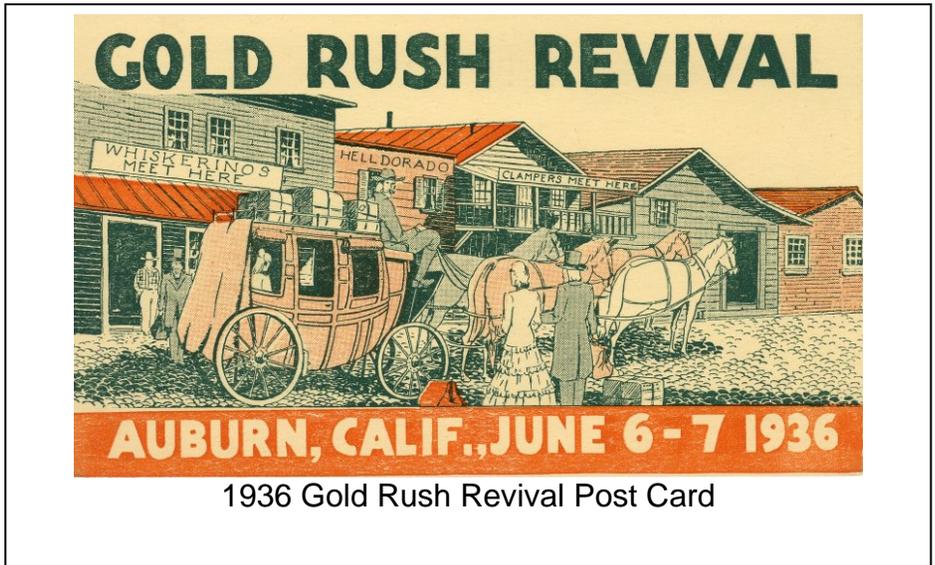
Both Dr. Durfee and Charlie agree that there's not much money in "sniping". Dr. Durfee's biggest deal this year gave one miner \$56.20 and

Charlie paid another \$128, with no indication as to how many days of panning those sums represented. Despite small returns, however, the "snipers" keep plugging away. As one of them explains, "We're at least making enough to buy grub and tobacco."

Politics played an important role in the progression of the new Gold Rush. On March 5, 1933, newly inaugurated President Roosevelt announced a gold embargo, which didn't bode well for the larger mines in operation. In effect, gold could not be shipped or sold outside of the U.S., which meant that mine owners couldn't find a better price for their gold abroad. But by the fall of 1933, President Roosevelt changed tactics to achieve the same result. He reversed the gold embargo in August and in October he raised the domestic price of gold to \$35.00 per ounce, which was higher than the world market price.

With gold fever raging through the region once more, people began to feel a connection to the 1849 Gold Rush and they longed for a way to express it. In 1934, citizens approached the Auburn City Council for permission to hold a '49 celebration that would include a rodeo. The Auburn City Council ruled out the rodeo, but approved the overall idea of a '49 celebration. On June 2nd and 3rd of 1934, the first Gold Show, which would be called the "Gold Rush Revival" the

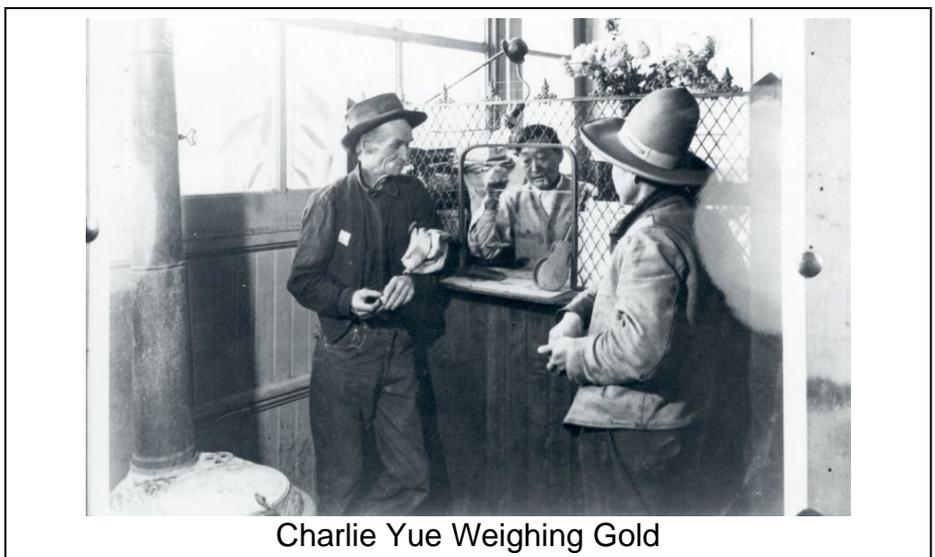
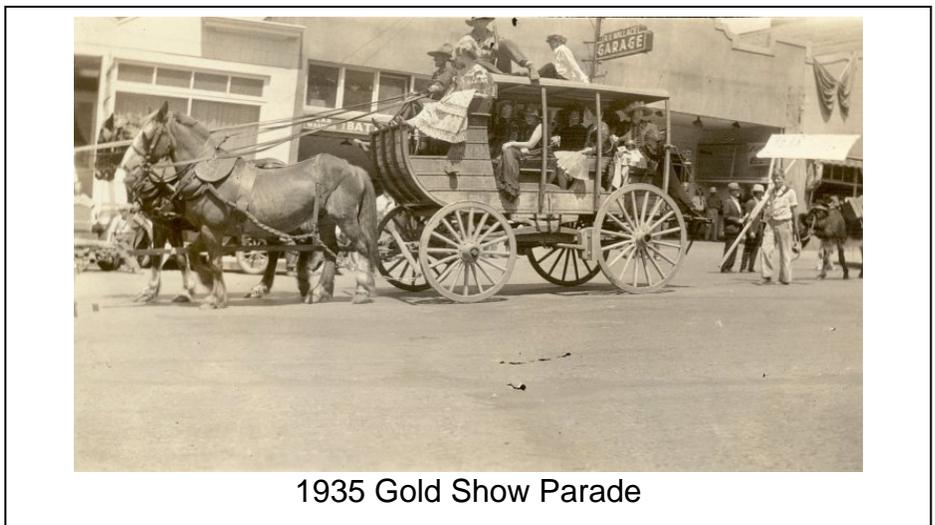
following year, took place. The event would later grow to include a parade and a queen. In the 1936 Gold Rush Revival, California Governor Merriam led the parade through Old Town Auburn. In 1937, Governor Merriam appointed members to the 20th Agricultural District with the expressed goal of obtaining statewide participation in the Auburn Gold Rush Revival, which would be combined with the county fair and the event renamed the “Annual Fair and Gold Show”.



When the U.S. entered World War II, many of the younger men who had flocked to the gold fields turned in their pans for rifles. The Gold Rush was over. The war also put a damper on the Annual Fair and Gold Show; there were more important things to think about and do.

Today, in the midst of what some are calling the “Great Recession”, gold has once again turned heads – not just because of high unemployment, but because of high prices. With gold hovering around \$1,100.00 per ounce, people have once again picked up their pans and headed to the rivers and creeks, though in much smaller numbers than before. Will this eventually lead to our own “Gold Rush Revival”?

One can only hope.



New Gold Rush Continued:

As I researched old newspaper accounts of the New Gold Rush, I stumbled upon the story of Peter Voiss. Peter was an old prospector who looked and acted the part. He traveled from San Jose to the gold fields in an old wagon led by three burros. He often participated in the various Gold Rush parades and celebrations held throughout Gold Country in the 1930s, including our own Gold Rush Revivals. The following story about Peter appeared in the April 30, 1936 issue of the *Auburn Journal*:

Peter Voiss, aged prospector who is held in the county jail at San Jose for the killing of Dr. Jasper Gattuccio, San Jose dentist, has a large number of friends throughout the mining district who are rallying to his support.

Peter Voiss is well known in this district where he has visited on numerous occasions with his donkeys and broken down wagon. He took an important part in the Gold Rush Revival Celebration last year and was on his way to Auburn at the time of the unfortunate incident in Santa Clara County last week. It would take him about five weeks to travel from San Jose to Auburn.

During the last few years the only method of

gaining a livelihood by the 74 year old prospector was the money he received from those who took his picture. In the San Jose incident, it seems that Dr. Gattuccio not only refused to pay Voiss for one of his pictures, but stopped on another occasion several weeks later and again snapped a picture of Voiss, apparently realizing that it angered the aged man. The old man grabbed his shot gun from his wagon and fired at Dr.

Gattuccio, some of the shots entered his head and he died a few hours later. Voiss was taken into custody by deputy sheriffs who witnessed the affair.

Voiss at first expressed fear for the welfare of his three burros...Dr. Walter Durfee of Auburn, who held a bill of sale on the burros, called in San Jose and returned the burros to Auburn. Dr. Durfee had befriended the aged Voiss on numerous occasions and had been given the bill of sale for a loan of \$60 to tide the old man over a rough period. The burros have been placed in a pasture near Auburn and it is reported that they are failing to eat, they seem to be grieving for their old master, who has been constantly at their side for many, many years.

During a sensational trial, Peter Voiss was acquitted of murder. He retrieved his burros from Dr. Durfee and returned to his life as a wandering prospector, making a little money on the side posing for photographs. He died on September 13, 1946 at the age of 84.



Peter Voiss



Peter Voiss



Museums Intelligence

Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

The Daphne on the Courthouse grounds is in bloom, which means spring is just around the corner. And with spring comes third graders – lots of them – as we prepare for spring Living History at the Bernhard. This year, our calendar is nearly full with only three available dates for Living History left. We will definitely break the 3,000 student mark this year! We’ve also got a bevy of new docents to help us with the program and everyone can’t wait for it to begin.

Spring also means new exhibits. We just installed two new exhibits in the Courthouse: a Pate case exhibit on food preparation in the hallway, and the Gold Rush era bottles that were found beneath the parking lot are on display in the foyer. We will also be working on a new exhibit of Flapper dresses to replace the *Unveiled* exhibit in the gallery. This exhibit will be completed by summer.

Community Education Program: *Advanced Placer Mining Methods*

Gold! Gold! Gold! Does that word still make your heart skip a beat; make you feel light on your feet? Gold attracts us all, but it is a difficult mineral to

mine. How did the early ‘49ers mine for gold? How did their efforts evolve over time? Would you like to learn something about the history of placer mining and how to do it yourself? If so please join us on Saturday, March 13th at 1:00 pm upstairs inside the Bernhard Museum Winery for a free Community Education program: *Advanced Placer Mining Techniques*. Museum docent and lifelong gold miner Don Albrecht will present information about early placer mining methods used during the Gold Rush. On display will be various tools used in placer mining. Because seating is limited, reservations are required for this program.

For more information, or to reserve your seat, please call 530-889-6500.

Community Education Program: *Preserving the Past for the Future*

What kinds of things do museums collect? What happens to them? Do we ever get to see them? Or are they put away in a box with thousands of other boxes like the final scene in *Indiana Jones: the Raiders of the Lost Ark*? You can learn the answers to these questions and many more by attending *Preserving the Past for the Future* presented by Placer County Museum’s Curator of Collections, Kasia Woroniecka. The program begins at 1:00 pm on Sunday, April 18th in the upstairs Bernhard Museum Winery. You’ll get a behind-the-scenes look at how museums function and how our past is preserved. If you’ve ever considered donating an

object to any museum, this is a must-see program. Please don’t bring items to the program for donation; you can discuss possible donations with Kasia after the program. This Placer County Museums Community Education program is FREE! The Bernhard Museum Winery is located at 291 Auburn-Folsom Road in Auburn. For more information, please contact 530-889-6500.

PCHS Officer Nominations

President: Michael Otten
1st Vice President: George Lay
2nd Vice President (programs): Addah Owens
Secretary: Bonnie Parodi
Treasurer: Al Stoll
Board members (Two-Year Terms, 2010-11 to 2011-12): Sherri Schackner, Walt Wilson, Penny Watson & Karri Samson.
(Carry over Board Members from 2009-10 with additional year remaining): Jean Allender, Larry Moll, & John Knox)

Respectfully submitted at dinner meeting Feb. 4, 2010

Sherri Schackner, chair, nomination committee
Winona Virgil
Smith Virgil
Betty Samson
Karri Samson

Officers for 2010-2011 will be elected at the annual membership dinner meeting on April 1, 2010, at 6:30 p.m., Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn, CA

At that time the Nomination committee will make its final report. Additional nominations may be made at that time and a vote taken. If a candidate is unopposed, election to that office may be made by voice vote. Should there be more than one nominee for an office then there shall be an election by ballot for that office. Those elected will assume office May 1, the start of the fiscal year.

Placer County Historical Society News

President's Message

*Michael Otten,
President*

In case you missed it, the Auburn dollar has a new look. Most know the rarely-seen dollar as the Sacagawea dollar. Authorized by the Native American \$1 Coin Act, this dollar ushered in 2000 with about as much impact as Y2K.

These are essentially copper coins, bonded together with outer layers of manganese brass. Along with the \$1 presidential series, they are being introduced in the spirit of the Canadian "Loonie" (nickname for the Loon pictured on its \$1 coin) and the Euro. The dollar coins are being pushed in a money saving effort to convince Americans to give up their \$1 paperbacks like Canada and Europe have done with much success.

I fondly call the Native American coin the Auburn dollar. I usually have some in my pocket to talk about the Placer County seat and to give as tips and prizes, a talking point if you will. I invite you to join in.

It was in the Auburn area where America's most famous baby, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, spent the biggest chunk of his adult life during the Gold Rush. Charbonneau, Sacagawea's son, was the youngest member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Still featured on the heads side of the coin, first produced in 2000, is the familiar mother and baby son design by sculptor Glenna Goodacre.

Until last year the tails side of the dollar remained pretty much the same. It depicts a soaring eagle

encircled by 17 stars. The stars represented the number of states at the start of the 1804 Corps of Discovery expedition.

Here's the 2000 version:



Last year the tails' motif changed to depict an Indian maiden planting seeds in a field of corn, beans and squash.

2009 version:



For 2010 the theme is "Government--The Great Tree of Peace." The image is of the Hiawatha Belt binding five arrows to symbolize the strength in unity for the Iroquois Confederacy (early 1400s in upstate New York). The five arrows represent the Onondaga, Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga and Seneca nations.

2010 version:



Below the image are words "Haudenosaunee" (People of the Longhouse) and "Great Law of Peace." The Haudenosaunee Confederation (aka the Iroquois Confederacy) was founded by two historic figures, the Peacemaker

and his Onondaga spokesperson, Hiawatha, who spent years preaching the need for such a league. The Peacemaker sealed the treaty by symbolically burying weapons at the foot of a Great White Pine called the Great Tree of Peace, whose five needles symbolized the five Indian nations.

This confederation with its concepts of democratic self-government and equality is credited by Benjamin Franklin and others with influencing the formation of the United States centuries later.

Congress, in a 2007 law decreed that in the future the reverse or tails side of this coin will carry "images celebrating the important contributions made by Indian tribes and individual Native Americans in the development of (and) history of the United States." The law sets up a selection process and offers some image suggestions. They include the creation of the Cherokee written language, Wampanoag Chief Massasoit, the "Pueblo Revolt," Olympian Jim Thorpe, Ely S. Parker (a general on the staff of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and later head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs) and the "code talkers" who served in the World Wars.

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Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and later head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs) and the "code talkers" who served in the World Wars.

My nomination with local roots would be a symbolic representation of the beautiful Maidu creation story possibly featuring Earthmaker, Coyote, Meadowlark and Turtle Island.

Undoubtedly, from at least a national and international standpoint, Charbonneau is Auburn's most famous Native American resident. If the various Auburn Streetscape committees are considering huge sculptures of Wendell Robie and Pony Express riders along with a Maidu and a fish, might it also be fitting to have a sculpture of Charbonneau? Just a thought from someone who thinks we ought to do a little bragging about our unique community.

--Michael Otten, otten@ssctv.net

Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

Addah Owens, Vice President

When: April 1, 2010

Time: 6:30 Dinner, 7:30 Program

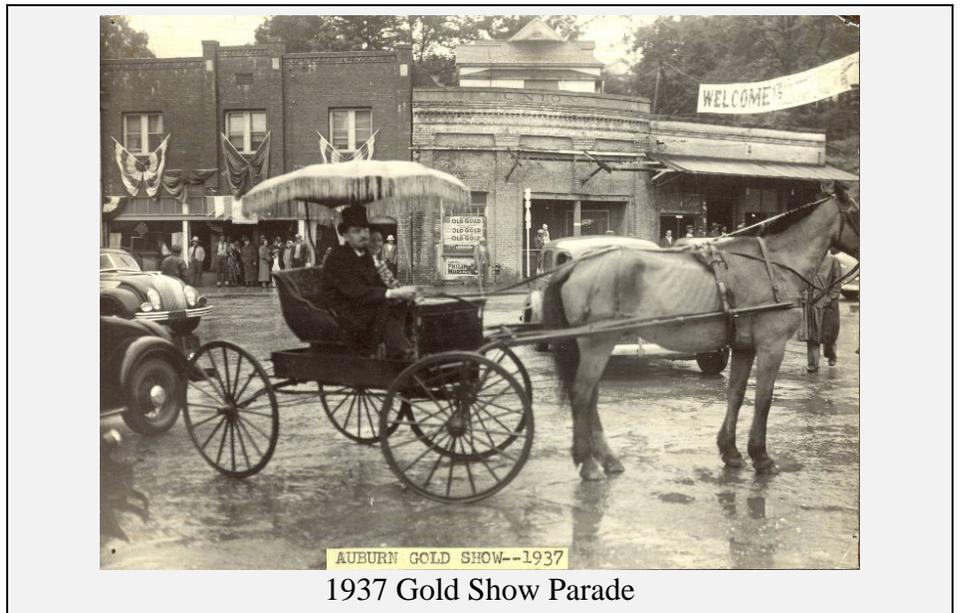
Where: Veteran's Memorial Hall,
100 East St., Auburn, CA

Cost: \$14 per person

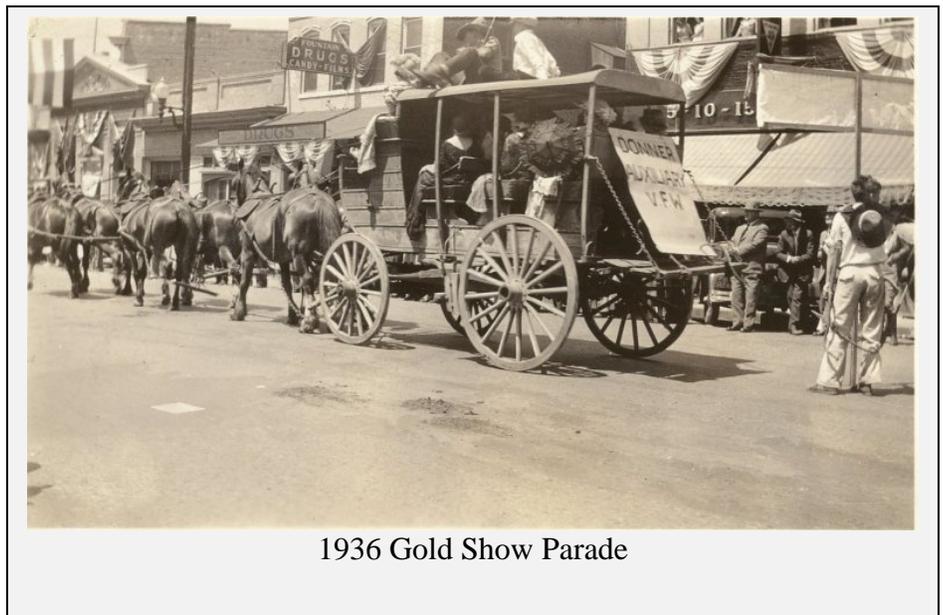
Menu: Spring Ham Dinner

Mail Check to: PCHS, c/o Betty
Samson, 8780 Baxter Grade Road,
Auburn, CA 95603.

Program: Speaker to be announced
soon. Please call 530-885-5074 for
update and reservations.



1937 Gold Show Parade



Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society
Ed & Nilda Duffek,
(530) 305-3209
www.colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society
Margie Powell, (530) 432-4015
www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society
Sandy Simester, (530) 367-3535
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
George Lay, (530) 878-1927

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

Lincoln Area Archives Museum
Shirley Russell, (916) 645-3470

Lincoln Highway Association
Norman Root, (916) 483-8669
www.lincolnhwy.org

Loomis Basin Historical Society
Dot Shiro, (916) 663-3892
www.ppgn.com

Native Sons of the Golden West, Parlor #59
Tom Potts, (916) 412-3910

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

Old Town Auburn Preservation Society
Donna Howell, (530) 885-2891

Placer County Genealogical Society
Alice Bothello, (530) 885-2216
www.pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society
Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837
www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org

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

Rocklin Historical Society
Barbara Chapman,
(916) 415-0153
www.rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Historical Society
Phoebe Astill, (916) 786-2338
www.rosevillehistorical.org

Artifact Highlight

Kasia Worniecka

Miner's Hard Hat with Carbide Lamp



The first carbide lamps were introduced in the late 1800's, but did not become popular until the 1920s. They were used primarily in mines, but also in motorcycle headlamps, bicycle lights and military searchlights. The carbide lamp, like the one pictured on a miner's hard hat circa 1940 from our collection, has a removable base which would be unscrewed and filled with marble-sized pellets of calcium carbide. A small amount of water was poured into a reservoir in the top part of the lamp. The water reacted with the carbide to form acetylene gas, which rose to the top of the carbide chamber into a small tube, which led out of the chamber to a burner tip. This could be lit with a flint, and the flame produced was focused by a shiny reflector to give a bright white light, between four and six times brighter than an oil lamp or flame safety lamp.

Calendar of Events

March

- Mar. 8th, 2:45 pm** Placer County Museums Docent Guild Meeting at the Bernhard Winery.
Contact: 530-823-3553.
- Mar. 13th, 1:00 pm** Community Education program: *Advanced Placer Mining Methods* presented by Don Albrecht in the Bernhard Museum Winery. Reservations required.
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Mar. 15th, 6:00 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Business meeting at the Foresthill Divide Museum.
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- Mar. 15th, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.
Contact: 916-624-3464.
- Mar. 17th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-652-7844.
- Mar. 25th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogy Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact 530-885-2216.

April

- Apr. 1st, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall.
Contact: 530-885-5074.
- Apr. 18th, 1:00 pm** Community Education program: *Preserving the Past for the Future* presented by Kasia Woroniecka in the Bernhard Museum Winery. Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Apr. 19th, 6:30 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Potluck meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- Apr. 19th, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.
Contact: 916-624-3464.
- Apr. 21st, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-652-7844.
- Apr. 21st, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Winery.
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Apr. 22nd, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogy Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact 530-885-2216.