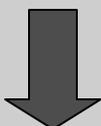


THE PLACER

A Voice of History

Jan. – Feb. 2012
Volume 15, Issue 1



In this Issue

1. Administrator's Notes
2. Deadwood
3. Deadwood
4. Museums Intelligence
5. PCHS News
6. Historical Organizations/Artifact Highlight
7. Calendar of Events

Melanie Barton, Museums Admin.
Placer County Museums Division
101 Maple St.
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-6500
mbarton@placer.ca.gov

Michael Otten, President
Placer County Historical Society
PO Box 5643
Auburn, CA 95604
otten@ssctv.net

Editor and Staff Writer:
Ralph Gibson
(530) 889-6502
rgibson@placer.ca.gov
www.placer.ca.gov/museum

Administrator's Notes

Melanie Barton

It's hard for me to believe that we are starting a new year. The old adage, "Time flies when you are having fun" certainly applies to this past year. I always look forward to January as a time for reflection and planning for things to come. 2011 has been an outstanding year for Placer County Museums. Attendance at all six museums and programs has increased substantially. We have created two exhibits including "Wagons about Town" in the Courthouse Treasury and a revamped hydraulic mining exhibit in the Gold Country Museum. Many display changes may go unnoticed such as the period clothing on the manikins at the Bernhard, the watercolor and quilt exhibit in the Winery, and the addition of the Coffin Diary at the Golden Drift Museum. It's worthwhile to visit the museums on a regular basis so that you can enjoy these subtle changes. We also take pride in the physical condition of all the museums and are very thankful that even in challenging fiscal times, we have been able to maintain these wonderful community assets.

Our programs, especially The Heritage Trail, Living History,

School Tours and Community Education programs, continue to grow and provide the opportunity for Placer County residents and visitors to learn a little bit about our history in a fun and entertaining way. It is always a pleasure when a visitor shares that they "have lived in Auburn for 20 years and never visited a museum or attended a program". Although this is a bit sad to hear, we are pleased that they finally did visit and encourage them to come back and bring a friend. I had a call from a gentleman who lives in the bay area who wanted to make a donation to the Bernhard Museum. He explained that he and his wife discovered the museum and beautiful grounds on one of their frequent trips to Tahoe where they have a summer home. They often use a picnic table on the museum grounds and enjoy a docent lead tour. Feedback such as this is always gratifying. People visit museums for many reasons and it frequently is not just to learn about local history!

Our primary goal for 2012 is to complete the relocation of the Archives & Collections facilities. We also expect to continue to update existing museum displays and install temporary exhibits. This will be the 5th year for The Heritage Trail event and we look forward

to an even better trail through history on August 11th – 12th. Staff is already gearing up for a very busy spring Living History program. The Bernhard is quiet at the moment but the giggles and smiles of youngsters will return in just a few short months.

The theme for *The Placer* this year is: *When the gold ran out, mining towns that once bustled with activity fell into silent decay in which earth and time consumed nearly all the evidence that they ever existed except on faded yellow maps.* Each issue will focus on different towns including Deadwood, Last Chance, Bath, Yankee Jims, Westville, and Damascus. With names like these, how can it not be interesting!

In 2011 we also lost some dear friends & members of the Historical Organizations Committee: Margie Powell, a Donner Summit Historical Society board member; Norman Root, President of the California Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association; Tom Potts, a member of the Native Sons of the Golden West and a great help to the museums; Ross Carpenter, President of the Old Town Auburn Preservation Association & Joy Williams, President of the Placer County Museums Docent Guild. We will miss them all.

We are grateful for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you in a museum in 2012.

Deadwood

By Ralph Gibson

Over half a million people traveled to California during the Gold Rush. In a short period of time, towns and cities sprang up all over the gold bearing regions as men began to dig and pan for their fortunes. When the gold ran out in one area, many abandoned their homes and businesses and went elsewhere in search of a new home and new ground to lay claim to. The buildings and structures left behind fell into decay.

The silent sentries of a Gold Rush ghost town, the hollow homes of gray streaked wood, broken windows and rusted metal, stand guard over the memory of the past. But, like all things, they are eventually consumed by the earth and all traces that the town ever existed are erased except on faded yellow maps. It is on some of these towns that this year's *The Placer* will focus.

The first town on our list is Deadwood. It seems that many areas that were overrun with 19th century gold prospectors have a town named Deadwood. There's Deadwood, South Dakota (brought to life by the HBO series *Deadwood*), and California has at least three (the other two are in Butte and Trinity counties).

Why the name Deadwood? One account of the possible origin of the name is in the 1882 Thompson & West *History of Placer County*:

Gold in paying quantity was first found here in 1852 by a party of prospectors, who, being so elated at their good luck, remarked to all subsequent comers, that, though heretofore they had had indifferent success in prospecting, now assuredly had the "deadwood" upon securing a fortune.

Deadwood sprang up in 1852 between Michigan Bluff and Last Chance on the Foresthill Divide, two towns that would eventually become ghost towns themselves. Placer gold was taken from rich gravel deposits in the area by drift mining and hydraulic mining. In the 1850s, some 500-600 people – mostly gold-hungry men – called Deadwood home. But by the early 1860s the rich gravel had given out and the population dropped to below 100. It continued its slow, steady decline into the early 20th century. By the 1950s, a few ragged timbers around an old well were all that remained of the town.

But the town endures as part of our history because of the people who lived there. Louis and Fredericka Ebbert settled in Deadwood in 1856. Louis opened a store and a liquor shop while Fredericka

sold fresh-baked bread and homemade butter. She also washed and ironed clothes for the local miners for a small fee. They were an enterprising couple. One thing that stood out about the Ebberts was their unusual pet. The following account comes from the *Auburn Journal's Sunday Magazine*, published on March 25, 1984:

The Ebberts owned a pet monkey that besides being mischievous was a pickpocket. One day while looking out her kitchen window, Fredericka thought she saw greenbacks falling out of a tree. Pursuing her hunch, she discovered the monkey had dropped the money and with it a man's wallet. Entering the Ebbert store she inquired of a male customer if he had his wallet. "Sure do, he smiled, putting his hand where his wallet ought to be. "It's gone!" he exclaimed.

The monkey had indeed taken the man's wallet. Fredericka reunited the man with his money so he could purchase what he needed.

Another story about Deadwood comes from the *Placer County Directory of 1861*. The following is the account of Mr. A.J. Felch and his eight year old son Willy during a heavy winter storm in 1860 on Christmas Eve:

The snow covers the ground to the depth of several feet, clings in huge masses to the leaves and branches of the evergreens, and fills the air with large feathery flakes which are rapidly falling...But the father and son are comfortably seated, each in a chair, by the warm stove, Willy with his feet on the hearth. "Come, Willy," says Mr. Felch, "you had better hang up your stockings, and go to bed, and perhaps Santa Claus will bring you something before morning."

"O, I know what you want!" says Willy; "you want to get me to bed, and then you will put something into my stockings."

"Why, it is late as you generally sit up, Willy."
"Yes, but I'll bet that when I get up to-morrow morning, I shall find a candy rooster or something else in my stockings, that you have put there."

These were the last words spoken. In a moment afterwards, quick as thought, crash went the house. Another moment, and Mr. Felch found himself in the open air, up to his waist in the snow, the tempest roaring around him, and volumes of snow and

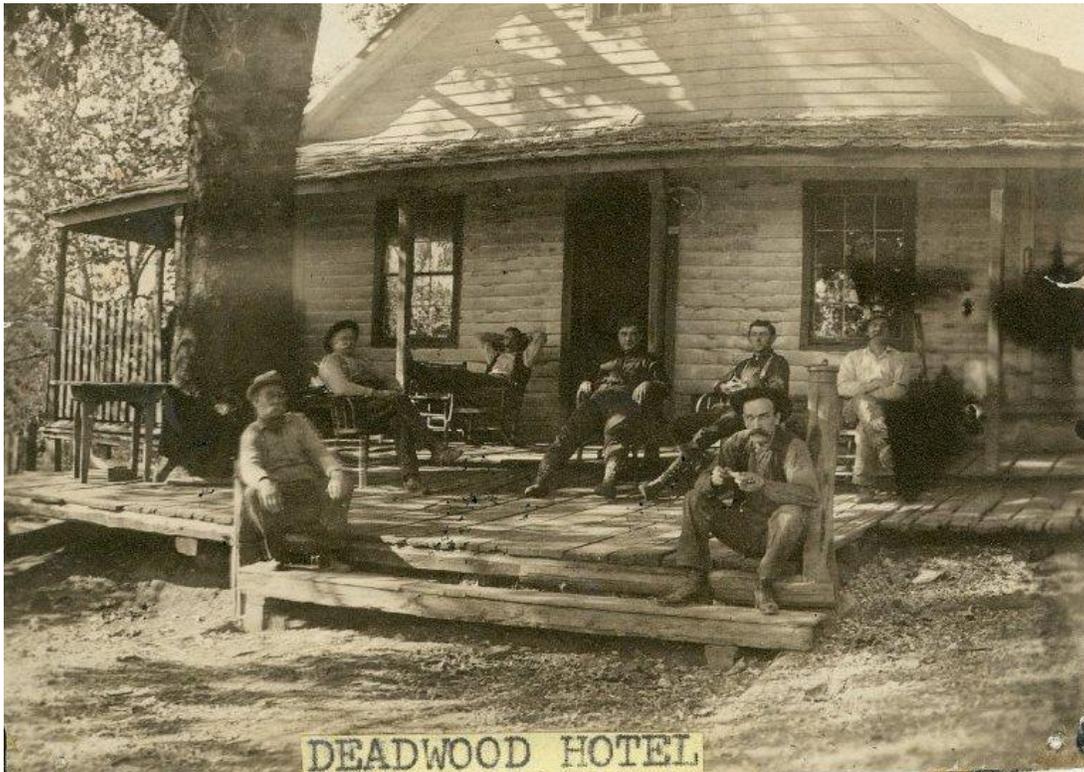
water rushing down the mountain side.

An avalanche had swept most of the house down into the canyon below. Mr. Felch dug desperately to find his son. Two men who lived nearby heard the crash and soon arrived to offer assistance. As they dug, each man shouted, "William! William!"

Finally, a low muffled answer seeped up from the snow: "Sir..." Other than being frightened and buried by several feet of snow, Willy was unhurt. He and his father walked towards the main section of Deadwood and were welcomed into a warm house. Mrs. Felch escaped the ordeal altogether; as she was in Michigan Bluff receiving medical treatment for an eye problem.

Although nothing of the town of Deadwood remains, its history lives on through the documents and stories that were passed on by the people who lived there.





Deadwood Hotel c. 1911
Left to right: Elliot Austin, Deadwood Dick, August Ebbert, Andy Ebbert, Harry Simpson and Frank Fick



Museums Intelligence

Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

I hope everyone had a great Christmas. A new year is dawning, but I would like to take a look back at the memorable year of 2011. Our education programs continued to be successful. Over 3,000 students participated in Living History and over 400 enjoyed the Gold Rush tour program.

The Archives and Research Center had a busy year. Over 900 researchers visited the Archives this year and they have handled over 400 research requests by phone or email.

At our Collections Management Facility over 1,000 objects have been inventoried and new objects have been donated to the collection.

Community Education Program: *The Exciting World of Fossils*

Join us at the Bernhard Museum Winery on Saturday, January 28th at 1:00 to see, handle and learn about fossils. Gene Lorange, who has done extensive research on the Hawver Cave, and museums

staff will be on hand to introduce you to the world of fossils. This program is designed for families with children of all ages, but everyone is welcome. We'll have real samples of fossilized wood and other fossils plus casts of fossils of large mammals that were discovered in Hawver Cave. The Bernhard Museum is located at 291 Auburn-Folsom Road.

Space is limited, so reservations are required. Call 530-889-6500 to make your reservation or for more information.

Community Education Program: *The Hidden Wonder of the World: The Transcontinental Railroad from Sacramento to Donner Summit*

The Transcontinental Railroad has long been a source of wonder and awe. Documentary filmmaker Bill George will present his 30 minute film on the Transcontinental Railroad from Sacramento to Donner Summit on Saturday, February 18th at 1:00 in the Bernhard Winery. He will follow with a brief presentation on the history of the railroad. Please join us to learn more about this significant local, state and national event.

For more information, please call 530-889-6500.



Bloomer Cut

Placer County Historical Society News



President's Message

Michael Otten,
President

Let us pause as we start 2012 and prepare for the centennial of the Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge and take a glimpse at the world of 1912 when the bridge opened and began hauling limestone from El Dorado County across the American River on a journey via 17 trestles out of the canyon to Auburn.

My grandparents' world in 1912 in Roseville revolved around the Southern Pacific Railroad shops, starting a family on a rural ranch and an almond orchard off Rocky Ridge Road where the Maidu once flourished. That year Placer County's third and last Carnegie Library opened in Roseville (the Roseville Historical Society is planning a big centennial observance this fall). Though the family home still stands, Ralph and October Otten would hardly recognize the county whose population then was less than a fifth of Roseville's population today.

Pardon my nostalgia but please jump in the time machine back to 1912, before the World Wars, the income tax (we had a \$2 poll tax then), computers, "smart phones," space ships, the Great Depression, Interstate Highways, the internet, E-books, fast food, microwaves, television, digital cameras and a host of conveniences we think we can't live without.

Back then we learned of the discovery of the South Pole. There was a coroner's inquest into the death of an infant found dead on the Southern Pacific tracks near Clipper Gap on Christmas Day.

New Mexico and Arizona become the 47th and 48th states and the Territory of Alaska was organized. The "unsinkable" Titanic luxury ocean liner struck an ice berg and sank on its maiden voyage.

It was the time California women began voting in state and local elections. Our congressman, Democrat John E. Raker, a former Modoc County judge, in running for re-election to the second of seven terms, declared his support for woman's suffrage by declaring on page 1 of the *Placer Herald*: "They should not be classed with the Chinaman, with the Japanese, and with the non-citizen."

There were two competing newspapers in the county seat:

- *The Placer Herald*, under editor-publisher W. A. Shepard, declared itself "the official city and county newspaper," and vigorously supported House Speaker Champ Clark, D-Missouri, for President in the primary and switched to Woodrow Wilson after Clark failed to carry the day.
- *The Placer County Republican*, under editor-publisher A. E. Fulch, declared itself "the official county and city newspaper," and vigorously supported former President Theodore Roosevelt with his running mate of California Gov. Hiram Johnson, who had bolted from the Republican Party to form the Progressive Party (aka the Bull Moose Party). The Roosevelt-Johnson ticket carried Placer County and California but

nationally it was Wilson who defeated incumbent William Howard Taft (a write-in candidate in California) to become the first Democrat elected President since 1892.

One could subscribe to either newspaper for \$1.50 a year.

Then as now, Placer County's exhibit at the State Fair won top awards.

Clark Aston Smith's poetry made its way into both newspapers. "Today the name of Clark Aston Smith is heralded from one end of the continent to the other as a genius in the poetic world--a Junior Poet of the Sierras," effused the Herald over the publication of Smith's "The Star Trader and Other Poems."

The Placer County Bank was paying 4 percent interest on savings accounts and getting ready to erect a new building that is expected to make it on the National Register of Historic Places early in 2012.

There were public health complaints to the Board of Supervisors about the sewage in Auburn and Colfax. The Auburn Trustees ordered the city engineer to prepare cost estimates to take care of the problem and the city attorney to draw up a bond issue to expand the system.

The trustees also ordered a 10 mile an hour speed limit. imposed a \$300 liquor license on saloons and ordered them closed between 1 and 6 a.m., banned shooting in the city limits and passed a dog muzzling ordinance with a \$15 licensing fee. The Ladies Improvement Club persuaded the trustees to impose a 9 p.m. curfew on those under 16 with the Courthouse and the

Congregational Church to ring their bells at that time as a warning to kids to get off the streets.

Southern Pacific's new passenger station (Nevada Street) opened on a second line through Auburn with the city and the Auburn cemetery engaging in a big beautification project in the area.

That year westbound Train No. 1, the San Francisco Overland Limited, jumped the track on a curve a mile above Applegate Station with the engineer being fatally scalded by the steam. The engine, baggage car and diner went over the bank but apparently no passengers were hurt and some reportedly were unaware why the train had stopped.

Auburn's famed dentist and scientist, Dr. J. C. Hawver, married his second wife, Mary E. Parsons, a noted California botanist and author of "The Wild Flowers of California."

Deputy sheriff Elmer Gum served as the chief chef and Sen. E.S. Birdsall as officer of the day for a buck barbeque at the Race Track. The event, described as the biggest of its kind ever held in California, was put on by the North Fork Game Protective Association and the Auburn Gun Club.

The Placer County High School's Cadets Rifle Team won the state marksmen championship. The District Attorney issued an opinion that one need not be a high school graduate to serve on the Placer County Board of Education after it asserted no one on the board had such a degree.

The New Casa Theatre advertised four reels every night of "absolutely flickerless pictures" accompanied by pianist Bernice Pearl at the "same old price of 5

and 10 cents." One baker advertised 24 bread tickets for \$1 cash.

"Think Auburn First" was big though it was called "Buy Local" then. With the impending opening of the Panama Canal and an international exposition in San Francisco and the development of the state, the *Placer Herald* implored that "Auburnites should cater to the tourist trade."

Toward that end, the California Welcome Center operated by the Placer County Visitors Bureau, expects to move by this spring into the fire station portion of the 1930s City Hall on Central Square.
Happy 2012!

otten@ssctv.net

Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

Addah Owens, Vice President

When: February 2, 2012

Time: 6:30 Dinner, 7:30 Program

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

Cost: \$14 per person

Menu: Chinese New Year Dinner

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

Program: Bill George will present his film, *The Hidden Wonder of the World: The Transcontinental Railroad from Sacramento to Donner Summit*. The film focuses on the remnants of the Transcontinental Railroad between Sacramento and Donner Summit, including Bloomer Cut. Mr. George will give a brief presentation after the film.

Placer County Historical Organizations

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

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

Foresthill Divide Historical Society
Donna Coffman,
(530) 367-3437
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
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

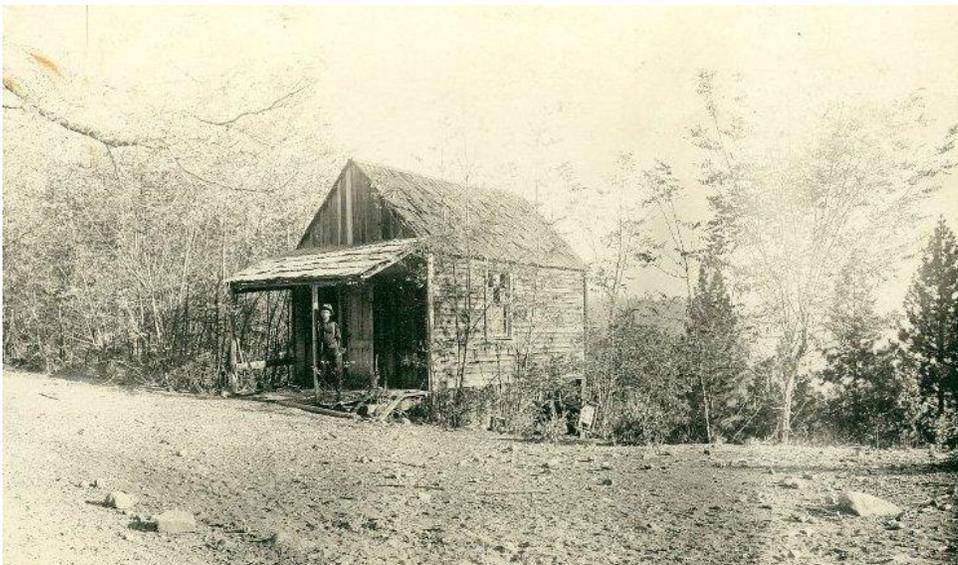
Placer County Genealogical Society
Alice Bothello, (530) 885-2216
www.pcgenes.com

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

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) 773-3003
www.rosevillehistorical.org



Deadwood School, C 1896

Calendar of Events

January

- Jan. 10th, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum.
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- Jan. 16th, 6:00 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Business meeting at the Foresthill Divide Museum.
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- Jan. 16th, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.
Contact: 916-624-3464.
- Jan. 18th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- Jan. 26th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact 530-885-2216.
- Jan. 28th, 1:00 pm** Community Education Program: *The Exciting World of Fossils* at the Bernhard Winery.
Reservations required. Contact 530-889-6500.

February

- Feb. 2nd, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall.
Contact: 530-885-5074.
- Feb. 14th, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum.
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- Feb. 15th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- Feb. 15th, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Winery.
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Feb. 18th, 1:00 pm** Community Education Program: *The Hidden Wonder of the World: The Transcontinental Railroad from Sacramento to Donner Summit*. Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Feb. 20th, 6:30 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Dinner meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- Feb. 20th, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.
Contact: 916-624-3464.
- Feb. 23rd, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact 530-885-2216.