

Auburn's Conroy Hotel

Karri R. Samson

The Conroy Hotel on Railroad Street, formerly the Putnam Hotel, had a grand opening on May 10, 1899. The Auburn Band played from the balcony. At 9:30 a waltz opened a dance that lasted until sunrise the next morning. At midnight a grand dinner was served for nearly 500 guests. It was believed that one thousand people, from all parts of Placer County and Sacramento, came to see the newly renovated hotel.

Sam Putnam opened the Putnam Hotel in April 1880. He purchased an unsuccessful fruit cannery building and remodeled it into a fine hotel at the cost of about \$12,500. On January 9, 1881, the hotel burned to the ground. Putnam rebuilt an even grander hotel. It was insured for \$5,000.

After his death in 1882, the hotel was reopened by new owner John W. Thompson on June 18, 1883. On June 25, 1884, John Gassner purchased it.

The Conroy Hotel contained "42 sleeping rooms, a fine large office, a beautiful parlor and a commodious dining-room which is supplied with all the delicacies of the season, rendering this a first class hotel." Conroy also built on an additional 20 x 42 feet for a card and billiard room. In 1905 Conroy added a two-story annex. Conroy sold his hotel to local business men Albert F. Ford, J.D. Meredith, J.B. Landis and Fred Landis February 1909. They christened it the



Conroy Hotel, Auburn, CAL.
Published for Knief & Fleming, Auburn, CAL.

New Conroy Hotel. Under subsequent owners, the name was changed to the Hotel Placer. At one time it was also known as the Nashville House.

William C. Conroy came to Auburn with his parents at the age of nine. He was employed with the railroad as a baggage master and freight agent for 13 years. In 1890 he was elected the sheriff of Placer County and served as sheriff for eight years.



After selling the hotel, Conroy was employed as a watchman at the Clipper Gap Powder Works, Mt. Quarries, and the City of Auburn. Conroy died on August 4, 1923, at the age of 66, shortly after recovering from pneumonia. He had been in Auburn that day and had expressed that he would be ready to resume his duties as night watchman the next week.



On May 4, 1912, the main hotel burned down, but the annex was spared. The hotel that replaced it in 1914 was named the Hotel Auburn (there already was an Auburn Hotel). Today the building houses businesses and is called the Auburn Promenade at 853 Lincoln Way.

Karri R. Samson (Samson is a longtime PCHS board member and Landmarks Committee chair)

PCHS Note: The Society is looking for more photos, movies, stories and other items relating to the Conroy Hotel, Putnam Hotel, Hotel Auburn, Auburn Promenade, restaurants or other businesses located there. If you can share, we would love to hear from you.