



2020 January-February Volume 23, Issue 1

Inside this issue:

Administrator's Notes	1
New Years Postcards	2
Old Objects, Newly Discovered History	4
News from PCHS	5
Video Project in the	5
Historical Organizations	6
Calendar of Events	7

Ralph Gibson

Museums Administrator
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-6500
rgibson@placer.ca.gov

April McDonald-Loomis

President Placer County
Historical Society
P.O. Box 5643
Auburn, CA 95604
April400@wavecable.com

Katy Bartosh

Editor and Staff Writer
(530) 889-6500
kbartosh@placer.ca.gov



Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday season. 2020 will be another busy year for the museums. This winter our much-expanded Gold Rush Program will begin with nearly 500 registered students for January and February. As soon as that program ends, Spring Living History begins with just over 2400 students signed up to participate.

During it all, we'll be working on a new exhibit for the Placer County Museum in the historic Courthouse. The working title of the exhibit

has been "Postmortem," but we're currently leaning toward is "The Good Death". This exhibit will define what a "Good Death" was and will describe the rituals of death from the Victorian Era to the mid-20th Century. We

plan to open in the spring of 2020.

Throughout the summer and Heritage Trail, we'll be working on another exhibit for the

Courthouse: Hawver Cave.

Fall Living History begins in September and will run through early November. After that, we'll decorate for the holidays and manage our Christmas programs. With the attendance at our first *S'mores and Stories* event at the Bernhard last December, you can expect to see it again this year.

And after that, I'll be at my computer writing

about what is upcoming for 2021.

But, for now, I just hope everyone has a terrific 2020!



Placer County Museums Collection, 1914

What does a pig on a postcard mean for the New Year?

Have you ever wondered what's in that safe in the Historic Courthouse?

There is a new documentary video in the works.

Want to know if the 'facts' you tell your visiting relatives about Placer County are really true?

New Year Postcards

by Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections

Victorian and turn-of-the-20th-century New Year postcards often featured symbols of rebirth, such as butterflies and hatching chicks, and winter imagery like snowmen. The card designs are colorful and playful, yet some of the Victorian visual symbolism they contain might appear rather strange today.

Collecting postcards in albums was a popular 19th-century pastime, and we have several albums in our collection. Here are a few examples of New Years postcards:



The snowman is representative of winter and the holidays. Yet in this card he is paired with Pierrot, a lovesick and clumsy character in the French pantomime. Pierrot was a very popular character, used in postcards for different occasions, including Valentines and birthdays.

Placer County Museums Collection, 1910

Four-leaf clovers and horseshoes are still used as symbols of good fortune. The leaves in the clover represent faith, hope, love, and luck. Clovers were often featured in Christmas and Near Year postcards to symbolize that the sender is thinking of the recipient.

Placer County Museums Collection, Undated



Christmas and New Year's cards often had scenes of flowers, birds and their nests as a reminder that spring would be coming.

Placer County Museums Collection
1906



Pigs were popular as good luck charms in France, England, Ireland, Germany, and Austria during the 19th and early 20th centuries. As the print industry flourished in Europe and the United States, pigs appeared on New Year greetings during the Victorian and Edwardian Period as symbols of good health, happiness, and prosperity - the sentiments associated with Christmas and the New Year.

Placer County Museums Collection, 1906

This postcard shows a boy pushing a cart filled with bags full of gold coins. Victorians had many traditions and superstitions associated with the New Year. One of them was the need to have a bit of money in their pockets on New Year's Day to ward against poverty and misfortune in the new year.

Placer County Museums Collection, 1910



At midnight on New Years' Eve, bells were rung to symbolize victory over evil and to bring hope for peace and happiness in the year ahead. In the Victorian language of flowers, lily of the valley (bottom left) meant "return of happiness."

Placer County Museums Collection, 1906



Old Objects, Newly Discovered History

by Kelsey Monahan, Curator of Archives



Detroit Safe Company, 1878

Looking towards the New Year, I have been thinking about how museum collections are always evolving, and our collections are no exception. While new objects come in each year, we also learn more about our existing artifacts thanks to new technology and research conducted by volunteers.

One example of this is a safe from the Detroit Safe Company. It was donated to the Placer County Museums in 2017 and is on display in the Courthouse hallway. Often times, the only history we have of an artifact is that which the donor can provide. In this case, we knew the safe was manufactured in Detroit, Michigan, July 29, 1878, and had belonged to the Auburn law firm of Lowell, Lowell, and Lowell.

However, using new tools we can uncover more information. With access to the archives of the California Digital Newspaper Collection and Newspapers.com, we can search through historic editions of newspapers for more information.

The front of the safe is painted with the name, "T.E. Stephens." Thanks to previous research, we know that Thomas E. Stephens started in the grocery business in Auburn in 1862. This store would have been next to the Placer Herald building in what is today Old Town Auburn.

Additional information came up with an article from the Placer Herald in 1878, the same year the safe in the Courthouse

was manufactured, which said:

Our neighbor, T. E. Stephens, received last Wednesday, one of the Detroit company's latest improved fire-proof and burglar-proof safes; its weight is 3,200 pounds and is complete in all its arrangements. The safe is a good piece of property and if it is what it is professed to be, will enable Mr. Stephens to control the proceeds of his business with some degree of certainty.

The Placer Herald, October 26, 1878

With this information, we can say that it is very likely that the safe in the Courthouse was once in the Stephens store in Auburn. After Stephens passed away in 1892, the store was taken over by G.P. and J.M. Lowell.

J.M. Lowell's sons Marshall Z. Lowell, Arthur C. Lowell, and Orrin J. Lowell would later establish the law firm of Lowell, Lowell and Lowell to practice law in Auburn. In the 1940's a man named John Couzens worked at the firm and when it closed, he purchased the safe from the Lowell estate. He later donated it to the Placer Sierra Bank, and in 2017 it was donated to the museums.

Without the ability to search the historic newspapers, who knows if we would have been able to find the article detailing T.E. Stephen's purchase of the safe. Thanks to our researchers and the power of technology we can look forward to even more new discoveries about our collections in the new year.

News from Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

April400@wavecable.com (530) 823-2128

It's hard to believe another year has passed. There will be several positions on the PCHS Board opening up in 2020, and we are especially in need of a secretary. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact one of the Board members.

Our December dinner meeting with the raffle was a great success and a lot of fun. The Society was proud to partner with other historical associations to present the very first "Placer County History Award" to journalist Gus Thompson. Gus is keeping the stories and history of

the area alive in his many newspaper columns. Take the time to drop an email or a real letter to the editor of the Auburn Journal and tell them how much you enjoy Gus' columns on local history.

Video Project in the Works

by Bryanna Ryan, Supervising Curator

2019 was a year filled with notable commemorations and new beginnings. We celebrated the 1959 Auburn All-Stars and participated in the Gold Country Fair's 130th anniversary by recreating an 1889 Victorian parlor experience. By fall, we were honoring the completion of the 1869 Transcontinental Railroad with our first mini documentary video. We are grateful for these opportunities to remember the past, the people, and the events that have made a lasting impact in our communities.



20162919.JPG



20162920.JPG



20162921.JPG



20162925.JPG



20162926.JPG



20162927.JPG

Pictures from DeWitt's Past

In 2020 we are looking forward to more projects. For our next mini documentary video, we are turning our attention toward the DeWitt Complex in North Auburn. What really motivated us with

much to explore. Extensive research has been gathered and so many fantastic images, objects, and oral histories are available to help bring this story to life.

This project will delve into the historic experience of the site, and the role and impact it has had in the local community. From its initial construction beginning in 1943 as the DeWitt General (Army) Hospital, to its role as the

DeWitt State "Mental" Hospital, and finally to its current place as the Placer County DeWitt Government Center, this historic site has a fascinating story to tell.

As with all our ambitious projects, we could not accomplish all of this without the generosity, energy, and help of the amazing Muse-

ums and Archives volunteers. Thank you for all you do! I am looking forward to seeing what 2020 brings and wish you all a Happy New Year!

Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society

Jay MacIntyre, President
(530) 346-8599

colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest (209) 606-6859

donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Sandy Simester
(530) 367-3535

foresthillhistory.org

**Fruitvale School Hall
Community Association**

Mark Fowler

Golden Drift Historical Society

Sarah Fugate
(530) 389-2121

Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard
(916) 747-1961

**Joss House Museum and
Chinese History Center**

Richard Yue
(530) 346-7121

Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen
(916) 645-3800
laamca.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

(530) 583-1762
northtahoemuseums.org

**Old Town Auburn Preservation
Society**

Lynn Carpenter
(530) 885-1252

Placer County Genealogical Society

Toni Rosasco
(530) 888-8036
pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society

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

**Placer County Museums Docent
Guild**

Fran Hanson
(530) 878-6990

Rocklin Historical Society

Hank Lohse
(916) 624-3464
rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Fire Museum

Jim Giblin (916) 538-1809
rosevillefiremueum@gmail.org
rosevillefiremuseum.org

Roseville Historical Society

Denise Fiddymment
(916) 773-3003
rosevillehistorical.org

January

- 2** 2:00pm Placer County Historical Society Board Meeting, Room 10, Auburn City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn. (530) 906-4901
- 13** 6:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464
- 14** 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003
- 15** 6:00pm Loomis Basin Historical Society General Meeting, Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871
- 18** 1:00pm "Myths and Legends," Bernhard Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd. Auburn. (530) 889-6500
- 20** 6:00pm Forest Hill Divide Historical Society business meeting, Forest Hill Divide Museum. (530) 367-3535
- 23** 7:00pm Placer Genealogical Society Meeting, Beecher Room, Auburn Library, Auburn. (530) 885-2216

February

- 4** 9:00am Historical Organization Committee Meeting, Auburn Airport, Auburn. 530-889-6500
- 6** 6:00pm Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting - Auburn Veteran's Hall, 100 East St, Auburn. (530) 906-4901
- 10** 6:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464
- 11** 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003
- 19** 5:30pm Historical Advisory Board Meeting, Bernhard Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd. Auburn. (530) 889-6500
- 19** 6:00pm Loomis Basin Historical Society General Meeting, Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871
- 27** 7:00pm Placer Genealogical Society Meeting, Beecher Room, Auburn Library, Auburn. (530) 885-2216

Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

When: February 6th, 2020**Time:** 6pm dinner, 6:30pm program**Where:** Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East Street, Auburn**Cost:** \$16 per person**Menu:** TBD**Program:** TBD**Mail Dinner Checks to:**

PCHS c/o Jane Hamilton,
1871 Crockett Road, Auburn, CA
95603. (530) 885-7839 or
hamiltonjane1@me.com

DO NOT BRING ALCOHOL.**Meeting Schedule:**

March 5 – Board meeting
April 2 – Dinner meeting
May 7 Board meeting
June 4 – Dinner meeting
July 2 – Board meeting
September 3 – Board meeting
October 1 – Dinner meeting
November 5 – Board meeting
December 3 – Dinner meeting

