



The Placer

2019 May-June

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Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

Given the volume of snow in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the summer of 2019 will be another where folks will be snow skiing in July wearing their bathing suits.

We also hope that they will be riding the Heritage Trail this summer. This year we have a record 26 museums on board.

Joining us this year are Truckee's Old Jail and Railroad Museums, the new Loomis Library, and our own Archives and Collections Facility. The Student Scavenger Hunts, which were very popular, are back this year with some exciting new changes. As always, all visitors can enter a drawing for a gift basket by getting eight stamps on their Get-Up-And-Go cards. With an event every weekend from June 15th to Septem-

ber 7th, you will have no shortage of museums to choose from.

For details, please check out our blog at: www.theheritagetrail.blogspot.com.



This year also marks the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad. Heritage Trail will focus on this milestone by including the anniversary events in the Trail Guide and the blog. We've already added information for many of the events on the

blog, so please check it out!

I hope each of you has a terrific summer and don't forget to ride the Heritage Trail!

Are you afraid of snakes? W. B. Hotchkiss wasn't.

We're helping researchers around the world access unique items.

Help support the Placer County Historical Society.

Looking for something to do?

The Rattlesnake

by Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections

Rattlesnakes are a part of life in this area. As the weather gets warmer these cold-blooded reptiles come out of hibernation to find warmer spots. Snakes have been a part of our local folklore for centuries, through Native American mythology, town names, streets, and outlaws. The rattlesnake even found its way onto one of the first American flags, the Gadsden Flag, that depicts a rattlesnake coiled and ready to strike.

The odds of being bitten by a rattlesnake are small and fatalities are uncommon. However, their venom attacks blood cells, causing temporary or permanent tissue and muscle damage. Over the centuries many remedies have been used to treat snake bites. Most were ineffective, and some may have even caused the victim's death.

A popular treatment, often portrayed in movies and novels, involved cutting over the bite and sucking out the poison. This method was used throughout the world for centuries and had little benefit, unless applied quickly to a superficial bite. If the bite was deep, the remedy was useless.

Early newspaper accounts frequently reported the names of individuals who were bitten, and whether they lived or

died. On April 26, 1879, The Placer Herald cautioned its readers that “serpent poisons are not injurious when taken into the stomach, it is always safe to let a person suck the wound with his mouth, provided there is not abrasion of the lips.” Frequently the wound was cauterized with gunpowder. There were instances where it was mixed with egg and



salt before being applied as a poultice. The Placer Herald described the use of “rattlesnake weed,” which is “a sure cure for rattlesnake bites. The manner of application is to stew or chew the weed, and swallow the juice.” (Placer Herald, November 5, 1859)

Although many treatments were practiced, the use of alcohol, primarily whis-

key, was the only remedy sanctioned by medical professionals. It was believed to actively seek out the poison within the victim's body and destroy it.

On August 3, 1878 the Placer Herald published the story of a teamster who was bitten by a rattlesnake. The man rushed to his wagon to get whiskey and “drank all that he possibly could of the strong spirits, and then taking some tobacco from his pocket, saturated it in whisky, making a poultice in which he wrapped the injured hand.” The man survived.

Since rattlesnakes prefer temperatures between eighty and ninety degrees, bites are usually reported in the summer months and often occur while gardening or recreating. In May of 1881, a few months before his wedding to Anna Bernhard, Deidrick Backhaus had a run in with a large rattlesnake at his father's place in Dutch Ravine near Auburn. The Placer Herald reported that the rattlesnake “measured 5 feet 8 inches in length, and was as big around as a man's wrist. It had 13 rattles which were cut off and sent to the Herald office as a curiosity.”

Even the Placer Herald's publisher, W. B. Hotchkiss, was no stranger to rattlesnakes. Here he is in 1905 (right) pictured with a large specimen. He is

Collection Highlights



This amazing carving is currently on display at the Gold Rush Museum. It was carved in the 1860s by a miner and used as a match holder on Polifka's Bar in Michigan Bluff. It is a skull with a snake slithering out of the eye sockets. Although I can't be certain that it represents a rattlesnake, the diamond shaped head and the turned-up tip of the tail made it impossible not to include here.



W. B. Hotchkiss' leather shin guards. In April 1879 the Placer Herald advised: "Where vipers and the smaller snakes are found, woodmen and others should wear thick boots, as they seldom attempt to bite above the ankle, and their fangs cannot penetrate leather." Sturdy leather boots were commonly advertised in the Placer Herald for both men and women.



Rattlesnakes played an important role in Native American mythology and healing. The rattles were sometimes worn as a necklace to sooth teething children. Rattlesnakes were also used in Native American basket design. There are several baskets with a rattlesnake pattern in our collection, but these two stand out. The large bowl was made by the Cahuilla of Southern California, and the smaller was made by the Yokuts.



wearing boots with leather shin guards which would provide additional protection against snake bites.

Rattlesnakes are amazing creatures, but they can also be dangerous. If you have the misfortune of getting bitten by one remember to stay calm and call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. Don't

apply a tourniquet. Don't pack the bitten area in ice. Don't cut the wound and suck out the venom. Don't drink alcohol. Summer is just around the corner. Stay safe!

Placer County Participates in the California Revealed Project

by Bryanna Ryan, Supervising Curator

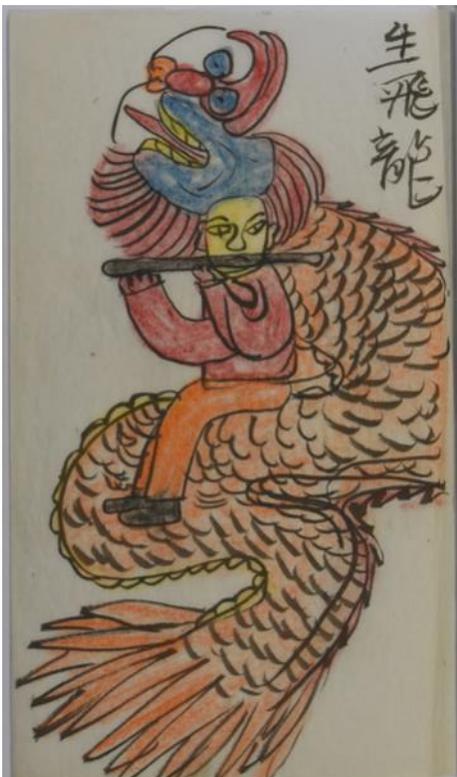
Placer County Museums has been collecting material to preserve the history of this region since 1948. Many of these items are valuable to researchers worldwide, but are also fragile and prone to deterioration. We are happy to announce that eleven such items have been selected as part of the California Revealed Project.

These objects have been carefully packed and shipped to the California State Library where they will be digitized and then returned to us. The images and audio recordings will be preserved as part of the Hathi Trust and made widely available online at Archive.org. By this winter, the originals should be safely stored in our vault while their images and sound recordings are accessible to the entire world. These resources will hopefully help add understanding to our shared history.

One of the items is a beautifully illustrated “Book of Chinese Immortals and Whimsical Figures” which was created between 1890 and 1930. The original artist is Ma Wing Chong (also known as M.W. Buck, 1889-1959), a citizen of Auburn, who was a teamster and laborer in Placer County.

This picture book, with text written in Cantonese, offers a vivid portrayal of important figures in Chinese culture in-

cluding the Flying Golden Dragon, God with Three Eyes, and Immortal Buddha (among others).



Two other Chinese manuscripts from 1886 have also been selected for this project. One is a book of ideological text for the Chinese secret society known as the Hung Shun Tong (the Society of Heaven and Earth). The other is the organization’s rules, rituals, instructions, discipline, and secret signals. This society existed in northern California with the goal of reuniting to overthrow the Manchus. It is a unique and valuable resource for scholars studying the history of Chinese in northern California during the 19th century.

Finally, eight Recordiogram phonograph discs will be of special interest to those



of you familiar with the DeWitt History Museum. These vinyl-coated paper discs were used in a recording booth provided by the American Red Cross at the DeWitt General Hospital.

To boost morale, individuals could record short personal messages to send to service men and women. Due to the fragile nature of these discs we have not had the pleasure of listening to them. Based on their labels, we expect to soon hear Colonel Smith, Colonel Storck, Lorraine Anderson, and other DeWitt General Hospital staff members. To hear the voices of people we have only read about and seen in photographs is something that I am especially excited for and I am looking forward to sharing these with everyone when they are ready.

News from Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President April400@wavecable.com (530) 823-2128

I am hoping by the time this Placer reaches you that Spring will have arrived! The “but we need the rain” comments are getting a bit old and most of us are more than ready for Spring.

Upcoming for the Historical Society is our Heritage Trail event at the Benton Welty Historic Classroom. The date is June 15th and we are looking for volunteers. We recently installed the map donated by Sharon and John Blodger, but due to its height, we cannot pull out the various “leaves” of the map. If anyone has a long pole with a hooked end, we would welcome a donation.

The Big Day of Giving in on Thursday, May 2nd. The Historical Society is on the list of approved organizations for the first time this year. Even if you don't donate to the Society, visit their website, www.bigdayofgiving.org, to see the variety of Placer County organizations worthy of your donation. It is a wonderful experience to give back to your community.

Thank you everyone for RSVPing to the last dinner meeting. All our attendees met the deadline. This month we will have another change. **Dinner will be at 6:00pm, not 6:30pm.** Be sure to arrive a bit earlier than you are used to doing.

Our next dinner meeting will be June 6th, (please RSVP by June 1st) at the

Veteran's Hall. Christina Richter from the Roseville Historical Society will be our guest speaker. She will be talking about the restoration of the Fiddymont property in Roseville.

Don't forget to check out the events planned for the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. There are a variety of fun activities occurring from Sacramento to Truckee, and our own Heritage Trail programs will also be focusing on the Railroad.

When the Central Pacific Railroad came to Auburn on May 13th, 1865, you could take a round trip journey from Sacramento to Auburn for \$1.00. On the 17th of May, the Sacramento Fire Department planned to have a special train on the tracks coming to Auburn for a picnic. They would have 1,000 people and two brass bands on board.

April McDonald-Loomis

Heritage Trail in June

June 15th, 10am-4pm

The Benton Welty School Room, the Bernhard Museum and the Gold Rush Museum

June 22nd

The Loomis Library (10-5pm)
The Griffith Quarry Museum (8-12pm)
The Rocklin History Museum (10-4pm)

June 29th, 10am-4pm

Tahoe City: The Gatekeepers Museum and Watson Cabin

The Sesquicentennial Celebration

May 4th, 7pm

Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus Historical Review, Truckee Comm. Arts Center

May 10th, 12pm

Ribbon Cutting Kickoff, Train Depot

May 11th, 7pm

History Talk – The Meaning of the Railroad, Truckee Tahoe Airport

June 1st, 7pm

History Talk – The Firsts, Truckee Tahoe Airport

June 8th, 5pm

History Talk - Story of Tunnel Six, Clair Tappaan Lodge

June 10th, 6pm

History Talk - Locomotive Technologies, Pizza on the Hill

June 15th, 10am (walk) 5pm (talk)

History Walk - Boca Townsite; History Talk - Brewery, Steam and Beer, Donner Memorial State Park

June 22nd, 7pm

History Talk - The Chinese and their Importance to the Railroad, Truckee Tahoe Airport

June 29th, 7pm

History Talk - Snow Sheds, Fires and, Other Related Subjects, Truckee Tahoe Airport

Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society

Chris Miller
(530) 346-8599
colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest (209) 606-6859
donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Sandy Simester
(530) 367-3535
foresthillhistory.org

Fruitvale School Hall Community Association

Lyndell Grey
(916) 645-3517

Golden Drift Historical Society

Sarah Fugate
(530) 389-2121

Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard
(916) 747-1961

Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center

Richard Yue
(530) 346-7121

Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen
(916) 645-3800
laamca.org

Lincoln Highway Association

Bob Dieterich
bobd@iname.com
lincolnhighwayassoc.org

Loomis Basin Historical Society

Karen Clifford
(916) 663-3871
ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html

Maidu Museum & Historic Site

Kaitlin Kincade
(916) 774-5934
roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum

The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics

David C. Antonucci
(775) 722-3502
tahoemuseum.org

Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor #59

Dave Allen (530) 878-2878
dsallen59@sbcglobal.net

Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association

Mario Farinha
(530) 269-2412

North Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Marnie Carr
(530) 583-1762
northtahoemuseums.org

Old Town Auburn Preservation Society

Lynn Carpenter
(530) 885-1252

Placer County Genealogical Society

Toni Rosasco
(530) 888-8036
pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society

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

Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Fran Hanson
(530) 878-6990

Rocklin Historical Society

Hank Lohse
(916) 624-3464
rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Fire Museum

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

Roseville Historical Society

Christina Richter
(916) 773-3003
rosevillehistorical.org

May

- 2** 2:00pm Placer County Historical Society Board Meeting, Room 10, Auburn City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn. (530) 906-4901
- 7** 9:00am Historic Organization Committee Meeting, Portuguese Hall, 690 Taylor Rd., Newcastle. (530) 889-6500.
- 13** 6:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464
- 14** 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003
- 15** 6:00pm Forest Hill Divide Historical Society Business Meeting, Forest Hill Divide Museum. (530) 367-3535
- 16** 1:00pm "Crossing the County with Railroad Iron," Gold Rush Museum, 601 Lincoln Way, Auburn. (530) 889-6500
- 22** 6:00pm Loomis Basin Historical Society General Meeting, Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871
- 23** 7:00pm Placer Genealogical Society Meeting, Beecher Room, Auburn Library, Auburn. (530) 885-2216

June

- 6** 6:00pm Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting, Auburn Veteran's Hall, 100 East St, Auburn. (530) 906-4901
- 10** 6:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464
- 11** 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003
- 15** 10:00am Heritage Trail, The Benton Welty School Room, the Bernhard Museum, and the Gold Rush Museum.
- 19** 5:30pm Historical Advisory Board Meeting, Bernhard Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd. Auburn. (530) 889-6500
- 22** 9:00am Heritage Trail, Loomis Library, Griffith Quarry Museum, Rocklin History Museum.
- 27** 7:00pm Placer Genealogical Society Meeting, Beecher Room, Auburn Library, Auburn. (530) 885-2216
- 27** 10:00am Heritage Trail, The Gatekeepers Museum (530) 583-1762, and Watson Cabin (530) 583-8717, Tahoe City.

Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

When: June 6, 2019

Time: 6:00 Dinner, 7:30 Program

Where: Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East Street, Auburn

Cost: \$16 per person

Program: The Speaker is Christina Richter from the Roseville Historical Society. She will speak about the restoration of the Fiddymont property in Roseville.

PLEASE RSVP BY JUNE 1ST

Mail Dinner Checks to:

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

DO NOT BRING ALCOHOL.



PLACER COUNTY MUSEUMS

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