

# THE PLACER

A Voice of History

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## Administrator's Notes

*Melanie Barton*

So how do two recent bottle discoveries tie into this edition of *The Placer* theme, *Prohibition and Repeal*? Bear with me and I'll tell a tale that eventually will get us back to that topic.

Bits and pieces of local history have been unearthed at two different construction sites in Auburn during the past month. I've never fully understood the allure of old bottles, but I may be a new convert! There is something exciting about holding a soda bottle that was emptied by a person during the Gold Rush.

During the renovation of the front parking area of the historic Courthouse in Auburn, several bottles including eight whole ones with labels from Williams & Severance, Union Glass Works and Dyottville Glass Works were found at the bottom of a privy. Because of the location of the privy and our knowledge of where and when the two courthouses were located, we are fairly confident that the bottles were disposed of from 1850-1852. All of these are soda bottles that were manufactured in Philadelphia and shipped empty to San Francisco as ship ballast.

In addition to the whole bottles, multiple tops (necks), bottoms and fragments were unearthed. Other artifacts found include porcelain bowl fragments, clay pipe fragments, copper pan fragment, and a metal lock plate. These finds are some of the earliest evidence we have of early Auburn. The collection is currently at the Collections Management Facility where each item will be thoroughly researched. We hope to have an exhibit at the Placer County Museum in the coming year that will shed light on what we have learned from these newly discovered artifacts.

Two weeks after the discovery at the Courthouse, hundreds of bottles and fragments were unearthed at Central Square as a part of the city of Auburn's Streetscape project. Evidently the bottles were used as fill. Some of the bottles found include beer, soda, mineral water, bitters and a tobacco bottle. All of the bottles from this location appear to be from 1900-1920. With further research Museum staff and volunteers will pinpoint the brewery names and dates of operation. I can tell you from the embossed labels that some of the bottles are from the Buffalo Brewing Co., Wilson Mfg. Co., and C. Schnerr & Co all located in Sacramento; and

from A.W. Kenison Co. a bottling plant built between 1897 and 1900 on property facing Central Square on the east side of High Street in Auburn.

So how does all this tie into Prohibition and Repeal? Beer and other alcoholic beverages were the mainstay of most bottling companies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many breweries such as Buffalo stopped making beer in 1920 because of the Volstead Act, better known as Prohibition. They produced non-alcoholic beverages such as near-beer with some success. After Repeal in 1933, some of these small breweries like Buffalo were unable to recapture their lost sales and eventually closed. If you have a bottle story with ties to Placer County, let me know. It could make an interesting addition to any exhibit we plan.♣



Bottles from the Courthouse Parking Lot

## Prohibition and Repeal

*Ralph Gibson*

Part of the rich history of this area is steeped in alcohol. From the wild tales of Gold Rush tent saloons to the vineyards of local winemakers, a good drink could always be had in Placer County. But before the Gold Rush, there was a movement afoot to prohibit the consumption of alcohol in the United States. This movement lost strength during the fight to end slavery and the Civil War, but it sprang back to life in the early 1870s. The prohibitionists, made up of several groups such as the Anti-Saloon League, struggled to convince lawmakers to pass a law making the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol illegal. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, some politicians were called either “dry” (for prohibition) or “wet” (against prohibition). Party affiliation had little to do with a person’s stance on the great issue of the time. In January 1917 the 65<sup>th</sup> Congress convened with 140 “dry” Democrats to 64 “wet” in both the House and Senate, and 138 “dry” Republicans and 62 “wet”. In December 1917, a resolution calling for an amendment to the constitution that would create national prohibition was passed by both houses. The Amendment was ratified by 36 of the 48 states on January 16, 1919. On January 16, 1920, the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment went into effect and the manufacture and sale of liquor was illegal. Congress had earlier passed a law, the National Prohibition Act (also called the Volstead Act), on October 28, 1919 over the veto of President Woodrow

Wilson to strongly enforce prohibition. Many states followed suit and passed their own “little Volsteads” to further prohibit alcohol. In California, the Wright Act, which mirrored the federal Volstead Act, was passed by the citizens of the state and went into effect in 1922.

Incidentally, the Volstead Act created a national ban on the manufacture, sale, transportation, importation, and exportation of intoxicating liquors, but did not directly ban the consumption of liquor.

Enforcement of Prohibition was another issue all together. Many local agencies lacked the funds necessary to effectively enforce prohibition. Almost from the very beginning of Prohibition, bootleggers transported alcohol to nearly every corner of the country. Over time, speakeasies, a secret place where people would go to order and drink alcohol, sprang up in most towns and cities.

In Placer County, the Sheriff’s Department worked hard to enforce the Wright Act. The following is an excerpt from the August 25, 1923 edition of the *Placer Herald*:

*Sheriff Elmer Gum captured four “jack” stills this week on Bear River near Sheridan. Two men (Russians), John Bagdanoff and Joe Debejak, were also taken in and are out on bonds. Two other bootleggers skipped out.*

*Gum was assisted by Deputy Sheriff Dependener, District Attorney Lowell and*

*Constable Beerman of Lincoln.*

Part of the costs of enforcement of the Wright Act was covered by the high fines levied against the violators as reported in the January 12, 1924 *Placer Herald*:

*The heaviest fines in the county for violation of the Wright Act were imposed by Superior Judge J.B. Landis and Justice of the Peace John Davis on James Johnson and G.B. Murphy, arrested in connection with a recent raid at Loomis, where stills said to be capable of turning out 250 gallons of liquor per day were seized.*

*Murphy was assessed \$900.00 in the justice court and \$600.00 in the superior court on various charges, to all of which he pleaded guilty. Johnson was assessed \$600.00 in each court, after he pleaded guilty. All fines, totaling \$2,700.00, were paid at once.*

*Charges against L. Sanchez were dismissed, it being claimed he was a mechanic employed to fix a truck at the time of the raid. The truck, seized while transporting liquor, is being held by Sheriff Elmer Gum.*

On January 19, 1924, the following was reported in the *Placer Herald* :

*The officers arrested three men at Roseville Thursday night, and charged them with bootlegging. One was at the Railroad Saloon, and*

*the other two at private houses.*

*Myron Lackye and Wallace Polson secured the evidence, and the arrests were made by Sheriff Gum, Deputies Dependener and Pilliard, and Constables Allen and Moran.*

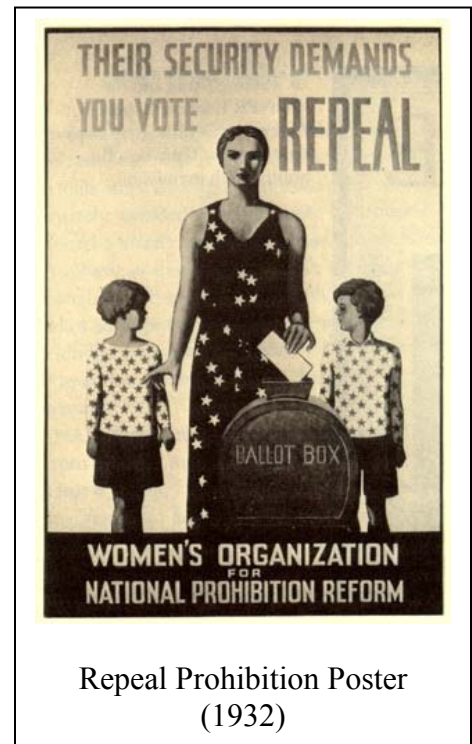
*The prisoners are out on bail.*

Raids on suspected still operators and bootleggers continued throughout the 1920s, but it seemed to make little difference. An indication of how successful such operations were, when still operators or bootleggers were eventually caught, they could afford bail and the exorbitant fines levied by the courts.

Once the Great Depression hit, most Americans felt they needed a drink; Prohibition became increasingly unpopular. On March 23, 1933, President Roosevelt signed an amendment to the Volstead Act, the Cullen-Harrison Act, which allowed for the manufacture and sale of beer containing 4% alcohol by volume and light wines. On April 8, 1933, one day after the new law went into effect; Anheuser-Busch delivered a case of Budweiser beer to the White House by wagon drawn by Clydesdale horses.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which created National Prohibition, was repealed with the ratification of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment on December 5, 1933. The 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment gave states the right to ban the purchase or sale of alcohol. Today in several states,

especially in the South, there are a number of "dry" counties.





More Posters and  
Photographs

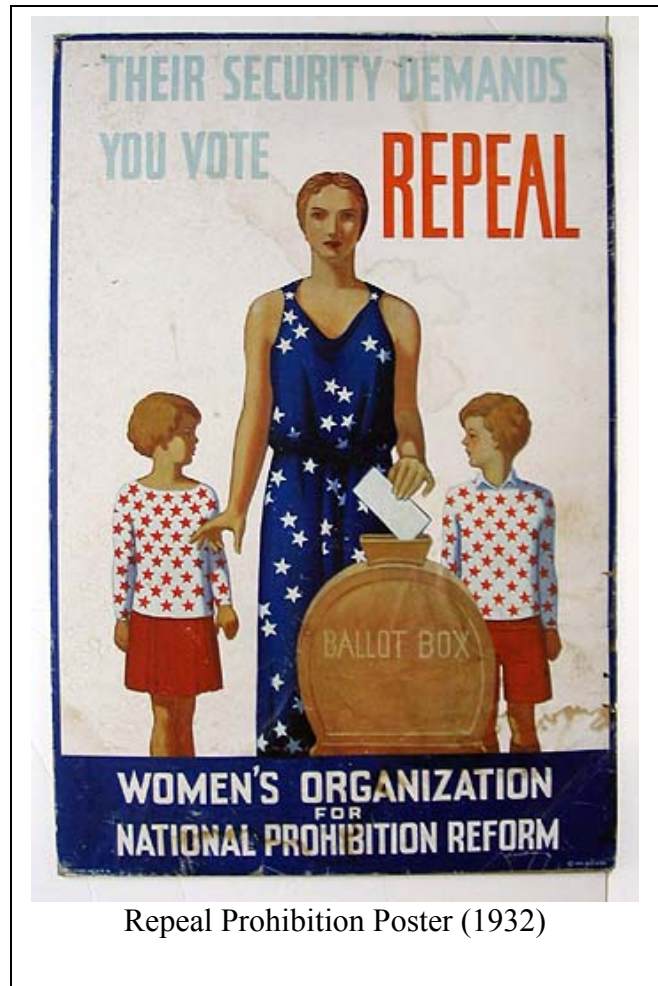
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Repeal Prohibition Poster (1932)



Police Raid in Washington DC in 1923



Repeal Prohibition Poster (1932)

# The Shadow of Danger



If you believe that the traffic in Alcohol  
does more harm than good—*help stop it!*

## Strengthen America Campaign

Strengthen America Campaign - 105 East Twenty Second Street, New York City, N.Y.

Prohibition Poster (1919)



# Museums Intelligence

## Placer County Museums News

*Ralph Gibson*

The last day to see the wedding dresses on display at the Bernhard Museum is Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. If you haven't seen them yet, please stop by the museum before we pull them out to decorate for Victorian Christmas. The wedding dresses in the Placer County Museum gallery in the historic Courthouse will remain on display until the spring.

A new redesign of a Pate Case display in the Courthouse foyer has been completed. This case focuses on trade baskets. The baskets and accessories in the case, many of which have not been on display in a long time, are beautifully displayed. Please come by the Courthouse and check it out.

We're working on a new exhibit on dolls that will be installed in the Bernhard Museum Winery before Christmas. On display with the dolls from our collection will be personal stories from the community about a doll from their childhood. If you have fond memories of a special doll, please call our Curator of Collections, Kasia Woroniecka, at 530-889-7705 to set up an appointment to share your story.

Volunteer training has wrapped up. We began with 21 but lost

five along the way. The 16 volunteer recruits will be shadowing in our museums soon. Please welcome them to the museums when you see them.

### Victorian Christmas at the Bernhard Museum

Catch a glimpse of Christmas Past! The Placer County Museums invites you to join us for a bit of Victorian Christmas Cheer at the Bernhard Museum. The museum will be dressed in Victorian Christmas splendor from December 1<sup>st</sup> through the Holidays and is open Tuesday through Sunday 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Stop by and learn the history behind some of our most cherished Christmas traditions. Admission is FREE! If you plan to bring a group of eight or more, please call us ahead of time to make reservations.

You can also visit us during Auburn's Old Town Country Christmas celebration on December 12<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-8:00 pm and enjoy a cup of hot apple cider and fresh baked cookies! For more information on any of these events, please call 530-889-6500.♠

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### Placer County Historical Society News

#### President's Message

*Michael Otten,  
President*

We are digging up Auburn's past once again to pave the way for what the City Council hopes to be a golden economic future along Auburn's central corridor

from Old Town. In a way, we are kind of like the group of folks that followed Claude Chana's initial gold discovery after May 16, 1848, in the dry diggings, digging through centuries of Maidu history in search of gold.

Work crews on phase 1 of the Auburn Streetscape at Central Square and those repaving the parking lot at the Historic Courthouse have been digging up the garbage left behind, a treasure trove of old bottles from a dump and outhouses of the past (See Gus Thompson's Oct. 29 article in *Auburn Journal* for more details).

Some of the bottles were dug up from Central Square during Streetscape Phase one. With another eight phases to go in this \$12 to \$20 million redevelopment project, it will be interesting to see what happens.



Bottles found during Phase One of the Streetscape Project.

The face of Auburn changed much during the Great Depression with the addition of a new City Hall, Post Office, Fairgrounds and stadium, and a then state-of-the art sewer plant, thanks to the Works Project Administration and other New Deal programs that helped keep



people working and families fed.

Now, the city is using the redevelopment process to put a modern face on Lincoln Way with the hopes that it will revitalize existing businesses and bring in new ones to build a better property and sales tax base to repay the costs of undergrounding utilities, new fancy sidewalks, a new intersection at Central Square with a plaza, fresh paved new streets. Despite some public misgivings the City Council in its redevelopment alter ego known as the Auburn Urban Development Authority (AUDA) is unanimously determined to see it through.

Now the PCHS, through its designation of myself as its representative, is part of it. AUDA last month created a 12-member Streetscape History and Arts Advisory Committee (SHAAC for short) with Council member Keith Nesbitt as its chair. SHAAC's first meeting was set for Nov. 4.

The five city residents named as large members of the committee are Dan Sokol, vice president of the League of Placer County Taxpayers (and a PCHS member); Chris Packard, financial adviser; Kristina Perry, retail; Michael Emmert, real estate, and Cynthia Haynes, PG&E senior project manager.

Other appointees are: David Keyser, tribal secretary representing the United Auburn Indian Community; Teri Gibson of the Christmas Village, representing the Downtown Business Association; Ty Rowe

of Bootleggers, (Old Town Business Association); Harvey Roper of Roper's Jewelers (Auburn Endurance Capital Committee) Marti Niles, Auburn Arts Commission; and Michael Otten (Historical Society).

The way City Manager Robert Richardson (AUDA executive director) sees it, this committee by June or July would have to prepare a report that "provides a complete history of Auburn for the Streetscape Master Plan overlay to include specific designated location and media to be utilized." A second report would define the public art for 10 locations, including the general themes and budget for each location.

While providing a complete history is impossible, it would be possible to lay out a historical timeline covering important events and people who shaped the community. Your ideas and suggestion on the history and art to be depicted will be appreciated. The final decision will rest with the Council. The message I am getting from Nesbitt and others is that the Council wants a more walk friendly community in hopes that residents and visitors will linger awhile and enjoy its historical and artistic ambiance.

At this point there are more questions than answers but plenty of high hopes to pull this Gold Rush community out of its current economic doldrums. Please step forward with your ideas and come to the meetings when you can. If you want to be included on regular updates

please provide me with your email.

**George Nick Voyiatzes**  
**1/23/1913-10/14/2009**

If you wanted to know Auburn area history, George Voyiatzes, would tell you for he lived through much of it. A longtime member of the Historical Society, Voyiatzes loved to tell stories and helped served up many a meal at dinner meetings. If the dinners weren't up to his standards or there was an increase in price, George would always let you know in no uncertain terms.

You know he will be marching in spirit in the Veterans Day Parade for few loved their country and community as well as George, who died Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> at the age of 96. Failing health caused him to resign a year ago as the DAV#80 representative on the Auburn Veteran's Memorial Hall Board. Fittingly, the reception honoring his memory was held at the hall where he spent a lot of time in various meetings and in the kitchen.

A World War II Army veteran, George was a member of American Legion Post 84 for more than 50 years and served as a post commander and member of the Mt. Vernon Grange for more than 60 years and serving as its master. He also spent more than a half century as a member of the Placer Sportsmen regularly helping out with the Kids Fishing Derby and the Buck Stew. As the Auburn Journal aptly described him, Voyiatzes

was indeed “a man for all Auburn's seasons”. He will be missed. George survived almost as long as the venerable Tahoe Club Building which turned 100 this year (visit <http://www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org> for more on the Tahoe Club and other history).

Finally, please donate an item for our annual Christmas drawing at the dinner meeting on Dec. 3.

As part of the new front parking lot paving project at the Courthouse new lighting was put in to illuminate the flags and an electrical line was extended toward the 1908 entry way fountain that was donated to the city of Auburn by former state Lt. Gov. Jacob Neff. If the city was able to light the fountain that provided water to dogs, horses and humans visiting the courthouse then, we should be able to do again in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.♥

--**Michael Otten,**  
[otten@ssctv.net](mailto:otten@ssctv.net)

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**Placer County Historical Society  
Dinner Meeting**

*Addah Owens, Vice President*

**When:** Dec. 3, 2009

**Time:** 6:30 Dinner, 7:30 Program

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

**\*Cost:** \$14 per person

**Menu:** Holiday Ham Dinner

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

**Program:** Ric and Jody Hornor, residents of Pilot Hill, with backgrounds in art and marketing have created a series of books bringing a fresh approach to our areas rich history. The books are

fun and engaging so more people will read, appreciate, and protect this areas history and culture.

We will wander from scene to scene by foot and by stage, sail around the Horn, visit the vibrant city of San Francisco, and pass through the hub of Sacramento on the way to the mines. The stories are often hilarious, relating tales of adventures and misadventures by miners, politicians, families, muleskinners, shopkeepers, saloonkeepers, sheriff’s lynch mobs, judges, and a variety of ne’r-do-wells who populated the Sierra Foothills during the time of the Gold Rush. We will view slides of beautifully restored black and white photos from the 1850s to the early 1900s.

Their books will be for sale before and after the program.♥



Bottles Found during the Streetscape Project



## **Placer County Historical Organizations**

Colfax Area Historical Society  
Ed & Nilda Duffek  
(530) 305-3209  
[www.colfaxhistory.org](http://www.colfaxhistory.org)

Foresthill Divide Historical Society  
Sandy Simester,  
(530) 367-3535  
[www.foresthillhistory.org](http://www.foresthillhistory.org)

Friends of Griffith Quarry  
Doug Brown, (916) 663-1837

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

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

Historical Advisory Board  
Tracy Falk, (530) 889-6500

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

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

Lincoln Highway Association  
Norman Root, (916) 483-8669  
[www.lincolnhwy.org](http://www.lincolnhwy.org)

Loomis Basin Historical Society  
Dot Shiro, (916) 663-3892  
[www.ppgn.com](http://www.ppgn.com)

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](http://www.pcgenes.com)

Placer County Historical Society  
Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837  
[www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org)

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

Rocklin Historical Society  
Barbara Chapman,  
(916) 415-0153  
[www.rocklinhistory.org](http://www.rocklinhistory.org)

Roseville Historical Society  
Michael Bryant, (916) 773-1520  
[www.rosevillehistorical.org](http://www.rosevillehistorical.org)

### **Artifact Highlight**

#### *Kasia Woroniecka*

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded in 1873, spearheaded the crusade for Prohibition. The purpose of the group was to combat the influence of alcohol on families and society. Its members were inspired by the Greek writer Xenophon who defined temperance "total abstinence from all things harmful." Besides alcohol, the WCTU was very interested in a number of other social reform issues including: labor, prostitution, public health, sanitation, international peace, suffrage and banning tobacco. Pictured is a Hospitality Stock Certificate of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of California (North) from 1921.





Hospitality Stock Certificate (1921)

## Calendar of Events

### November

- Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am** Historical Organizations Committee meeting at the Bernhard Winery.  
Contact: 530-889-6500
- Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Business meeting at the Foresthill Divide Museum.  
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.  
Contact: 916-624-3464.
- Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.  
Contact: 916-652-7844.

### December

- Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall.  
Contact: 530-885-5074.
- Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 pm** Community Education Program: *Victorian Christmas at the Bernhard Museum*.  
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.  
Contact: 916-652-7844.
- Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Winery.  
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Potluck meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.  
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.  
Contact: 916-624-3464.