

An Historical Tour of Auburn

Anyone who has traveled through Auburn on Interstate 80 has seen it. Taller than all that stands nearby, bedecked in the best of materials, the Placer County Courthouse in Auburn is a thing of beauty that has attracted the gaze of all who have passed by for well over one hundred years now. At the time of its completion in 1898, it was the most magnificent structure on the road between Sacramento and Salt Lake City. It cost the citizens a pretty penny in its construction, but it was an expression of pride and a symbol of the prosperity that Placer County had achieved in such a short period of time. The same sense of pride was expressed by the citizens when, after almost one hundred years of use, it was decided to renovate the building rather than replace it with a more modern building. Its renovation was to cost an even prettier penny, but it has preserved one of the few remaining courthouses in California built in the grand Italianate style. The courthouse still serves as an active court and, as such, it embodies the ideals of the late 19th century. Not only is the building itself a rare treasure, but the Placer County Museum located within it also houses precious artifacts testifying to the proud history of Placer County. For those willing to take the exit from Interstate 80, there are many golden nuggets of history to be found.

The courthouse is located in the area of Auburn known as Old Town. Auburn itself is one of the oldest towns in the Gold Country. It was one of the first places gold was discovered after James Marshall found the flakes at Sutter's sawmill. Once word got out, miners flocked to the area just below the knoll, along the ravines and this section of Auburn was where the first crude buildings were erected and where the life of the town began. Its first courthouse was a simple wood and canvas structure that was built in a location currently under Interstate 80. When the California counties were first mapped out, Auburn was in Sutter County and the county seat was in Nicolaus. In April 1851, the lines of the California counties were redrawn and the new county of Placer was created with Auburn as its county seat. Having been raised to this new prominence, the citizens decided that court proceedings and the county administration required a more permanent structure in a better location than that makeshift structure so typical of the early mining camps. In 1852, the Court of Sessions, which then conducted the financial business of the county, paid Isaac Tidd \$75 to draft plans for a new courthouse. The plans were for a 40' by 60' two-story wooden courthouse with various county offices and an office for the Grand Jury on the first floor; the courtroom and two jury rooms were on the second floor. Tidd also became the constructor. The final cost for the building was \$15,052.24. The new location was the knoll above the town where the current courthouse stands with its commanding view. At that time, the lot served as a cemetery and was owned by Abraham Bronk who sold it to the county for \$115. The bodies had to be relocated before construction could begin, so it was not until December 10, 1853, that the Court of Sessions held its first case in the new building. Eight more bodies had to be removed from the knoll in 1857.

The courthouse was to survive the disastrous fire of June 1855 that destroyed most of the town including the jail that was located next to the courthouse. A single-story brick jailhouse was built in 1857. A second story was added in 1863 and connected to the second floor of the courthouse by a metal walkway. As the needs of the court increased and as the building itself deteriorated,

the Grand Jury began recommending building a new courthouse as early as 1877. Bond issues were put before the voters and rejected in 1888 and 1890. In 1891, the Grand Jury issued a report on the condition of the courthouse saying, “while Placer has the reputation of being an enterprising county, it is a deplorable fact that the condition of its public buildings is a disgrace to modern civilization and a reflection on our intelligent community.” The County Supervisors decided it was time to build a new courthouse even without a bond issue and began levying a five-cent tax. After a few years they accumulated \$27,000 in a building fund. The county’s financial resources were also bolstered when, by court order, the Central Pacific Railroad paid \$70,000 in back taxes.

To design the new courthouse, the Supervisors hired the well-known San Francisco architect John M. Curtis. Of particular significance to the Supervisors was his work on the San Francisco City Hall, the Sonoma County Courthouse in Santa Rosa, and the Humboldt County Courthouse in Eureka. He had designed the two county courthouses in Santa Rosa and Eureka in partnership with Albert A. Bennett. The partnership was only one year old when it was included in *The Industries of San Francisco* by Frederick H. Hackett published in July 1884. The entry gives a good idea what the Placer County Supervisors were perhaps looking for in an architect and why they chose Curtis:

The high standard of elegance displayed in the more recent structures erected in San Francisco and in the interior is due to the taste and culture of the architects who have educated the people above the old time ideas, that were satisfied with plain, and oftentimes hideous buildings. Among the many gentlemen of that profession who have left an impress upon the times that will not soon be obliterated, the firm of Bennett & Curtis (A. A. Bennett and John M. Curtis) is entitled to a full representation in this volume. This meed of praise is doubly earned, because of the number of years that these gentlemen have been identified with the profession they so worthily represent, and the extent and variety of the specimens of their genius to be seen in Sacramento, Berkeley, San Joaquin Valley, etc. Mr. Bennett is probably the best known member of his profession on the coast. He has been a shining light for the third of a century and was one of the architects of the State Capitol at Sacramento. The massive State Prison at Folsom, San Quentin, the Baldwin Hotel, etc. are other evidences of the adaptability of his talents. Mr. Curtis has a worthy associate, and is now the architect of the new City Hall. Upon him rest the responsibility of finishing that municipal palace, a task which he was selected to fulfill because of his well-known abilities. The firm is as well noted for its designs for homes and business houses, as for other lines of architecture. Builders prefer the plans of Messrs. Curtis & Bennett because their buildings are as creditable to the constructor, almost, as to the designer. Curtis & Bennett do a very big business, and have a very large force of assistants regularly employed.

Albert A. Bennett was the senior partner in the firm. He was born in Schoharie County, New York, on July 6, 1825. From an early age he had a desire to become an architect and he started on that course at the age of sixteen by going to Connecticut to work as a carpenter and joiner for his brother. After two years he returned home and apprenticed himself to his brother-in-law,

Orson Phelps. At that time, there were no standards or licenses for architects nor was there a school of architecture until one opened in 1868 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Many acquired the title after serving an apprenticeship with another architect. Others who called themselves architects were builders or contractors such as Isaac Tidd, who drew the plans for and contracted to build the wooden two-story Auburn courthouse. Plans for buildings were frequently published in journals, newspapers, carpenter's handbooks, or manufacturer's catalogs. They could be readily adapted by local builders. One widely circulated pattern book that offered courthouse plans was Asher Benjamin's *American Builders Companion* which was printed in different editions between 1806 and 1827. Benjamin's books were still in print and circulated in California in the 1850s.

Bennett stayed with his brother-in-law three years studying architecture and carpentry and then left for Mobile, Alabama, in 1846 where he became involved in building the Alabama State Capitol. Bitten by the gold bug at the age of the twenty-four, Albert Bennett, like so many others, booked passage to California via Panama and arrived in San Francisco on August 20, 1849. After only a brief stint panning for gold, he settled in Sacramento in the spring of 1850 and resumed his career as an architect and developed quite a reputation for himself.

In 1863, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors, having no architects in their own town, hired Bennett to design a new courthouse in Woodland which had just become the county seat the previous year. Prior to the Civil War, the typical courthouse was built in what was called a three-bay design: a two-story, rectangular box with a gable roof, three bays of windows in the front and four to six bays on the side. Inside on the ground floor was a central corridor with offices off to the sides for county officials. The courtroom was on the second floor. For the Yolo County Courthouse, Bennett followed the standard three bay plan but built a larger, more substantial brick version in the Italianate style that had become popular in the East about 1850. This style featured columns, balconies, overhangs, tall arched windows, and sometimes a tower or a cupola. The Yolo County Courthouse had no cupola.

Between 1873 and 1876 Bennett would build five more county courthouses in the San Joaquin Valley. The Stanislaus County Courthouse, built in the new county seat of Modesto in 1873, was a larger three-story structure. The ground level housed the jail and sheriff's office as well as other county offices. The second story was the main public floor accessed by a wide outside stairway. Offices on the first two floors were off a central corridor. The courtroom was on the third floor with additional spaces for juries, judges, attorneys, and a law library. The courthouse had no cupola but for ornamentation it did have a statue of Justice on the roof over the entrance.

Justice has come to be a common image seen in, on, and in front of courthouses. Justice was typically depicted as a richly draped, mature, but not old, woman with a sword in one hand and a set of scales in the other. She could be seated or standing. The earliest traces of a female goddess presiding over the realm of justice can be found in the Egyptian goddess Maat and in Greece with the goddess Themis and her daughter Dike. The earliest attested cult of the Roman goddess Iustitia, from whom our word Justice comes, was established by the emperor Tiberius in 13 CE to convey a sense of the just war that had recently been waged against the Dalmatians. Later Roman emperors would use the goddess' image on coins to convey the same sense of justice. On

those widely circulating Roman coins, Justice was depicted as a robed, seated woman holding a scepter usually in the left hand and a shallow bowl in the right. It was not until the Emperor Pescennius Niger (193-94 CE) that the figure of Justice appeared on coins standing, holding scales in her right hand and a cornucopia in the left hand. In Christian imagery, Justice was not used as a goddess, but as a personification of Justice which had become one of the four cardinal virtues. It was during the Renaissance that the familiar image with sword and scales that we see today took shape. The image of Justice as blindfolded appeared for the first time in the 16th century. In fact, in one engraving by an unknown artist that was preserved in Adam Bartsch's massive catalog of old master prints *Le Peintre Graveur* published in the early 1800s, the blindfold is the only thing that Lady Justice is wearing. The blindfold and the scales persisted in later images, the nudity did not. Scales have been used as a symbol of a decision-making device since the earliest times and we use the term "weighing the evidence." The sword is a symbol of might, the power of law and punishment. The blindfold represents impartiality, and though we say, "Justice is blind," she was not. On the Stanislaus County Courthouse, Bennett preferred the unblindfolded version of Justice that could clearly see the truth.

All five of the San Joaquin Valley courthouses Bennett designed essentially had the same three-bay floor plan, but the four built after the Stanislaus County Courthouse were more lavishly decorated and their most dramatic feature was an elaborate cupola in the center of the roof. During the Civil War, the capitol building in Washington D. C. and the capitol building in Sacramento modeled on it established new points of reference for designers of California courthouses. Like those two buildings, the Merced County Courthouse built in Merced in 1874, the Fresno County Courthouse built in Fresno in 1875, the Tulare County Courthouse built in Visalia in 1876, and the Kern County Courthouse built in Bakersfield in 1876 had a cupola that consisted of a lower drum with a ring of columns surmounted by a smaller upper drum, topped with a dome. However, the domes of the capitol buildings in Sacramento and Washington enclosed a central ceremonial space and the dome's interiors could be viewed from below. The domes Bennett put on the San Joaquin Valley courthouses simply attached to the roofs and did not have ceremonial interiors. Although the cupola provided a popular observation point, it had no function except to stress the significance of the building. The courthouse was envisioned as the capitol building of its own region. All Bennett's courthouses were essentially the same on the inside with or without the cupola.

The capitol dome in Washington was capped with a statue of Freedom; the Sacramento capitol dome was capped with a golden ball; Bennett's Merced courthouse dome was surmounted by a statue of Minerva. Clark's original plan for the California capitol called for a replica of Hiram Powers' statue *California*. Ironically, it was largely through the efforts of supervising architects Albert Bennett and Henry Kenitzer, who were putting the finishing touches on the dome, that the change to the golden ball was made. Power's *California* was a completely nude woman holding a strategically placed divining rod over one area for modesty sake. The divining rod was intended to signify mining activity; Bennett thought a gold ball signifying a nugget was better than a nude.

Minerva had been chosen as the symbol of California when the state seal was designed in 1848. She was the Roman goddess of war and wisdom, but it was the story of her birth that influenced that decision to make her the representation of California. Minerva was miraculously born from the head of Jupiter and came into the world full grown and fully armed with helmet, spear, and shield, hence, her common depiction as a goddess of war; but she was also the goddess of wisdom since she was born from the head of Jupiter. The fact that Minerva came into the world full grown was seen as similar to California that came into the Union full grown, as it were, since California went from military rule to statehood without going through the intermediate step of becoming a territory.

While a fully clothed and armed statue of Minerva would have been appropriate for the capitol dome in Sacramento, it would also have been redundant. Minerva was already the central figure of Pietro Mezzara's sculptural arrangement for the pediment over the front entry where Minerva is flanked by the figures of Justice and Mining to her left and Education and Industry to her right. In that pediment, the association of Minerva with Justice who wears no blindfold and holds scales in one hand and a tablet of the law in the other, may have served as the inspiration for Bennett's choice of Minerva on the cupola of the Merced courthouse. As a goddess of Wisdom, Minerva was commonly featured on the seals and logos of institutions of higher learning, but she was not commonly associated with courthouses. By placing Minerva on the cupolas of his courthouses high above the three unblindfolded statues of Justice positioned above the entrances, Bennett made a point that not only were the buildings California courthouses, but that Wisdom presides over Justice and guides judgment.

Bennett had won a competition to design the Merced courthouse. He was awarded the prize of \$500 plus six percent of the building costs for supervising the construction. The building was constructed for \$55,970. The Fresno courthouse which came next was essentially a twin of the Merced courthouse. When the cornerstone for the Fresno courthouse was laid, the District Attorney Claudius G. Sayle, seemingly unfamiliar with the Merced courthouse, proclaimed the Fresno courthouse, "the grandest and noblest edifice that has ever been planned or contemplated in this valley." The Tulare County Courthouse in Visalia followed the same pattern as Merced and Fresno, but it had two courtrooms, one for the county and one for the district. The Kern County Courthouse was a smaller two-story building, but with the distinctive cupola although the three Justice statues were not on the roof.

It was during the time that Bennett was engaged in building the San Joaquin courthouses that John M. Curtis came to California. He was born in Warsaw, Illinois, in 1852 and orphaned at a young age. He spent his boyhood on a farm in Missouri. In school, he showed great mechanical genius and at a very young age went to work for Bent & Garrity, a leading contractor in St. Louis. He then entered the office of Mitchell & Brady, prominent architects in St. Louis, employed as a draftsman. After working for them for five years, he came to San Francisco in 1874 where he began as an assistant to architect E. J. Baldwin who was engaged in planning a magnificent theatre and hotel building. He subsequently opened his own office and worked alone until 1881 when he joined the office of Albert A. Bennett who, since 1876, was serving as California State Architect. Bennett had moved from Sacramento to San Francisco in 1876 and

would serve as state architect until 1883 when he and Curtis formed the partnership of Bennett & Curtis. The first public building that they won a contract for was the Sonoma County Courthouse in Santa Rosa, followed shortly by a contract for the Humboldt County Courthouse in Eureka. The designs for both those buildings were expansions of Bennett's San Joaquin Valley courthouses. The major difference was that the buildings were no longer simple rectangles, but were now cruciform. The statue grouping of Minerva on the top of the dome and the Justices on the roof over the entrances was continued. However, the Eureka courthouse caused friction between the two men. Curtis felt that he was being cheated out of his fair share of that project and the partnership dissolved in 1885. Bennet died in December 1890, leaving Curtis to inherit his courthouse building legacy. Curtis' association with Bennett in designing the Santa Rosa and Eureka courthouses and his time as supervising architect on the San Francisco City Hall were the major factors influencing the Placer County Supervisor's decision to have him design their new courthouse.

Once the architect was chosen, a second decision had to be made about where to build the new courthouse. The current courthouse sat on a knoll located in Old Town, but when the railroad reached Auburn in 1865, geographical features led the Central Pacific to locate the station a little over a mile further east of the old town. Hotels and other businesses that served travelers located there. A petition circulated to relocate the courthouse to that newer area of town. But the lawyers' offices were located near the courthouse and it did have a commanding view of the town, so the Supervisors brushed aside the attempt to relocate the courthouse, except to have the old wooden courthouse put on rollers and moved thirty feet to make room for its replacement. While the new courthouse was under construction, the old courthouse remained in service.

The courthouse that Curtis designed for Placer County was nearly a clone of the Sonoma County Courthouse that he and Bennett had designed in 1883, but the dome of the Placer County Courthouse more closely resembled the California state capitol dome and was proportionally better related to the rest of the building than on the previous courthouses. The cost of the dome was a significant portion of the overall cost of the building and it did draw criticism once the plans were published.

The following is from the *Newcastle News*, Volume 7, Number 20, April 4, 1894:

Plans for a new courthouse for Placer County at Auburn have been published. The structure is to cost \$100,000. The published cuts of the buildings show that a considerable portion of the cost would be applied to a dome which is neither useful nor ornamental, says the California Fruit Grower. No doubt the people of Placer County know what they want, and what they are willing to pay for; but it appears to the California Fruit Grower that a court house costing half the amount named would amply suffice Placer County for the next sixty years.

Our reasons for thinking thus may not be of value to some, but are derived from the following figures: Area of county, 915,000 acres; unentered government land, 150,000 acres; lands assessed, 575, 989 acres. Total assessed value of all property, \$10,275,060; rate of taxation, \$1.70 on each \$100 of assessment; miles of railroad, 116; county debt,

\$2,148; number of schools, 71; school children, 3,010; total population by the census of 1890, 15,039. We do not believe Placer County, or any other county in California or elsewhere, is justified in taxing its inhabitants \$6.62 each for the erection of a courthouse. Are the farmers and fruit growers of Placer County so prosperous, so well fed, housed, and clothed that they commiserate the poor devils who must serve the county for a miserable stipend of \$2,500 to \$6,000 per year? But of course it is the affair of the people of Placer County themselves, and if they wish for expensive toys and are willing to pay for them, perhaps others should not object.

The cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1894, with the accompanying parade and speeches. A month later the people made it clear that they were indeed willing to pay for their “expensive toys” when they voted in favor of \$80,000 in bonds to finance construction of the courthouse.

Construction proceeded quickly and on October 11, 1895, the *San Francisco Call*, Volume 78, Number 133 had the following article:

Placer County officials are soon to be ensconced in one of the prettiest buildings in the State. The new Courthouse, on which work has been expended for months, is fast nearing completion, and although it lacks the finishing touches to complete its architectural beauty, the massive structure ranks above anything of its kind in this section if not in the State.

The building is of the Corinthian style of architecture and similar to no other courthouse in the State except in its classic features. The ground dimensions of the main structure are 102x106 feet. It contains three stories, and its height from the ground to the fire walls is sixty feet. The first and second stories will be of granite and the third of pressed brick with terra cotta trimmings. The first story will contain the jail, with all the necessary appointments and twelve modern steel cells; offices for the Jailer, Sheriff, Assessor, Tax Collector, Treasurer and Surveyor. On the second is a spacious room for the meeting of the Supervisors, together with the offices of Clerk, Recorder, Auditor and District Attorney. The third story will have a large courtroom, Judges' chamber, jury-rooms, office for Superintendent of Schools, library and an assembly room for public meetings. The halls are wide and the offices are spacious and well lighted and ventilated. The offices of the Treasurer, Sheriff, Recorder and District Attorney are each provided with a vault. There is to be a fireplace or grate in each office and lavatories on each floor. The building is piped for both gas and electricity. It will be so constructed that it may be heated with hot air or water from a furnace heated in the subbasement.

The new Courthouse is absolutely fireproof, and it is strictly a California building so far as the materials used in its construction are concerned. The granite was taken from Placer County quarries at Rocklin. It is gray granite, and there is none prettier. The pressed brick and terracotta came from the famous pottery of Gladding & McBean at Lincoln, Placer County. The fireplaces, mantels, etc., will be made of the latest designs in glazed brick at the Lincoln pottery. The roofing is of El Dorado County slate, and the dome is of copper. The cost of the new building will be in the neighborhood of \$150,000,

two-thirds of that amount having been expended already. The heaviest and most expensive portion is up, including all the outside walls, roofing and dome, and two of the three mammoth granite stairways. The contract has recently been let for the completion of the inside work of the two lower floors.

This fine structure is located upon a little prominence in the center of the town and overlooks the country for miles around. In time the grounds will be terraced. The structure is being built by the issuance of \$80,000 bonds and by direct taxation for the rest of the amount. While it has made taxes high at a time when the taxpayers could least afford it, they do not regret the outlay and are proud of the new Courthouse. The cornerstone was laid July 4, 1894, by Judge Prewitt, and it is hoped the formal dedication will not be later than July 4, 1896.

The hoped-for formal dedication did not come until July 4, 1898, nor did the third mammoth stairway ever get built. The Supervisors had decided to divide the construction into four separate contracts and changes were made along the way and things were dragged out. As expenses rose, it was determined that the costly \$6,000 third set of entry stairs was not necessary and they decided to install an elevator instead. The total cost of construction came to \$173,583.55; the elevator came fifty years later.

When the *San Francisco Call* article was published, a statue of Mercury stood on the top of the dome, but a week later it was gone. The choice of Mercury proved to be an unhappy one. The statue of a partially clothed young boy with a winged cap appeared comical and was highly ridiculed. The *Placer Herald* of August 24, 1895, noted:

The scaffolding which was used in putting the statue Mercury on the Court House is still in place, and it is rumored that Mercury may not hold his job long on the dome, as both contractors and Supervisors are very much displeased with him, and he may be removed at any time. The sooner, the better.

The follow up article on October 19 said, "The statue on the Court House has been removed and a weather vane, and eagle will take its place." The eagle has long since flown away, but the weather vane remains.

It is not known why Mercury was chosen for the cupola instead of Minerva. The statue grouping of Minerva and Justice was almost a Bennett signature on a courthouse, but the Placer County Courthouse was designed by Curtis alone and he may have wanted some distinction to be made. But Mercury was not usually associated with Justice or courthouses. After all, he was the patron god of thieves. However, apparently it was not a far leap for the minds of the ancient Greeks to also make Mercury the god of commerce and it may have been in that capacity that he stood atop the courthouse. Many of the early articles on the courthouse made a point that almost all the materials to build the Placer County Courthouse came from Placer County. The building itself was seen an expression of and a tribute to the prosperity and industry of Placer County.

The large granite blocks of the first story, the granite staircases on the north and south that run the full width of the central portion of the building, and the monolithic porch columns came from

Rocklin. The Central Pacific Railroad had reached the Rocklin area late in 1863 and opened a granite quarry for the rock needed in construction. The first freight revenue that the Central Pacific Railroad made was carrying granite from the Rocklin quarries to Sacramento in March 1864. Prior to that, Folsom was the main supplier of granite, but the granite quarried at Rocklin proved to be more desirable for the exteriors of buildings. John Ross Browne in his book *Resources of the Pacific Slope* published in 1869 described the granite from Folsom as “hard and dark, containing feathery crystals of black hornblende in patches, on a dark bluish-gray ground of quartz and feldspar.” The granite from Rocklin was “of a nearly snowy whiteness, remarkably fine grained, and free from stains and blotches, and is susceptible to a fine finish.” Comparing the two, he said that the Folsom granite was dark and dingy, the Rocklin was lighter and marble-like. Rocklin’s superior granite soon made it the granite capital of the West.

The timber came from Alta. An article in the *Sacramento Daily Record* from November 15, 1873, gives an idea how important the lumber business was at that early date:

This thrifty mountain town, situated about two miles east of Dutch Flat, on the Central Pacific railroad, outdoes all other railroad towns on the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas in the extent and magnitude of its lumber trade. In the dozen of forlorn looking buildings that make up this town but few people who swept past on the overland trains would imagine that the annual business of this dilapidated little burg runs up into the millions....

Alta was at one time the terminus of the railroad, and had four or five times the population that it now has; but though most of its inhabitants left, business still stuck to the town. This continued prosperity is principally due to the energy and industry of the Towle Brothers, who have made Alta the base of their operations in a lumber trade of such magnitude that all other lumber interests between Auburn and Truckee are mere bagatelles in comparison.

The pride in their lumber industry was clear in the *Placer Herald*, Volume 31, Number 5, September 2, 1882, “From first to last, and in all its departments the Towle Brothers’ lumbering business in upper Placer is one of the grandest enterprises on the Pacific Coast.”

Marble for the interior of the courthouse came from quarries at Colfax. The April 18, 1867, issue of the *Daily Alta California*, reported that Mr. Pritchard, one of the owners of the Pioneer Steam Works in San Francisco, owned a valuable marble quarry at Colfax:

It will supply a want long felt in this branch of business. It is susceptible of a high polish, and can be used for general purposes. The quarry will be more fully developed at an early day, and it is well adapted for mantels, table tops, mosaic work, tiles, etc. The Colfax is the first and only quarry of black, variegated marble in California. Nine mantels of this beautiful marble, made at the Steam Works, are in progress of manufacture for the new Bank of California

In his book *Resources of the Pacific Slope*, published in 1869, John Ross Brown wrote:

The recently-discovered quarries of black and white marbles near Colfax, Placer county, on the line of the Central Pacific railroad, will probably stop the importations from Italy. The beauty of the black marble from this locality, the exquisite polish it retains, and the advantage the owners of the quarry possess in railroad communication, which enables them to deliver it at San Francisco cheaper than the Italian, will probably give it control of the market.

The Pritchard Marble Quarry also produced high-calcium limestone and it was eventually taken over by the Holmes Lime & Cement Company. Lime was first discovered about one mile above Auburn around 1853 by John R. Gwynn. He sold the quarry to Henry Thomas Holmes about 1854. More lime deposits were found within a few miles of the railroad near Auburn, Clipper Gap, Applegate, and Colfax and huge amounts were shipped by rail to San Francisco to be used in construction. For the next thirty years, Holmes supplied seven-eighths of all the lime used in the brick and stone buildings in the northern part of the state. Placer County's production waned as Santa Cruz County's increased in the 1890s. The last recorded limestone production was in 1916.

The plain and molded brick of the upper stories, the hollow clay tile blocks of the flat arch floor, and the clay moldings were made by Gladding, McBean of Lincoln. That the decorative molding should be a product of Gladding, McBean was particularly appropriate since they had pioneered the field of terra cotta decorative molding on the West Coast.

Charles Gladding, a successful building contractor who was involved in the trade of sanitary ware and sewer pipes, was visiting from Chicago when he read in the *Daily Alta California* about a road builder's discovery of an unusually fine deposit of pure white kaolin clay near Lincoln. He went to investigate and was impressed. He ran tests on the clay to see about the feasibility of a clay products factory and became even more enthusiastic. He returned to Chicago and enlisted the aid of Peter McBean and George Chambers who were also involved in the building trade and they formed Gladding, McBean and Company on May 1, 1875. Gladding then returned to California two weeks later with his son Albert and a crew of expert workmen. They set up the factory to manufacture vitrified sewer pipe. McBean moved to San Francisco and set up a sales office which became the company headquarters. Chambers never moved to California, but provided his engineering expertise from afar. By 1883 there were seventy-five men working at the plant in Lincoln.

In 1884, Gladding, McBean diversified into making terra cotta for architectural ornamentation. The first building to receive the new product was their own new two-story building on Market St. in San Francisco and it was the first building on the West Coast with such ornamentation. Noting its superiority as a building material, the November 1884 *California Architect and Building News* said, "Architects and builders now realize that in terra cotta they have a material at once beautiful, imperishable, and far less costly than a poor quality of stone, when worked into architectural detail."

Gladding, McBean's advertising at the time said:

One of the most marked improvements connected with the building trade in this country during the past decade is the use of terra cotta for the purposes of architectural decoration. Ten years ago a majority of those engaged in the building trade did not know of its existence, so accustomed were they to simple brickwork, painted wood, or decoration in galvanized or cast iron.

The advantages of terra cotta were numerous. While soft, it could be worked into any shape and inspected by the architect and adjustments made before it was fired. Molds could be used over and over, which was less expensive than carving natural stone piece by piece. The hollow form of terra cotta was much lighter than stone, but like stone it was fire proof. The success of their Market Street office brought them new contracts. In 1888, Joseph DeGolyer, a son-in-law of Chambers, came to Lincoln. He was a civil engineer with a specialty in chemistry which he eventually used to develop polychrome finishes.

In 1890, the company began to produce its hollow tiles for partitions, arches, columns, and for the floors that were later installed in the courthouse. That same year they entered a contest in the annual Industrial Exposition of the Mechanics' Institute in San Francisco and won the medal for the best exhibit of architectural terra cotta. The award committee commended them in writing:

We have much pleasure in drawing special attention to the excellent exhibit of Gladding, McBean & Co., showing as it does, marked enterprise as well as laudable and successful effort to establish in California a very notable industry, and displaying considerable perfection, both in technical and artistic qualities of the work produced, which in our opinion ranks with much of the best work produced in the Eastern United States and Europe.

Gladding, McBean's growing national and international reputation was a great source of local pride and their innovative work naturally had to be displayed on the new Placer County Courthouse. The fame and size of the company continued to grow well after the completion of the courthouse. Under Joseph DeGolyer's direction, the company expanded the architectural department from 500 square feet and one kiln when he came in 1888 to 500,000 square feet and eighteen kilns in the 1920s, but the Great Depression brought about the near demise of the terra cotta industry. However, although Gladding, McBean has changed hands, it has remained in business in Lincoln and is today the leader in terra cotta, clay pipe and tile products, and still a source of pride for Placer County.

In some articles and books, the statues of Justice over the entrances are attributed to Gladding, McBean, but they are metal, not terra cotta. They were not products of Placer County, but they do represent an important part of Americana that has faded away. In the 1850s, zinc sculptures began to be made in the United States. Urban centers could afford to commission expensive bronze statues, but smaller communities could not. However, they could afford zinc statues that were easily painted to imitate much more costly material. The source of the statues on the Auburn courthouse is uncertain. It may have been the Forderer Cornice Works in San Francisco, but the W. H. Mullins Company of Salem, Ohio, was the primary American company making formed sheet metal sculptures in the late 19th century. The statue of Justice was one of the most popular items and it could be purchased with or without a blindfold for between \$200 and \$400.

They also had eagles and weathervanes. The zinc statues began to lose popularity after the turn of the century, completely dying out in the 1950s and are largely forgotten today. Despite being robbed of their scales by the winds, it is fortunate that these three statues of Justice which were given the nicknames Mary Ann, Ann Eliza, and Mary Jane remain since they reflect cultural history throughout the United States during the 19th century. For many small towns such statues were their only public pieces of art.

When the new courthouse was finished, the old wooden courthouse was dismantled and some of the lumber used for a women's ward at the nearby Placer County Hospital. The formal dedication of the new courthouse was held on July 4, 1898. It included a parade, music, and sporting events. In the dedicatory oration, Judge James E. Prewett stated:

This grand building is one of the finest courthouses in the State. None can excel in fine artistic effect. It is our temple of justice, the repository of our titles, the fortress of our personal and property rights, the fountain head of our school system, the registry of our births, marriages and deaths, and its inmates stand guard by day and night over peace and good order of our communities.

Less than eight years after it was completed, the Auburn courthouse lost her almost identical sister in Santa Rosa in the 1906 earthquake that destroyed so much of San Francisco. That powerful earthquake devastated Santa Rosa as well, destroying the courthouse. That quake also shook Eureka and the courthouse there was damaged, but repaired. In December 1954, another earthquake near Eureka opened up cracks in the walls and ceiling and the building was evacuated and finally demolished in 1956. The two courthouses in Santa Rosa and Eureka designed by the partnership of Bennett and Curtis were now gone. Of the six courthouses designed by Bennett alone, the Yolo County Courthouse in Woodland had been replaced in 1917. The Tulare County Courthouse in Visalia and the Kern County Courthouse in Bakersfield, which had been greatly expanded in 1896, were destroyed by the 1952 Tehachapi Earthquake that measured 7.6 on the Richter. The Stanislaus County Courthouse in Modesto was demolished in 1958. When the Fresno courthouse that had been remodeled by John Curtis following a fire in 1895 was to be demolished and replaced with a new one, a fight ensued. The Fresno Historical Society fought the plan saying, "No more beautiful, stately and historic building exists in the county. It represents the very heart and personality of Fresno and ...a tie with Fresno's pioneer days. It is more significant and cherished than any museum or gallery could be." It was demolished in 1966.

The Merced courthouse was used as the county court until 1950 and then served as offices for other county officials until it underwent renovation in 1975 and was rededicated as a museum in 1983. The building was preserved almost as Bennett had designed it; there is an addition of one wing on the north side that was built in 1913. By 1980, Placer County faced the same dilemma that confronted Merced and Fresno, demolish or renovate. The courthouse was an unused shell. The interior was gutted in 1981. The Committee to Preserve the Courthouse for the Courts was formed in 1983 and mobilized public opinion against demolishing the building and eventually raised over \$6,000,000 for the restoration project. Retrofitting was done to conform to earthquake standards and the electrical system modernized, but the exterior of the building remained as Curtis had designed it. The jail that had been built on the grounds in 1941 was

demolished and removed in 1984, but under the monumental stairway leading to the second-floor entrance on Maple St. there is a passageway and a plaque placed there that tells the story of the women's jail built under the stairs in 1905. The restored courthouse standing alone as in 1898 was rededicated on July 4, 1990. The total cost of the project was \$6.8 million. Civil cases are still heard there, so after all these years it still serves its original purpose.

The courthouse itself is a cultural treasure, but now it also houses a museum and artifacts that make Placer County's history much more vivid. Exhibits highlight the Pleistocene fauna found in the area, the Nisenan and other nearby Native American tribes are represented by the Pate Collection of American Indian artifacts, the Gold Rush with the 194-ounce Placer County gold collection which is displayed in the old County Treasurer's safe, the agriculture that replaced gold mining as the major source of income, the Transcontinental Railroad, the development of towns in the county and a film on the evolution of the early trails into modern highways. There are also two sculptures that are copies of ones placed on the Woodland County Courthouse. They give you the chance to examine up close how far Gladding, McBean's expertise in architectural decoration had progressed by the early 20th century. The statues were modeled by Pio Oscar Tognelli in 1916 to decorate the new Yolo County Courthouse that replaced the one designed by Albert Bennett in 1863. Tognelli was born in Italy in 1880 and studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze before coming to California at the turn of the century. In 1909 he was hired by Gladding, McBean and in 1912 became head of the clay-modeling department. He worked at the Lincoln plant until 1921 when he went to the San Francisco office. The company was particularly proud of the work he had done on the Yolo courthouse. Keenly aware of the advertising value of the finished building, Atholl McBean wrote to Joseph DeGolyer, the head of the architectural department, "The terra cotta looked exceedingly well—nicely jointed, well fitted and well set. I believe this building will do more to help us get terra cotta specified for court houses than anything we have ever done."

These two life-size female figures stand between two Roman soldiers and are viewed from below as people enter the Woodland courthouse. *The Clay-Worker* volumes lxvii-lxviii, 1917, had this to say about the terra cotta decoration.

A considerable amount of architectural terra cotta from the factory of Gladding, McBean & Co., in Lincoln, Cal., is being used in the construction of the new \$250,000 Yolo county court house nearing completion at Woodland. The supervisors of Yolo county had at first contemplated the use of stone for the exterior of their monumental building, but on the suggestion of their architect, made an exhaustive examination of the use of terra cotta in similar structures and decided in its favor. The four full-size figures, representing Law, Authority, Justice and Mercy over the central bay of the main front of the building have already attracted much attention. These figures were executed by Pio Tognelli, a Florentine sculptor, now with Gladding, McBean & Co.

Law and Justice are usually represented by female figures, but you will notice that neither statue has scales or a sword, the typical attributes of Justice seen on so many courthouse statues, including Placer County's. One of Tognelli's figures holds a scroll, the other rests her hand on the fasces, a Roman symbol of authority. But the scroll and fasces are also both associated with the personifications of Law and Justice, making a specific identification of which statue is which

ambiguous. It seems best to take the grouping of all four statues as a composite of Law, Authority, Justice and Mercy as the article said rather than separate out specific identifications for each statue.

Currently on display in the lobby before you enter the museum exhibit area is an artwork by Derek Smalling, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. It is intended to make you think about Justice from a different perspective. Smalling created his original version of “Lady Justice” as a donation for a National Native American Heritage Month event in November 2018. “Lady Justice” was a woman heading to battle carrying a shield of interlocking arms which the artist said symbolized the protection of his people. The painting struck a nerve and started a nation-wide movement calling attention to the crisis of violence against Native American women. In November 2019, Smalling’s “Lady Justice” became the poster child of Operation Lady Justice, the Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. Earlier in June 2019, Governor Newsom issued an executive order recognizing and apologizing for California’s sanctioned abuse and genocide of its native peoples. The text of the two-page order is the background for this slightly different version of “Lady Justice.” It was commissioned by Placer County Superior Court Judge Garen Horst and is on loan to the museum. The July-August 2021 issue of *The Placer* printed Smalling’s description of his painting:

She adorns herself with a silver gorget of her rank and her shawl denotes the daytime sun and the nighttime moon of her vigilance. She staves off attack with the Inter-locking Arms Shield that represents to the Southeastern Tribal Nations the fundamental concept of Community. And, She wields a Pen Lance for that is how we must now affect change in both our Tribal Nations but in our broader community of the United States. She is an active agent of protection, securing her families, clans, Country, and Tribal Nations.

The museum has another artwork more closely related to Auburn, the original Thomas Kinkade painting *Auburn Centennial* commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce and unveiled at a dinner in October 1987 to kick off the celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of the city’s incorporation in 1888. It was a bit nostalgic for Kinkade who had visited Auburn a number of times as a kid. He painted himself in the lower right-hand side as an artist doing a painting. The painting is currently at the end of the hallway opposite the entrance to the museum exhibit room. As you walk to see the painting, you pass an open door on the left. Inside is the recreation of the office occupied in 1915 by Sheriff Elmer Gum. To gain a greater appreciation of the restored courthouse interior, take a walk around the upstairs. There are also many more nuggets of Auburn’s golden past to be seen outside the courthouse, so before leaving the museum, pick up a free copy of the brochure *A Walking Tour of Historic Old Town Auburn* published by the City of Auburn in conjunction with the Placer County Historical Society. Volunteers also offer a free walking tour of Old Town on Saturday mornings.

Neff Fountain

Outside the courthouse, proceed to the corner of Lincoln Way and Maple Street. Here stands another piece of Americana preserved through the efforts of the Placer County Historical Society. It has been moved from its original position and repurposed, making its original use less recognizable. The Neff Fountain was a gift not just to the people of Auburn, but to all of Placer County served by the courthouse. The following article appeared in the *Sacramento Union* on May 16, 1908:

Ex-Lieutenant Governor Jacob Hart Neff, the well-known Placer county pioneer, has just made a present to the city of Auburn of a beautiful fountain, which will be erected at the junction of East and Commercial streets, or in the triangle just east of the entrance to the courthouse grounds. "Uncle Jake" as he is affectionately called by many of our people, always had a warm spot in his heart for Auburn and Placer county, and he has been loved by all the people. He has lived in San Francisco for some years, but visits us occasionally and is always warmly welcomed. This thoughtful gift will still further endear him to all. At a special meeting of the board of trustees on Monday night, Trustee M. Fredon presented a letter from D.W. Lubeck, stating that Mr. Neff desired to present the city a fountain, provided it was set up at the junction of East and Commercial streets and that the city would take care of it, furnish the water, lights, etc. The letter was accompanied by a blue-print, showing the design of the fountain. There are two water troughs on two sides for horses and cattle, 33x32 inches, 10 inches deep. On another side there is a drinking fountain and on the fourth side a place for dogs and smaller animals to drink. A column rises in the center to a height of 20 feet, surrounded by five electric lights. The design is very handsome and the fountain will certainly cost the generous giver more than \$3000.

Thousands of such fountains existed in various designs all across America and they all shared common features: a spigot that emitted a continual stream of fresh water, small basins at ground level to allow dogs to drink, large troughs to quench the thirst of horses and cattle, and a basin for humans with a drinking cup suspended on a chain. They originated as a response to outbreaks of cholera spread by dirty water. Wealthy London businessmen formed the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association which opened its first public drinking fountain in April 1859. It was so popular that the association soon opened hundreds more. Many of the fountains also included accommodations for watering horses, cows and dogs so, in 1867, the name of the group was changed to the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association.

The idea spread to America. New York City's first public drinking fountain was installed in City Hall Park on June 10, 1859. But it was not until around 1880 that wealthy residents, especially those that wanted to be remembered as animal lovers, started underwriting their construction in local communities and emblazoning their names on the fountains as personal memorials. Neff's plaque reads, *Presented / To The / City Of Auburn / By / Hon. Jacob H. Neff / 1908.*

Nineteen-year-old Jacob Hart Neff arrived in Hangtown (Placerville) on August 8, 1850, having endured unusual hardships on the five-month overland journey that culminated in the loss of his

stock. He headed to the North Fork of the American River to pan for gold and did quite well. In his autobiography, he claimed to have mined only until 1863. He ran for sheriff of Placer County and held the office from 1867 to 1869. As sheriff, he would have been well acquainted with the old wooden courthouse that stood here then. From 1871 to 1875, he was in the State Senate. In 1875 he became a member of the State Prison Board. But he never really left the gold mining business. He was the superintendent of the Rising Sun Mine near Colfax in 1875, involved with the Pioneer Mine in Humbug Canyon in the 1880's, and the Morning Star Drift Mine in Iowa Hill during the 1890's. In 1891, he organized a miners' convention in Auburn to establish a state organization and was subsequently elected President of the California Miners' Association serving for six years. During that time, by securing passage of the Caminetti Act of 1893, he succeeded in reconciling the valley farmers with the miners over the issue of debris from the hydraulic mining. For this he was highly praised and much admired. A three-handled loving cup was presented to him as he departed the presidency of the California Miners' Association. An engraved plaque depicting miners panning was on one side, hydraulic mining was depicted on the second side, and an inscription was on the third side reading: "To Hon. Jacob Hart Neff from the Miners of California who love him for his noble and unselfish labors in their behalf, 1897." He served as Lieutenant Governor from 1899 to 1903.

The Neff Fountain standing there by the entrance to the courthouse parking lot actually makes an interesting punctuation point to an era. Originally dedicated sixty years after the start of the Gold Rush, it came at a time when most of the early Gold Rush miners had already passed away and those remaining were winding down their businesses and political careers. Neff himself died the following year. The year of the fountain's dedication was also the year Henry Ford introduced the Model T, making cars more affordable. It would not be long before the car replaced the horse on the busy streets and the fountain's troughs no longer needed. In fact, only five years later, the Lincoln Highway Association was formed in Detroit and they began mapping out the route for a gravel highway from New York City to San Francisco for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. That route passed by the courthouse into the oldest section of Auburn and the streets it used were renamed Lincoln Way. Adding to the fountain's obsolescence was the additional fact that it was installed at the very time people had begun to rethink the wisdom of humans and animals sharing the same drinking source and humans sharing the same drinking cup. Scientific studies were published showing that common drinking cups could spread disease and a "Ban the Cup" campaign got laws banning the cup passed in almost every state between 1909 and 1912. This led to the new form of fountain called the bubbler which shot a stream of water straight up. When it was found that people put their whole mouth over the stream down to the emitter, the newer versions sent the stream out at an angle which is common today. So, the fountain was outdated shortly after installation, but remained in the intersection until 1976 when it became a hindrance to automobile traffic. It was then moved to this new location. In 2013, it was discovered that rust was threatening the integrity of the cast iron fountain. The Placer County Historical Society raised funds for the restoration efforts. In its reborn version the troughs have been converted to planters.

Old Town

Standing there at the Neff Fountain, if you look east up Lincoln Way, you can see the brick Odd Fellows Hall that was built in 1894, the same year as the cornerstone of the courthouse was laid. Neff at one time owned a house near the Catholic church that is just beyond the hall. A number of interesting historical buildings are marked out on the Walking Tour Map as items A through L and you can view them from the street and read about them in the brochure. Turning the other direction, Lincoln Way takes you into the old commercial district and the walking tour brochure gives you a good idea of the old Gold Rush town. Walking down to the intersection of Lincoln and Sacramento streets, you find the Post Office Block that is one of the oldest structures in town, number eight on the walking tour. It was built right after the huge fire of June 1855 that destroyed much of the town. Prior to the fire, the Wells Fargo office was located there and this was a very busy part of town. A number of express companies did business in Auburn. Gregory Express was the first to arrive followed by Hunter & Company and Adams and Company. Wells Fargo did not arrive until 1852. The express companies were extremely important to the miners during the Gold Rush. They forwarded all kinds of freight and parcels, purchased gold dust, shipped gold with full insurance coverage, delivered mail, received deposits, and issued bills of exchange so miners could send money back East.

John Quincy Jackson was the agent for Gregory Express in Auburn in 1852. Excited by the discovery of gold, he had come to California from Virginia in 1849 at the age of seventeen. He tried his hand first at mining and then at shopkeeping before he went to work for Gregory Express. From Jackson's letters home, we get a good picture of what type of business was going on at that time. In the late summer of 1852, Gregory Express was in financial trouble when its drafts were protested and some connecting express lines withdrawn. In August, Wells Fargo, which had only been formed in March and was busy expanding its California operation, took over Gregory Express and John Q. Jackson became their agent in Auburn. In a letter to his brother dated October 23, 1852, he wrote:

Gregory had a large amount of drafts protested which has nearly ruined him and his business-he is now engaged in a law suit with his New York Agts in regard to their protesting his drafts when they had funds of his in their hands sent to meet them when presented-how it will terminate I don't know but I do know that by the change I have made it is a great advantage to me, As our business has increased five fold since the change has been effected.

He went on to explain what kind of business he had to do.

The business I am engaged in requires my whole attention and is far beyond my years-I might have staid in Virginia till I was as old as Mathusalem (or some such name) and never had \$1000 entrusted to me or been worth any thing myself, while here I have charge of a large Express Office and Banking house. This is a responsible position and

one, by which, in my good management of business and conduct, I have gained the utmost confidence of the "Heads" of the Concern in San Francisco & Sacramento. What I have to do is quite confining-staying in my office all day till 10 at night buying dust, forwarding & receiving packages of every kind, from and to everywhere- filling out drafts for the Eastern mails in all sorts of sums, from \$50 to \$1000 and drawing checks on the offices below, when men wish to take money to the cities, as it is a great convenience to them to have a check instead-and it saves us the trouble of shipping coin up from below for purchasing [gold] dust-I have just come from the Post Office, from which I have got 100 letters to be forwarded to the different parts of the country to which they are ordered by Express, on these I make \$25 as my charge on each is 25c-this comes around twice a month and I generally get out about a dozen 3 times a week besides-letters from within the state-this alone pays quite a sum- nothing like my expenses however, as they are necessarily heavy, but not so heavy but that they leave me a handsome sum each month on all my income ... all my letters on business are to be written always five or six each night and the same number during the day. The Gold dust bought during the last two days is to be cleaned, weighed, sealed and packed ready to be forwarded in the morning-My books balanced-letters to be sorted for the different offices to which they are to be forwarded-a list made of those received from Sacramento to day-and bundled for the river messenger who leaves at Daylight.

The *Placer Herald* on November 12, 1853, reported, "The Express men of our town are now reaping a golden harvest. Thousands of dollars worth of dust are bought every week. Upon the rivers, especially, they make heavy purchases every few days." In a letter dated September 15, 1854, Jackson gave his relatives back home some idea of the volume of business that was being done. He wrote:

The amount of gold dust bought at the offices of Yankee Jim's, Iowa Hill & Michigan Bluff, in the aggregate, is from \$80,000 to \$100,000 per month. At this office from \$30,000 to \$50,000, and at Rattlesnake Bar office from \$30,000 to \$40,000. Shipments are made of these amounts once or twice a week centering here. When we make a shipment tis frequently 100 to 150 pounds, about as much as one likes to shoulder to and from the stages.

In the same letter he also wrote, "I have no trouble except simply owing to the care of the treasure which is placed on this office. Were it not for this feeling of responsibility and trust, I would be as light hearted and happy as a bird." Four months after that letter was written a crisis would develop that would change the way business was being done.

When the San Francisco branch of Page, Bacon & Co. announced on February 22, 1855, that it could not cover its deposits due to the parent company's losses in the failed Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, all the banks in San Francisco were filled with customers demanding their funds and were forced to close their doors. The panic spread to the gold country. That night Jackson had attended a ball and had returned home at 4 am. At 8 o'clock the next morning he was awakened by a messenger who handed him a telegram saying that Adams and Co. had failed to prepare for a run. He rushed off to his office and before he reached the doors saw there was a crowd milling

about. He knew that the express companies did not have enough money to meet all their drafts. Adams and Company ran out of money quickly and was \$20,000 short when they ceased operation. The crowd grew angrier. Jackson was working in the office alone since his assistant had been transferred to the Iowa Hill office. In the letter he wrote the next day, Jackson recounted that two or three of his personal friends came forward and, “offered their assistance to the extent of their means. One of them being very popular and a substantial man, his presence served to allay all excitement and to instill confidence, as to our means, to the crowd.” When things calmed a bit, he went outside to secure more funds. He said things ran smoothly until 4 o’clock when it was telegraphed that Wells Fargo had closed in San Francisco; he said it felt like a death knell. When word spread, the pace of payouts picked up, but he felt his office could weather it. When the crowd sensed that there seemed to be no lack of funds and since he gave his personal guarantee that their money was safe with Wells Fargo, they made it through the day. That evening he expressed \$15,000 to San Francisco to bolster their resources. He was highly praised by his superiors in San Francisco and cheered by the people of Auburn. He would later tell his father that the way he handled the panic was one of the proudest moments of his life.

The telegraphs that Jackson received that day were delivered by the Alta Telegraph Company that had been formed less than three years earlier in Auburn by three of the town’s most prominent citizens in the earliest days. William Gwynn left Baltimore, Maryland, to sail to California in the spring of 1849 and was the first to open a store, albeit in a calico tent, in what was then Woods Dry Diggings. He soon opened the National Hotel in the only wood frame building in Auburn at the time. The store prospered and grew, but in 1852 he sold it to his father John R. Gwynn. William then pursued other business interests. He had a sawmill on the Bear River and lime kilns at Cherokee. Henry Holmes had sailed from New York for California in January 1849 and almost immediately upon arrival headed to the North Fork of the American River. Unlike the many miners who came to Auburn to spend the winter below the snow line, he spent the next winter in Hawaii. After returning again to Auburn, he was appointed deputy sheriff in 1851. He only served briefly before returning to New York to visit friends and then was back in Auburn in 1852. He received an offer from John Gwynn to take charge of running the Post Office located in the store. He made good money from that operation and invested it in land and lots which he improved. By the next year, Gwynn’s business had grown so much that he asked Holmes to help him in the store and give up the Post Office, which he did.

While Holmes was running the Post Office, I. E. Strong, a telegraph builder and operator from the East, happened to make his way to Auburn. Holmes made his acquaintance. Strong had been unsuccessful finding backers in San Francisco and Sacramento to build California’s first telegraph line, but Holmes decided to give it a try and called a town meeting. The idea of building a telegraph line from Auburn to Grass Valley and Nevada City, connecting the mining towns along the way, met with acceptance and he organized a company called Alta California Telegraph Company. John. R. Gwynn was elected president, H. T. Holmes, secretary, I. E. Strong, manager and superintendent in general. William Gwynn and Holmes got the contract to build the first telegraph line in California which, for the most part, they attached to standing pine trees. The enterprise was very profitable and they extended the line to Coloma. William Gwynn got the contract to construct that line. In January 1854, they reorganized and incorporated as the

Alta Telegraph Company and extended the line to Marysville and Sacramento. When they expanded the line to San Francisco in 1856, they infringed on exclusive rights that had been granted by the State of California in May 1852 to the State Telegraph Company for the purpose of running a line from Marysville to San Francisco. A lawsuit followed. However, both companies had been infringing on Samuel Morse's patents and, consequently, they were both sued by him. To settle, State Telegraph purchased the exclusive rights for use of the Morse patents in California and in July 1860, the U.S. Circuit Court issued an injunction prohibiting the Alta Telegraph Company from using the Morse patents. A short time later the Alta Telegraph Company merged with the State Telegraph Company, which was eventually absorbed by Western Union.

A short time after the formation of the telegraph company, Holmes married John Gwynn's daughter Laura Virginia. Later Gwynn offered to sell his business and his property in Auburn to Holmes in exchange for some property Holmes owned at Millertown. John Gwynn was the first to discover lime about one mile above Auburn on the Auburn Ravine around 1853 and erected a kiln. As part of the deal, Holmes bought that lime kiln and would go on to become the biggest producer of lime in the state. Holmes ultimately partnered with his brother-in-law William Gwynn in different lime mines and their association lasted until 1881 when the partnership was converted to a stock company.

After the Panic of 1855, Adams and Company never reopened and, with Page, Bacon & Co. also out of the picture, Wells Fargo now dominated the express business. However, as a result of the Panic of 1855, Wells Fargo changed its relationship with its agents. By August, they had prohibited nearly all of their agents from receiving deposits and limited their authority to purchase large amounts of gold in the company's name. Wells Fargo reduced its risk by increasing the autonomy of its local agents who became bankers and assayers with expertise in their own local area. Four months after the crisis passed, most of Auburn, including Jackson's newly furnished office, was destroyed by fire. When he rebuilt, he had a new fire-proof brick building across the street in the location where the Testa Building, built in 1922, now stands, number six on the walking tour of Old Town. Signage at the top of the building read WELLS FARGO in big letters but below that the words JOHN Q. JACKSON, EXCHANGE AND BANKING HOUSE indicated the new arrangement. He later expanded his business to include assaying. In its May 8, 1858 issue, the *Placer Herald* announced, "The Assay Establishment at J.Q. Jackson's at Wells, Fargo & Co.'s office is in operation and ready to receive orders."

By 1859, most of the placer gold was gone and many miners had given up. The population of the mining camps had dramatically declined and the assaying business was dropping off. News of the start of the Civil War in 1861 brought a glut of gold to the market and a precipitous decline in its price. It dropped so low by May 7 that a Wells Fargo clerk wrote on an assay receipt "bars cannot not be sold at any price." The uncertainty of the gold market was the very reason that Wells Fargo had changed its relationship with its agents in 1855 making them correspondent bankers. The losses that were incurred in the decline fell upon the Wells Fargo agents, such as Jackson, who were operating their own assay offices. These economic factors played a role in Jackson's decision to sell his assets and move on. He sold his Wells Fargo office in November

1861 for \$2,500 and left Auburn with a total net worth of \$14,000. Not bad, but not the fortune that he had hoped to make when he first came to California. With the Civil War raging in the East, he did not return home immediately. He spent five years in Valparaiso and Santiago, Chile, before returning home to Petersburg, Virginia, where he took up the less exciting trade of a tobacconist, but did find something that had eluded him in California. During his time in California, he had lamented the lack of single marriageable women, but in Virginia he married Mary Hester Aldridge in 1867 and eventually had three children.

Just up the street from where all that panicked excitement took place in 1855 is the vantage point from which Thomas Kinkade painted *Auburn Centennial* and, if you walk up to that area near the intersection of Washington and Sacramento streets, you can see how that location allowed him to incorporate into the painting two of the iconic buildings that Auburn takes such pride in, the courthouse and the red firehouse built in 1891. Thomas Kinkade was given a daunting task when he undertook the commission to paint *Auburn Centennial*. How do you paint a portrait of a city? A portrait must portray the character that lies beneath the outward appearance and Kinkade seems to have captured the intangible, the love of a community that has preserved its icons.

Further up Sacramento Street was the Chinese section of town. The major fire of 1855 that destroyed most of the town, consuming over eighty houses and businesses, started in this area. The wooden buildings of Chinatown were frequently consumed by fire. Today the building that most proclaims the fact that this was the Chinese section of town is the Joss House which has been preserved as a museum and is number 16 on the walking tour. The Joss House was a temple where Chinese gods were kept and worshipped and was an essential part of any Chinese community. The original building was built in the 1860s, but burned down in the 1880s in one of the fires so frequent in Chinatown. The current Joss House was built in 1921 by Charlie Yue and his brothers. Known as the Ling Ying Association Building it was constructed in the board and batten style so typical of Chinese buildings of the Gold Rush era and is one of the few remaining wooden structures in Old Town. For the small remaining Chinese community, it served as a place for worship, a place to educate children, a hostel for travelers, and there was a large kitchen for community meals. The Chinese were a big part of early Auburn and the museum gives good insight into some of that history.

Claude Chana and His Statue

A hundred years after Jacob Neff's arrival in Placer County, the placer gold was gone and all the miners whose rush to California had so swiftly propelled it to statehood had passed away, but a new era of Gold Rush mining was beginning in Auburn—mining the legacy. In September 1947, the State Legislature created the California Centennials Commission with a grant of \$2,000,000 for a three-year program to commemorate three centennials: the discovery of gold and the Gold Rush in 1848; the 1849 Constitutional Convention; and the admission of California to the Union in 1850. As part of the centennial celebrations, the film *California's Golden Beginnings* was shown everywhere. There were centennial caravans and a traveling museum touring the state.

Also, as part of that commemoration, a number of sites in Placer County were added to the California Historical Landmark registry in April 1948: #397 Town of Dutch Flat, #398 Yankee Jim's, #399 Town of Foresthill, #400 Virginiatown, #401 Iowa Hill, #402 Town of Michigan Bluff, #403 Emigrant Gap, #404 City of Auburn, #405 Town of Gold Run, and in August 1950 #463 Ophir. This was the first time since the program began in June 1932 that any sites in Placer County were declared California Historical Landmarks. Commemorative plaques were placed statewide by the commission during all three years. The Placer County Centennial Committee collected artifacts from the area and opened a museum at the 20th Agricultural District Fairgrounds in January 1948. That same year, the effort to commemorate the Gold Rush also reinvigorated the Placer County Historical Society which had been formally incorporated in August 1920. Dr. Robert Rooney was elected the Society's first president and William Lardner was elected its secretary. Both men were long-time residents of Auburn. Dr. Rooney had come to Auburn in 1880. He brought the motion for Auburn's reincorporation in 1888 and served as Auburn's second mayor. William Lardner had come to Auburn in 1877 after getting his law degree from Iowa State University. He was Placer County's District Attorney from 1880 to 1883, a member of the California State Legislature in 1900-01, and a State Senator for Placer and El Dorado Counties in 1902-05. His historical interests led him to co-author with Michael Brock the *History of Placer and Nevada Counties, California* which was published in 1924. Their work is a major historical source for Placer County's history up to the book's publication date. After Lardner's death in 1927, the Placer County Historical Society became largely dormant, but once reawakened, it has today become a major force in the preservation of Placer County history.

The group furnished the base for the California Centennials Commission's historical plaque for Auburn on the southwest corner of Lincoln Way and Park St. close to the statue of Claude Chana. It reads:

CITY OF AUBURN

Gold discovered near here by Claude Chana May 16, 1848. Area first known as "North Fork" or "Wood's Dry Diggins." Settlement given name of Auburn in fall of 1849. Soon became important mining town, trading post and stage terminal. County seat of Sutter County 1850 and Placer County in 1851. Destroyed by fire 1855, 1859 and 1863.

California Registered Historical Landmark No. 404

Tablet placed by the California Centennials Commission. Base furnished by Placer County Historical Society.

Dedicated September 23, 1950

Although Nicolaus, not Auburn, was the county seat of Sutter County in 1850, Claude Chana was indeed the first to discover gold in the Auburn area and, a quarter century after that commemorative plaque was installed, the city of Auburn decided to honor the man in a very big way. The city commissioned a monumental forty-five-ton concrete statue of Claude Chana to be placed at the entrance to Old Town in October 1975.

The statue was made by local dentist Kenneth Fox whose art was all self-taught. His first statue in 1967 was requested by some war veterans to honor those lost in battle. He depicted a soldier carrying a dead comrade in his arms and he titled it *Why*. But this was during the Vietnam War and the title made it controversial. He was asked to change the name. He refused, so the name plaque was removed and, as a protest, he made a colossal statue formed from concrete over a steel frame depicting a completely nude man freeing himself from chains. He placed it in front of his dental office. He continued creating statues in this greatly enlarged, nude format. The town was shocked to the point that they rerouted the school buses to avoid going past his office. But the statues were eye catching and the town warmed to his work. They commissioned him to make the miner statue for \$8,000. Today, his creations are tourist attractions and are referenced as the "Great Statues of Auburn."

Claude Chana was born in Rouen France in 1811 and immigrated to New Orleans in 1839. In the spring of 1846, he joined a wagon train heading to California from St. Joseph, Missouri. His party made it over the Sierras just a few weeks before the Donner party became trapped. The route he followed led past Emigrant Gap into Bear Valley and on to Johnson's ranch near present day Wheatland. At that time, this was the first ranch that a traveler from the East would come to in California. Chana learned that a fellow Frenchman lived nearby. Theodore Sicard was a French sailor who jumped ship in California in 1835. From 1842 to 1843, he worked for John Sutter as the manager of Hock Farm. He eventually petitioned for a land grant and received four Spanish leagues (about 17,700 acres) that stretched ten miles along the south bank of the Bear River. He built an abode on it in 1844. Chana went to work for Sicard and they planted the first fruit orchards in Placer County. A short time later Chana went to Sutter's Fort and worked as a cooper. There he became friends with James Marshall. After seven months at the fort, he returned to Sicard's ranch where he soon learned about the gold discovery at Coloma. He went to check out the report and found many miners already there. He returned to Sicard's ranch to outfit himself. Claude Chana and fellow countrymen Francois Gendron and Philibert Courteau set out for Coloma with a party of about twenty-five Indians. Gendron had been in California since 1832 and knew a shorter route through the foothills to Coloma than the normal route that took one first to Sutter's Fort then east to Coloma. On May 16, 1848, the party camped next to a stream in an area later known as Auburn Ravine. Chana decided to try his hand at panning in that stream and quickly found three large nuggets of gold. The party spent about three weeks in the area prospecting and then with tales of bigger strikes on the Yuba River they moved on never having reached Coloma. Chana never built anything on the site that was to become Auburn or, as far as history knows, ever returned to the site. Chana, however, was one of the few miners who did very well mining. When he returned to Sicard's ranch in October 1849, he supposedly had \$25,000 and he used \$6,000 of his gold to buy Sicard's ranch where he planted grape vines and expanded the fruit tree orchards that he had helped plant earlier. For a time, he prospered and became one of the wealthier men in the county. But the gold that provided him the means to buy the land also later destroyed the work he put into it. By 1875 hydraulic mining further up on the Bear River had caused so much debris to accumulate on his land that he was forced to sell it at auction for a mere \$500. The *Bear River News* reported in 1881 that he was "bowed, toothless and decrepit and has scarcely the wherewithal to keep the wolf from his door." He died the following year.

Although the plaque identifies the huge figure as Claude Chana, no pictures or drawings of Chana exist. Ken Fox used a local man for his model, Paul Avery, who often panned for gold. It is the pose that he struck that tells the story of the thousands of nameless, faceless miners who panned for gold in the Auburn area. The exact spot where Chana discovered gold is not known for sure, but the most recent research places it on the other side of Interstate 80 near the Ophir exit. Although his brief sojourn there left no tangible mark, his discovery did establish that gold could be found in the area and the story of his discovery would become an indelible part of Auburn's history. Other miners who came to the area had better luck than Chana's group. In his 1882 *History of Placer County*, Myron Angel said that Samuel Seabrough, in his sketches of the *Beginning of Placer Mining* reported, "In the 'Dry Diggings,' near Auburn, during the month of August, 1848, one man got \$16,000 out of five cart-loads of dirt. In the same diggings a good many were collecting from \$800 to \$1500 a day." The place soon came to be known as "North Fork Dry Diggings." In the spring of 1849, some soldiers from the disbanded Colonel Stevenson's New York Volunteer Regiment came to the area. The regiment had arrived in San Francisco in March 1847 for the Mexican American War. When Stevenson was raising troops for the war in New York, the Secretary of War William Marcy directed him to enlist unmarried men of good character who would likely remain in California when the war was over. Myron Angel goes on to say that it was not improbable that a soldier named John S. Wood was among them and that by July 1849 the place where he was mining was known as "Wood's Dry Diggings." A short time after that the town came to be called Auburn. Angel wrote:

perhaps through weight of numbers of the New Yorkers from their Eastern home city, or by common consent, or by vote of a town meeting, or by poetic inspiration — no one seems to know just how or why — the new-born settlement received its present name, and "Auburn, the loveliest village of the plains," had her christening day.

One might wonder why Chana who left no trace or name on the town of Auburn is honored with such a monumental statue. The statue of huge size in the iconic crouching pose of a gold panner was commissioned by the town as a tourist attraction calling attention to the town's Gold Rush history and was conspicuously placed near Interstate 80 to be seen by travelers.

The effort to emphasize Auburn's Gold Rush past began much earlier with the centennial celebrations and accelerated in the 1950s. The Winter Olympics of 1960 were planned for Squaw Valley. Interstate 80 was being built to accommodate the huge volume of traffic expected for the events. Thousands of travelers would be passing by Auburn. The business community wanted to give them a reason to stop. Some of those businessmen were members of the Auburn Ski Club which played a significant role in bringing the Olympics to Squaw Valley. Skiing in California started in the early 1850s during the Gold Rush. Ski races offered not only entertainment during the bleak winter, but also wagering opportunities. The first organized ski race in the world took place in La Porte in Plumas County on February 15, 1867. Six hundred dollars in prize money was offered and the event attracted hundreds of visitors. The Auburn Ski Club was started in 1928 by a group of ski enthusiasts from the Auburn area led by Wendell Robie who became its first president. Born in Auburn on May 28, 1895, Robie is considered by many to be the father of California sport skiing. The club built a small hut and a jump at Baxter, which was as far as

Highway 40 was open in the winter at that time. In October 1930, Robie was elected president of the newly formed California Ski Association. That group's affiliation with the National Ski Association secured California's right to hold sanctioned meets and invite the world.

The Auburn Ski Club grew quickly and became one of the foremost in the world. It heavily promoted ski jumping, the new form of the sport. It also worked tirelessly to convince the State to keep Highway 40 clear of snow through the winter. Major ski events attracted many visitors and they got the idea that the skiing could provide extra gas tax money that could be used for snow removal. Legislation was introduced in 1931 and Highway 40 snow removal facilities were built at Yuba Gap and Donner Summit. When the state realigned the highway, the club moved to a higher elevation at Cisco Grove in 1933 where they built a club house and the first modern engineered ski jump in California. By 1934, 30,000 visitors were availing themselves of the ski sports at Cisco Grove. The ski meets focused on ski jumping at first, but after the thirties it was downhill and cross country. In 1937, a larger electric motor was installed on the tow line, accommodating even more visitors to the slopes. More lodges located there and Cisco Grove became the most modern and developed ski area of its time with ski jumps and clear slopes for all levels of ability. But construction of Interstate 80 cut right through the ski area which effectively put an end to Cisco Grove's dominance and brought its final demise. The Auburn Ski Club sued the state and used the money it got from its property at Cisco Grove to purchase land at Boreal Ridge at the top of Donner Summit. Before 1952, Caltrans plowed the roads with traditional plows that moved snow from place to place by sliding it and the snow could get ahead of the removal capabilities necessitating closures. The railroads had a more efficient rotary plow and Caltrans began to use such plows which kept the roads open year-round and gave easier access to the highest elevations, including Highway 89 to the Squaw Valley resort.

Alexander C. Cushing opened his resort in Squaw Valley in 1949 with a double chair lift, a rope-tow, and a 50-room lodge. That was all he had in 1954, when Cushing submitted his application to the Olympic selection committee. Wendell Robie and Roy Mikkelsen of the Auburn Ski Club were on the Bid Committee. Mikkelsen was born in Norway and emigrated to the United States in 1924. He settled in Chicago and joined the nearby Norge Ski Club. He competed in ski jumping in the 1932 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. Later that year he competed in a July 4th ski jumping tournament hosted by the Auburn Ski Club at Sugar Bowl where there was still ten feet of snow on the slide. He was back again in February 1933 to compete in the ski jump at Auburn Ski Club's new facility at Cisco Grove. After World War II, he eventually settled in Auburn and continued to compete in Auburn Ski Club events. He was elected mayor of Auburn in 1952 and served for two years. In a 1960 ceremony in Central Square, Mikkelsen lit a torch to mark the coming of the Olympics to Squaw Valley. Although any connection between skiing and historical preservation might seem hazy today, it is perhaps clearer when we consider that both Robie and Mikkelsen were civic minded men. Mikkelsen had been mayor. Wendell Robie served as a President of the Placer County Historical Society and was one of the founders of the Placer County Historical Museum. Both men realized what historical treasures Auburn offered skiers and spectators on their way to the slopes and, as businessmen, both men realized what tourist traffic meant to Auburn.

Although the new alignment of Interstate 80 would demolish portions of the old town, a campaign was begun to restore the Gold Rush appearance to Old Auburn. When the red firehouse built in 1891 for the volunteer fire department from funds raised by the community

was slated for demolition, the community rallied to again find funds to save it. It was moved out of the path of the Interstate in 1957 and restored. Although it is not from the Gold Rush era, it is one of the more frequently photographed buildings of Auburn. Many of the old stores in the remaining section of Old Town were repaired and repainted in anticipation of visitors exiting the Interstate. Active restoration continued after the Olympics and tourism really began to boom in the late 1960s. In September 1970, a nomination form was submitted to the Department of the Interior National Park Service to include Historic Old Auburn in the National Register of Historic Places. The buildings covered in the application were on the city blocks of Maple Street, Commercial Street, Court Street, Lincoln Way, Washington Street, Spring Street, and Sacramento St. The huge miner placed at the entry to Old Town from Interstate 80 in 1975 was the perfect advertisement for the restored Gold Rush town.

The Chana statue is one of the most frequently photographed features of Auburn. Actually standing in front of it not only gives you a sense of its great size, but also makes you aware of the strange juxtaposition of the old and the new not evident in photos. The busy highway with its accompanying noise runs nearby and a service station is right across the street. The service station stands on the site of what was once the Orleans Hotel that was demolished in 1959, so that building was already gone by the time of the Olympics, but the buildings along Commercial Street were ready for the expected visitors and readily visible from the Interstate. The juxtaposition of old and new is perhaps not so strange if we remember that Interstate 80 is the successor to the Lincoln Highway which was planned to accommodate visitors to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. The dominance of the automobile, coming less than a decade after Neff dedicated his fountain for horses and humans, would drive the horse from the streets and the liveries that once serviced horses would be replaced by the stations that serviced cars. The walking tour brochure has a nice picture of the livery that once existed at 218 Washington Street, number 20 on the tour.

Up the Street from the Chana Statue

Commercial Street has some of the oldest and most interesting buildings of Old Town. You get the best view of the store fronts by walking up the street on the gas station side where you can see the western style stepped parapets and patterned brick at the cornices. If you want to get a better sense of the actual feel of the buildings, walk the sidewalk alongside the buildings where you can better see their cast iron columns and wooden store fronts. You will immediately note that a Gold Rush town was built with no Americans with Disabilities in mind since the buildings conform to the natural topography.

The Placer County Bank on Commercial Street, number 26 on the walking tour, was housed in a building constructed of brick by William Parkinson after the fire of 1855. The bank was founded by Jacob Neff and a number of other partners in 1887 as proclaimed by the date on its exterior. The bank is associated with one of the most heinous crimes in Auburn history. On May 26, 1904,

a masked gunman entered the bank at noon. Only one person was behind the counter, assistant cashier Edgar McFadyen. The robber handed him a note demanding all the money in the bank. McFadyen, stalling for time, pretended not to be able to read it. Growing impatient, the gunman jumped over the counter and scooped about \$6,500 in \$20 gold pieces into a bag he had brought with him, then ran out. A half block down the street he stole an unattended buckboard and headed out of town toward Newcastle. A mile later he abandoned the buckboard and escaped on foot. His disguise of false whiskers, a slouch hat, overalls and jumper, along with a 22-caliber pistol were found concealed in a bush, but the robber had made good his escape in the thick chapparal. For a few months no one had a clue who the robber was, but after a while suspicion turned toward Adolph Weber, the eighteen-year-old son of Julius Weber who had operated the Auburn Brewery for a number of years and was now retired. The bag used in the robbery had resembled one of the homemade money bags Julius Weber used in business and the agility of the robber indicated that he was a young man. Until about the age of sixteen, Adolph Weber had been “a bright and promising boy” according to the family doctor. But by the end of his sixteenth year, Adolph had begun to start torturing animals and insects and raising fighting cocks which were brutally mangled if they lost. The family doctor said Julius was “a victim to imaginary troubles” and “he became very morose and sullen, resenting any and all control.” He began to frequent the brothels which were not far from his house off Brewery Lane. A short time after the robbery, the Weber family spent several weeks in San Francisco where Adolph bought a 32-caliber pistol from a pawn shop in July. After the family’s return to Auburn, Adolph became even more morose and would fly into violent rages for very trivial reasons. His mother confided to her sister that she felt the family was in danger from his rages.

On November 10, 1904, at 7:32 in the evening, fire bells from the red firehouse in Old Town rang out. The two-story Weber house was burning. The firemen arrived quickly and entered the front room through a window. They pulled out the bodies of Mary Weber, her daughter Bertha, and her young son Earl. Mary and Bertha had both been shot dead and Earl had been bludgeoned about the head and was unconscious. He died almost immediately after being rescued. They apparently had been killed elsewhere in the house and dragged into the parlor before the fire was set. The house burned to the ground. The next day they found Julius in what had been the bathroom. Immediate suspicion fell on Adolph who was examined by the district attorney and sheriff the day after the fire. Adolph later testified in a coroner’s inquest that evening. He was arrested the next day. Subsequent searches in the basement of the barn on November 22 uncovered an Iver-Johnson 32-caliber pistol with five discharged shells and blood and hair apparently from the bludgeoned boy. On November 23, a lard can with \$5,500 in \$20 gold pieces was found. It was claimed by the Placer County Bank as part of the money stolen in May. Adolph was formally charged with the murder of his mother on November 29; no charges were ever brought for the bank robbery, even though Adolph did not dispute the bank’s claim. His murder trial took place in February 1905. It created a huge media sensation. He was convicted on overwhelming evidence and sentenced to death. After a lengthy appeal process, he was hanged at Folsom prison on September 27, 1906.

During the trial, the motive that the prosecutor gave for the crime was that, with the death of his family, Adolph would be the sole heir of the family fortune which was about \$70,000. At that

time there was no law that prohibited a murderer from inheriting the property of his victim. Adolph did inherit the family wealth and used it to pay for his defense. The outrage over this eventually led to Slayer Statutes being enacted in most states' probate codes. The statute essentially prevents someone from inheriting property from someone they intentionally and "feloniously" killed. Self-defense is excluded.

In the appeal process, there was an insanity hearing. That line of defense was rejected, but the Weber family doctor Robert F. Rooney revisited that question with an article entitled, "The Weber Murders. Was Adolph Weber Insane?" in the May 1908 *California State Journal of Medicine*. He attributed the murders to paranoia. In conclusion, he wrote:

In view of what I have stated it might be pertinently asked why I did not raise my voice in his defense, before his execution. I had three reasons for not doing so. Firstly, owing to my close relations with the murdered family, I held a deep abhorrence for the perpetrator of the crime, and was blinded to his rights. Secondly, I like nearly all other general practitioners, never made a study of psychiatry, and did not recognize the symptoms of the disease when they lay open to any one skilled to read them. And lastly, I never knew the mass of this evidence, until after his death. I have picked it up piecemeal since then, and can truly say that I am exonerated, on this point alone, if blameworthy on the others.

Commercial Street takes you back to Maple Street where the walking tour of Old Town ends. The illustration for the Jacobs Building at 219 Maple St, number 31 on the walking tour, comes from Myron Angel's *History of Placer County* published in 1882 and is captioned "Residence & Business Place of J.M. Jacobs Photographer." James Monroe Jacobs was born in Ohio in 1832 according to one census or in 1834 according to another. One account of his life has him arriving in California in 1853, another has him running away from home, joining a wagon train, and arriving in California in the late 1850s. There is evidence that he was a daguerreotypist active in Iowa Hill as early as 1856. He seems to have tried mining for a time in the 1850s and also owned a store in Michigan Bluff while being active as a photographer in the mining towns of Dutch Flat and Yankee Jim's. On June 4, 1859, he announced that he reopened his "Daguerrean Gallery" in Iowa Hill, claiming to take pictures on glass, leather, oil cloth, and paper, all in "the most perfect manner." In May 1863, he took out a \$10 business license in Foresthill and had a gallery there for at least four years. He also had a studio in Gold Run during the late 1860s. With galleries in a number of mining towns, he referred to himself in his ads as the "Principal Photographer of Placer County." The census in 1880 recorded Forest Hill as his home, but he made Auburn his new home soon afterwards. He is documented to have been operating in Auburn in 1871-2, 1878, 1882, and 1888-1893. After moving to Auburn, he was active in politics and served three terms as Placer County treasurer during the 1890s. He died in 1899.

The California State Library has a major collection of his work; the California Historical Society has a small collection. The collections consist basically of three types of photographs: carte, cabinet, and stereographs. In the early 1850s, small photographs were used as calling cards. In 1854, the Frenchman André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri patented a system of printing that put as many as ten photographs on a single sheet thus facilitating the mass production of photographs. A photo cut from the sheet mounted on a card was called "carte de visite" or "visiting card."

These cards about 2.4" x 3.5" were popular during the Civil War since they could be obtained fairly cheaply and sent to distant loved ones in a small envelope. Their popularity faded in the 1870s when the cabinet card was preferred. Cabinet cards were about 4.25" by 6.5" and were usually displayed on a cabinet. They could be seen from across the room. A number of Jacobs' portraits on these types of cards were post mortem. Stereographs were the third type Jacobs produced. Two nearly identical images were placed side by side on a card and viewed through a stereoscope. This created a three-dimensional effect. Stereographs were often sold to tourists and were collected by many middle-class families. Jacobs did stereographs of mining camps, stores, and houses throughout the foothill towns. Prior to the invention of movies, viewing stereographs was a common entertainment activity. In a June 1859 article about stereographs for the *Atlantic Monthly*, Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "The first effect of looking at a good photograph through the stereoscope is a surprise such as no painting ever produced. The mind feels its way into the very depths of the picture."

The historical plaque on the Jacobs Building also tells us that upstairs were "the dental offices of Dr. J.C. Hawver, also a spelunker and photographer." Hawver had very little schooling as a young boy, but he had a keen mind and intellectual curiosity. It was his wife who encouraged him to go to dentistry school. His active mind led him into so many areas of study that no one could say that he was not well educated. As a young boy, Hawver worked on a ranch where he came to love the outdoors, which explains why later in life his favorite leisure activity was camping, one of the favorite subjects of his photography was trees, and his favorite area of study was geology. It was the discovery of a cave that made John Hawver's legacy. On December 2, 1906, a group of high school boys climbed down eighty feet into a cave near Cool on the middle fork of the American River. The light from their candles revealed bone fragments and a large vertebra stuck in the rock wall. The next day, the mother of one of the boys who knew Hawver had a keen interest in geology took her son to Hawver to tell him of the discovery and showed him some of the bones he had brought home. Hawver went to the cave with another group of boys a few days later. They entered a different section through a narrow slit, then waded through waist deep water to a previously hidden part of the cave where ancient bones had been exposed by the leaching water. Hawver understood immediately the value of the deposits and reported the discovery to Benjamin Wheeler, the president of the University of California. Wheeler assigned the investigation to Professor John C. Merriam who had been researching vertebrate and invertebrate paleontology at Berkeley since 1894. During the summers of 1907 to 1909, Merriam together with E. L. Furlong and N. C. Nelson, anthropologists from Berkeley, investigated the cave which the scholars named after Dr. Hawver. During the scholars' absences, Hawver continued to investigate the cave at times with his wife and they took a large number of photographs; sometimes he allowed groups of school boys to participate. He sent boxes of bones to Berkeley and added to his own collection. Often the bones he extracted had to be blasted out. When a charge went off early, Hawver lost a thumb which affected his dentistry. Deprived of an education as a youth, he freely made his scientific library and geological and paleontological collection available to school boys. In 1910, the Hawver Cave became the Mountain Quarries Limestone Mine. Much would have been lost to quarrying had not Dr. Hawver preserved it. Today, Hawver Cave is part of the Auburn State Recreation Area, but it is the one area of the park that is off limits and a crime to enter unless you have a guide.

The bones from Hawver Cave tell of a time before the Indians when the area was roamed by mastadons, bison, three-toed horses, giant sloths, and saber-toothed tigers. Professor Merriam would go on to greater fame with his work on similar bones from the La Brea Tar Pits. The findings of the Berkeley scholars on Hawver Cave were published in a bulletin of the Geology Department in April 1918, but Hawver had died unexpectedly from a heart attack four years beforehand. Because of Hawver's illumination of the Pleistocene Era of Placer County, the history of Placer County as told in the Placer County Historical Museum begins with a display highlighting Hawver's discoveries. It is just to the left inside the door of the main exhibit room. If you continue in a clockwise direction around the room, the history of Placer County continues to unfold with the Indians and on to the Gold Rush and the other industries developed in the county. If you missed this your first time through the museum, the courthouse is just around the corner from the Jacobs Building if you want to revisit it.

However, if you are touring on the weekend, the Jacobs Building houses another museum only open on the weekends. Since the Placer County Hospital opened on the site of the Jacobs Building in September 22, 1855, and since it later housed Dr. Hawver's dental office, it is appropriate that it be the Gold Country Medical History Museum. The museum displays vintage medical devices including quackery devices, pharmaceutical bottles, nursing and dental artifacts dating from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. There is also information on the history of early medicine as well as information on some pioneering doctors, dentists, and pharmacists.

The Railroad

If you look back down Commercial Street from the Jacobs Building past the Chana statue, note the railroad trestle that crosses Interstate 80. It was built in 1909 as part of the improvements and double tracking of the transcontinental railroad. The history of Auburn and Placer County is very much tied to that railroad. Auburn's interest in getting a railroad started fairly early. In 1852, the Sacramento, Auburn and Nevada Railroad Co. was formed and a sixty-eight-mile survey was made from Sacramento through Negro Bar (Folsom) to Auburn, then through Green Valley to Nevada City. The survey continued on to Henness Pass since there were hopes that this would be just the beginning of a line that would cross the Sierras and connect with the Eastern United States. However, when the first section of the tracks was estimated at a cost of \$2,000,000, the venture collapsed. Colonel Charles Lincoln Wilson, a San Francisco businessman, reorganized the venture and convinced investors to build an inland railroad that would connect the two major supply points of Sacramento and Marysville by heading east from Sacramento to Negro Bar where it would cross the American River, then north to Marysville skirting the foothills of the Mother Lode. The new venture was incorporated in August of 1852 as the Sacramento Valley Railroad. But the corporation was undercapitalized and needed to be reorganized in August of 1853. It was not until February 1854 that Wilson arrived in New York to find an engineer, a contractor, and suppliers for the construction of the railroad. The engineer that Wilson hired was Theodore Dehone Judah. At the time, Judah was just finishing up work on a twenty-eight-mile

railroad for the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie Railroad Company. The daunting obstacle to that route from Buffalo to Lewiston was the particularly steep escarpment of the Niagara Gorge. It looked impossible to the other engineers who surveyed it, but Judah had assured the owners that, if they had the money, he could overcome that obstacle by cutting a shelf out of the rock. The Sacramento Valley Railroad presented no such challenge, but Judah had already become quite interested in the seemingly impossible obstacle that the Sierra Nevada mountains placed in the path of any railroad using the central route between San Francisco and the East Coast. He saw his opportunity to build the first railroad in California as the first step in finding that route over the Sierras. Judah arrived in Sacramento in May and immediately set up his own engineering consulting firm, T.D. Judah & Company, Civil Engineers & Railroad Contractors in the Hastings Building on the corner of 2nd St. and J St. After Judah completed the survey for the Sacramento Valley Railroad, a construction contract for forty miles of track was signed in November 1854 with Robinson, Seymour and Co. in New York. That would not get the railroad to Marysville, since they did not have the funds for more, but they felt that investors would be forthcoming once the first forty miles were in operation. Lester Robinson sailed for California in February 1855 to oversee construction.

Work on the roadbed was barely four months along when the town of Auburn burned down in June 1855 and the town was still in the process of rebuilding when the tracks reached the newly created town of Folsom on February 4, 1856. Judah had also been hired by Joseph Folsom to map out a town as a terminus for the railroad and all the lots in the 98 blocks of Folsom had been sold at auction on January 16, 1856. By the end of February, there were over 250 buildings and, by the beginning of April, a population of about 1,500 lived in the newly created town of Folsom.

Although the terrain between Sacramento and Folsom had offered no challenge to the builders of the railroad, the financing did. It became clear that the Sacramento Valley Railroad could not come up with the money to pay the contractor. To protect his interest, Lester Robinson foreclosed on October 18. The plans for the bridge across the American River and the next eighteen miles of track were dropped. The railroad between Sacramento and Folsom, however, proved to be very profitable and Lester Robinson, who now owned the majority of the shares of the Sacramento Valley Railroad, began to make plans for its continuation to Marysville. In 1857, the Sacramento Valley Railroad filed a map for an extension to Marysville with Lester Robinson's brother John as chief engineer. But Colonel Charles Lincoln Wilson had not given up his hopes to complete the original plan of the railroad. He negotiated with businessmen in Marysville and incorporated a new company called the California Central Railroad with Theodore Judah as engineer and himself as contractor. He thus successfully outmaneuvered Robinson. The California Central Railroad broke ground on June 1, 1858, and the bridge across the river was completed the next year. The California Central Railroad took the tracks the last eighteen miles of the original contract. At the terminus of the line, Wilson had Judah map out a new town. Charles Lincoln Wilson gave his new town his middle name and sold the first forty-six lots at auction on November 23, 1859, but the railroad did not reach the new town of Lincoln until October 11, 1861. The towns of Folsom and Lincoln were both planned out and plats were filed with the counties. Unlike Auburn, the city blocks were placed between streets intersecting at right angles and the lines of the map superimposed over the land had no concern for the contours of the terrain. One thing that a visitor gets from taking the walking tour of Auburn is the

feel of a real Gold Rush town laid out in no pre-planned pattern. The streets followed the early trails and the trails followed the contours of the land.

The Sacramento, Auburn and Nevada Railroad Co. that never got started in 1852 had demonstrated the early hope to connect Sacramento to Auburn via Negro Bar and then connect Auburn to Nevada City and then to cross the Sierras. Judah, as chief engineer of the California Central Railroad, began a survey of the "Auburn Branch Railroad" on July 21, 1858. But the California Central was engaged in building the extension to Marysville through land further west and progress was slow so it seemed that it would be quite some time before a spur line to Auburn would come from the California Central. The railroad to Folsom had cut the travel time for freight coming from Sacramento from one day to one hour and it came at much cheaper rates. Freight from Sacramento to Auburn took two days and sometimes three days. The citizens of Auburn were anxious to have a railroad that could cheaply deliver passengers and freight to their town. The businessmen of Auburn negotiated with Lester and John Robinson, who had been outmaneuvered by Wilson for the route to Marysville, and a new railroad called the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad was organized in 1859. A new survey was done by Sherman Day in October of that year. Judah's earlier work was disregarded. Day estimated the cost of the route from Folsom to Auburn at \$1,000,713. The first 14.5 miles from Folsom was the least expensive to build at an estimated cost of \$376,133. He estimated the annual net income at \$176,195 providing a return on investment of about 18 percent. However, the private financing of the Sacramento Valley Railroad had proven inadequate and ended in the foreclosure that gave Robinson control of the Sacramento Valley Railroad. That lesson made Robinson leery of such private financing a second time. It was decided to get some government backing. Only chartered municipalities could issue bonds and to accomplish that Auburn had to incorporate. An act of incorporation passed the state legislature in March 1860 and April 11 was set as the date for the residents to vote on the proposed incorporation. It passed and the town elected trustees on April 18. The California legislature then passed bills allowing the newly incorporated town of Auburn to place a measure on the ballot to take \$50,000 in stock in the railroad and, in a later bill, to allow Placer County to subscribe to the stock as well. The Auburn voters unanimously approved the bond measure on June 4. But the residents of Placer County did not see the value of a railroad that ran north to Nevada City instead of east through the county and voted down their \$125,000 bond measure. It was a wise choice, for just a few months after the vote, the prospects of success for the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad began to dim as more concrete plans for the transcontinental railroad began to take shape.

Several months after the arrival of the Sacramento Valley Railroad in Folsom, Judah made a trip to the East to solicit interest in a transcontinental railroad emanating from California that he called the "Pacific Railroad." He found little interest. He made a second trip to Washington, D.C. in 1857 and presented a pamphlet to all the members of Congress entitled "A Practical Plan for Building the Pacific Railroad." Basically, the work called for a bill that would provide funds for him to do detailed engineering surveys in order to realistically estimate the construction costs of a transcontinental railroad. But the tensions between North and South over slavery derailed any action on his proposal. In the winter of 1858-59, he again visited Washington where he found that President Buchanan only supported a Southern Route to the Pacific and would veto any bill that proposed otherwise.

Recognizing that the political climate in Washington could find no agreement on the route for the transcontinental railroad, the California legislature voted for a Pacific Railroad Convention to be held in San Francisco in September 1859. Delegates came from every county of California, as well as from Oregon, and the territories of Arizona, Nevada, and Washington. Judah served as a delegate from Sacramento County. Having spent time lobbying in Washington and knowing the political climate, Judah convinced the convention delegates that they could not expect to find financing without a plan developed from detailed surveys of the potential routes and that the best compromise for the route debate was a central route. On October 17, 1859, the *Sacramento Daily Union* published the *Pacific Railroad Convention Memorial* that was addressed to the President of the United States, the Heads of Departments, and to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States. The major thing to come from the convention was the call for the railroad to use the Central Route.

The Convention and the people of this coast are united in a demand for a railroad which shall be constructed from some point upon the western border of the Atlantic States, along what is known as the "Central Route," to some point on the frontier of California, whence divergent lines can be run — one to the waters of Columbia river, or Puget Sound, in the north, and one to San Francisco, in the south. They are also united in demanding of the General Government a liberal donation of the public lands, by which they shall be enabled to aid the construction of the said branch lines of railroad. It cannot be believed that Congress will refute so simple an act of justice to these States, or will be so blind and unmindful of the interest and duty of the Government, as not to meet their expectation in its behalf, or that it will fail to extend to this coast the benefit and security of railroad communication with the East.

No specific course was laid out. The line was to start in Sacramento and cross the Sierras by whatever route the legislature might select. The Convention appointed Judah as their accredited agent to lobby for the necessary legislation in Washington. By the end of September, Judah was on his way to Washington.

After reading *The Pacific Railroad Convention Memorial*, President Buchanan expressed favor for the concept and legislation was introduced by the California freshman congressman John Chilton Burch. While awaiting approval of the bill, Judah opened an office in the capitol and filled it with maps and data for the members of congress to inspect. Even so, other business prevented the bill from coming to a vote that year.

Judah returned to Sacramento in July 1860 convinced more than ever that Congress would not act on a compromise until there were proper surveys and estimates of construction costs. He headed to the Sierras in search of a route. He began barometrical surveys in the mountains by exploring many of the old routes that had been carved out in the late 1850's, such as Georgetown Pass, and Henness Pass, which he explored with Charles Marsh, a civil engineer and water company owner from Nevada City. He also explored the Donner Pass route, which had earlier been explored from Dutch Flat to the summit by Simon G. Elliott in the summer of 1860. In Dutch Flat he met with the pharmacist Daniel Strong. In 1859, Strong hoping to cash in on traffic to the Comstock silver mines, was searching for a route to build a toll road from his town of

Dutch Flat over the Sierras to Nevada. Following an old abandoned wagon trail, he found that there was a natural grade down a continuous ridge all the way from Donner Summit. Realizing that this was just the type of grade that Judah was searching for to build the transcontinental railroad, he sent him a letter informing him of his discovery. It was not until October 1860 that Judah went with him on mule-back to investigate the route. Judah quickly realized that it offered an excellent gradual grade for the train and it only required the crossing of one ridge instead of two. Moreover, two canals that had recently been constructed through the area of Dutch Flat for hydraulic mining also provided additional evidence of the feasibility of the uphill grade to Emigrant Gap. After his investigations, Judah, Marsh, and Strong agreed that the Dutch Flat to Donner Pass route over the Sierras was the best. Once back in Dutch Flat the three men quickly drafted an agreement called "Articles of Association of the Central Pacific Railroad of California."

They immediately began subscribing stockholders. In November 1860, Judah published a prospectus for potential investors that included the route over Donner Pass. In their initial efforts they raised \$46,500 from investors mostly in the Dutch Flat, Illinoistown area. Since the proposed line to the Nevada border was 115 miles and since the law required subscriptions of \$1000 per mile, they needed another \$68,500 to conform to the law. Judah hoped to raise the rest from wealthy investors in San Francisco and Sacramento. But investors in San Francisco had lost money when the Sacramento Valley Railroad went into receivership and he met with a cold reception there in December.

In January 1861, Judah held a meeting at the St. Charles Hotel in Sacramento with about thirty of the most influential businessmen of the city including Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins. What he really needed most was the money for the surveys that had to be done to convince Congress to fund the railroad over the Central Route. As part of his pitch, he pointed out to them that even if they failed to get Congress to approve the railroad, they could have a wagon road from the survey and open a competing route to the Comstock silver mines. Leland Stanford and Collis Huntington had been speculators involved in the formation of the Wagon Road Company that built a freight wagon road from Folsom to Carson City through Placerville in 1858 and they knew how lucrative that route had become. Such a road over Donner Pass offered a quick return on investment in the short run.

Huntington persuaded six others to each pay one-seventh of the costs of the surveys and Judah returned to the Sierras in late March to finish them. While he was away, Mark Hopkins called a meeting of stockholders on April 30 and drew up articles of association. Charles Crocker got a new act governing railroad incorporation passed through the legislature in May, and the Central Pacific Railroad was formally incorporated under those new rules on June 28, 1861. Judah was made Chief Engineer.

Judah completed his detailed survey of the Donner Pass Route in early August 1861 and proceeded to draft plans and profiles for the next few weeks. The major change from the original plan was the realignment of the ascent into the Sierra foothills. Instead of using the Sacramento Valley Railroad through Folsom to Lincoln and then building tracks to Auburn, the Central Pacific now planned to head directly to Lincoln from Sacramento. On October 1, 1861, Judah

published his first Chief Engineer's Report and on October 9, 1861, the directors voted to send Judah to Washington "for the purpose of procuring appropriations of land and U.S. Bonds from government, to aid in the construction of this road." On March 4, 1862, the Pacific Railroad bill was formally introduced in the House of Representatives and began its way through Congress. The start of the Civil War had eliminated Southern opposition to the Central Route; the debate now turned on whether the federal government was going to make a small number of California investors rich at taxpayers' expense. But the link to California's gold and Nevada's silver was seen as a strategic necessity, so the bill moved along and on July 1, 1862, Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act. The Central Pacific would be building the transcontinental railroad west from Sacramento and that was not good news for the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad.

Despite the fact that Placer County's voters turned down the bond issue for the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad, construction of the railroad to Auburn had commenced with John Robinson as Chief Engineer in May 1861. Grading began in August, just a few weeks after the Central Pacific Railroad was incorporated. The route for the new railroad largely paralleled present-day Auburn-Folsom Rd. which was originally called Auburn-Sacramento Rd. Tracks connected with the California Central Railroad at Ashland Station, located near the present-day corner of Greenback Lane and Folsom-Auburn Rd. and were to terminate near the Placer Herald office in Old Town, currently under present day Interstate 80 not far from the Chana statue. Only thirteen miles of track were laid to Auburn Station located near the intersection of Auburn-Folsom Rd and King Rd. in Loomis by October 1862 when construction funding ran out. Law suits by property owners over right of ways also contributed to the problems. There was little incentive to raise more money to continue the project. The contract to build the western portion of the transcontinental railroad had been given to the Central Pacific Railroad with the passage of the Pacific Railway Act two months beforehand and it was going through Auburn.

Following the passage of the railroad act, Huntington wanted one last cost analysis of the alternatives, especially the Feather River route. He accompanied Judah on one more exploration in September and they made the final determination that the Donner Pass route was indeed the best route. Leland Stanford, then governor of California, threw the first ceremonial shovel full of dirt at the inaugural celebration in Sacramento on January 8, 1863. Meanwhile, the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad remained stalled six miles short of Auburn and, failing to generate the revenue that had been projected, it could not pay dividends to the investors. The city of Auburn owned \$50,000 of their stock for which they had issued twenty-year bonds bearing eight percent interest with payments payable semi-annually. Part of the 1860 bond act that authorized the purchase of the stock was a property tax trigger. If the railroad did not generate enough revenue, the city would levy a property tax to cover the bond interest. In March 1863, it had to pull that trigger and levied a property tax on Auburn residents of \$2.10 per hundred dollars of assessed value. Added to that, Placer County had voted to invest in the Central Pacific and that generated more taxes. That was bad enough, but the businessmen of Auburn still expecting to have a railroad depot a few blocks from the courthouse once the Central Pacific got to town, got a shock when they learned of the July 1, 1863, Chief Engineer's Report. It revealed that Judah had made a major change in alignment. He had decided to take the route through Newcastle and bypass Auburn, which was in a ravine, and establish a new depot about a mile north of town on ground 150 feet higher. This was one of the last adjustments made by Judah before he left in

October for New York via Panama where he caught yellow fever and, shortly after arriving in New York, died at the age of thirty-seven.

Lester Robinson was a major investor in the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad and, as he had done with the Sacramento Valley Railroad, when the financial troubles were apparent, he moved to protect his interests by foreclosing on the railroad in May 1864. Auburn filed a petition to intervene in the lawsuit, but it was unsuccessful and the railroad was put up for sale in June and sold to his brother John Robinson. They intended to pull up the rails and use them in the construction of the Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad that they had incorporated in June 1862 and had begun to construct from Folsom towards Placerville in late 1863. Lester Robinson hoped it would become a competing route for the transcontinental railroad crossing the Sierras over Johnson Pass (Echo Summit). He maintained that the Central Pacific had no real intention of completing the railroad over Donner Summit, but rather would run it only to Dutch Flat and then use the wagon road it was constructing to transport freight over the summit. This rumor was bandied about as the "Dutch Flat Swindle." Robinson further disparaged Judah's memory by saying that Judah had personally told him it was impossible to run the railroad over Donner Summit. Fights ensued as Robinson tried to take the rails. Court injunctions and violence were both used. John Robinson was arrested for contempt against an injunction. Life was lost in the ensuing violence. But eventually Robinson won and the tracks were removed. Auburn was left with a \$50,000 bill and no railroad yet.

Sam S. Montague, whom Daniel Strong had first contacted about surveying the wagon toll road he wanted to build over Donner Pass, replaced Judah as chief engineer on the Central Pacific and by the end of November 1863 he had advanced the grading work to a point where it crossed the line of the California Central Railroad about eighteen miles from Sacramento. The settlement that grew there was called Junction which was later changed to Roseville. The grading in advance of the tracks continued to move forward, but the company was in desperate need of a subsidy from the state to continue. Because of their poor cash position, they were not able to put many men in the field during the mild winter of 1864 and progress was slow. The terrain from Sacramento to Newcastle is relatively level ground. From Newcastle to Auburn the railroad encounters the steepest grades on the western slope of the Sierras. Unlike the automobile, trains cannot climb steep inclines but require gradual increases in elevation. Judah had designed the line to basically have a grade that increased 105 feet in elevation per one mile of track. This means that ravines had to be bridged, cuts through hills had to be made, shelves created on cliffs, and tunnels dug through mountains. The Antelope and Newcastle Ravines were two difficult chasms that had to be crossed with trestles. Judah's realignment of the Newcastle to Auburn line put the new depot for Auburn at an elevation 150 feet higher than the previously planned depot in the ravine near the Placer Herald. This made it easier to continue the ascent from that point, but it meant that a cut had to be made through a long, tall ridge on Bloomer Ranch about one mile southwest of Auburn.

Excavation of the ridge began on February 22, 1864, with about thirty men at work. The Bloomer Cut needed to be 800 feet long and sixty-three feet deep. The ridge was made up of boulders imbedded in clay making it like concrete. It proved impervious to shovels and picks so

the crew resorted to blasting. That was dangerous work. On April 15, James Harvey Strobridge, the Superintendent of Construction, and two workers were trying to remove one charge that did not go off when they accidentally triggered it. One worker died of his injury; Strobridge lost his left eye.

After tracks reached Newcastle thirty-one miles from Sacramento on June 6, 1864, progress slowed to a crawl. The *Placer Herald* reported on July 30, 1864:

The statement of the Sacramento Union, that there are 300 men at work on the Pacific Railroad, at the Bloomer Hill cut, is incorrect. The number does not exceed forty; and that is all that can be worked to advantage. The whole number of men now at work on the road, upon the grading and culverts, above Newcastle, are not more than sixty. We do not see what is to be gained in the Union claiming a large force at work, when the contrary is the fact. The frequent loose statements in connection with this road, is beginning to convince people that there is a vast amount of humbug indulged in.

To aid in financing, the California legislature had passed a bill guaranteeing the interest on \$1,500,000 of railroad bonds at seven percent for twenty years. It was signed into law by Governor Low on April 4, 1864. Stanford had lobbied heavily for its passage, but the bill was challenged in the court system and was making its way to the California Supreme Court. Moreover, the “humbug” mentioned in the *Placer Herald* article was the Dutch Flat Swindle rumor heavily promoted by Robinson. The legal wrangling awaiting a decision from the Supreme Court and the Dutch Flat Swindle allegations were both hurting the bond sales. When the Dutch Flat & Donner Lake Wagon Road was completed by the Central Pacific partners in June 1864 and stagecoaches and freight wagons began operating from the railhead at Newcastle, it only added fuel to the flames that Robinson was fanning about the Dutch Flat Swindle. But in reality, the toll road was a valuable companion piece in the building of the railroad and without it the railroad may not have been built. It demonstrated that there could be profits in the short run to supplement the railroad finances and it also provided a supply line for construction beyond the railheads. It ceased to be useful once the train reached Reno in June 1868, but it did become a state highway in 1909 and was later incorporated into the Lincoln Highway, the original gravel highway from New York City to San Francisco that eventually morphed into U.S. Highway 40.

It was not until January 2, 1865, that the California Supreme Court reaffirmed the constitutionality of the legislative act guaranteeing the bonds. This made the bonds immediately salable and the coffers of the railroad began to replenish. Shortly after the court decision, the Central Pacific placed ads in various newspapers for 5,000 laborers to work on the twenty-three miles of track to be laid between Newcastle and Illinoistown. The Bloomer Cut was completed that spring. It is estimated that 40,000 cubic yards of material was ultimately excavated from the ridge. The cut is still in use today even though it does not meet current clearance standards. Regulators made an exception because the walls were so solid. The cut looks about the same as it did when completed in 1865. It is on private land with no public access, but in October 1991 a plaque dedicated by the Native Sons of the Golden West was placed nearby on Herdal Drive off of Auburn-Folsom Rd. It reads:

BLOOMER CUT

So named because of its location on the Bloomer Ranch, it remains virtually unchanged since its original construction in 1864. The overwhelming task of construction was undertaken by the diligent, hard working efforts of a small band of Chinese laborers. Using picks, shovels and black powder, they inched their way through the conglomerate rock cemented together with rock-hard clay. At the time of its completion, Bloomers Cut was considered the eighth wonder of the world. The first Central Pacific train rolled into Auburn on May 11, 1865.

Chinese Rail Workers on the Transcontinental Railroad

It is debated by historians how many, or if any, Chinese worked on the Bloomer Cut. Of the two workers injured in the powder blast in April 1864, one was Portuguese, the other was French. We know that Chinese were working on the wagon road from payroll records as early as January 1864 that record a crew of twenty-one Chinese. More were hired later in the year for work on the wagon road, but we have no record of Chinese working on the railroad this early. It was while the construction base camp was at Auburn that the decision was made to fill in the sparse ranks of railroad workers with Chinese. The response to the employment ads for 5,000 workers had been disappointing and inadequate since only 800 men applied. Charles Crocker, who oversaw the construction of the line, convinced Strobridge to hire Chinese workers from the area for the grading. And it took quite some convincing since Strobridge shared a good deal of the resentment and hostility toward the Chinese that was expressed in *The Annals of San Francisco*, a work written by residents of the city. The passage below comes from the year 1852:

The manners and habits of the Chinese are very repugnant to Americans in California. Of different language, blood, religion, and character, and inferior in most mental and bodily qualities, the Chinaman is looked upon by some as only a little superior to the Negro, and by others as somewhat inferior.

Strobridge grudgingly agreed to try out a crew of fifty men for a month and that experiment soon changed his mind. The Central Pacific quickly began to recruit more Chinese. By April 12, 1865, E. B. Crocker, Charles Crocker's brother and Central Pacific's legal counsel, wrote to his friend Cornelius Cole:

We have now about 2000 men at work with about 300 wagons and carts and I can assure you they are moving the earth and rock rapidly. We are now on some of the heaviest work in the mountains, but so far we have been fortunate in meeting very little hard rock. You will be astonished when you come back and see the amount of work we have done.

A large part of our force are Chinese, and they prove nearly equal to white men, in the amount of labor they perform, and are far more reliable. No danger of strikes among them. We are training them to all kinds of labor, blasting, driving horses, handling rock,

as well as the pick and shovel.... We want to get a body of 2500 trained laborers, and keep them steadily at work until the road is built clear across the continent, or until we meet them coming from the other side.

If the Chinese worked on the Bloomer Cut, it was in the last stages of excavation. But the vast majority of the work going forward was going to be done by Chinese. As governor of California, in his 1862 inaugural address, Leland Stanford promised to protect the state from "the dregs of Asia." As president of the Central Pacific in March 1865, he contracted with Cornelius Koopmanschap, a Dutch sea captain, to recruit thousands of workers directly from China. The first ones arrived in June. There are no accurate figures how many Chinese workers were eventually hired to work on the line from Auburn to Promontory, Utah, but estimates run as high as 12,000 to 15,000, constituting ninety percent of the workforce.

The Central Pacific tracks reached Auburn on May 13, 1865, and regular passenger service began. The depot was located a little over a mile from the business section of town in a rather desolate area. It was an unpleasant journey on foot for those who had come to do business at the courthouse. George Bishop, who had recently lost the Traveler's Rest Hotel in a bankruptcy auction, began an "omnibus" service from the depot to Old Town, but many still had to walk through muddy streets. Since the railhead had now moved up from Newcastle to Auburn, the depot was quite busy transferring passengers and freight for travel over Donner Summit on the toll road. Shipping houses and businesses serving wagon traffic were set up at the railhead. The established mercantile businesses of Old Town stayed put and let customers make their way to them. Auburn only remained the railhead for a little over three months until the trains reached Colfax on September 5. Colfax thereafter was the main transfer point for freight going to Grass Valley and Nevada City as well as Iowa Hill and the mining towns across the American River. The first hotel did not appear near the Auburn station until 1868 and it was somewhat ramshackled. When a huge fire swept through the depot area in 1870, the losses included a hotel, stables, barns, a hay and feed store, a blacksmith shop, two lime houses, and the combination depot and saloon, but did not include any mercantile businesses or residences.

Auburn's depot may not have been where the city had hoped to have it, nor did it generate the freight traffic that had been expected, but it was on the route destined to connect the two coasts of the country. That was fortunate, but, unfortunately, Auburn had invested in the wrong railroad and the bonds it issued to purchase stock in the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad still required interest payments with the burden falling entirely on the taxpayers since the worthless railroad stock generated no income. The only way out was to unincorporate. Placer County Assemblyman and Auburn resident Charles A. Tuttle introduced Assembly bill 760, "An Act to repeal an Act to incorporate the town of Auburn" in 1868 and it was passed by both houses of the legislature.

Being freed from the debt of the first railroad made it easier to accept the distance to the depot of the second railroad. A visit to the fourth depot that was built in 1902 by the Southern Pacific quickly gives you a sense of the distance, but no sense of the emptiness between the courthouse and the depot in 1865. This surviving depot has become the home of the Gold Country Museum. Today, the first thing that catches your attention outside the depot is a twenty-two-foot tall, thirty-three-foot-long statue of a Chinese railroad worker pushing a wheelbarrow. It is a perfect

complement to the depot, but it was not commissioned for the site. It was created by Dr. Ken Fox in 1972 as his personal tribute to the Chinese railroad workers and it stood outside his dental office on Auburn Ravine Road next to a giant statue of an Amazon holding a bow.

At the time Ken Fox made the statue, public monuments that commemorated or plaques that even mentioned the role that the Chinese played in the building of the railroad were almost non-existent. A wave of anti-Chinese sentiment had long before swept away public acknowledgement of their role in shaping the American continent. Resentment of the Chinese was first expressed right at the start of the Gold Rush when California levied an excessive miner's tax on the Chinese immigrants, but not on Europeans. It grew worse after the Central Pacific brought more Chinese workers to California willing to work for wages half that of white men. When the completion of the railroad released thousands of Chinese workers to the labor market, resentment intensified. The Panic of 1873 that brought on a long depression made things even more difficult. The Chinese were driven out of many towns, notably Rocklin, Roseville, and Penryn in Placer County. From the 1870s to the 1890s there were nearly 200 violent anti-Chinese pogroms in California. Such hostility led to the Chinese Exclusion Act signed into law on May 6, 1882, by President Chester A. Arthur. All immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States was prohibited. It was supposed to last ten years but was renewed in 1892 for another ten years, and then made permanent in 1902. It was not repealed until the end of 1943. So, it is not surprising that there were no public monuments to the Chinese railroad workers. You do not build public monuments to people you are trying to keep out of the country.

On May 10, 1869, three photographers were present at Promontory, Utah, to record the historic moment when the tracks laid by the Central Pacific from the west and the tracks laid by the Union Pacific from the east were finally connected in the Golden Spike Ceremony signifying the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Many glass plate exposures were taken, but the one that became most famous is titled "East and West Shaking Hands at Laying of Last Rail" taken by Andrew J. Russell. Although it has long been said that no Chinese are present in the picture, more recent research at Stanford University has found two, one with his back turned and the other partially covered by a hat. But, in truth, any evidence of Chinese presence in the photo is so obscure that it went unnoticed for almost one hundred and fifty years. Looking at that picture, no one would have a clue that more than 12,000 Chinese had toiled and that many had died in making that moment possible.

In 1963, the Chinese Historical Society of America was formed in San Francisco at a time when there were fewer than 250,000 Chinese living in the United States. The society claimed to be the "lone voice for the study and dissemination of the history of this segment of the US population." Their main goal was to promote the contributions and legacy of the Chinese in America. With the centennial celebration commemorating the driving of the golden spike on the horizon, they began to lobby to be included in the celebration and to have the right to install commemorative plaques in Sacramento and Promontory, Utah.

The state of California was also preparing for that centennial celebration. In November 1962, the Transcontinental Railroad became number 780 on the list of California Historical Landmarks. On May 9, 1969, a series of plaques was to be dedicated at various locations along the railroad

line running within the state. The date of dedication of the plaques was one day before the official celebration in Utah. It was appropriate that the state of California should celebrate the centennial early. The Golden Spike Ceremony in 1869 had been originally planned for May 8, but got delayed. In Sacramento plans had been made and dignitaries were in place on the 8th so they went ahead with the celebration two days early. For the centennial celebration in Sacramento in 1969, Philip Choy, president of the Chinese Historical Society was on hand for the dedication of the Society's plaque. With Chinese writing at the top and English below, it simply read:

To commemorate the centennial of the first transcontinental railroad in America and to pay tribute to the Chinese workers of the Central Pacific Railroad whose indomitable courage made it possible.

Two Southern Pacific trains arrived at the ceremony, one to take the state historical landmark plaques to their various locations along the route as far as Truckee and then return to San Francisco while the other went on to Promontory for the celebration there on the 10th. Those state plaques give a nice summation of the progress of the railroad from Sacramento over Donner Pass to Truckee.

NO. 780 FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD - *Here, on January 8, 1863, Governor Leland Stanford turned the first spade of earth to begin construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. After more than six years of labor, crews of the Central Pacific Railroad from the west and the Union Pacific Railroad from the east met at Promontory, Utah where, on May 10, 1869, Stanford drove the gold spike signifying completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad. The Central Pacific Railroad, forerunner of the Southern Pacific Company, was planned by Theodore D. Judah and constructed largely through the efforts of the 'Big Four' Sacramento businessmen Leland Stanford, Collis P. Huntington, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins.*
Location: California State Railroad Museum

NO. 780-1 FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD-ROSEVILLE - *Central Pacific graders arrived at Junction on November 23, 1863, and when track reached there on April 25, 1864, trains began making the 18-mile run to and from Sacramento daily. The new line crossed a line reaching northward from Folsom that the California Central had begun in 1858 and abandoned in 1868. Junction, now called Roseville, became a major railroad distribution center.*
Location: Old Town Roseville, S.E. corner of Church St & Washington Blvd

NO. 780-2 FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD-ROCKLIN - *Central Pacific reached Rocklin, 22 miles from its Sacramento terminus, in May 1864, when the railroad established a major locomotive terminal here. Trains moving over the Sierra were generally cut in two sections at this point in order to ascend the grade. The first CP freight movement was three carloads of Rocklin granite pulled by the engine Governor Stanford. The terminal was moved to Roseville April 18, 1908.*

Location: SE corner of Rocklin Rd and First St, Rocklin

NO. 780-3 FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD-NEWCASTLE - *Regular freight and passenger trains began operating over the first 31 miles of Central Pacific's line to Newcastle on June 10, 1864, when political opposition and lack of money stopped further construction during that mild winter. Construction was resumed in April 1865. At this point, stagecoaches transferred passengers from the Dutch Flat Wagon Road.*

Location: SW corner of Main St. and Page St, Newcastle

NO. 780-4 FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD-AUBURN - *After an 11-month delay due to political opposition and lack of money, Central Pacific tracks reached Auburn May 13, 1865, and regular service began. Government loans became available when the railroad completed its first 40 miles, four miles east of here. With the new funds, Central Pacific augmented its forces with the first Chinese laborers, and work began again in earnest.*

Location: 639 Lincoln Way, Auburn

NO. 780-5 FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD-COLFAX - *Central Pacific rails reached Illinois-town on September 1, 1865, and train service began four days later. Renamed by Governor Stanford in honor of Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the House of Representatives and later Ulysses S. Grant's Vice President, the town was for ten months a vital construction supply depot and junction point for stage lines. The real assault on the Sierra began here.*

Location: Grass Valley Street and Railroad Tracks in Railroad Park, Colfax

NO. 780-6 FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD-TRUCKEE - *While construction on Sierra tunnels delayed Central Pacific, advance forces at Truckee began building 40 miles of track east and west of Truckee, moving supplies by wagon and sled, and Summit Tunnel was opened in December 1867. The line reached Truckee April 3, 1868, the Sierra was conquered. Rails reached Reno June 19, and construction advanced eastward toward the meeting with Union Pacific at the rate of one mile daily. On May 10, 1869, the rails met at Promontory (Utah) to complete the first transcontinental railroad.*

Location: SP Depot, 70 Donner Pass Rd, Truckee

With the installation of the Auburn plaque, the Chinese finally did get an official state sponsored mention of their work on the transcontinental railroad. The next day they were to receive a humiliating snub in Utah. Philip Choy and Thomas W. Chinn, the executive director of the Chinese Historical Society of America, went to observe the centennial celebration at Promontory. Choy was to be given five minutes at the podium to pay tribute to the Chinese workers. At the last minute he was informed that there was not enough time for him to speak. The Chinese workers went unrecognized, but it was even worse than that. The following is from an article in the May 12, 1969, *San Francisco Chronicle* by Dale Champion:

Secretary Volpe, the principal orator, succeeded in infuriating the Chinese delegation from San Francisco by wholly ignoring the 12,000 Chinese who helped build the Central Pacific over the Sierra to Promontory.

"Who else but Americans could drill ten tunnels in mountains 30 feet deep in snow?" asked Volpe, speaking in a flat, nasal Bostonian accent. "Who else but Americans could

chisel through miles of solid granite? Who else but Americans could have laid ten miles of track in 12 hours?"

On May 14, Congressman John Moss of Sacramento sent John Volpe a letter that began, "I have a strong sense of disquiet over the content of the speech made by you at Promontory." He went on to say:

I recognize that as a member of the Cabinet with relatively short tenure, you have had many problems cross your desk each day and that it was necessary for you to undoubtedly assign much of the preparation of your remarks to subordinates. Whatever the conditions, it seems incredible to me that anyone superficially acquainted with the history of the construction of the transcontinental railroad would ask the question, "Who else but Americans"when in fact on the same platform from which you spoke were representatives of the Chinese community of the Western States, particularly from the San Francisco area, who were there proudly to participate in commemorating the work done by more than 12,000 Chinese imported for the specific purpose of doing the backbreaking job of building much of the most difficult stretch of the railroad through the Sierras.

Congressman Moss ended by asking Volpe to apologize to Philip Choy and Thomas Chinn. Volpe's question may have been rhetorical, but still it was a question that, to answer correctly, clearly needed more education. Ken Fox answered that question and paid tribute to the Chinese workers in a very big way in 1972 with his statue. But his answer was out of context standing there next to his dental office and giant Amazon. The city of Auburn found the proper context when it purchased the old depot from Southern Pacific for one dollar in 1988. The statue was moved to its depot location on November 27, 1989. The depot, the rails, the caboose with the additional rail car, the historical plaque with its mention of the Chinese workers, and the gigantic statue of the Chinese laborer pushing the wheelbarrow all come together to give an appropriate and more enduring tribute to the Chinese workers.

Further tributes were paid to the Chinese when the Native Sons of the Golden West dedicated the plaque at Bloomer Cut in October 1991 and again in May 1999 when the Colfax Area Historical Society dedicated a plaque on State Highway 174 two miles east of the center of Colfax commemorating the construction around Cape Horn.

The Historical Landmark plaques placed in Placer County for the centennial celebration were installed in cooperation with the Placer County Historical Society. They were placed along the railroad line, as was fitting, but were inconspicuous, as were the Bloomer Cut and Cape Horn plaques, and as big as Ken Fox's statue is, it still cannot be seen by travelers on the Interstate. In 2009, the State Department of Transportation and the Placer County Historical Society dedicated a plaque in a much more conspicuous location at the Interstate 80 rest stop at Gold Run just before Dutch Flat. It reads:

About 1000 feet from this location is the track of the Transcontinental Railroad. In 1865 thousands of Chinese in Kwantung Province China were recruited to work on this great connection between the East and West Coast. This monument is dedicated to the memory

of those Chinese laborers who worked for Charles Crocker of the Central Pacific Railroad.

Although you cannot actually see the tracks, that rest stop has the potential of having over one million travelers a year pass through it and members of San Francisco's Chinese community decided that it was a prime place to memorialize the Chinese laborers by installing a new monument there. They wanted it completed prior to the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike ceremony. Fundraising for the Chinese Railroad Workers Memorial Project began in June 2014 with a hopeful dedication date in 2017. Four years past that date, the project remains unfinished. The statue for the monument has been completed and is currently on display at the Railroad Museum in Old Town Sacramento. It depicts a very muscular, shirtless Chinese worker with a sledge hammer raised over his head just about ready to bring it down. Whether it will actually be installed on the plaza at Gold Run is uncertain at this time.

Crofutt's Trans-Continental Tourist's Guide

One of the spectators at the Golden Spike ceremony in 1869 was George Andrews Crofutt who termed it "the most thrilling scene he had ever witnessed." As a young man, Crofutt had worked as a journalist, publisher, and editor in New York and Philadelphia, but went bankrupt in the Panic of 1857. Joining the Pike's Peak Gold Rush, he took up mining in Colorado in 1860. It also proved unsuccessful, but he discovered the West, fell in love with its beauty, stayed and worked as a long-haul freighter. Seeing those last tracks joined together at Promontory, he recognized the potential for transcontinental tourism and decided to capitalize on it. The journalist in him was reawakened and he began to publish tourist guides. In the preface to his third revision of *Crofutt's Trans-Continental Tourist's Guide* in 1872 he wrote:

We believed that a correct, comprehensive, and reliable guide-book of the great Pacific Railroad was needed, there being nothing of the kind in existence, and early in the spring of 1869 we commenced our labors to produce one that should in as few words as possible convey to the reader a general idea of the most important places and objects of interest on the line of the Union and Central Pacific Railroad, and immediately tributary thereto, between the Missouri River and the Pacific Coast. Having passed ten years of our life in traversing the far Western country through which this road was built previous to 1869, and having made the GUIDE a specialty ever since, we have had advantages in producing a reliable guide that few, if any, have possessed.

On that entire route between the Missouri River and the Pacific Coast the place Crofutt picked as the most spectacular was Cape Horn, which today can be viewed nicely from the location of the Colfax Historical Society's plaque. The plaque reads:

View of Cape Horn Promontory North Fork American River Canyon

Dedicated to the memory of thousands of Chinese who worked for Charles Crocker on the Central Pacific Railroad. They were lowered over the face of Cape Horn Promontory in wicker Bosun's chairs to a point 1332 feet above the canyon floor. The ledge created for the railbed was completed May 1866. They are honored for their work ethic, and timely completion of the Transcontinental Rails ending in Promotory (sic), Utah, May 1869.

To understand why this section of track was called Cape Horn, you need to look at the railroad map. Judah's projected rail bed made a climbing turn on this ridge. On the map it resembles the course a ship would take rounding the southern tip of South America. All the rails used by the Central Pacific made such a trip by ship to get to California. The spectacular descending slope of the mountain 1,727 feet above the North Fork of the American River required a shelf like Judah had engineered in the Niagara Gorge. The work was difficult and dangerous and took almost a year to complete. The Colfax Historical Society now acknowledges that the part about the Bosun's chairs is incorrect, but it does reflect one of the myths that the railroad itself helped to create in its public relations promotions.

Keeping in mind that forty miles of the passage through the more scenic, yet snowier, higher country of the Sierras was spent in the darkness of the snow sheds, after coming out of those sheds, Crofutt says:

...steadily on goes the long train while far below us the waters dance along, the river looking like a winding thread of silver laid in the bottom of the chasm 2,500 feet below us. This is Cape Horn.

Timid ladies will draw back with a shudder, one look into the awful chasm being sufficient to unsettle their nerves and deprive them of the wish to linger near the grandest scene on the whole line of the trans-continental railroad.

He went on to say:

The best view of this noted place is obtained when going east, or from the river below. Viewed from the river, the train looks like some huge monster winding around the bluff, bold point, puffing and blowing with its herculean labors, or screaming angry notes of defiance, or perhaps of ultimate triumph at the obstacles overcome. When the road was in course of construction, the groups of Chinese laborers on the bluffs looked almost like swarms of ants, when viewed from the river. Years ago, the cunning savage could find only a very round-about trail by which to ascend the point, where now the genius and energy of the pale-face has laid a broad and safe road whereon the iron steed carries its living freight swiftly and safely on their way to and from ocean to ocean.

When the road was constructed around this point, the men who broke the first standing

ground were held by ropes until firm foot-holds could be excavated in the rocky sides of the precipitous bluffs.

Croftutt chose to illustrate this scene with a full-page lithograph from a vantage point below Cape Horn. The Colfax Historical Society also chose a similar distant vantage point for their historic plaque so the viewer can appreciate what Croftutt called the “ultimate triumph at the obstacles overcome.” In truth, those obstacles have been greatly exaggerated over the years. The actual construction at Cape Horn did not attract any attention from the contemporary newspapers, but the spectacular view and the stories of the construction of the track around the bluff were heavily exploited over the years by the Central Pacific to encourage tourism and grew to legendary proportions. In the course of time, the cliffs became vertical and the men were lowered in baskets that sometimes failed to be hauled up before the powder charge went off. The story about men being lowered in bosun’s chairs first appeared in the June 1927 issue of the *Southern Pacific Bulletin* that said, “workers were lowered over the cliff in bosun's chairs and did the preliminary cutting suspended 2500 feet above the American River.” But photographs and profile maps from that period showed an irregular forty-five-to-seventy-degree slope completely impossible to lower men over in baskets, but readily worked by men supported and stabilized with ropes. The mountainside at Cape Horn was composed of steatite, sometimes called “soapstone,” a soft rock because of its high talc content and it is commonly found on the western slope of the Sierras. It does not compare with the granite that had to be excavated at the summit. In his November 25, 1865, *Report of the Chief Engineer*, Samuel Montague said, “The work at Cape Horn has proved less difficult and expensive than was first anticipated.” Of course, none of these facts were known to the tourists who preferred to marvel at the view and read the guide books that romanticized the herculean labor it took to round Cape Horn. Cape Horn was a huge tourist favorite and Croftutt gave it a full-page illustration in his guide book, but that spectacular view was gone when Erle Heath wrote his article for the *Southern Pacific Bulletin* in 1927. He noted, “The track around Cape Horn has now been abandoned and the trains go through a tunnel, to which the railroad men have given the name ‘Panama Canal’.” Two years later in 1929, the railroad reclaimed the outside track for eastbound traffic and the westbound traffic used the tunnel.

Further along the line, Croftutt also deemed Bloomer Cut worthy of a full-page illustration in his guide book and noted the difficulty of its construction. A great deal of dynamite and human energy went into making the Bloomer Cut and shaving down the mountain to create a ledge for the train track at Cape Horn. But just a short distance away from Cape Horn, whole hillsides were being washed away by water from high pressure nozzles. As the train passed through the gold mining district, the guide book pointed out the flumes and ditches used by hydraulic mining in the area. Much of the activity was able to be seen from the railroad platforms at Alta, Dutch Flat, and Gold Run. This is the entry on Gold Run:

A small mining town, containing about 200 inhabitants. Around it you can see on every hand the miner’s work. Long flume beds, which carry off the washed gravel and retain the gold; long and large ditches full of ice-cold water, which, directed by skillful hands, are fast tearing down the mountains and sending the washed debris to fill the river beds

in the plain below. There are a set of “pipes” busy in playing against the hillside, which often comes down in acres. All is life, energy and activity.

None of this is visible to the modern traveler using Interstate 80. Hydraulic mining ceased over a century ago and Alta, Dutch Flat, and Gold Run are only names on exit signs and few travelers exit. Auburn, however, does offer a good look into the gold mining of the region with its Gold Rush Museum located in the Southern Pacific depot with its huge statue of the Chinese worker pushing his wheelbarrow out front. In fact, the addition of the Gold Rush Museum to the depot reminds us that the Chinese originally came to California to mine for gold, not build a railroad. In the early days of the Gold Rush, the gold had to be “washed” from the dirt and that required water. Either the water had to be brought to the dirt or the dirt brought to the water in such a wheelbarrow. Not everyone readily makes the connection of the Chinese with the mining. Amusingly, or perhaps sadly, in the San Jose *Mercury News* of October 14, 2018, an article announcing the opening of the Gold Rush Museum began, “A 22-foot-tall Chinese farmer stands outside the old Auburn railroad depot, plow in sculptured hand, frozen in time.” The museum has a mining camp diorama that gives insight into how a miner lived and the tools he used. Kids can actually pan for gold and find real flakes. There is a reconstructed hard rock mining tunnel with sound effects as well as exhibits on how stamp mills work, exhibits explaining assaying the ore for gold content, and hydraulic mining.

Back in 1872, the scenic beauty of Cape Horn was described in rather poetic terms in the guide book and the view was cherished by the tourist. Less flowery, but complimentary language informed the traveler of the town of Auburn:

This is the county seat of Placer county, a town of 1,000 inhabitants. Elevation, 1,362 feet. Gardens and orchards abound, and everything betokens quiet, home-comforts and ease. It has excellent schools and fine churches, and is one of the neatest looking towns in the county, though not as lively as regards business, freight and travel. The public buildings, court-house, etc. are good, and the ground well kept. The greater part of the dwellings stand a little distance from the road. The principal hotels of Auburn are the American, Orleans, and Railroad House.

This description of Auburn was not itself an inducement to get off the train, but Auburn was the transfer point for passengers wishing to see the biggest tourist attraction in the area, Alabaster Cave. Two different stage lines made daily trips from Auburn to Placerville via Alabaster Cave.

The cave was owned by William Gwynn and Henry T. Holmes. When a ledge of limestone rock was discovered in El Dorado County at Kidd Ravine about eight miles from Auburn, Holmes and Gwynn began quarrying the limestone and built a kiln. At the time of the cave’s discovery, Holmes was living in Sacramento since demand for lime in Sacramento had been so great that he needed to move there in 1857 to manage the business. He located the business on 6th Street between I and J Streets and erected a brick warehouse. William Gwynn was overseeing the quarry which was called Alabaster Lime Quarry and Kiln. On April 18, 1860, two workmen, George S. Halterman and John Harris, removed a large piece of rock and an opening appeared in the ledge. Enlarging it, they entered a cave, but decided they needed more light to proceed.

Gwynn was informed of the discovery and obtained candles to light the way deeper into the cave. On the 19th he wrote to Holmes in Sacramento:

Wonders will never cease. On yesterday, we, in quarrying rock, made an opening to the most beautiful cave you ever beheld. On our first entrance, we descended about fifteen feet, gradually, to the centre of the room, which is one hundred by thirty feet. At the north end there is a most magnificent pulpit, in the Episcopal church style, that man ever has seen. It seems that it is, and should be called, the 'Holy of Holies.' It is completed with the most beautiful drapery of alabaster sterites, of all colors, varying from white to pink-red, overhanging the beholder. Immediately under the pulpit there is a beautiful lake of water, extending to all unknown distance. We thought this all, but, to our great admiration, on arriving at the centre of the first room, we saw an entrance to an inner chamber, still more splendid, two hundred by one hundred feet, with the most beautiful alabaster overhanging, in every possible shape of drapery. Here stands magnitude, giving the instant impression of a power above man; grandeur that defies decay; antiquity that tells of ages unnumbered; beauty that the touch of time makes more beautiful; use exhaustless for the service of men; strength imperishable as the globe, the monument of eternity—the truest earthly emblem of that everlasting and unchangeable, irresistible Majesty, by whom, and for whom, all things were made.

Holmes gave the letter to the *Sacramento Bee* to publish and it generated immediate interest, but many who came to see the cave showed little reverence for its majesty, vandalizing it for souvenirs. Gwynn quickly closed it up until better arrangements could be made for tourists. Holmes and Gwynn would continue to operate the lime quarry, but they leased the cave to Halterman and his partner Smith who erected barricades, built platforms, and installed lamps for better visibility. A new, more convenient entrance was opened close to the road.

James M. Hutchings in *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California* (1862) quoted the above section of Gwynn's letter as would Crofutt's guide book later. You almost had to see it for the religious experience. Hutchings described his visit to the cave. Since at that time most tourists were coming from San Francisco, he started with the steamboat ride from San Francisco to Sacramento, then took the train ride from Sacramento to Folsom, and finished with the coach ride on the El Dorado Turnpike for the remaining 12.5 miles to the cave. He stayed at the hotel that Holmes had opened on the site. On the short walk to the cave, he passed the lime kiln that was burning constantly and said of it, "To see this kiln at night, in full blast, as we did, is a sight which alone would almost repay the trouble of a visit." Once in the cave, he described its wonders in detail and added an illustration of the room called the "Crystal Chapel." He ended his article by saying, "The ride being agreeable, the fare cheap, the coachman obliging, the guides attentive, and the spectacle one of the most singular and imposing in the state, we say to every one, "Go and see it." The cave became a top tourist attraction. The trip got even easier from San Francisco when the transcontinental railroad was completed to the Alameda Terminal on September 6, 1869, and then even easier when the terminal transferred to Oakland two months later where service between San Francisco and Oakland was provided by ferry. Once the transcontinental railroad was completed, Auburn, not Folsom, became the main transfer point for the stages that went to Alabaster Cave.

Fruit Growing

In describing the mining towns along the route, there was one feature that Crofutt felt worth pointing out to tourists. The entry for Dutch Flat says:

One feature of this town is worth noting, and worthy of commendation—the beautiful gardens and fine orchards which ornament almost every house. In almost all of the mountain towns, in fact in all of the older mining towns, the scene is reproduced, while many of the valley towns are bare of vines, flowers or fruit trees. The miner's cabin has its garden and fruit trees attached, if water can be had for irrigation, while half of the farm houses have neither fruit trees, shrubs, flowers or gardens around them.

The entry for Illinoistown noted that, “Some of the finest apple and peach orchards in this section are found here.” Miners planted fruit trees to supplement both their diets and income. Typically, the number of trees was small for personal use and any extra fruit was marketed locally. In 1856, the county surveyor reported that there were about 5,000 fruit trees in Placer County. That would have only covered about 50 acres of land. By the end of the decade, most of the placer gold had been exhausted and more miners were turning to agriculture. In February 1859, the federal government began to sell nearly all the agricultural land in Placer County and those wishing to farm could now obtain patents on larger parcels of land. Adequate water was an absolute necessity for both the mining industry and fruit growing. One of the first canals was built by the Gold Hill and Bear River Company in 1851 and canals and ditches proliferated in the mining district thereafter. Those same ditches and canals that made mining possible provided the water supply to make the transition from mining to agriculture. In the early 1860s orchards remained small serving only local markets since shipping fresh fruit any distance was difficult. Fruit was often hauled at night to keep it cool. The roads were rough, the wagons slow, and the fruit easily damaged in transport. Tolls to use the roads cut into profits. When President Lincoln signed the bill for the transcontinental railroad, it was a boon for Placer County since fifty miles of track ran through it. The granite, lumber, marble, and lime industries expanded as the railroad moved forward and fruit growers in Placer County planted 47,478 fruit trees between 1868 and 1870 primarily for eastern markets. A significant change was underway. What Crofutt could not know in 1872 was that those fruit trees he was pointing out represented the nascent industry that in a few decades would replace mining as the dominant economic activity in Placer County and that the engine driving that change was quite literally pulling the train through the mountains. Many miners would soon be following in the footsteps of Claude Chana who left gold mining to plant orchards.

One of the foremost names connected with this transition was William Joseph Wilson. He was born in Ireland on August 15, 1828, and came to California in 1852 to search for gold. He began mining near Franklin House and Miners' Ravine and had some success for a few years. He mined for about nine years. In 1865, he moved to Newcastle and bought a home with an acre of ground on which he planted raspberries, strawberries, peaches and pears for additional income. Since he did not have the money for a horse and wagon, he packed the fruit on his person or

wheelbarrowed it for over a mile to market it. He found it quite profitable and started buying fruit from his neighbors for cash and eventually purchased eighty acres and planted an orchard. Once the transcontinental railroad was finished, he made the first shipment of a full carload of apples, pears, peaches and plums from Newcastle sending it to a Mrs. Astretta in Denver, Colorado, at a cost of \$900 for the freight. To make up the full 26,000-pound carload, Wilson had to buy fruit from other growers. This led to another form of the business and he is credited with starting the first fruit shipping company in Newcastle, William J. Wilson & Son, which set the pattern for others to follow. The shipping companies did not grow their own fruit, but bought it from the farmers, packed it in crates, and used Wells Fargo as freight forwarder on the railroad. Newcastle soon became the center of fruit shipping in Placer County. But the progress was slow in the beginning and there was no evidence of that industry in the 1872 Crofutt guide that described Newcastle as a small place of about 200 people and "Off to the right are the old time mining camps of Ophir, Virginia City, Gold Hill, and several others, where yet considerable placer mining is indulged in by the old settlers, who are good for nothing else." However, by 1876 the fruit shipments from Newcastle were about 1,000,000 pounds which translated to about forty carloads. It would continue to grow and in the late 1870's, the Newcastle Fruit Growers Shipping and Preserving Association was created.

While prospects for fruit growers in the foothills of Placer County were increasing because of the railroad, Claude Chana's orchards in the western part of the county were being destroyed by flood waters and debris from hydraulic mining. In fact, vast areas of farmland in the Sacramento Valley were buried in sediment and debris that washed into the waterways causing flooding and making the rivers unnavigable. Crofutt's guide book had described the hydraulic mining at Gold Run as a set of pipes playing against the hillside, but noted that the acres of debris washed from the hillside filled the river beds in the plain below. In July 1881, the State Attorney General requested that Judge Denson of Sacramento County issue a restraining order upon the Gold Run Ditch and Gravel Mining Company to stop the discharge of the debris into the river. The case *People vs. the Gold Run Ditch and Mining Company* went to court in November with Judge Jackson Temple presiding. The litigation lasted for seven months. The judge rendered his decision in June 1882. Basically, he said that miners had never acquired the right to use the rivers as dumps and that hydraulic mining constituted a public nuisance. He issued a perpetual injunction prohibiting the company from discharging "coarse" debris into the North Fork of the American River. However, he did leave the miners the opportunity to continue in operation if they built debris dams that kept all coarse debris from entering the river. It was a partial victory for the farmers and a partial defeat for the miners.

In the fall of 1882, Edward Woodruff, a citizen of New York who owned property in Marysville, filed a lawsuit in the Ninth United States Circuit Court in San Francisco against the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company and all other mines on the Yuba River. The state's largest hydraulic mine was Malacoff Diggins at North Bloomfield. The Malacoff Mine had been organized by Jules Poquillion in 1865 and became the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company when San Francisco investors acquired the mine under the leadership of Lester Robinson, who had caused Auburn so much grief over the failed Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad. Within a few days of the filing, Judge Lorenzo Sawyer issued a temporary injunction closing the mines while the lawsuit proceeded. Extensive documentation and photographic

evidence of the destructive results caused by the debris were submitted as were the professional assessments of the Corps of Engineers. The litigation lasted eighteen months. Robinson bitterly fought against the lawsuit as he had done over the iron rails of the defunct Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad. Ironically, during the trial Lester Robinson sued a coal company for dumping tailings into the stream watering his San Joaquin Valley farm and won. Such a verdict did not bode well for the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company.

Judge Sawyer issued his final 225-page decision on January 7, 1884. It took three and one-half hours to read. He pointed out that where dams had been tried, they failed to contain the debris. He, therefore, perpetually enjoined the defendants from discharging tailings of any size or type in the Yuba River or any of its tributaries. This removed the loophole that Judge Temple had left the miners in the Gold Run decision. This was the virtual end for hydraulic mining. Another blow came in November 1882 when the State Supreme Court upheld Judge Temple's Gold Run decision but overturned the section that had allowed hydraulic mining if the "coarse" debris was contained.

However, the courts did observe that hydraulic mining was a lawful and even a commendable business if conducted in a manner that did not injure the rights of others. That was the loophole. Great economic damage in the mining counties followed on the heels of the Sawyer Decision. There were numerous operations that defied the law and operated clandestinely which in turn caused violence. In defiance of the court order, the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company continued operating and the tailings kept going into the streams and rivers. Woodruff and his supporters brought contempt actions against the company in 1886 and in 1891. Some kind of compromise had to be reached. In January 1892, thirty-five counties sent representatives to San Francisco to establish the California Miners Association. Jacob Neff was a representative from Placer County and would go on to serve as President of the Association for six years. The new organization stated its opposition to illegal hydraulicking and suggested that licensing of legal operations be left to the judgment of an impartial commission of government engineers whose determination should be final. Anthony Caminetti, elected to Congress from Amador County, worked to get a bill passed in 1893 that created the California Debris Commission to regulate hydraulic mining and license those mines that could operate without discharging debris into the waterways. However, in reality, clean hydraulic mining was to prove too costly to be resumed on any meaningful level.

While all this turmoil was going on in the mining country, Auburn was having its own difficulties with a lawsuit that stemmed from its investment in the failed Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad. Amos Catlin filed a lawsuit in the Federal Circuit Court in 1885 on behalf of Thomas Bell of San Francisco to redeem the bonds that Auburn had issued to purchase shares in the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad. Catlin had formed the Natoma Water and Mining Company in 1851 in Folsom and had successfully argued a case before the United States Supreme Court on its behalf in 1864. Subsequently Catlin had a very successful law practice in Sacramento. Some believed that Lester Robinson was the real client behind the lawsuit. The plaintiff was suing for the original amount of the bonds which was \$44,750 plus the interest that the city had never paid since it unincorporated in 1868. It came to over \$140,000. Charles. A. Tuttle and E. L. Craig were the attorneys representing Auburn and they argued that there was no

case because the summons was not good since the city of Auburn no longer existed. But there was already interest in Auburn reincorporating and there was a good legal question about what the liabilities might be if the city came back from the dead at a future time. Legal posturing went on for a time, but Catlin's leverage was Auburn's interest in reincorporating. He offered a settlement proposal in a letter dated October 6, 1887. Tuttle and Craig called a citizens' meeting to discuss it. A committee of three was formed to consider the offer. It was accepted. Dr. Robert Rooney offered an unofficial resolution that Auburn should reincorporate upon successful conclusion of the bond lawsuit and it was unanimously carried.

While Auburn was reincorporating and preparing for future growth, the economic damage of the Sawyer Decision was growing more evident in the mining towns. It was not just the unemployed miners, but also the support industries that suffered. Lumber mills laid off workers, hotel owners and shopkeepers lost their customers as miners left the region. Tax assessors reduced their valuations of mines and ditches to fractions of their former value. It was estimated that gold production dropped \$3,000,000 the first year following the decision.

The hydraulic mines around Dutch Flat had produced fantastic amounts of gold into the late 1870s, but had also deposited about seventy feet of tailings into the Bear River. Activity virtually ceased after the Sawyer Decision. By 1890, almost all of the mines around Dutch Flat were idle and the town which was once the largest in Placer County was practically deserted and decaying. In contrast, the fruit industry would grow substantially in the five years following the Sawyer Decision. *A Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California* published by Lewis Publishing Company in 1891 highlighted the change:

The most noteworthy feature of the later history of Placer County has been the great extension and development of horticulture and the growth of grapes for table use and raisin-making. In this direction she has outstripped most of the other mountain counties, and has consequently suffered less than they from the stoppage of hydraulic mining. Until that event gold-mining was her leading industry, and still occupies a considerable amount of the energy of the county, but since then fruit-raising has been much the more important. Her people discovered that they possessed a "citrus or warm belt" and were quick to take advantage of it.

When the sun sets, the air in the valley floor cools and sinks while the warmer air rises to the hillsides, thus creating a "citrus or warm belt." Although freezing temperatures did occur, they were infrequent and unsubstantial. This thermal belt was temperate enough to grow citrus and it ripened deciduous fruit several weeks earlier than other parts of the state, giving Placer County growers an advantage in being first to the market. The market timing and high quality of the fruit brought premium prices.

The year after the Sawyer Decision was rendered, Newcastle proudly announced in the *Placer Herald* that it had shipped a record 115 full carloads of fruit during 1885. By 1890 that number had grown to 271 carloads for the first ten months of the year. Newcastle was already becoming known nationwide for its fruit. It had about fifty growers and four shipping companies. By 1891 the number jumped to 399 carloads. Newcastle at that time accounted for five-sixths of the fruit

shipped from Placer County, but Auburn did have two fruit packing houses near its depot. Obviously, the increase in shipped tonnage meant that more acres were being planted in fruit trees. The Sawyer Decision played a role in the increase in production. Water that had been used to wash away hillsides in hydraulic mining was diverted to agricultural usage. Two other things occurred in the late 1880s that led to more fruit production in the county. First, profit margins improved in 1887 when the railroad reduced the shipping rates by fifty-per-cent. A carload now cost \$300 to Chicago and \$400 to New York. Secondly, and more importantly, the development of refrigerated railcar services meant less risk in shipping and opened even more markets to absorb the increasing tonnage after 1888. Anyone who has bought a pear at the grocery store knows that you buy it green and let it ripen up at home over the next few days. Most deciduous fruit is picked green and begins its ripening process in transit. The two controls on that ripening process are time and temperature. Less time to market means that fruit can be picked at a riper stage and be more flavorful and refrigeration preserves the quality. The first carload shipment of fruit from Newcastle went in a ventilated car which was simply a common boxcar with iron gratings for ventilation. Risk of spoilage was very high.

J. B. Sutherland of Detroit patented the first refrigerated railcar in 1867, but he could find no financial backing. His insulated car had ice bunkers at each end. Air came into the car at the top, cooled as it passed through the ice, and circulated through the car by gravity. William Davis, a fish merchant also from Detroit, who had been working with refrigeration since 1865, improved on Sutherland's design. Davis' railcar was well insulated and had galvanized-iron tanks arranged along the sides. The tanks held a mixture of ice and salt and could be refilled from the top without entering the car. He patented his refrigerated railcar on June 16, 1868. He intended to use it in his fish business, but first tested the car with a shipment of strawberries which arrived in reasonably good condition. George H. Hammond, who was in the meat business and whose market was next door to Davis' fish market, asked him to modify it for shipping beef. Davis adapted his car and got another patent on September 15. Unfortunately, he died shortly after that on November 24. His heirs sold Hammond the patent rights on July 1, 1869. The Michigan Car Company built the first refrigerated railcar for transporting beef. The carcasses were suspended from the roof of the car and had a tendency to swing wildly on the curves causing derailments. It soon became obvious that further innovation was needed. On July 24, 1877, Joel Tiffany patented a refrigerated car that circulated air with ducts in the walls and vents in the car ends. In 1878, Andrew Chase designed a ventilated car for meat packer Gustavus Swift that was well-insulated and the ice was in a compartment at the top of the car allowing the cold air to flow downward naturally. Despite the development of the technology, railroad lines resisted adopting refrigerated cars for a number of reasons: their cost was one-third to one-half more than regular boxcars, the insulation reduced the capacity requiring more cars to ship large lots, the refrigerated cars were labor intensive, and they usually returned empty. This led meat shippers such as Philip Armour and Gustavus Swift to design and purchase their own fleets of refrigerator cars when the railroads declined to purchase refrigerated cars.

Originally, refrigerated cars were used primarily in the meat business. Fruit shippers remained skeptical assuming that fruit shipped in iced cars would lose flavor and not keep well after removal from the cars. All shipments of California fruit went in ventilated cars without ice until 1888. Chicago was the main center for distribution to Eastern markets, but that was a long

journey and shipments of greater distances were at greater risk. Spoilage was an ongoing problem. Without ice the only way to reduce the risk was to reduce the time and the railroad did that by making express runs of trains carrying only fruit. In 1887, F. A. Thomas of Chicago revolutionized the fruit shipping industry. His idea was to provide a private refrigerated car service under one management from shipping point to destination that re-iced the cars in transit as necessary. He started his operation with a few cars in western Tennessee in the spring of 1887. He planned to ship strawberries to Chicago, but had to buy the first carload of strawberries himself since growers were hesitant to try the new system. A few tests proved the practicality. Some cars were also taken to California and growers were induced to try them. The experiment proved equally successful. The first fruit shipments from Placer County in refrigerated cars began the next year. By the end of 1888, Thomas's company had sixty refrigerator railcars and by 1891 that number had grown to 600.

The first fruit shipments to Eastern markets over the transcontinental railroad had been fruits from deciduous trees such as pears, peaches, and plums, but by 1890 Placer County was producing a good quantity of citrus fruit in their warm temperate belt. The surveyor-general's report on agricultural production in Placer County listed only thirty-five citrus trees in 1866. Twenty years later, Placer County ranked among the top counties in California for the number of citrus trees. At the 2nd annual Citrus Fair of Northern and Central California held in Sacramento in 1886, the county's growers took the five top awards. In 1887, Placer County formed a Board of Trade to promote agricultural activity and one of the primary goals was to make Placer County a leader in citrus production. The major project that came from this effort was led by Joel Parker Whitney who owned the huge Spring Valley Ranch between Rocklin and Lincoln. Under Whitney's leadership, a number of growers incorporated the Placer County Citrus Colony on April 2, 1888, with Whitney as president. Originally the colony had 4,430 acres, but by 1890 that had grown to almost 12,000 acres. Whitney, who managed 3,025 acres within the Colony, was the largest stockholder in 1890. The growers intended to improve the hilly land for the production of citrus. This required extensive terracing and an extension of the Birdsall Irrigation Ditch from the Bear River Ditch Company and, once again, numerous Chinese workers were leveling ground. Since Whitney's wife was English, he greatly admired English culture, so the plan was to sell ten-acre citrus ranches mainly to wealthy English gentlemen. By 1890, there were twelve wealthy English families living in fine homes and, by 1892, their orchards were profitable and their hopes were high for the coming years.

Those hopes for the county were expressed in an article published on January 16, 1892, by the *Placer Herald* describing the opening of the Citrus Fair held in Auburn that year:

The Northern California State Citrus Fair opened at the Opera House, Auburn, Monday night. It was an auspicious opening, and promises to be the grandest affair of its kind ever held in California. It will go down in history as a memorable event to Auburn, to Placer, and to all Northern California, That the Fair will result in great good to this section of California there can be no question. The favorable press notices received, and the personal inspection of the exhibit made by the many visitors will advertise our great advantages in climate and soil to millions of people.

Besides its fruit, Auburn was proud to show off its new Opera House that replaced the old Music Hall on Washington St. Costing over \$40,000, it surpassed anything of its kind outside the large cities. It could seat 700 people and was considered to be the perfect type of pavilion for events such as the Citrus Fair. It boasted of a stage forty feet deep and fifty-five feet wide with scenery that had been painted in Chicago. It had opened just a few weeks before the Citrus Fair with an inaugural performance attended by the governor and now it was all decked out for the Fair.

The decorations in the Opera House are simply superb. Over the entrance is fastened strings of oranges gracefully looped, and large palms stand on either side of the doorway. In the center of the ceiling hangs an immense orange branch loaded with the golden fruit, from which garlands of evergreens droop downward to either wall. The balcony rail and the walls are profusely bedecked with clusters of oranges and the green. On the stage, near the footlights stand two large pillars of oranges, each surmounted by a ball of the same fruit. Altogether it is very artistic.

The article also described the prize-winning exhibit that Placer County presented:

Placer county's design for the premium to be awarded for the most artistic display is in the shape of a wall and gateway. It is a mammoth-structure, covering nearly the whole of the pavilion wing of the Opera House, measuring sixty feet in length, sixteen feet wide at the base, and twelve feet high. It is a huge bank of oranges—70,000 in number—and is most artistically decorated with cut paper and ferns. It is labeled, in large snow-white letters, "Placer, the Gate-way County." Along the top are arranged banners denoting every section in Placer county.

At the time of the Citrus Fair, Placer County had 1,895 lemon trees and 12,535 orange trees and while the Fair did focus on citrus there were exhibits that featured other fruits grown in the county including Japanese persimmons, olives, dates, apricots, plums, peaches, pears, raisins and figs. Shipments from Newcastle in 1893 indicated just how much more fruit was being produced in the county. The number of full cars rose from 451 the previous year to 526 in 1893 with an additional 3,000,000 pounds going in smaller lot quantities. But the increase in freight figures tells only part of the story since the increase in volume was accompanied by a decrease in the commodity prices. The high hopes expressed at the time of the Citrus Fair in Auburn in 1892 were sidetracked by the Panic of 1893. It started with the bankruptcy of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad on February 20, 1893. Fear drove investors to liquidate stocks and bonds and to redeem them for gold from the United States Treasury. On April 2, 1893, the Treasury announced that the value of its gold reserve had fallen below the required \$100,000,000 and the crisis grew worse. Economic activity slowed, loans went into default, and people stormed the banks demanding their money, forcing many to close their doors. On May 3, 1893, there was a massive sell-off on Wall Street that sent share prices tumbling. When the National Cordage Company, one of the country's largest employers and a stock-market favorite went into receivership the next day, the panic was full on. The depression that followed lasted a little over four years. It adversely affected commodity prices and helped hasten the decline of the Citrus Colony which ultimately came to an end in 1905 when it was dissolved by the state for failure to pay taxes.

It was during the economic downturn that followed the Panic of 1893 when the Placer County Supervisors hired John Curtis to design the new courthouse in Auburn. The *California Fruit Grower* objected to the high cost of the non-functional dome which they saw as “neither useful or ornamental” and argued that it made the taxes higher at a time when the taxpayers could hardly afford it. But the bond issue was approved and Placer County built its new courthouse as a testament to the prosperity of the county and to the sophistication of its people. To a lesser degree that same symbolism had been expressed earlier with the construction of the Opera House.

One of the casualties of the Panic of 1893 was the Union Pacific Railroad which had built the eastern portion of the transcontinental railroad. When it went into receivership, Edward H. Harriman joined the reorganization syndicate. By 1897, he had the controlling interest in the railroad and became its chairman in May 1898. Harriman recognized the potential of the railroad if it were upgraded and, under his direction, the board spent approximately \$25,000,000 on improving and modernizing the railroad’s physical condition. He also encouraged the board to buy Southern Pacific stock and tried to convince Collis Huntington, the last surviving member of the Big Four builders of the Central Pacific, to sell his shares. Southern Pacific had been formed as a holding company of a number of different railroads and the Central Pacific still existed as a separate corporate entity within the Southern Pacific. Eight months into the new century Collis Huntington died, putting a punctuation point, as it were, to the end of the previous century. When Huntington’s Southern Pacific Railroad holdings were put up for sale, the Union Pacific was able to acquire thirty-eight percent of the stock which was enough to give Harriman control of a network of 9,500 miles of rails between San Francisco and New Orleans. Eventually the Union Pacific acquired forty-six percent of Southern Pacific’s stock and when Harriman became President of the Southern Pacific in September 1901, the Union Pacific and the Southern Pacific were firmly under the control of one man.

With a budget between \$30,000,000 and \$40,000,000, Harriman initiated a system-wide program to improve the deteriorating condition of the Southern Pacific. One of his immediate goals was to make the Central Pacific capable of carrying as much freight between San Francisco and Ogden, Utah, as the Union Pacific could carry between Ogden and Council Bluffs. The Central Pacific had remained essentially the same single-track line since its original construction. Sections of side tracking allowed trains heading in the opposite direction to pass one another, but that slowed traffic and reduced the volume. Harriman began double-tracking the route over the Sierras. This included realignment of tracks, new tunnels, enlargements of old tunnels so that they could accommodate the newer more powerful engines, lengthening siding which allowed longer trains, replacement of bridges, centralization and expansion of the shops and yards at Roseville and Sparks, Nevada. The trestle that passes over Interstate 80 near Old Town was built in 1909 as part of that double-tracking. It was originally a plain deck-girder bridge with tall piers supporting the girders. When the Interstate 80 expansion was being built in the late 1950s, the trestle was modified. Some piers were removed and the truss was added for support.

The improvements to the railroad were greatly needed. Lardner recorded that in 1902 there was a *California fruit-shipper*,

who at that time believed the industry to be confronted by grave future possibilities that threatened disaster, "During 1901," said he, "shipments of deciduous fruits to Eastern markets from California aggregated 5700 carloads. This year (1902) we are faced with the prospect of 8,000 or 10,000 cars; and unless we can secure some concerted action in marketing, the season is likely to prove ruinous."

At that time, Newcastle was shipping over twenty-three percent of the deciduous tree fruit that went to the East Coast from California.

In addition to recognizing the value of an improved railroad, Harriman also recognized that the private refrigerated car lines had proven quite profitable and he decided that the railroad should invest in its own line of refrigerated cars. Prior to his takeover of Southern Pacific, the Armour meat company had created Fruit Growers Express, a produce-hauling refrigerator car leasing subsidiary, and Southern Pacific had contracted with them. The growers complained bitterly about excessive charges and by 1901 were demanding a government investigation of the abuses. Harriman formed the Pacific Fruit Express on December 7, 1906, as a joint venture between the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific. He ordered a fleet of 6,000 refrigerator cars from the American Car and Foundry Company and began operation on October 1, 1907, just in time for what turned out to be a bumper crop in 1908 when 1,855 car loads were shipped out of state from Newcastle alone. Pacific Fruit Express operated the largest ice factory in the state at Roseville where cars were loaded with ice not only for Placer County fruit but also for the Salinas, Sacramento, and Central Valleys.

The improvements on the railroad initiated by Harriman, as well as his formation of the Pacific Fruit Express, helped make those fears expressed in 1902 unfounded. Lardner in 1924 said, "we can now view with amused tolerance a presumed calamitous situation existing twenty-two years ago." Harriman himself did not live to see many of the benefits that his efforts to upgrade the railroad brought about. He died the year the trestle near Old Town was under construction and a significant amount of the double tracking in the Sierras came later. The new century would see the rise of the automobile and the decline of the railroads, but that had not happened yet when Harriman began upgrading the transcontinental railroad. At that time, it took about ten days for a shipment of fruit to reach the East, but the growers were asking for a six-day delivery. The double tracking greatly increased the volume of freight that the railroad could handle and cut the transit time. Additionally, the Pacific Fruit Express added more refrigerated cars to the system and that was another boon to the fruit growers. By 1921, Pacific Fruit Express alone had grown to 19,200 rail cars carrying 170,000 carloads.

Bernhard Bernhard and the Bernhard Museum

At the turn of the 20th century, the town of Auburn was just a little over half a century old and the new courthouse was the proudest symbol of the progress and prosperity that the county had achieved in such a short period of time. But the courthouse is a government building representing the collective prosperity of the county and it does not give us a good view into how any one individual contributed to and enjoyed that prosperity. That view has been preserved elsewhere by a community mindful of its past and anxious that its legacy not be forgotten by younger generations. The Bernhard Museum complex at 291 Auburn-Folsom Road typifies what type of life the pioneer families carved out for themselves with their hard work. Thousands of school children visit the museum every year and enjoy its four-hour Living History Program that gives them a better understanding of what life was like during the period known as the Victorian Era.

Bernhard Bernhard and his wife Rosa were both born in the same area of Germany; Rosa on November 1, 1822, Bernhard on September 9, 1823. They came to America in 1846 and were married in Pennsylvania. By 1850, they were living in St. Louis, Missouri, and had three sons. Bernhard worked as a drayman transporting goods. Bitten by the gold bug, he took the isthmus route to California in 1852. Mining did not pan out and he returned to the life of a teamster. By 1853, he was living in Auburn and was freighting from Sacramento to the mining camps. The family was reunited when Rosa finally joined him in Auburn in 1855/56. Bernhard continued to grow his freighting business and his family which eventually grew to eight children. When the railroad reached Auburn in 1865, freight from Sacramento was hauled by the railroad, but Bernhard continued to haul freight up the Dutch Flat & Donner Lake Wagon Road until the summit tunnel was nearing completion in December 1867, then Bernhard sold his ten mules.

He purchased property that had once been the Traveler's Rest Hotel on the main road from Sacramento to Auburn. Built by George Bishop and John Long in 1851, it was converted to Bishop's private residence in 1858. Bishop planted orchards and a vineyard on its thirty acres. He lost the property five years later when he could not pay his debts and it was bought by Eliza Caruthers at public auction. Five years later she sold it to Bernhard in January 1868. Bernhard now engaged in the fruit culture. He enlarged the home in 1870 to better accommodate his large family and enlarged his acreage that same year by buying John Russell's orchard. His farm eventually grew to 130 acres. In 1874 he built a two-story stone wine cellar into the hillside. The walls are two feet thick and there is a short passage between the bottom floor and the home's basement. Bernhard produced 4,000 gallons of wine annually, but part of the vineyard was for table grapes. As early as 1872 he had constructed a still for the production of brandy. He called his farm the "Auburn Vineyard" even though he had more fruit trees than vines.

He ventured into silk making in 1871 with the planting of 1,000 mulberry trees. In 1874 they successfully hatched out 1,000,000 worms that produced 100 pounds of silk which was worth \$10 a pound. The labor was done by Rosa and the kids during the seven weeks from hatching until the cocoons were ready for market. But they did not find it profitable and abandoned the enterprise after five years. He built a fruit dryer in 1876 and a wine processing building and fruit

barn in 1881. The vineyard was destroyed by phylloxera in 1891 ending his wine and brandy business. From then on, he concentrated on the orchards.

Myron Angel in his 1882 book on the history of Placer County included a passage on Bernhard along with an illustration of his residence, vinery, and distillery. He also cited a Placer Herald article of June 14, 1873, that offered Bernhard's farm as an example of what could be done with the land around Auburn and what it was capable of producing. Angel concluded his passage on Bernhard saying, "The fine property, with comfortable residence and pleasant surroundings, as will be seen in the illustration, is all derived from the red knoll, in the foot-hills, and a few years of frugal industry. With such capabilities of country, and such products the rich 'mining' county of Placer can never be worked out."

Bernhard and Rosa died within two months of each other in 1902. The Bernhards were in the pioneering vanguard of the fruit culture of Placer County. According to a U.S. Census of Agriculture manuscript from 1880, almost half of the fruit trees in the region of the four foothill counties of Placer, Amador, El Dorado, and Nevada were near the Placerville wagon road in El Dorado County which had 134,393 trees; one-fourth of the fruit trees were in Placer County which had 54,834, mostly along the railroad. Nearly every farm in these two areas had from a few dozen to a few hundred apple, peach, or pear trees. By the time of the Bernhards' deaths twenty years later, the primacy in orchard culture had made a dramatic shift to Placer County. Data from the published report of the U.S. Census of Agriculture for 1900 shows that of the 1,548,169 fruit trees in the four-county area 1,137,095 of them were in Placer County, seventy-three percent of the total. The growth of orchards had skyrocketed in Placer County, while in contrast, there was little growth in the other three counties.

The figures are even more impressive for the next twenty years following the Bernhards' deaths. The U.S. Census of Agriculture for 1920 reported that out of a total 3,071,749 orchard trees in the four-county area 2,429,767 were in Placer County. That growth is partially attributable to the expansion of the railroad initiated by Harriman and the increase in the number of refrigerator cars added by the formation of the Pacific Fruit Express. During this time, the biggest shipper from Auburn was the Auburn Fruit Exchange which was incorporated on November 18, 1915. The *Auburn Journal* issue of November 6, 1922, reported that the Auburn Fruit Exchange shipped more fruit than ever before with 306 cars having been sent East during the summer.

Lardner in his *History of Placer and Nevada Counties California* gave a summary of the fruit shipped from Newcastle during the seven years preceding his book's publication as follows:

1917, full car lots, 1683; 1918, full car lots, 1922; 1919, full car lots, 1715; 1920, full car lots, 1748; 1921, full car lots, 1821; 1922, full car lots, 2042; 1923, full car lots, 2547. This does not include fruit by express, which would average approximately 100 cars for each season in addition to the above. During the week ending July 31, 1923, there were sent out from Newcastle 327 full cars, or an average of about fifty-five cars daily, from Monday until Saturday. As almost all were loaded in excess of 26,000 pounds, the minimum, the total, under normal conditions, would have been considerably more than the average named.

For Placer County as a whole, he gave the following numbers

Out of Placer County, during 1923, there were loaded and sent East on their long journey, the phenomenal total of 5830 cars, the various stations from which they originated, and the shipment from each, being as follows: Newcastle, 2547 cars; Loomis, 1368 cars; Penryn, 636 cars; Roseville, 605 cars; Auburn, 431 cars; Lincoln, 126 cars; Colfax, 116 cars; Applegate, 1 car.

Ironically, the very things that spurred Placer County's huge growth in fruit production for decades ultimately contributed to its demise. The improvements in rail traffic resulting from double tracking and the increase in the number of refrigerator cars did not just benefit Placer County, but the Central Valley as well. In 1910, California fruit and nut crops covered 646,004 acres of land; by 1929, they covered 3,121,986 acres. Most of the newly planted fruit trees were in the valley counties. Valley growers had a competitive advantage since their trees began bearing fruit several years earlier than the trees in Placer County. The valley growers also enjoyed a longer growing season and their cost of water was less expensive. Fresno County had already become the leader in peaches by 1920. The decline for Placer County's fruit industry began during the Great Depression. The citrus crop was the first to go. Growers in the northern part of the state had trouble competing with the southern part and the hard freezes of the early 1930s finished off the orchards. Pears were the primary fruit shipped from Newcastle and those shipments peaked in the 1930s as the Sacramento Delta and Lake County increased production. Pear blight hit Placer County in the early 1960s and thinned pear acreage from 5,400 acres to 1,500 by 1966. By 1961, Tulare and Fresno Counties had already surpassed Placer County as the leaders in plum production. In December 1967, the Newcastle Fruit Growers Association liquidated their holdings; the Auburn Fruit Exchange dissolved in May 1989.

Only two of the Bernhards' eight children survived them. Anna continued to run the farm; Henry ran a grocery business across the street from the Orleans Hotel. After Anna died, Bernhard's grandson, George Barkhaus ran the farm until his death in 1956. George's brother Benjamin sold what was left to the 20th District Agricultural Association in 1958. The Association did not have the money to maintain the property and it fell into disrepair. In 1963, the local paper ran an article entitled "The Historic Traveler's Rest Appears Doomed." Alarmed at what would be the loss of the oldest building in town, The Placer County Historical Museum Foundation was formed to rescue and restore it. The property was sold to Placer County in 1973 as a potential museum site. It took almost ten years, \$250,000, and much volunteer labor to restore the property which opened to the public on July 1, 1982.

Today the Bernhard Museum Complex consists of three historic structures: the beautifully furnished Victorian Era farmhouse that was originally the Traveler's Rest Inn, the wine cellar, and the wine processing building. There are docent-led tours of the farmhouse. A self-guided tour of the grounds is also interesting. The dirt path in front of the house was part of the original stagecoach road that ran from Sacramento to Auburn and to the gold fields beyond. A carriage barn built by the Native Sons of the Golden West in the 1990s displays restored wagons owned by the Native Sons and the museum's collection of farm wagons. The focus of this part of the museum complex is to show the different ways Auburn functioned as a transportation hub.

During the period in which the Bernhards lived, the major innovation in transportation was the railroad. That was to change dramatically after they died. German inventor Karl Benz patented his Benz Patent-Motorwagen in 1886 and that date is considered to be the birth of the modern automobile, but it was not until Henry Ford manufactured the Model T in 1908 that cars became widely available and affordable. The 1914 Buick firetruck on display in the red firehouse in Old Town Auburn gives you an idea how quickly the automobile made Neff's fountain with its trough for horses obsolete. When the city of Auburn bought its new motorized fire truck, planning was underway for the first transcontinental highway. In 1912, Carl Fisher, co-founder of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and owner of a company that made headlights for automobiles, proposed building a gravel highway from New York City to San Francisco that he called the "Coast to Coast Rock Highway." There was an assumption that automobile traffic would increase considerably as motorists from across the country headed to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego which were planned for 1915 to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal. Speaking to a group of automobile industry associates in September 1912, Carl Fisher told them, "a corps of 25,000 automobiles can be taken over this road to the opening of the Exposition in San Francisco either in May or June, 1915." Since 1915 would be the fiftieth anniversary of President Lincoln's death, the association that incorporated in Detroit on July 1, 1913, called itself the Lincoln Highway Association. They began mapping out the route from existing roads and the marketing campaign that followed created an identity for the highway that was unmatched by any other road of that time.

At Reno, the Lincoln Highway diverged into two alternate routes to California. The southern branch called the Pioneer Branch was for those who wanted to take in the scenic beauty of Lake Tahoe. It went over Johnson Pass (Echo Summit), then through Placerville and Folsom; the northern branch followed the old Dutch Flat & Donner Lake Wagon Road that was completed by the Central Pacific partners in June 1864. The streets that it used as it passed through Auburn were renamed Lincoln Way. The Lincoln Highway officially ceased to exist in 1925 when the United States Bureau of Public Roads eliminated named highways and designated routes by state highway numbers. The Lincoln Highway became Highway 40.

As their final act before they closed at the end of 1927, the Lincoln Highway Association ordered 3,000 220-pound concrete markers in order to dedicate the highway to the memory of Abraham Lincoln. The markers featured the Lincoln Highway logo which was a blue "L" in a white rectangle with a red stripe at the top and a blue stripe at the bottom. On September 1, 1928, at 9:00 am, the markers were put in place by Boy Scout troops all across the country. Only a very few originals remain today. A replica of one stands in Old Town near the intersection of Lincoln and Sacramento Streets.

Those Lincoln Highway markers stand like punctuation points in the history of transportation. During the construction of the transcontinental railroad, the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road was heavily used for transporting supplies by horse and wagon to the railheads and to miners in Washoe County in Nevada, but when the railroad was completed, it fell into disuse. The railroad became the dominant means of travel over the Sierras for both passengers and freight and stagecoaches only ran to distant towns off the railroads. With the completion of the transcontinental railroad, Bernhard Bernhard sold his mules and became a farmer. Wells Fargo

also sold its stagecoaches and left that business to smaller local companies serving those distant towns. Within three years of the opening of the Lincoln Highway, the era of the stagecoach was over. Where stagecoaches still ran, it was simply for tourists as part of the romance of the Old West. Passenger traffic on the railroads also declined dramatically after the automobile became common and the tourist guide books of the 20th century were written for those touring by car. Railroad freight traffic fared better, but by the time that Interstate 80 was being built in the 1950s, Detroit was building more powerful trucks with larger carrying capacity and they began to dominate the freight industry, including the shipments of fresh fruit. The number of railroad refrigerator cars for the industry as a whole eventually reached 180,000, but refrigerator trucks competed with the railroad and, by 1960, the number of railroad-owned refrigerator cars had dropped to 25,000. By then, Placer County did not have much fruit to ship.

Today, the only part of the fruit industry to make a comeback is once again taking advantage of that citrus belt that was recognized back in the Gold Rush days. The major crop is Mandarin oranges. This industry too was almost lost in the hard freeze of 1990, but it has recovered. At number ten on the list of agricultural crops for Placer County, this citrus is the only fruit to make the list. One of the major events of the county is the Mountain Mandarin Festival that takes place every year at the fairgrounds in Auburn in November the weekend before Thanksgiving when the crop of Mandarin oranges ripens. First held in 1993 the event has grown to a three-day affair that now attracts 30-35,000 visitors.

Downtown Auburn

By the time the Bernhards died, the city of Auburn was well on the way to filling in the empty space that once existed between the courthouse and the depot. The walking tour of Old Town gives one a good sense of the earliest days of the town and the Bernhard Museum gives a good sense of the comfortable life style that developed during the Victorian Era. Assuming that you have driven to the Bernhard Museum, a good way to get a sense of how the town grew out of the ravine is to drive back on Auburn-Folsom Road to the courthouse, turn right on Lincoln Way and continue to High Street. Locations on the walking tour map of Old Town designated by letters are along this street and you will note that some churches and houses had been built there soon after the devastating fire of 1855 and before the depot. East was the direction growth was headed. On the southwest corner of the intersection of Lincoln and High Streets is the Auburn Visitors Center with an ample parking lot behind the building. You can pick up A Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Auburn here and a Downtown Auburn Walking Tour booklet with longer stories on select sites. At the time that the Bernhards died, the prominent commercial building on Central Square was the Opera House.

The incorporation of the city in May 1888 and the expansion of its boundaries was a rebirth of sorts and the major growth of the new city would take place in the section of town that came to be called Downtown which is defined physically by Lincoln Way and High Street. Water service had reached that area in March 1888 making it more attractive for businesses and homes. Auburn was a town in transition. In fact, an article about Auburn in the *Overland Monthly* of January 1891 was entitled, "A Story of Transition." The article began:

Auburn of today is at once a reminiscence and a promise. It is passing through a period of transition; undergoing the same change from mining to agriculture activity that the State has already undergone. The change is coming more slowly about Auburn; the mining industry is passing into the background more slowly, the agricultural interests are more backward in being developed. Yet here, on a comparatively small scale and compactly, one may study the process of change that the State has seen.....

As you walk through the streets there is scarcely an echo of the busy mining town of early days: the mad excitement of the search for gold has passed away. Perhaps the struggling mass of humanity paused in their greedy search for a moment to gaze upon their surroundings, and the enchantment of the scene cast a spell upon them that made them forget their rockers, and their gravel, and the shining specks of wealth that glistened in their pans.....

The railroad came, and circling around on the crest of the hill above the town, established a station about a mile and a half northeast of the ravine. This divided Auburn into a new town and an old town; and since then the space between has been filling up, the old town reaching timidly toward the new; while the new, in the pride of aristocratic origin, built modern residences and blossoming gardens along the roads leading to the old town and its business houses.

This division between the old town and the new town also meant commercial competition between the two parts of town and that competition is, perhaps, best illustrated by the story of the building of the Opera House on Lincoln Way. No longer there, it was located just to the east across the street from the Visitor Center at the corner of Linden Street. It was the major commercial building that went into this area after the incorporation of the city in 1888. The first money for its construction was raised in 1889. Lardner in his history of Placer County said:

The old Music Hall had well-nigh served its day about 1890. It was too far from the residence center of town. The electric street lights were not numerous or bright on Washington Street on a dark, rainy night. Colonel Davis, General Hamilton, W. A. Freeman, the writer, and many others started the proposition for an opera house more nearly in the center of the residence population. A rule swung around the present opera house site, on the map, showed that it was at the exact center, touching the residences on the river hills and the ridge west of the ravine.

Although the location of the Opera House was the center point between the depot and the courthouse, it was not yet the center of the population.

The three men mentioned by Lardner were among the foremost citizens of the town. Colonel Walter S. Davis was a Civil War hero who had come to Auburn in 1879 after growing oranges for four years in Anaheim. He purchased the Mammoth Bar Mine near the American River confluence and the mine proved hugely successful making him very wealthy. He was the main money behind the project. General Jo Hamilton was a pioneer lawyer of Placer County and a former Attorney General for the State of California. He owned an estate at the corner of what is now High Street and College Way and in the early 1880s donated a five-acre parcel to the newly-formed Sierra Normal College and Business Institute which in 1897 became Placer High School. William A. Freeman was the proprietor of the Freeman Hotel, which, with its 100 rooms, was the

largest establishment on the east side of town. His ad in that January issue of the *Overland Monthly* with the article on Auburn in transition read:

Tourists and invalids will find Freeman's Hotel first class in all its appointments, and recently having added largely to its accommodations, the Proprietor will be able to satisfy all who may give him a call. The locality being at such an altitude that it will afford a splendid view of the surrounding scenery, the Sacramento Valley and the Coast Range. Business men and travelers, Freeman's Hotel, being situated convenient to the Depot, the baggage is easily transferred to and from the Hotel, at no expense. The accommodations are complete. Every room is lighted by electricity, is well furnished, and so arranged that it can be ventilated to suit the desire of the occupant. Pure spring water through the House. Warm and cold baths free to guests. The table at all times will be supplied with the best the market affords, including the choicest varieties of fruits, in their season.

Freeman's recent addition to his hotel represented some of the high hopes that a new Opera House would add to the tourist traffic and the prosperity of the town. However, the effort to build the Opera House in the newer section of town met with opposition from a group that wanted the venue to remain in Old Town and it resulted in a sort of tug of war. In Lardner's words:

Everything was going just lovely, when the hot August weather again began downtown. A rival corporation was started, called the Auburn City Hall Association. Other land was added to their site, and a brick building seventy-five feet wide and nearly 100 feet long was started, with stores beneath, and a town hall and theater with galleries, upstairs.

In reality, everything was not going along just lovely. Subscriptions for the Opera House did not meet the expected expense and, when George Hill, one of the Directors, resigned and refused to pay his subscription, others followed suit. Despite that, ground breaking had taken place on July, 12 1890. The major part of the building was finished by December, but the interior was not done until well into the next year. The building was mortgaged for \$5,000 in June 1891. There were several suits for non-payment of bills. So, the Opera House was already in trouble when The Auburn City Hall Association filed for incorporation in July 1891. The "New Town Hall" was to be built on the site of the old Music Hall in Old Town, number 21 on the Old Town walking tour. Eighty-three investors subscribed for \$20,720. Most of the subscribers had businesses or did business in Old Town. The "New Town Hall" was never finished and never served as a town hall, although some of it was rented out to stores. Debt overcame its promoters and the unfinished structure was sold at public auction for \$5,931.39 in July 1894. E. C. Snowden purchased it later for \$6,000 in April 1895, but failed to carry insurance and lost his investment when the building burned in 1905. Lardner closed the building's history saying, "The remnants of the front and lot were rented during the war for a gathering-place for scrap iron, etc.; and over the once pretentious portal are the forlorn words, 'Auburn Junk Co.' — once Armory Hall, later Music Hall, and now a bitter remembrance." Although the Opera House survived for over six decades, its original investors did not fare any better than the "New Town Hall" investors. Two additional mortgages had been taken out on the Opera House in 1892 and by April 1894 all three were in default. The property was sold at public auction for \$5,637.91 on April 9, 1894.

The most significant construction to be undertaken after the completion of the Opera House was the courthouse and the citizens living in the eastern part of the city petitioned to have the new building constructed in their part of Auburn. Old Town was in decline, but the county supervisors chose to keep the courthouse in the same location. In the same year, faced with the same decision about where to build, the Odd Fellows, who had been meeting on Washington Street in Old Town, decided to construct their new Hall further eastward where the growth was headed. They started clearing the lot in April 1894, but did not secure their \$5000 loan for construction until October. One of their lenders was Julius Weber. Built in the same Italianate style as the courthouse, its meeting space was on the upper floor and retail space was at street level. The pediment on the cornice with the letters IOOF and the three entwined rings proclaims its ownership. Located at 1196 Lincoln Way, you passed this on the left as you drove to the Visitor Center. It is letter E in the Old Town Walking Tour brochure. It was then, and still is now, one of the more notable buildings in Auburn and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2011. The plaque placed on the building by the Placer County Historical Society in 1994 gives a bit of its history:

Instituted in 1852, the first Odd Fellows Lodge organized in Placer County, seventh in California. Meetings were held in several different locations until this building was erected in 1894. Bricks used in construction were made and fired on this site. This hall is a notable architectural feature in Auburn. It continues to serve its original function as a lodge hall upstairs, with rental spaces below.

Its builder was Henry T. Holmes. He was one of the earliest settlers in Auburn and, although he moved to Sacramento in 1857 and later to San Francisco, he maintained business interests in the area and his name can be associated with the construction of numerous buildings in Auburn. Holmes went into the lime business in 1854 when he bought the kiln from his father-in-law John Gwynn. In conjunction with that business, he built a brickyard between Auburn and Millertown, which was about a mile and a quarter northwest of Auburn. He prospered when most of the wooden buildings in Auburn burned down in 1855 and the town began rebuilding with his bricks held together by the mortar from his lime kilns.

The Odd Fellows Hall can seat 400 people and more recently has become the venue for small scale music concerts put on by Keep Smilin' Promotions which has given the building a new nickname, "The Foothill Fillmore." Were it still here, the Opera House might be jealous. The Opera House was only somewhat successful; Lardner said that Auburn could not really afford the Opera House and that its promoters, like the promoters of The New City Hall, eventually lost about \$20,000. It was built for an era that had not yet been introduced to the movies, but the Opera House began showing silent films in 1901. Film was to become a popular form of entertainment in nickelodeon theaters and the Opera House faced added competition from a theater across the street in the Kreuzberger Building. By 1930, when the State Theater opened on Lincoln Way, talkies had established themselves as the main form of entertainment. Although the Opera House made the change to talkies, attendance at performing arts declined and by 1944 it could not compete with the modern State Theater. It was spending its last days as a bowling

alley when, on October 3, 1957, a fire lasting less than two hours destroyed a history of sixty-six years.

The main reason for the Opera House's demise as a theater venue is visible as you look back down Lincoln Way. When the State Theater (number 6 on the Downtown walking tour) opened in December 1930, a year into the Great Depression, it was heralded as a monument to the future progress of Auburn and Placer County. It was quite exquisite with seating for 1,325 patrons who could watch not only movies, but also live vaudeville acts. By 1930, the silent film was a thing of the past and the theater had the state-of-the-art acoustics for sound. There was an orchestra area before the stage and a balcony with loge seating, curving side walls and columns, and a painted mosaic ceiling. Over the years it underwent numerous changes. In 1937, it was upgraded with better sound and the Art Deco sign added. It looked quite different in the 1990s when the non-profit Auburn Placer Performing Arts Center purchased the property from the Lardner family. Much of the original interior had been changed. The balcony had been torn down in the 1980s because of a broken truss, a wall now divided the theater into two separate cinemas, and the old facade and sign were gone. Community volunteers helped the Auburn Placer Performing Arts Center turn one of the small theaters into a performing arts venue with a new stage and seating for 130 patrons. In 2008, they restored the theater exterior to the way it looked in 1937. They opened in April 2009 as the Auburn State Theater and quickly proved successful in that small venue. The next step came in 2014 when the wall that divided the theater into two parts was removed and the seating capacity enlarged. The theater now has 340 seats that were once in the famous Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles.

The same year that the State Theater remodeled, upgrading its sound system and adding its iconic sign, the city decided to relocate its City Hall to Central Square and consolidate its fire stations. When sidewalks were installed in Central Square in 1905 the halfway point was marked by a medallion in the sidewalk and it seemed appropriate that the center of government and a centralized fire department should be located there. The building served as City Hall until 1990. Today, it is on the National Register of Historic Places and it seems just as appropriate that it houses the Auburn Chamber of Commerce and that the old bay for fire trucks is the home of the Placer County Visitors Bureau and California Welcome Center. This building is number 1 on the Walking Tour of Downtown Auburn. The City Hall was built as a WPA project during the Depression. The architect was George Clinton Sellon and the city asked him to "forget all gingerbread." He designed the building in Art Moderne style. Popular from the 1920s to 1940, Art Moderne buildings characteristically have a horizontal design, streamlined to emphasize sleekness. There is also a fondness for curving lines. Interestingly, at the same time that he designed the Auburn City Hall, Sellon also designed the Nevada County Courthouse in the Art Deco style that emphasized the vertical line and used stylized, geometric ornamentation. Both these styles originated from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, a World's Fair held in Paris in 1925. It was the intention of the French government to promote a new design aesthetic for architecture, furniture, and other decorative arts suitable for the modern machine age without reference to the classical past.

Ironically, in 1990, City Hall relocated into the recently restored building that was originally constructed as a grammar school in 1915. The school was designed in the very Beaux-arts style that the city rejected in 1937. Located at 1225 Lincoln Way, it is the letter G on the Old Town

Walking Tour. The first school on the site was built in 1866 and its location further illustrates the move eastward from Old Town. The first building was replaced by a two story, four room building in 1874 and a second building was added next door and connected by a breezeway in 1880. The current building replaced them in 1915. Anyone simply passing by does not have the benefit of the plaque on the wall to learn how significant of a building it was in its school days. The plaque reads:

Built in 1915, this Beaux Arts grammar school was designed by San Francisco master architect William Henry Weeks and was considered a showcase of modern education, representing the most contemporary advances in school design and efficiency.

It is no wonder that the Auburn Grammar School was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012. Its architect William H. Weeks had already attained a reputation as one of the foremost designers of schools in California. Weeks first set up his office in Oakland in 1892. When he received a commission to build the First Christian Church in Watsonville, he went there to oversee its construction and became enamored of the place. He moved to Watsonville in 1894 and, because of the work he had done on the First Christian Church, Weeks was immediately employed to design many of the town's residences. Shortly after he opened the office, the local paper was reporting that he had been hired to design the high school on East Beach Street. Completed in 1895 at the cost of \$25,000, it was a two-story, Stick-style building with a central tower. His business continued to grow and in 1897, Weeks opened a branch office in Salinas where he became the principal designer for all the facilities of the new sugar factory Claus Spreckels was building there.

When the high school in Watsonville burned down in 1901, Weeks designed the next one in a Mission Revival style. By then he had already designed schools in a number of different towns and commissions kept coming. Based on what he had learned in designing schools, he published an article in 1906 entitled "Rural School Buildings of California." He developed standards for ideal classroom square footage and established criteria for making sure that every student could see the blackboard and hear the teacher. He placed great importance on ventilation and stressed how heating and proper air circulation minimized the spread of disease. In 1911, noting that the construction of a new school was so rare that the trustees seldom knew how to go about it, he offered his services as a consultant to any school board in need of advice on the preliminary steps in the construction of a new school. Most of the progressive features of school construction that Weeks advocated are on the interior and, consequently, not as obvious as the other concern that he had regarding the aesthetic beauty of the building. To him the appearance of a school needed to indicate its essential function and it must have "beauty, grace and dignity."

Dignity is one of the key words used in describing the Beaux-Arts style of architecture that Weeks used for the Auburn Grammar School. Beaux-Arts is a more opulent version of the Greek Revival style that was most commonly used for Carnegie libraries nationwide and the style Allen D. Fellows had used for the Auburn Carnegie Library at 175 Almond Street that opened six years earlier in May 1909. The exterior of the Grammar School is decorated with Gladding, McBean terra cotta. Weeks worked quite a bit with Gladding, McBean designers. About the same time the Grammar School was finishing up, Weeks was in the planning stage of the Yolo County Courthouse in Woodland where the originals of those two Gladding, McBean figures of Law and

Justice in the Auburn Historical Museum were placed. The supervisors were considering using stone for the Yolo County Courthouse; it was Weeks who convinced them to use the Gladding, McBean terra cotta.

Weeks had been designing schools for twenty years when he designed the Auburn Grammar School and would design schools for another twenty years before his death in 1936. His obituary in the April 30, 1936, *San Jose Mercury Herald* had the following paragraph:

Weeks was a genuinely great architect and all over California there are monuments to his skill. For that matter, all over California there are thousands of youngsters whose lives are a little more happy and a little more healthy because of what W.H. Weeks knew about school architecture. Mr. Weeks was a specialist in school design and knew what exposures provide students with the best light, what type of hallway permits quickest passage from one class to another, what type of exterior brings with it the greatest beauty.

As advanced as Weeks' designs were at the time, the schools he designed did not meet the earthquake safety standards required by the later legislation of the 1960s and the trustees ordered the school closed in 1964. It was used by the Auburn Union Elementary School District for offices and as with the courthouse, when faced with its destruction, the citizens were determined to preserve a building that had such a long history and held such pleasant memories for so many residents. It was modernized and converted into offices for the city administration in 1990.

Behind the City Hall is the School Park Community Garden and along the drive to the park is a beautiful 800 square foot tile wall mosaic. Designed by Auburn Arts Commissioner Michael Kent and completed in August 2016, it provides an artistic overhead view of the American River as it flows from the High Sierra through Auburn to join the Sacramento River and continue on to the San Francisco Bay. The dark land mass of the mosaic was built from around 20,000 tiles hand-made by Auburn area youths in summer programs, while the blue rivers were made from broken commercial tiles. Dozens of volunteers contributed to the final design and installation.

Auburn is on the north fork of the American River which begins on the crest of the Sierras near Lake Tahoe. It unites with the waters of the middle fork near Foresthill and then flows into the north arm of Folsom Lake. Originally it was about nine miles longer and joined the south fork near Mormon Island before Folsom Dam was built. When Gabriel Moraga made his exploration of the Sacramento Valley in 1808, he named the river Rio de las Llagas, "River of Wounds" or "River of Sorrows." In 1837, Governor Alvarado named the river Rio de los Americanos because the area was frequented by "trappers of revolutionary proclivities," meaning Americans. The Americans in Texas had fought the battle of the Alamo the year before and the Mexicans were quite suspicious of American intentions. The Nisenan called the river *Kum Mayo*. The river that had sustained Nisenan life for millennia was ultimately the cause of their demise when gold was discovered on the south fork at Coloma.

The river mosaic at City Hall is a continuation of a theme started with a mosaic back in the Art Park by the Visitor Center that depicts the headwaters of the river flowing over outcroppings

of rock and across the pavement to the corner of the street. It is back to that headwater in Central Square that we return to continue the historical tour.

The building that dominated the Central Square area at that time was the First Congregational Church on the corner of Lincoln and High Streets. Number 4 on the walking tour, its location was just across the street from today's visitor center. Long gone, its picture in the walking tour brochure gives you a good idea what was there when the Opera House was constructed. When the Reverend Hiram Cummings held his first Sunday evening services for the seven members of his congregation in Auburn in 1875, he used the Pioneer Methodist Church at 1338 Lincoln Way, letter B on the Old Town walking tour. By 1879, the congregation needed its own church and purchased a lot on what was then Broad and High Streets. Construction started in 1881, but the church was not ready for its first service until March 31, 1883. It was not one of the best locations then. Winter rains turned Broad Street into a mud bog. The church, in recounting its history online, says their new church was referred to as "The Swamp Angel."

Today, Wells Fargo Bank occupies the spot where the church once stood. Back then, it was the cornerstone of Central Square. That honor has passed to the Masonic Lodge across the street on the northeast corner. William G. Lee was one of the businessmen who saw advantages to moving his business from Old Town to the newer Central Square area. He had come to Auburn in 1903 to take over a dry goods business in Old Town and after a short time there grew unhappy with that deteriorating and outdated downtown area. He was quite anxious to move Wm. G. Lee Dry Goods to Central Square after the completion of the Nicholls Block in 1906. Lardner said that efforts to improve the oldest section of Auburn had gone unheeded.

Efforts were made by some of the most progressive to improve their surroundings by getting glass fronts, better sidewalks, and better streets; but these forward-looking citizens were met by their landlords and neighbors with the slogan of civic stagnation. 'It is good enough. We have been here for forty years, and we have done well enough; and if you are not satisfied, move out.' The dare was taken. The W.G. Lee Company's department store; McLaughlin, the druggist; Anderson Bros., jewelers; and a furniture store quietly bargained for the building of up-to-date store rooms on the large triangular place in the upper part of town. Home building lots were being offered for sale at reasonable prices near by. In April, 1906, five stores were emptied down town and the new center block was occupied.' W. A. Freeman, on his hotel bus, calling 'All aboard for Auburn' to witnesses, jurors, and country business men at the county seat, drove the now awakened down-towners nearly crazy. They saw ruin and a deserted old town before them. They had scoffed at the inevitable too long.

The same year he moved into the new store, Lee helped in the formation of the Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce, currently also located on Central Square in the old City Hall. Lee became quite a promoter of the Central Square area. About 1910, the Masons had begun to look for a new location. They had been holding meetings in the Willment store on Commercial Street in Old Town since 1860 (number 29 on the Old Town walking tour) and were in need of a bigger hall. On July 24, 1913, they got an option proposal from the Auburn Investment Company for the one-story brick building occupied by Lee and a 80 x 92 foot lot next door. In October, they closed the deal with a \$17,000 purchase. After the purchase, the lodge formed the Auburn Masonic Hall Association. William Lee was elected a member of the board of directors and one

wonders how much his influence played in the decision to purchase the building. The lodge hired noted local architect Allen D. Fellows to add a second story. Their previous location had also started out as a one-story building and the Masons added the second story for their meeting hall.

Fellows was a local architect who had designed the 1909 Auburn Carnegie Library in typical Greek Revival style, but he designed the Masons' building in the new more opulent Beaux-Arts style, integrating the two parts with a unified facade sheathed with Gladding, McBean architectural terra cotta. When you stand there admiring that beautiful second floor facade and realize that it is not stone you are looking at, but clay fired in the kilns of Gladding, McBean at Lincoln, colored to look like stone and attached to the building, you get an appreciation just how far their expertise in architectural terra cotta had come since the building of the courthouse. Lee managed to continue to conduct business during construction since the second story entrance was placed on the left side of the first floor. The construction was done by Herdal Brothers of Auburn who had recently completed the Placer County Bank on Lincoln Way which was also designed in the Beaux-Arts style. At a cost of \$55,000 for the building and furniture, the Masonic Hall far exceeded the first estimate, but upon completion the lodge members were well pleased and felt that the type of building and its construction were far superior to what was originally planned. The Masonic Lodge dedicated their remodeled building on April 25, 1916. In the late 1950s, the ground-floor was remodeled as part of the effort to beautify Auburn in anticipation of the 1960 Winter Olympics, but despite that, the building retains a high degree of original integrity and was placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings in 2011 and is number 8 on the walking tour. Businesses occupy the ground floor, but the second floor is still used by the Masons.

The plaque on the Masonic building says, "It is the last remaining historic building located on Auburn's 'Central Square', which was built between 1900 and 1920." That is true as far as the buildings on the four corners of Lincoln Way and High Street are concerned, but just around the corner up High Street, there are older buildings that were constructed shortly after the Opera House opened. Once the Opera House was completed, more commercial development and street improvements followed. One of the earliest additions was the new grocery store that W. R. Arthur built in 1892, number 12 on the walking tour. It is a convenient walk from the house he had built in 1890 just down the street at 1111 High Street, number 2 on the walking tour. The Kreuzberger Building next door, number 11 on the walking tour, followed in 1893.

The Arthur Building is an early example of the Renaissance Revival style that was modeled on the 16th century buildings of the Italian Renaissance. It was first popularized on the East Coast by leading architectural firms such as McKim, Mead & White in the late 1880s. The style became popular in California somewhat later and lasted somewhat longer, but between 1910 and 1930 it became the hallmark design in commercial downtown districts throughout California. The usual symmetry of the style has been altered by the extension on the left side of the Arthur Building, so to better appreciate the typical features of the Renaissance Revival style, the key building to view is the P G & E Building up the street at 1050 High Street, number 18 on the Downtown walking tour. Typical stores in this style were usually two-story, brick structures. The P G & E building, which was built in 1929 even as the popularity of the style was fading, exhibits the symmetrical proportions that were of primary importance as well as the strong visual distinctions between the top, middle, and bottom portions of the building. The storefronts had a central door with large showcase windows framed by wood or copper to the side. Transoms were above the door and windows for air circulation and their uniformity kept the building visually balanced. The second level above the storefront was smaller in height than the ground floor, but maintained the

symmetry and balance with evenly spaced windows. The third and narrowest level was the cornice at the top of the building. It usually had some kind of ornamentation.

The Downtown tour area is filled with new and different styles of architecture. The Tahoe Club, number 16 on the walking tour, at 900 Lincoln Way offers an example of Mission Revival, a style native to California. In 1895, Charles Fletcher Lummis founded the Landmarks Club of Southern California whose priority was the preservation of the California missions. Interest in mission architecture took hold from that movement. A common feature of this style is the use of the arched openings such as those you see on the second floor of the Tahoe Club. This echoes the arched walkways of the old missions. The parapets at the top of the building pick up the arch again. The exteriors of Mission Revival buildings were done in smooth plaster, not rough stucco and imitate the look of mission walls. The style was also a little fanciful and each building was unique. The Tahoe Club's rounded corner turret was not a part of mission architecture. The Tahoe Club was built in 1913 during Mission Revival's relatively short-lived popularity. The style was considered simple by academically trained architects. However, it did serve as a springboard to a more popular genre called Spanish Colonial Revival that gained national exposure from the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 in San Diego.

One of the most attractive historic buildings of Downtown Auburn that highlights this new age of architecture was the new Placer County Bank Building on Lincoln Way, number 42 on the walking tour. The contrast between the old 1887 Placer County Bank Building in Old Town and the new Placer County Bank Building of Downtown Auburn could not be greater. Unlike the brick building with its simple wooden, false facade in Old Town, the bank, completed in 1913, is a two-story concrete building constructed in the new Beaux-Arts style. It was designed by Charles Sumner Kaiser who also designed the multi-story Farmers & Merchants Bank building in Sacramento. Placer County Bank's high classical columns with ornamental Doric capitals give it statuesque proportions. The columns frame three large windows inset in Roman arches that extend upward for the two stories of the building. The main door to the bank is under the center window. On the ground floor, there is a door at each corner of the building and a window on the second story above it. A single terra cotta wreath offers simple decoration in the space between the window and the door. The frieze at the top of the columns is inscribed with the name "Placer County Bank" in the center with the dates "1887" to the left side and "1913" to the right over the corner windows. The building presents a completely symmetrical frontage and that was one of the main characteristics of the Beaux-Arts style, which is also called Classical Revival. Its emergence was chiefly due to it being the major style used in the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The classical Greek and Roman forms of column and arch were meant to suggest order, stability, logic, and reason. This became the dominant style of architecture in the United States between the late 19th century and early 20th century and was a favorite style for banks and government buildings.

When you compare the two Placer County Bank buildings, the contrast is quite dramatic. The bank buildings tell one story about the changes in American architecture, but the relocation of the bank from Commercial Street in Old Town to Lincoln Way tells another story about Auburn itself. The Gold Rush town had started in a ravine, but the depot built to serve that town was built by the Central Pacific in 1865 in no man's land a little over a mile away. Infill was slow in

the 1870s and 1880s when the bank was founded. Infill began to pick up in the 1890s creating a new commercial area. When the bank opened its new office in the developing downtown area, it kept its original bank in Old Town as a branch office, but found it had to close it in 1918 due to declining traffic.

On the wall of the building to the east of the Placer County Bank are two murals. One depicts the Opera House with cars from the 1940s parked out front. The Opera House may be gone, but it is not forgotten. The other mural depicts a scene with cars from an earlier time, cars that might have traveled the Lincoln Highway. Numbers 17 and 33 on the walking tour were once locations of service stations. Begun as a pedestrian shopping core, downtown grew to accommodate the automobile traffic. The Lincoln Highway was the main artery through both Downtown and Old Town and the route along which commercial growth developed.

The brochure for the walking tour of Downtown Auburn is subtitled “Where the Railroad Met the Gold Country” and a good portion of the tour is on what was once Railroad Street, which led from the depot to Old Town. As you continue on the walking tour up Lincoln Way toward the depot, pay attention to the dates given in the brochure for the buildings. It will give you a sense of the growth coming from the depot in the 1880s moving toward Central Square. Railroad Street later became part of the Lincoln Highway and has since been renamed Lincoln Way. The depot is the farthest point on the Downtown walking tour and a little climb up the hill. You may prefer to drive if you have tired of the walk, but it should not be missed even if the depot itself and the Gold Rush Museum located therein is not open. Ken Fox’s Chinese “Coolie” statue will awe you and there is good informational signage outside with old photographs that help fill in what has been lost like Freeman’s Hotel. You also get a sense why Judah located the depot there at an elevation 150 feet above the ravine of Old Town and the view that Freeman advertised in the January 1891 *Overland Monthly*.

After the building of the Opera House in Central Square, that halfway point between Old Town and the Central Pacific Depot came to be viewed as the lynch pin that connected the two separate parts of the town. A number of roads converged at that location and the Lincoln Highway, later Highway 40, passed through it, but after construction of Interstate 80 was completed in the 1960s, much traffic was diverted from the downtown area. It began to decline. Two new commercial areas developed north of Interstate 80: one along the Highway 49 corridor and the other in the Airport Business Park. The two older commercial areas of Old Town and Downtown Auburn became Historic Districts and this historical sketch remains focused on these two districts. These districts are part of an Historic Preservation program and the majority of the more than 300 buildings with historic significance identified in a survey done in 1986 are within these districts. Any changes to existing structures or construction of new buildings in the Historic Districts are subject to a design review which is intended to promote the economic restructuring and revitalization of the two districts. One of the Downtown Design Review goals is “To recognize the role of Downtown as a pedestrian shopping district whose image is predicated on the character, scale, and unique attributes associated with the unique building stock and their design relationship to the streetscape.”

In keeping with that goal, in 2007 the city began to consider a renovation of Central Square. Although never really a Square at all, at that time it was dominated by a five-way traffic stoplight system that did not work well, a situation that gave people a good reason to avoid the area. With

the decline of business activity, the area had become quite unattractive. The City of Auburn's Central Square Streetscape Project was created to transform Central Square into the centerpiece of the Downtown commercial district. Streets were realigned, diagonal parking created, historical lighting features were installed, and attractive brick walkways and landscaping were added. Engraved granite pavers highlighting historical events and famous individuals in Auburn's history were placed in the pavement. Informational signs on large granite blocks tell some of the history and illuminate the past with old pictures. Downtown Auburn started as a pedestrian shopping core and, as a result of the Central Square Streetscape Project, all of this can be enjoyed on a leisurely stroll that is more pedestrian friendly than ever. The project was completed in 2012 and one of the final crowning touches was the unveiling of a beautiful piece of public art, a six-foot bronze sculpture of a Nisenan dancer. To this point, the Nisenan have barely been mentioned, almost as if they had been forgotten or relegated to the museum.

The Nisenan

The Nisenan were the Indians who occupied the land between the Sacramento River on the west, the Sierras on the east, the Yuba River on the north, and the Cosumnes River on the south. The foothill Nisenan were separate from the valley Nisenan. The major river drainages formed informal boundaries between groups of the hill Nisenan. The Placerville District was between the Cosumnes River and the Middle Fork of the American River, the Auburn District was between the Middle Fork of the American River and the Bear River, and the Nevada City District was between the Bear River and the Yuba River. The Auburn group spoke slightly differently and considered themselves distinct from the Nisenan living south of the middle fork of the American River and distinct from the group north to the Yuba. Different dialects developed because before the coming of the whites it was rare that anyone traveled more than twenty miles from their village of birth, although there was a good deal of movement within that limited area.

The Nisenan were loosely organized into tribelets with large central villages surrounded by smaller autonomous villages consisting of only two or three families. Although the leaders of the central villages did have some influence over the surrounding smaller villages, there was no political control. The central villages, often referred to as winter villages, were generally located at the 1,000 to 2,000-foot elevation above the fog line of the Sacramento Valley and below the snow line of the Sierras. Central villages provided a home base when the winter weather restricted foraging and required more substantial housing. They also served as central locations for food storage and usually had a wicker acorn granary. Central villages were also social centers and usually had a semi-subterranean excavated dance house. People living in the smaller villages came to the central village for major ceremonies and dances and went home afterwards. When the supply of food around a village was exhausted, they moved the village. Ten years might be the longest time in one place. It was important to locate near a supply of water and villages were built on level knolls or gentle slopes with southern exposure and with fairly open country around the village so the approach of strangers could be seen. Land was frequently burned to keep it free from underbrush. This also helped drive away rattlesnakes which the Nisenan particularly feared.

Estimates of the pre-contact size of the Nisenan population have varied widely, but the number most frequently settled on is 9,000. This estimate was made by Alfred Kroeber, a professor of Anthropology at U. C. Berkeley, in his *Handbook of the Indians of California* published in 1925 and, even then, he thought the number was a liberal figure. When Kroeber began to study the Nisenan in the early twentieth century, there were only a reported 1,100 Nisenan and many of them were of mixed heritage.

The Nisenan were never part of the Spanish mission system. The Spanish did send an exploratory expedition under the command of Gabriel Moraga into the Sacramento Valley and Nisenan territory in 1808 to evaluate the possibility of establishing a mission, but it became clear that they did not have the resources to support a mission so far inland and the idea was abandoned. Moraga did not make contact with the Nisenan at Auburn. In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain and Alta California came under the control of Mexico. The weak control Mexico exercised over Northern California left it exposed to the incursions of foreign fur trappers. The first contact Indians in the Auburn district seem to have had with whites was when the trapper Jedediah Smith led an expedition into their territory in 1828. He kept a diary and recorded the abundance of beavers and otters as well as numerous encounters with the Indians. Other trappers followed and, though the new Mexican government considered the unauthorized taking of pelts to be robbery, they could not prevent them from coming. The Hudson Bay Company which had established its Pacific Coast headquarters on the Columbia River in 1821 would be particularly active. John Work, a trapper for the Hudson Bay Company, visited the Nisenan territory in 1833 and apparently brought either smallpox or malaria to a native population that had no immunity to such diseases. This was only the first of a number of epidemics to devastate the Nisenan population, reducing their population by as much as three-quarters by one estimate.

Hoping to stop what the Mexican government saw as robbery by the fur trappers and to control foreign entry into the region, in 1839 the Mexican Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado granted John Sutter a 48,827-acre tract of land in the Sacramento Valley which Sutter named New Helvetia. Governor Manuel Micheltoarena made four more large land grants in Nisenan territory in 1844. The 35,521-acre Rancho Rio de los Americanos on the south fork of the American River was given to William Leidesdorff and a 22,197-acre grant on the Yuba River was given to Don Pablo Gutierrez, an employee of Sutter. When Gutierrez was killed in the revolt that overthrew Micheltoarena in 1845, the grant was sold to William Johnson at auction on April 28, 1845. The grant came to be called Rancho Johnson. Rancho Honcut was a 31,080-acre grant on the Yuba River given to Theodor Cordua. Theodore Sicard's grant that stretched ten miles along the south bank of the Bear River was about 17,700 acres. To develop these large land grants, the owners used Nisenan labor.

When the Americans took control of Northern California in 1846, the Indians became the concern of the American military and the commander turned to Sutter as the most knowledgeable individual on Indian affairs in the region. He asked Sutter to do a census. The census Sutter's employee conducted in November 1846 counted little more than 2,700 Indians in thirty rancherias in the region between the Feather and Mokelumne rivers. Certainly, far fewer than occupied the area before contact with the whites brought pestilence.

The Gold Rush made things even worse. The Indians constituted the only work force in California at that time and the first miners employed Indians to help with the mining. Claude Chana and his friends had twenty-five Indians with them when they stopped in the Auburn Ravine. But, after the huge influx of miners in 1849 and 1850 that propelled California so quickly to statehood, the small number of Nisenan were overwhelmed. Their foraging area was quickly depleted by the miners and streams and creeks were polluted. As miners appropriated more and more Indian land, violence erupted. Many miners treated the Indians as wild animals. A white could kill an Indian with impunity. Peter Burnett, the first governor of California, said that a war of extermination would be waged against the Indian until he became extinct. However, the Indian problem in California now became the concern of the federal government. The federal solution was to isolate the native peoples on reservations, ostensibly for their protection and to prevent the extermination of the tribes. Indian Commissioners were assigned to provide an equitable settlement. During 1851 and 1852 they negotiated eighteen treaties with the California Indians, known as the "Barbour Treaties." The treaties recognized the Indians as political entities with sovereign power. The Indians agreed to give up their lands in exchange for about 8.5 million acres to be set aside as reservations, about one-seventh of the State of California. The white settlers felt this was too much of the state to give away to the Indians and, as a result of political pressure by the California legislature and business interests, the treaties were never ratified by the U. S. Senate. The treaty documents were placed under an injunction of secrecy. No one told the Indians who, on their part, fulfilled the terms of the agreements. The unratified treaties meant that California recognized no sovereignty for the tribes and they had no land rights. All the land passed into the public domain.

Not all Indians went to the reservations. Some did not want to go, others could not go. The Indians had been the only labor source in California from the beginning of the Spanish missions and when California became a state it took measures to make sure that Indians continued to be a significant part of that labor force. On April 22, 1850, Governor Peter Burnett signed the "Act for the Government and Protection of Indians." The act legalized custodianship of Indian minors and Indian convict leasing. With the consent of their parents or "friends" (a vague term), Indian children could be worked without pay as apprentices learning a trade until age fifteen for girls or eighteen for boys. This provision was responsible for widespread kidnapping of Indian children. Another provision of the law said any white person could go to the jailhouse and pay the fine of any Indian and have him work it off. Jails were then low-cost labor suppliers. To help maintain that supply, the law also allowed any Indian to be taken into custody "found loitering and strolling about, or frequenting public places where liquors are sold, begging, or leading an immoral or profligate course of life." The dichotomy of the situation is seen in the state's first governor whose rhetoric on the one hand called for the extermination of the Indians and whose legislation on the other hand ensured the continued exploitation of the Indians. The practice did not begin to change until Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, followed by the Thirteenth Amendment that banned most forms of involuntary servitude in 1865.

In an article on November 8, 1856, the *Placer Herald* estimated that only 125 Indians still lived in Placer County. Stephen Powers, in his chapter on the Nishinam (Nisenan) in *Tribes of California* published in 1877, wrote, "They had the misfortune to occupy the heart of the Sierra mining region, in consequence of which they have been miserably corrupted and destroyed. Indians in the mining districts, for reasons not necessary to specify, are always worse debauched

than those in the agricultural regions.” Powers spent 1871 and 1872 traveling among the California Indians observing and gathering information on their customs. He wrote a series of articles on the subject before he was able to convince John Wesley Powell of the Smithsonian to publish a volume on the California Indians. One of his main sources of information on the Nisenan was Captain Tom Lewis from the village of Kotomyan near Auburn. The title “Captain” was given to the head men of the villages. Powers included woodcut illustrations of Captain Tom and his wife Jane in the book. The woodcuts were probably made from photographs taken by Alexander W. Chase in 1874. Chase was a major contributor to Powers’ book and provided most of the photographs that Powers used to make the woodcuts that illustrate his book. The woodcut shows Captain Tom standing, wearing trousers with a rabbit skin robe draped around his torso. But today, the better-known images of Captain Tom and his wife are the reproductions of the actual photographs taken by Chase that had been stored in the Smithsonian collection but not published until 1978 in *Handbook of North American Indians* by Robert F. Heizer. They have been frequently reproduced since; however, pictures of Captain Tom’s son and daughter taken at the same time are seldom reproduced. In Chase’s photograph, Captain Tom is seated wearing a rabbit-fur robe, flicker quill headband, a shell neck band and he holds a stick with woodpecker scalps and flicker feathers. The photograph is misleading and the items were combined in a way that was not traditional, probably at the instigation of the photographer. The headband and the abalone neckpiece would only have been worn in a ceremonial dance. The rabbit fur robe about his torso was generally used as bedding and only worn in the coldest of temperatures. Captain Tom wears pants and his wife and children are also covered head to toe, but prior to white contact, the Nisenan men went about completely naked and the women only wore a braided tule breechcloth. Citing their nudity and as proof of “their low aboriginal estate,” Powers said they went about “costumed strictly after the fashion-plates of Eden.”

Another woodcut in Powers’ first chapter on the Nisenan is captioned “Captain John, Nishinam Chief.” He stands proudly, a long-haired Indian clothed in pants and a shirt with a vest over it, holding a gun with the stock at his right foot and the long barrel held at the top by his two hands. Powers does not mention him in the text of the chapter, but Captain John Oite was an Auburn chief at the time of the first contact with the whites. His influence extended over a large territory from Colfax, Iowa Hill, and Forest Hill on the east, to Rocklin and Lincoln on the west, from the middle fork of the American River on the south to the Bear River on the north. Joel Parker Whitney, who owned the huge Spring Valley Ranch between Rocklin and Lincoln on which he started the Placer County Citrus Colony in 1888, was a friend of Captain John. A passage from Whitney’s *Reminiscences of a Sportsman* published in 1906 gives us a glimpse of Captain John’s life in the 1880s.

The oak groves about me now (my residence in California) were once the habitat of many Digger Indians. No monuments have they left, and all that tells of their existence are the thousands of mortar holes in the flat rocks, many of which still contain the pestles of rude form with which they crushed the acorns for bread-making. On many flat rocks there are a dozen or more of mortar holes, large and small, and some of them worn down to a foot in depth, and many hundreds of such mortar holes are to be seen within a radius of a mile from where I am now writing. Ten or fifteen years ago a small band of these Indians yearly came about here, but I have not seen any about of late. Capt. John, the chief of a small band, was an old friend of mine, but has evidently gone the way of his fathers.

Attended by a small group of bucks and squaws he would regularly round up at my house, and, after a pleasant greeting, would accept an invitation to grub up with a load of cold meats, hams, bread, canned goods, etc., accompanied by sundry parcels of old clothes and hats; then, with an oleaginous smile over his swarthy visage, he would go to the clover valley below for encampment. Almost weekly during Capt. John's stay he would call around for a personal interview, the substance of which was to procure a dollar to purchase powder and balls to kill wild-cats, in evidence of which he would pull out of his hunting and grub sack a badly worn pelt of some ancient nondescript of abnormal origin, which would immediately satisfy me with the importance of his request. One of the first duties of Capt. John and his attendants was to disrobe and roll in the unctuous mud of the mineral springs in the valley, and afterwards to sit in the sun on the ground for an hour or two coated with the mud, which was replenished at intervals by another application. The new portions added were poured down from the top of the head, and the appearance of those mud-cure zealots would discount any appearance yet given of the witches in Macbeth. From the mud to the water, and then with invigorated appetite to the clover beds, and in sequence to sweet repose, restful to the savage breast as to the luxurious visitor of modern curative stations, was a frequent act of our first families of America. Capt. John seriously assured me that it was a heap good for bone sick-evidently meaning for rheumatism. These Indians often engaged in gathering grasshoppers when they were plentiful, in the following manner: First by sinking a well hole in a convenient locality, of some five or six feet in depth and of equal width, keeping it half full of water; then engaging all hands with bushes and tree branches in beating forward the grasshoppers on the ground toward and into the well, where they were soon drowned; then heating some large stones on a fire made for the purpose, from which the stones were rolled forward when sufficiently heated into the well, and the water, heating up, cooked the hoppers. When accounted done by the head chef, the hoppers were raked out upon the adjoining ground to dry, the latter effect being reached, they were then packed away in skins for use. With them a good and prosperous season occurred when acorns and grasshoppers were plentiful. Even if the clover were deficient, it may be assumed that a good acorn stew enriched with a few handfuls of grasshoppers, and possibly a bunch or two of clover, would make a very appetizing meal for a Digger Indian as a change from pine cone, nuts, and ground squirrels.

Powers' book published in 1877 provides us with some of the best ethnographic information on California Indians that could be obtained at that time, but he did not really respect the cultures that he spent those two years studying. As he was drawing his conclusions on Indian life, he wrote:

But, after all, let no romantic reader be deceived, and long to escape from the hollow mockeries and the vain pomps and ambitions of civilization, and mingle in the free, wild, and untrammelled life of the savage. It is one of the greatest delusions that ever existed. Of all droning and dreary lives that ever the mind of man conceived this is the chief.

Although Powers saw his own culture as vastly superior to the Indians, there was one area in which he said the Indians greatly surpassed the Americans. He wrote, "No American could dance as they do, all night for days together, sometimes for weeks." The dance house, called a "kum" by the Indians and a roundhouse by the whites, was the biggest permanent structure in a central village. The chief and his assistants supervised its construction and it was considered his property. The chief did not live in it, but he did determine how and when it was used. It was partially subterranean, excavated to a depth between three and five feet with a diameter of thirty feet to as much as seventy feet. Forked oak branches were used for the center posts which numbered between two and four depending on the size. Young pines or buckeyes were used for rafters, with buckeye preferred in the foothills since it was considered to be rot-resistant. The rafters were covered with brush, grass, pine needles, and dirt. A round hole was left at the top to allow smoke to escape. The door of the kum always faced east and was closed with bark slabs. Inside, opposite the door was a foot-drum made from a hollow oak log burned out inside, split, and placed over a hole in the ground filled with finely crushed dry leaves. The floor was covered with a thick mat of pine needles.

Powers described a number of different Nisenan dances, noting two in particular performed by the Nisenan living on the American River and below; there was an indoor dance called lo'-leh held in the winter simply for amusement and there was an acorn dance "pai'-o" held in autumn. The most important dances were called "lu'mai" or, in English, "Big Time". The chief determined when they would be held. There was no religious calendar that fixed the dates; a particularly good hunt or harvest was cause for celebration. Villagers as far away as twenty miles were invited. It was the chief's responsibility to summon the trained dancers. Runners were sent to the different villages carrying a string with several knots tied in it to signify how many days until the dance was held. A knot was removed each day for the countdown. Although most of the dancers were men, women also did perform. Drum and flute music accompanied the dancers. The dancers wore special paraphernalia for different dances. The statue of the Nisenan dancer in Auburn's Central Square created by local artist Douglas Van Howd was heavily researched and reproduces the highly decorated headdress made of flicker feathers. The dancer also has a shell necklace and holds feathers in one hand and a split-stick clapper in the other which were all part of the ceremonial paraphernalia. Powers did describe the Nisenan as tall, sinewy, and endowed with a magnificent physique and that is what you see in the statue. The location of the statue in the Central Square so close to where the Opera House once stood and just down the street from the Auburn State Theater seems particularly appropriate since Nisenan dance was the earliest performance art in Placer County, but the dancer is out of context for there is no kum, which was his theatre, and there is no musical accompaniment. However, Big Time celebrations are not a thing of the past. The Sierra Native Alliance which was founded in 2007 by a group from the Native American community holds an annual Auburn Big Time-Pow Wow. It is a day-long celebration of Native American culture and dance held at the Auburn Gold Country Fairgrounds as part of the group's effort to preserve the native families, cultures, and environments. Big Time celebrations are held in many other places as well.

The United Auburn Indian Community that commissioned the Nisenan dancer is a composite tribe with most of its members descended from Nisenans (frequently referred to as Southern Maidu) with additional members from the Miwok and Tehama tribes. It gained federal recognition by act of Congress in 1994, but it was a long struggle to get there. The unratified Barbour Treaties of the 1850s were discovered by an archivist going through the records of the

U. S. Senate in 1905. Their discovery resulted in a renewed effort to secure lands for landless and homeless Indians mainly in central and northern California. Congress authorized an investigation into their conditions and directed the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to report to Congress with a plan to improve their lot. Charles E. Kelsey, a San Jose attorney who served as Secretary of the Northern California Indian Association, was appointed as Special Agent to the Commissioner to carry out Congress' mandate. We might also note that, at this same time, Joel Whitney was also a member of the Northern California Indian Association. This association had been formed in 1894 as a branch of the Women's National Indian Association. Based in San Jose, it campaigned for the advancement of California Indians and, as a member, Kelsey had been lobbying to secure land titles for Indian families and villages. For Placer County, the census Kelsey conducted in 1905-6 recorded 98 Indians under the category "without land", 28 of them were listed as heads of families and he recorded 7 Indians under the category "owning land" with 2 as heads of families. Based on Kelsey's report and recommendations, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis Leupp recommended that Congress appropriate monies to purchase lands for homeless California Indians. The Indian Office Appropriation Act passed in 1906 provided \$100,000 to purchase land for homeless Indians of no specific tribal affiliation. Kelsey was appointed purchasing agent. In 1908, another \$50,000 was appropriated and regular additional appropriations came on an almost annual basis through 1933.

In a letter of August 15, 1916, Special Indian Agent John J. Terrell described to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs a band of twenty-five Indians residing in a small village on the outskirts of Auburn. He described them as all full bloods except for two who were three-quarter blood and characterized them as a "small hard-working band of good Indians (who) should receive some of the benefits of the appropriation for the homeless Indians of California." In 1917, the government purchased twenty acres of land in trust for the Auburn band.

The chief of this small band was Captain Jim Dick and one of the first things he did was direct the building of a kum. From him we get some insight about planning and organizing a Big Time. Dick's account was transcribed by Ralph L. Beals who spent three months in 1929 interviewing Nisenan Indians for a paper entitled "Ethnology of the Nisenan." Beals called the event Dick described "a dance revival" and said it took place about 1890 when Dick was about twenty. Dick was a son of the chief at Cool. His father and his uncle Captain Joe started talking about building a kum and holding a Big Time at Pilot Hill. Later, they invited Captain John of Auburn and others to a dinner to talk things over. A date was set for a Big Time and they especially invited all the young people even from far away. Dick's father and uncle directed the construction of the kum, one on the inside, one on the outside. After the kum was built, they held a rabbit and deer hunt. The women fixed the acorns and cooked over a fire in the kum, but everyone ate outside. Before the dance started, prayers were recited by the captain. Dick said that since the people at Pilot Hill did not know how to dance, the dancers came from elsewhere, although he did not say from where. After the Big Time, the visitors left one man and one woman dancer to teach dances to the people at Pilot Hill, who bought their outfits from the visitors. The chief from the visiting tribe announced that he would host another Big Time a month away so that the Pilot Hill people could come and show them how well they had learned the dances. The very next day the chief of the Pilot Hill people appointed the dancers who would perform and asked for a volunteer to be the drummer. All the younger men held back and looked at the older men who started saying, "I am too old, let someone younger do it." Finally, someone willing was found and another dinner

was held two or three days later and the dancers were given their first chance to perform. They imitated what the visitors had shown them. Some of them went into the brush to practice, then tried it in the roundhouse. When they seemed ready, Captain Joe, who was in charge of the dance, had the boys and girls go around four times and kept telling the drummer to hit it harder and faster. Then five dancers went to Colfax for the first test. Prior to the Big Time, they practiced for four days, but rested the day before the dance. When they arrived for the ceremony, they went into the brush where they changed; then, when all the people were assembled in the kum, the dancers marched in singing.

Some fifty rancherias were eventually created by the program that gave the Auburn Band its twenty acres. Another twenty acres were added to the Auburn Rancheria in 1953, but the land was held in trust by the federal government and, in August 1958, the government passed the California Rancheria Termination Act which called for the distribution of communal lands and assets to the individual tribe members of forty-one rancherias. This terminated the federal government's trust responsibilities to the rancherias, including health care, education, and subsistence. The government sold the Auburn Rancheria land except for a 2.8 acre parcel where a tribal church and park were located. Then, in 1967, the government terminated its federal recognition of the Auburn Band. This loss of federal recognition proved even more devastating twenty years later since only "federally recognized" tribes had access to the opportunities for economic improvement that were created by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act passed by Congress in 1988. This act required states to negotiate in good faith for the operation of gambling casinos by tribes whose sovereignty had been recognized by the federal government. A number of Indian bands brought suit to have their recognition restored, claiming that it had been illegally withdrawn. The surviving members of the Auburn Band reorganized their tribal government as the United Auburn Indian Community in 1991. The Auburn Indian Restoration Act restored federal recognition and included a provision that the tribe could acquire land in Placer County to establish a new reservation. A casino soon followed. The Auburn Band began negotiating with the State of California in 1999 and finally opened Thunder Valley Casino in Lincoln in June 2003. An expansion in 2010 included a seventeen-story luxury hotel which is the tallest building in Placer County. In March 2021, ground was broken on The Venue, a 150,000 square foot state-of-the-art entertainment facility with seating for 4,500 guests. The United Auburn Indian Community not only operates one of the most successful Indian casinos in the United States, but it also operates Whitney Oaks Golf Club which it purchased in 2012. The golf course is located on the land of Joel Whitney's Spring Valley Ranch where Captain John had his mud baths and grasshopper drives. Looking at that manicured golf course landscape, what would Captain John think today? What would Joel Parker Whitney think? His mansion was demolished in the early 1950s, but the pyramid tomb where his ashes were interred in 1913 is near the eleventh green. Almost once driven to the edge of extinction, today the descendants of the Auburn Nisenan not only contribute millions of dollars to worthy local charities, but are the fourth largest employer in Placer County.

The renovation of Central Square was meant to make the area more attractive to pedestrians and the Nisenan dancer that capped its completion was only the first installation of public art in the Central Square that is intended to further enhance the downtown experience. Also depicted in Central Square near the dancing Nisenan is a mosaic sculpture of three leaping fish, a salmon, a steelhead, and a rainbow trout. Called "Confluence," the sculpture is intended to highlight

the past, present, and future of salmon in the Auburn area. It was dedicated during the 2019 Auburn Salmon and Steelhead Festival sponsored by the non-profit Save Auburn Ravine Salmon and Steelhead. This group is working to make the entire length of the Auburn Ravine navigable for anadromous fish. The statue actually caused a bit of controversy. The Central Square was designed to commemorate people and activities that are symbolic of Auburn. The Streetscape Committee is very careful in choosing who and what appears on the granite tiles. Many are still blank awaiting further choices. The Placer Historical Society lobbied against the statue on the grounds that it was misleading to the public, arguing that salmon have no viable historical significance for the Auburn area. The sponsors of the statue could counter that E.A. Stevenson, special Indian agent in Placer and El Dorado counties, watched Nisenan taking barrels of salmon at Salmon Falls on the South Fork above Folsom in 1851. Lardner in *History of Placer and Nevada Counties* said, “Both the north and middle forks are clear mountain streams. Salmon came far up the rivers in the early days, but the North Fork dam has stopped the salmon running.” Salmon and steelhead certainly had an historic past and importance to the Nisenan, but do they have a future in the Auburn area? Today the salmon are stopped even further down river before Nimbus Dam where the Nimbus Fish Hatchery takes the eggs and raises the Chinook salmon and steelhead for release back into the river below.

The art piece that dominates the Art Park is “Stella Stella Stella.” Painted larger than life on the wall of the old city hall and under a canopy of colorful umbrellas, she is a flamboyant modern woman wearing pink flamingo glasses done in three “Andy Warholesque” versions that are in stark contrast to the dancing Nisenan across the street, yet both were created by the same local artist, Frank Ordaz. The much smaller original entitled “Stella Stella” was inspired by a local women’s group, the Sugar Plump Fairies, known for their costumes, antics, and silliness all done to raise funds to introduce all forms of art to the youth of the area. Ordaz spied Sugar Plump Fairy “Lemon Drop” in a downtown parade for an event, snapped some pictures, and painted the portrait. In an article, Stella is described as “a ‘fun-raising’ philanthropist with a taste for glitter and performance art.” So maybe the modern Stella and the ancient Indian dancer are not really so far apart after all. But there is one thing that is not immediately obvious about how modern “Stella Stella Stella” really is. The painting was done by a robot in September 2018. It took one day to set it up and four hours to paint it.

Endurance Capital of the World

Because city leaders felt that Auburn’s history reflected the California journey, granite pavers that highlight historical events and the people who have made Auburn history were incorporated into the Central Square streetscape. The city also constructed brick pillars and installed granite pavers to honor the athletes and organizers responsible for making Auburn the “Endurance Capital of the World.” On April 14, 2003, the Auburn City Council declared Auburn to be the “Endurance Capital of the World,” since it is home to some of the most challenging endurance competitions in the world. In 2017, the city trademarked the title. Two of the most internationally famous events, the Tevis Cup 100-Mile Endurance Equestrian Ride and the Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run, were initiated and organized by Wendell Robie, the same man who started

the Auburn Ski Club. Interpretive signs in the Central Square streetscape give some of the history and show the route and elevation changes of these famous races.

About eighty-five percent of the race route follows a trail first used by the Nisenan for trade with the Washoe and later used by gold miners as a means of passage between Auburn and the Comstock Lode in Nevada. The development of wagon roads elsewhere, the railroad, and the end of the gold and silver rushes brought an end to the trail's usefulness and it became overgrown and largely forgotten. In the late 1920s, Robert Watson, constable of Tahoe City, set about rediscovering the trail by searching for old blazes in pine trees that had once marked the trail. His effort rekindled interest in that era of Placer County history. On September 22, 1931, the Auburn chapter of the Native Sons of the Golden West sponsored a 100-mile ride led by Wendell Robie for the purpose of placing markers on the trail that Watson had rediscovered so it could be more easily recognized by riders in the future. Dr. Conrad Briner, a former mayor of Auburn, documented the ride with a silent film camera. On the second night of the grueling trip, Robert Watson, still quite the horseman at seventy-seven, joined them at Robertson Flat and guided them the rest of the way to Tahoe City. The whole trip took three and one-half days, but they left the trail clearly marked. Known as the "Auburn-Lake Tahoe Riding Trail," it was frequently used by horsemen thereafter.

Endurance rides were growing in popularity, but it was not until 1946 that the first 100-mile three-day ride in California was held in Guerneville. In 1952, Washoe Junior Horsemen, with adult guides, held a 100-mile three-day ride in the Sierras above Reno crossing over into California. Robie would have been aware of the event. Vermont's Green Mountain 100 Mile Trail Ride was already in its twentieth year when representatives of three riding clubs met in Auburn in January 1955 to discuss plans for a three-day endurance ride modeled on the Vermont event. At that meeting, Robie made a proposal that there be a 100-mile one-day endurance race held on the last day of the event. At first, to some it seemed an impossible feat, but others said that they had ridden as much as eighty to eighty-five miles in a day and that 100-miles in a day was certainly possible. Dr. Bullock, a veterinarian, agreed that it was within the capacity of a well-conditioned horse.

Robie developed a prospectus and provided some financing. In April, the organizers made a presentation to the Placer County Chamber of Commerce. Robie promoted the event heavily. It was held in August with three 100-mile events: 68 riders for the three-day ride, 34 riders for the two-day ride, and Robie and four others for the one-day ride. In 1956, Robie renamed the Auburn-Lake Tahoe Riding Trail the "Western States Trail" and organized the Western States Trail Ride Inc. The next year, Robie called the race "The Pony Express Ride," He knew that the Pony Express never used that route, but mail carriers of the earlier express companies did. He also knew that the Winter Olympics to be held in Squaw Valley were going to be on the 100th anniversary of the start of the Pony Express and he wanted to capitalize on any publicity that came with the Games. With the approval of the Post Office, real mail was carried in that ride. For 1957, he changed the name to "Western States 100 Miles One Day Pony Express Ride." Today the crown jewel for endurance riders around the world is the silver belt buckle with the image of a Pony Express Rider that is awarded to those who finish the ride with horses in good condition. In 1959, Will Tevis put up a perpetual trophy in honor of his grandfather Lloyd Tevis to be awarded to the winner of the 100-mile one-day race and the event came to be known as

“The Tevis Cup.” Will Tevis was a famous horseman, but his grandfather who was president of Wells Fargo & Company from 1872 to 1892 had little interest in horses. Although he was a silent partner in his brother-in-law James Ben Ali Haggin’s Rancho Del Paso in Sacramento, he never visited it. As one drives by Haggin Oaks Golf Course off Business 80 today, it is hard to realize that it was once part of Rancho Del Paso which was the most successful breeding and racing operation in the world at the time and contributed in many ways to American horse racing. In 1964, Louis Haggin of Versailles, Kentucky, in honor of his grandfather, donated the Haggin Cup for the rider among the first ten crossing the finish line whose horse was judged to be in the most superior physical condition. In 2017, the Western States Trail Foundation Board of Governors added the Wendell Robie Trophy to be awarded to all horses that successfully completed at least five Tevis Cup rides.

The 2021 race had 140 participants. Spectators could view the race from different locations, but most congregated at the starting point at Robie Equestrian Park near Palisades Tahoe, which until September 2021 was called Squaw Valley, and at the finish line at the Auburn Fairgrounds. The race ends quite early in the morning with about half of the riders finishing in the last hour,

The Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run had its beginning in the Tevis Cup 100-Mile Endurance Equestrian Ride. For the 1972 Ride, Wendell Robie invited twenty soldiers from Fort Riley, Kansas, to test their endurance on foot. Their goal was to complete the course in less than 48 hours. Guided by an experienced rider, they started out a day before the riders. Only seven finished under 48 hours. At the closing ceremonies, this was the first time a trophy was awarded to a finisher on foot, but the soldiers were not the first runners on the course. On that first ride in 1955, about 3 a.m. in the morning, the horsemen were surprised to meet a young long-distance runner getting in shape for competition. He jogged alongside the horses for a stretch.

The year before the soldiers ran, twenty-three-year-old Harry “Gordy” Ainsleigh also spent a bit of time running the course. That was his first time competing in the equestrian ride and his weight was a bit of a disadvantage. To take the weight off his horse, he ran many miles, but still finished with a time of 19:37 which was about five hours after Donna Fitzgerald who won that year. He competed the next year passing by the seven soldiers and completed the race beating his previous time by ten minutes. He was quite impressed by the soldiers. In 1973, he decided to try a 50-mile run in the Castle Rock Ride which was established in 1967 and patterned after the Western State Trail Ride. He finished in about nine hours. He competed in the Western State Trail Ride that same year, but his horse came up lame and he did not finish. He procrastinated finding another horse for the 1974 ride. Drucilla Barner, who was Wendell Robie’s executive secretary at Heart Federal Savings and Loan and who in 1961 was the first woman to win the Ride, suggested that he run the trail on foot since he spent so much time running ahead or behind his horse anyway. When he decided to run, he also decided to do it in less than twenty-four hours. Most, including Robie, did not believe it could be done. Ainsleigh spent a good bit of time training. On the morning of the race, he was given a good head start so he did not have to deal with the horses in the early part of the single-track trail. The temperature reached 107 that day and at one point he was dehydrated and thought he could not finish, but after taking salt and water and a 30-minute rest, he continued the race to finish with a time of 23:42. This was the stuff of which legends are made and he became the icon of the race that would be established because of him.

Robie decided to make the 100-mile run part of the 1977 Western State Trail Ride. That first year the event was called the “Western States National One Day Run.” Robie had a three-foot replica of the Tevis trophy made which was later named the “Wendell Robie Cup.” Those who completed the race in 24-hours received a belt buckle with Mercury, the swift messenger god, engraved on it. But Mercury fared no better on the buckle than he did on the courthouse. He was replaced by an eagle on the courthouse and by a mountain lion on the buckles given to later participants. There were fourteen runners in the 1977 race and 200 riders. Horses and runners passing on sections of the narrow trail proved difficult and it was decided to separate the two events the next year. A new Board of Governors was set up for the foot race and a separate advertising campaign started. An advertisement in *Runner's World* magazine read: “Western States 100-mile Endurance Run. An experience only for ultramarathon veterans. Course: rugged, uncertified over mountains, through streams, with snakes and bears.” Sixty-three runners showed up to experience that and it has remained a tradition ever since. After the event in 1977, Robie hoped that Auburn would have “a name among the physical endurance enthusiasts.” Auburn has exceeded his hopes. A granite paver, of course, commemorates Robie’s achievements. The house that Robie lived in is number 3 on the Downtown walking tour just a block down the street from the pillar that lists the events that make Auburn the Endurance Capital of the World.

In the 19th century, Central Square was the lynchpin that joined two separate parts of Auburn together. Today, the renovated Central Square is the lynchpin that joins the present with the past. Once the center of Auburn through which the Lincoln Highway and Highway 40 passed, it is bypassed today by travelers on Interstate 80 at speeds two to three times faster than the traveler on the Central Pacific Railroad or the Lincoln Highway ever traveled, but the dome of the courthouse and the statue of Claude Chana are highly visible and beckon to the traveler telling him that there is much to be seen here worthy of exploration. Take the exit.