



The Placer

2021 May-June

Volume 24, Issue 3

Inside this issue:

Administrator's Notes	1
Powder Flasks	2
The Citrus Literary Society	3
Forging Ahead	4
News from PCHS	6
Historical Organizations	7

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Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

As we look ahead to a summer that promises to be a little brighter than last summer, staff has been busy with reopening procedures and plans for all our museums. When we get to June, only the Bernhard Museum will remain closed. We hope to reopen that museum later in the summer, but there is another possibility floating in the warming wind. Sometime later this spring, perhaps at the May 25th Board of Supervisors meeting, we will request the Board approve the acquisition of the Fruitvale School near Lincoln. The schoolhouse began as a one room schoolhouse in 1888. In 1923, a second room was added. The Fruitvale Community Hall Incorporation (FCHI), which owns the schoolhouse, lost the one person with the vision and energy to keep that historic site going. In desperation, they reached out to Supervisor Weygandt who then asked the Museums Division to see how it could help. The FCHI wanted their schoolhouse to be part of the Placer County Museums system. After inspections, estimates by Building Maintenance to make repairs and address immediate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues, we have moved forward with a budget that scares me a little, but upper management has yet to flinch. The schoolhouse will operate as sort of a Museum/Veteran's Hall hybrid as one of the main sources of revenue is in rentals.

But for us, its value is its priceless history. We plan to not only expand the Fruitvale Living History program but explore and develop new educational programs that target grades 8 and above. The historical and educational potential of this site is immense.

I hope all of you have a terrific summer as we finally emerge from this pandemic. And perhaps, as more sites open for the public to explore, we'll have one more museum in our County system for people to enjoy.

Just because it's essential
doesn't mean it can't be
decorative.

Have you heard about the Citrus
Literary Society?

Learn about our latest acquisition.

Check in with your local history
organization.

Powder Flasks

by Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections

Powder flasks were an essential accessory used by hunters and soldiers to store gunpowder used with muzzle-loading firearms. Gunpowder was sold in bulk and flasks of different shapes and sizes were used to carry it in the field. It would pour easily when dry, but would cake and fail to burn when damp, making well-sealed powder flasks necessary.

Paper cartridges filled with black powder were in use since the 15th century, but they were not patented until 1808. People were forced to carry separate containers of black powder, bullets, and wads. Muzzle-loading a musket required multiple steps, but a well-trained soldier could load and fire two or three times a minute. Generally, a small amount of loose powder was poured into a measure and then down the barrel of the gun. A lead ball was placed on a lubricated patch on the muzzle, and then pushed down the barrel. A small amount of powder was placed on the firing pan, which was located between the cock and the frizzen. The cock was pulled back, the frizzen was closed, and the weapon was ready to fire.

Powder flasks were made of different materials, most often copper, silver, wood, bone, and leather. Early flasks were plain, but decorated ones with embossed designs or hunting scenes became very popular. By the 1860s powder flask production was an increasingly industrialized process and factories produced flasks for hunters and the military. Some notable companies include The American Flask & Cap Co., Robbins and Lawrence Company of Windsor, Vt., Samuel Colt, James Dixon & Sons G. & J. W. Hawksley or Bartram & Co. A majority of the flasks in our collection are made of copper, leather, and brass. Here are a few examples:



Violin shaped copper powder flask with embossed design and four hanger rings. PCM Collection, 1948.14.7 (left) Embossed copper powder flask c. 1860. PCM Collection, 1948.9.2 (bottom left) Embossed and fluted copper powder flask with four hanger rings and a leather strap, c. 1860. PCM Collection, 1964.18.3 (bottom right)



The Citrus Literary Society

by Kelsey Monahan, Curator of Archives

In the late 1880s an interesting phenomenon of “literary societies” appeared in Placer County. These groups formed throughout the area including in Penryn, Forest Hill, Ophir, and Newcastle. One of the most celebrated was the Citrus Literary Society, founded north of Auburn.

to tire of dancing. The floor was crowded all the time, and in the early hours of morning as the party began to separate, their songs could be heard in all directions and faded away in the distance as the gray dawn appeared on the eastern horizon. The Citrus Literary Society No. 1 was organized last November, has about sixty members and is doing good work and making rapid progress.

Placer Herald, March 9, 1889

Unfortunately, the last mention that could be found of the C.L.S. was for their annual dance in 1895, although it seems the Citrus Hall was still used in the community. In 1905 Mrs. A.J. Smith bought the hall and renovated it, she later referred to it as the Rock Creek Hall, and she and her son Walter Smith held many dances and suppers there.

No photos of the society’s picnics or Citrus Hall could be found in our collection. If you have or know of a photograph relating to the Citrus Literary Society, we would love to speak with you!

The Citrus Literary Society celebrated the anniversary of its organization on the 22 ult at Citrus Hall with anvil firing, blazing bonfires, and a large and enthusiastic meeting. The C. L. S. has met with great success, having within a year built and paid for its hall and spent hundreds of dollars for other improvements. The society has about eighty members and all take pride in keeping it in the front rank of the social organizations of Placer county. To-night the society will hold a social and literary meeting when a fine programme of songs, readings, tableaux, etc., will be given for the amusement of the members. On the 19th inst the society will give a masquerade ball and it is the intention of the C. L. S. to make it the best of all the parties held at Citrus hall.

FOURTH ANNUAL
Basket Picnic
By the Citrus Literary Society,
ROCK CREEK,
Saturday, May 20
GAMES AND PRIZES.
LIQUID REFRESHMENTS.
DANCE IN THE EVENING.
MUSIC BY AUBURN ORCHESTRA.

— THE —
CITRUS LITERARY SOCIETY
.....WILL GIVE A.....
PICNIC.
— AT —
Bald : Hill : Grove
(3 miles from Auburn)
Saturday, May 9th. 1891.
The public of Placer County is invited to attend and participate in the games, races and other amusements. Cash and other prizes will be awarded to the winners of all contests. All kinds of refreshments will be served on the grounds and a day of pleasure will be afforded to all. In the evening a
GRAND BALL & SUPPER
Will be given in CITRUS HALL, which has just been enlarged to twice its former size. Old Placerites, new Placerites, and all other Placerites, are cordially invited to come and enjoy themselves. By order of
COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.
apr24-td

Placer Herald, December 6, 1890 & May 20, 1893; *Placer Argus*, April 24, 1891

Forging Ahead

by Bryanna Ryan, Supervising Curator

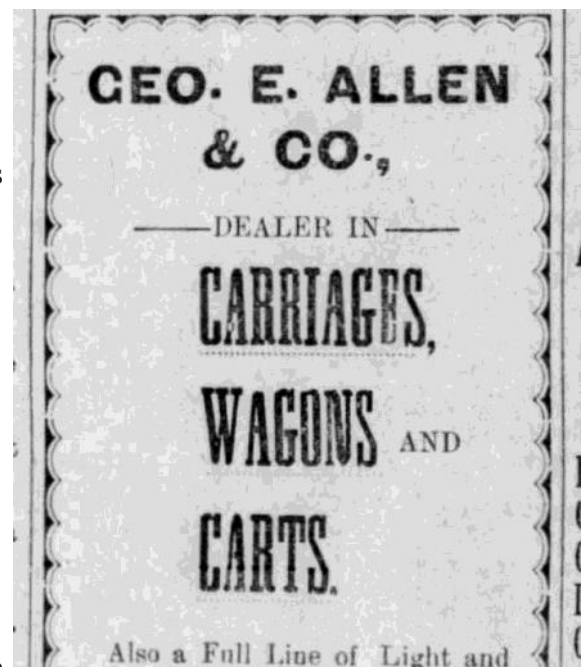
Last month, an exciting new collection has been acquired by our Museums division and is slated to become an installation at the Bernhard Museum Complex. It is a forge, anvil, and bellows that came from the Auburn Iron Works building on Lincoln Way. This building is an official California Point of Historical Interest for reportedly being one of, if not the, oldest continually operating blacksmith shops in California. It sits in the area of town known as “East Auburn,” across from the historic train depot where Central Pacific Railroad track was laid in 1865.



Beneath the building, runs the South Yuba (formerly, Bear River) ditch – another historically significant feature of Auburn which, no doubt, provided a valuable resource for the blacksmith operations above. Meanwhile, the shift from wagons and railroads to automobiles is another development which impacted this site for more than a century.

We have begun researching the history of the lot in hopes of learning precise details of this new collection. In 1870, the official Map of Auburn identifies the parcel as Lot 1 of Block 19 and, at the time, was owned by J. J. Smith. Research is ongoing but the earliest blacksmiths identified on the site are George E. Allen and Joseph Sandhofer of the partnership “Allen & Sandhofer.”

In 1888, a bill by this company was approved by the Board of Supervisors and they were noted in the Placer Herald for their work which was mainly as wagonmakers and blacksmiths. In 1891, they even had a California patent approved for their design of “vehicle tongue support.” In 1892, they were one of five blacksmith shops in Auburn. Shortly after, Sandhofer sold his interest to his partner and moved from the area and by 1897. “Walker & Duryea’s Blacksmith Shop” was on the site when a fire broke out in the nearby Kenison & Johnson’s Bottling Works which caused heavy losses in the area and to the blacksmith shop.



Placer Herald, June 25, 1898

Louis (aka L.A.) Duryea had apprenticed with Sandhofer & Allen and enjoyed glowing local reputation as a blacksmith and man of character, when he took over the business which he ran until 1914. In this year, he sold the operation to William M. and Tillie M. Haines.

Duryea occupies another notable position in local history when he was later appointed deputy by Elmer Gum to fill out the term of F.H. “Big Dip” Dependener when the former deputy was killed in an auto accident in 1928. Duryea was then elected Constable in 1930, an office he occupied until his death in 1938. His obituary in the Placer Herald described him as “a quiet mannered man, strictly square and honest.” He was a member of Parlor 59 of the Native Sons of the Golden West who publicly mourned the loss of their brother.



William Haines was elected to the Placer County Board of Supervisors in 1922 and served in this position for 30 years while continuing to manage his blacksmith shop until selling it in 1937 to Dave F. and Don A. Gebhart who officially adopted the name “Auburn Iron Works” in 1939. They sold the operation to Kent Harris and Norma Harris in 1973 and it is Norma Harris we thank for working with us to have the historic collection transferred to our care.

We also thank Parlor 59 of the Native Sons of the Golden West for physically moving the pieces to the Bernhard Museum where it temporarily sits awaiting a proper installation.

The Bernhard property once held a blacksmith shop on site and it has long been a goal of Bernhard Museum preservationists, to see one return. A forge, anvil, and bellows would have been very useful resources on the farm. With them, equipment repairs and metalsmithing would save valuable time and keep operations running. We are grateful for this opportunity to preserve so many historic themes in Auburn’s history and will look forward to sharing it with the public.



News from Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

April400@wavecable.com (530) 823-2128

Normal is right around the corner! Things are starting to open up! We might even be able to have an in-person general dinner meeting in June. We have the Veteran's Hall which is more than enough room. The question would be how people feel about food; I don't even know if we could get a caterer. Potluck? Cookies and iced tea? Please email and let me know how you feel: April.pchs@gmail.com. We will try to have a great speaker to celebrate! If we do meet we will also hold the election that we missed.

By the time you read this, we will have four new plaques up on buildings downtown: 805, 823, 835 and 922 Lincoln Way. We are very grateful to the Native Sons who installed them for us. They're a great bunch! The new plaque for Firehouse # 1 is on its way and hopefully the Hook and Ladder Company can help us with installation.

I hope you have had a chance to look at the new *Landmarks of Auburn* book, which is full of information. John Knox and I are working on another one, *Historical Buildings of Auburn*. With so many historic buildings, it will take a while to produce.

Looking forward to seeing you all! April McDonald-Loomis



Placer County Historical Organizations

For information on meeting schedules for May-June, please contact organizations individually.

Colfax Area Historical Society

Jay McIntyre, President, (530) 346-8599
colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest, (209) 606-6859
donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Troy Simester, (530) 367-3535
foresthillhistory.org

**Fruitvale School Hall
Community Association**
 Mark Fowler

Gold Country Medical History Museum

Lynn Carpenter, (530) 885-1252

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

Loomis Basin Historical Society

Karen Clifford, (916) 663-3871
pogn.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

Phil Sexton, (530) 583-1762
northtahoemuseums.org

Placer County Genealogical Society

Toni Rosasco, (530) 888-8036
pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society

April McDonald-Loomis
 (530) 823-2128
placercountyhistoricalsociety.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
rosevillefiremusem@gmail.org

Roseville Historical Society

Denise Fiddymont,, (916) 773-3003
rosevillehistorical.org

Has the last year got you ready to be out and about?



Keep History Alive!

Volunteer for Placer County Museums

