



# The Placer

2025 September-October Volume 40, Issue 5

## Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator



PLACER COUNTY  
MUSEUMS

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It's been an unusually mild summer and a few leaves in some trees have already begun to give us a sneak peek at the upcoming fall fashion. I love autumn and Halloween is my favorite holiday, so I have been ready for this since June. There are already Halloween lights flashing on my desk.

It's a busy time for us because we have a lot of seasonal events. The first will be the re-installation of our exhibit, *A Grave Affair*, in the Treasury of the historic Courthouse. This exhibit interprets the death and mourning rituals of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The exhibit will open September 12<sup>th</sup> and run through Halloween. Next up is the Old Auburn Cemetery Tour on Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. You don't need reservations, just show up and be prepared to meet some interesting characters from our past.

As noted in a prior issue, I am retiring this year, and my last day will be Halloween. I've been looking back through our files and found this nugget from the minutes of our staff meeting on September 11, 2008: "Ralph reported that he has been working with Bev Lewis from the Placer County Film office on a new exhibit in the History on the Go space in the gallery. It will be on movies that were filmed in Placer County. The four movies will be: Gold Rush (Truckee), Greed (Iowa Hill), Godfather II (Lake Tahoe), and Phenomenon (Auburn). The exhibit will be on display for approximately a year and a half."

If I recall, that exhibit was on display for about two and a half years before being replaced with one of many subsequent exhibits on local cemeteries. Speaking of cemeteries, I hope to see you all at the Old Auburn Cemetery Tour on October 5<sup>th</sup>!



Collection of prosthetic eyes c. 1885-1930, part of *A Grave Affair* exhibit at the Placer County Museum.

## New Donation Highlight

*By Kasia Woroniecka , Curator of Collections*



This Chinese sewing basket, dating to around 1900, features a lid adorned with decorative tassels. Popular from the 1880s through the 1930s, these baskets were commonly used to store sewing supplies. They also served as traditional wedding gifts, often filled with food and other offerings. Typically crafted from bamboo, cane, grasses, or willow, these baskets reflect the growing Western fascination with Asian design and culture during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The basket belonged to Effa Elvira Lardner Gordon, who was the youngest daughter of W. B. Lardner and Jennie Mitchell Lardner. W.B. Lardner was a prominent attorney, State Senator, Placer County District Attorney, and Auburn's City Attorney.

## Greetings from a Haunted Past: Highlights from a Halloween Postcard Collection

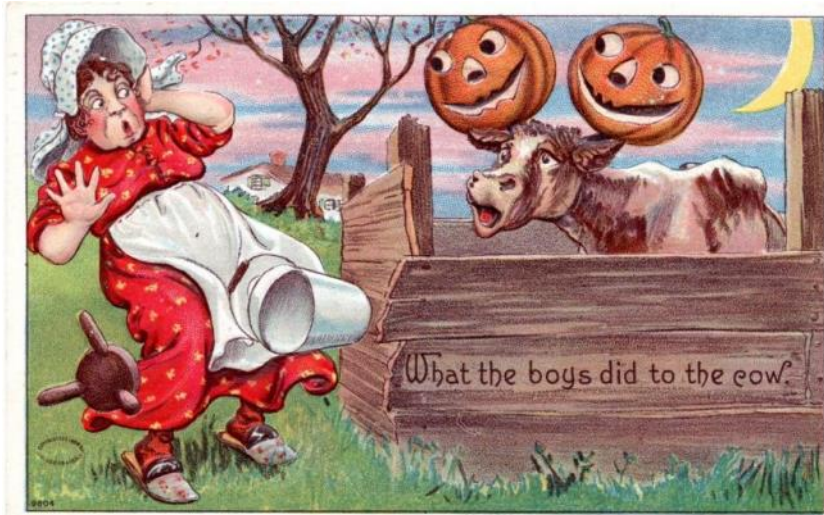
*By Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections*

The tradition of Halloween greeting cards began in the United States in the 1890s, with postcards becoming especially popular between 1900 and 1920, a period often considered the “golden age” of Halloween postcards. Much like Christmas and birthday cards, Halloween cards grew into a cherished custom in the early 20th century, featuring colorful illustrations and familiar holiday motifs.

Early Halloween postcards commonly depicted classic imagery such as witches, black cats, and jack-o'-lanterns, with the jack-o'-lantern emerging as an especially prominent symbol. As the holiday grew in popularity, so did the demand for themed cards. By the mid-20th century, companies like Hallmark helped commercialize Halloween greetings through mass production and national marketing campaigns.

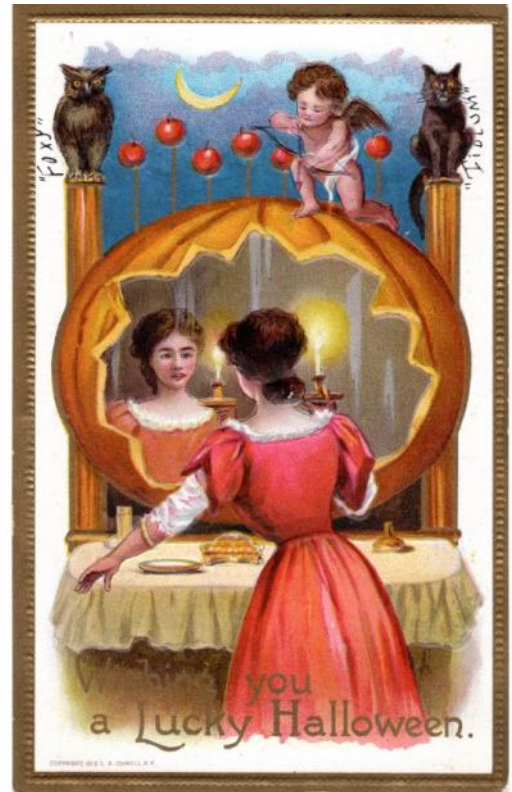
We recently accepted a large collection of postcard albums, including a few fascinating examples of early Halloween postcards that highlight this unique and whimsical aspect of American holiday history. Here are a few examples:





Halloween postcard. "What the boys did to the cow." 1910

PCM Collection



Halloween postcard. "Wishing you a Lucky Halloween." 1910.

PCM Collection



Halloween postcard. "A Joyful Halloween." 1912.

PCM Collection



Halloween postcard. "To Wish You the Best of Luck at Halloween" 1924.

PCM Collection



Halloween postcard. "The Joys of Halloween be Yours." 1910.

PCM Collection

## New Exhibit Lights Up the Placer County Museum

*By Jason Adair, Exhibit Technician*

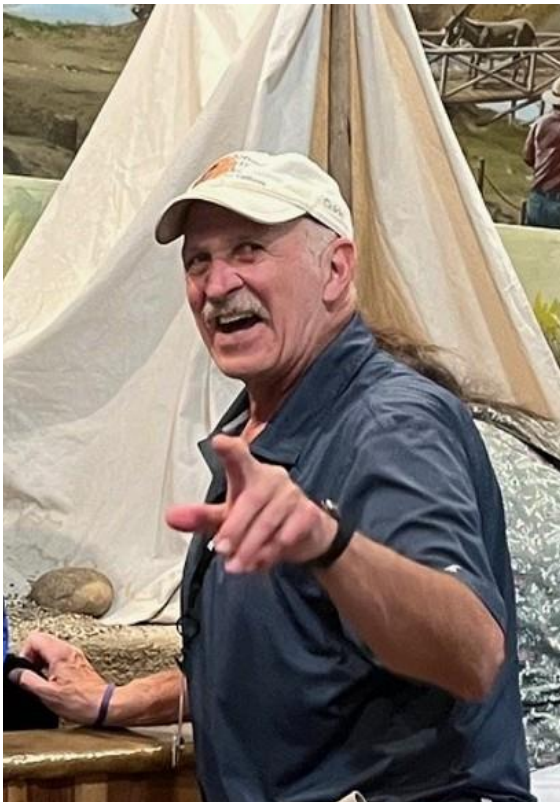
Anyone who knows me probably knows my feelings about stained glass. Simply put, I'm not a fan. But dang it if I don't love the new exhibit we put in the Courthouse that features a mammoth stained-glass lampshade made in memory of Drucilla Barner, the first woman to win the Tevis Cup. I'm sure many people have looked at it in the back of Collections on their way to the high-density shelving, but no one has actually seen it. We hadn't really seen it until we wired it up and put a bulb in it, at which point we were all taken aback and knew we had to get it on display. What's more, once we decided on it, Someone had to make it more difficult



by saying, "It would be better if it spun around in the case so you could see the whole thing." Dustin said he could sort that part out so there was no going back. As it turned out, it's one of those exhibits that people who work in the courts stop me in the hall to say how much they like it. If that's not enough of a reason to come to the courthouse and look around at what we have going on, we also tuned up the gold display. The fabric in it had faded over time and the gold just didn't pop as much as it used to, but not anymore. Come check them both out and if you're not completely satisfied, you can have some candy corn that is already on Ralph's desk. Just in time for...Labor Day?

## Volunteer Spotlight

*By Katy Bartosh, Curator of Education*



This issue's docent spotlight is Ron Grove. Ron was a high school history teacher, but when he retired, he was looking for something history-related to do. "I heard great things about how the volunteers for the museums were treated so well and went to the training in 2018 with Beth and the rest is history." I asked him what his favorite object was at the museums: "Probably the soda machine in the Courthouse. It's so cool and attracts a lot of attention with visitors. It's such a great story too." If any of you have met Ron, you might have noticed he has an endless supply of "Dad jokes" on tap. "I knew I had to do something to get students interested in history, so my "hook" was what came to be called Grove jokes. One stand by, when teaching the Constitution I mentioned that the Bill of Rights was going to be called the William of Rights, but that was too formal. Some kids rolled their eyes (ok they all did) but they did listen and learned history isn't so bad."

Thank you for volunteering, Ron!



## Annual History Award

This year's History Award is a very special one for the Placer County Docent Museum Docents and all those folks who love our county museums. Ralph Gibson is leaving his post at the leader of the museum program after years of expanding, improving and guiding the museums. All those who have worked with him appreciate his work ethic, (he attends every meeting and every event), his kind manner, his wise counsel and even his shirt choice!

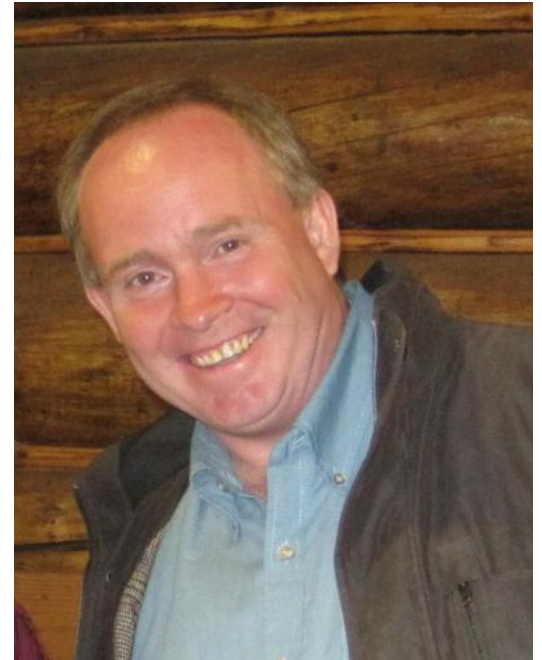
Ralph will be missed by all of us. Please join us at the **October 2, 2025** Placer County Historical Society general dinner meeting to honor Ralph.

Non-members are welcome to join us to honor Ralph. Dinner is \$30.00 per person and **reservations must be made before September 28<sup>th</sup>**. Please RSVP to [rsvp.pchs@gmail.com](mailto:rsvp.pchs@gmail.com)

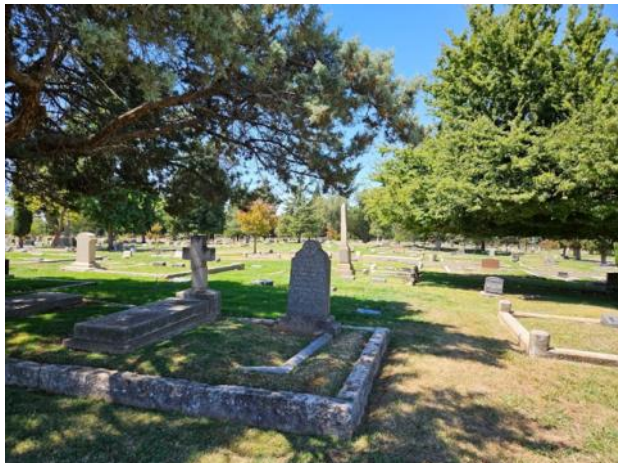
We can accommodate vegetarian or gluten free requests only. You must indicate that special request when you RSVP.

In that reply, please let us know if you will be paying at the door or via Venmo at [placer-historical-society](https://www.venmo.com/placer-historical-society).

The meeting starts at 6:00 pm. Please join us to honor Ralph!



## Rocklin Historical Society Cemetery Tour



The Rocklin Historical Society will be hosting tours of the Rocklin Cemetery on Day of the Dead (**Saturday, Nov. 1**). We will be offering two tours of the gravesites of notable residents in the cemetery – one from 10 a.m. to noon and the second from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Each tour will be limited to 20 people (age 16 and older).

Volunteers depicting the notable residents will be stationed at select gravesites to offer a brief history of the resident as well as his/her impact on our community.

Tickets, at \$20 per person (or \$15 for Rocklin Historical Society members), can be purchased on Evite starting in mid-October.

Watch Facebook and our website ([rocklinhistorical.org](http://rocklinhistorical.org)) for more details.

Proceeds from this event will benefit our Secret Garden, which is being developed behind the Rocklin Library in memory of Rocklin's first county librarian, Jennie Minkinen.

For more information, send an email to [rocklinhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:rocklinhistorical@gmail.com).

## Chinese Cemetery Memorial Plaque Unveiling

The Golden Drift Historical Society is hosting a Memorial Plaque Unveiling on **Saturday, September 13, 2025**. The ceremony will commence at 11 am with a Taoist Blessing Ceremony, followed by the unveiling of the Memorial Plaque honoring Dutch Flat's Chinese Pioneers and an Incense Offering.

Dutch Flat's Chinese Cemetery Restoration Project is a joint effort of the Golden Drift Historical Society and the Chinatown History and Culture Association, with support from the CCBA, and many other organizations and individuals.



Dutch Flat Chinese Cemetery

Cemetery Road

Dutch Flat,  
CA 95714



## Placer County Historical Society

### Dinner Meeting

When: Thursday, October 2, 2025

Meeting at 6:00, Dinner at 6:15, Speaker at 6:45

Roger Staab on "How the Southern Pacific and Lake Tahoe Railway Saved Lake Tahoe."

Location: **Veterans Memorial Hall**

Dinner cost: \$30.00.

100 East Street, Auburn, CA

Speaker presentation: Free

*Please RSVP to [rsvp.pchs@gmail.com](mailto:rsvp.pchs@gmail.com)*

Please go to [www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org) for more information



## Placer County Historical Organizations

### Colfax Area Historical Society

Jay McIntyre, President, (530) 346-8599  
[colfaxhistory.org](http://colfaxhistory.org)

### Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest, (209) 606-6859  
[donnersummithistoricalsociety.org](http://donnersummithistoricalsociety.org)

### Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Annie DeMaria-Norris (916) 206-4479  
[foresthillhistory.org](http://foresthillhistory.org)

### Fruitvale School Hall

Community Association  
 Mark Fowler

### Golden Drift Historical Society

Sarah Fugate, (530) 389-2121

### Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard, (916) 747-1961

### Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center

Larry Finney, (530) 305-9380

### Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen, (916) 645-3800

[laamca.org](http://laamca.org)

### Lincoln Highway Association

Trey Pitsenberger  
[vice.president@lincolnhighwayassoc.org](mailto:vice.president@lincolnhighwayassoc.org)

### Loomis Basin Historical Society

Karen Clifford, (916) 663-3871  
[www.loomisbasinhistory.org](http://www.loomisbasinhistory.org)

### Maidu Museum & Historic Site

Kaitlin Kincade, (916) 774-5934  
[roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum](http://roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum)

### The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics

David C. Antonucci, (775) 722-3502  
[tahoemuseum.org](http://tahoemuseum.org)

### Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor #59

Dave Allen, (530) 878-2878  
[dsallen59@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsallen59@sbcglobal.net)

### Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association

Mario Farinha, (530) 269-2412

### North Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Phil Sexton, (530) 583-1762  
[northtahoemuseums.org](http://northtahoemuseums.org)

### Placer County Genealogical Society

Diane Fishburn  
<http://www.placergenealogy.org>

### Placer County Historical Society

April McDonald-Loomis  
 (530) 823-2128  
[placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://placercountyhistoricalsociety.org)

### Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Craig Norris

### Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

Chuck Spinks  
[Psrhs.org](http://Psrhs.org)

### Rocklin Historical Society

Gloria Beverage (916) 624-3464  
[rocklinhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:rocklinhistorical@gmail.com)

### Roseville Historical Society

Denise Fiddymont, (916) 773-3003  
[rosevillehistorical.org](http://rosevillehistorical.org)

## Calendar:

*Please confirm all meeting times and locations with each organization*

Foresthill Divide Historical Society Meeting:	Monday, September 15th at 6:00 p.m.
Golden Drift Historical Society Meeting:	Monday, October 6th at 7:00 p.m.
Historical Advisory Board Meeting:	Wednesday, October 15th at 5:30 p.m.
Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting:	Wednesday, September 17th at 6:00 p.m.
Placer County Historical Society Meeting:	Thursday, September 4th at 2:00 p.m.
Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society:	Tuesday, September 23rd at 7:00 p.m.
Rocklin Historical Society Meeting:	Tuesday, September 9th at 6:30 p.m.
Roseville Historical Society Meeting:	Tuesday, September 9th at 4:00 p.m.

