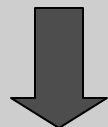


THE PLACER

A Voice of History

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Administrator's Notes

Melanie Barton

The Heritage Trail Museum Tour is just around the corner. Planned for August 6th & 7th, this year's event promises to be even better than the last. Eighteen museums from Roseville to Tahoe City will open their doors from 10:00 – 4:00 on both days and admission is free. Be sure to pick up a Get Up & Go card at the first museum you visit. After visiting four museums and getting your card stamped at each, you are eligible for a drawing. If you are lucky enough to have your card drawn you will win a beautiful gift basket chock-full of donated items from Placer County.

All the museums on the tour are planning fun activities that will appeal to folks of all ages. The Trail Guide with all the details including directions to each museum will be available at a museum in your area after July 14th and can also be viewed or downloaded from the event blog at theheritagetraill.blogspot.com. A few special activities include a granite splitting demonstration by Roy Ruhkala at the Rocklin History Museum at 10:00 on both days; a chance to meet "Alma Bell" inside the Women's Jail at the historic

Courthouse in Auburn; you can become a farm hand and build a replica produce box; grind wheat and sample hot biscuits at the Bernhard Museum in Auburn; and enjoy a special exhibit about the 1960 Winter Olympics at the SkiSport Museum at Boreal. These are just a fraction of the activities that will be available on this weekend. I encourage all Trail Travelers to look at a Trail Guide in advance and plan your route around the events and activities that are most appealing to you.

Once again, a Bus Tour will be available on both days. On Saturday, the trip goes east from Auburn to the summit of the Sierra. The Saturday trip heads west from Auburn and visits the valley museums. The cost of each tour is \$10.00 and reservations are required. To reserve your spot call 530-889-6500 today.

Sponsors for this event are the County of Placer, SureWest, Capital Public Radio and the Native Sons of the Golden West, Auburn Parlor #59.



The Lincoln Highway

By Ralph Gibson

Few people owned or operated automobiles around the turn of the 20th century, but that would soon change in 1908 when Henry Ford introduced the Model T. The Model T was priced at \$950.00, which was much cheaper than the \$2,000.00 to 4,000.00 one would have to pay for any other automobile. This meant that a flood of new drivers hit the road after 1908. But what kind of road did they hit exactly? Nearly all the roads in the United States were dirt in the summer and early fall and mud the rest of the year. Driving to any destination 100 miles or more away would be considered an extreme sport today.

By 1912, people were becoming more attached to the car and less so to their carts and wagons. And if they were going to drive, they wanted a better road to navigate. But the surface of the road wasn't the only thing they wanted improved, they wanted more roads to connect them to more places. The big dream was to have a highway that connected the Atlantic with the Pacific – a Transcontinental Highway. Such a big project required a real mover and shaker in the business world and one happened to enter the scene in 1912. Carl Fisher was a successful, forward thinking businessman who had two notable successes behind him. He built the Indianapolis Speedway and started the Indianapolis 500 race and he also converted a swamp into the

country's best known beach resort, Miami Beach, Florida. Now he needed another project, and a Transcontinental Highway fit the bill.

On September 10, 1912, he held a dinner meeting with all of his auto industry friends where he called for a coast to coast rock highway to be completed in time for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. He believed the project would cost \$10 million. "Let's build it before we're too old to enjoy it!" he said. The pledges he got from his associates totaled \$1 million. But Henry Ford was an exception. He didn't pledge any money because he felt it was the government's responsibility to build the nation's roads.

This was a huge blow and it meant they would have to spend more time raising the funds necessary, which meant they would not reach their goal of completing the highway in time for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. But Fisher didn't give up on his dream of a coast to coast highway. One of his loyal supporters, Henry Joy of the Packard Motor Car Company, is credited with naming the road the "Lincoln Highway". Fisher thought it was brilliant and had a strong patriotic appeal. Locally, the name resonated as the following Nov. 8, 1913 *Placer Herald* article illustrates:

The Auburn Chamber of Commerce at a meeting held Friday evening of last week started the movement

for an organization of a Placer County Highway Association which will include all the public and commercial bodies of the county as well as citizens. The meeting was held as a dedication meeting of the Lincoln Highway, and Director W B. Lardner delivered an address on the subject, in which he spoke of the importance of the Highway to Placer County, and the benefits that would accrue when it was completed. Mr. Lardner also spoke feelingly of the great man whose name the highway bears, and related several incidents during Lincoln's first campaign for the presidency in 1860, in which the speaker as a boy participated.

The public was enthralled with the project. Most hoped the highway would come through their state and they lobbied local government officials to make it so. Trying to keep public support high, the newly formed Lincoln Highway Association kept the route secret knowing many would be disappointed when they realized their state would be bypassed. The route itself would be comprised of existing roads that would be widened, graded and paved.

Once the route was publicized, the enthusiasm for the highway waned in most parts of the country that were not included. This stalled the fundraising effort. The Lincoln Highway Association abandoned the fund and instead focused on the new

goal of educating the public on the need for new, improved roads. They hoped to use special sections of the Lincoln Highway as an example. This eventually led to two significant Federal Highway Acts in 1916 and 1921 that would give states money to build and improve their roads and highways.

In the January 15, 1916, the *Placer Herald* reported:

The Placer County Board of Supervisors have gotten practically all the rights of way for the State Highway lateral from Roseville to Auburn, and it is understood the Highway Commission will begin work immediately, and that most of the road will be completed before the fruit season opens next summer...

The highway lateral will practically follow the present wagon road from Roseville to Auburn, touching Rocklin, Loomis, Penryn and Newcastle and thence up Auburn Ravine to Auburn.

In April of 1916, most of the road from Roseville to Auburn was ready to be paved. The April 1, 1916 *Placer Herald* noted:

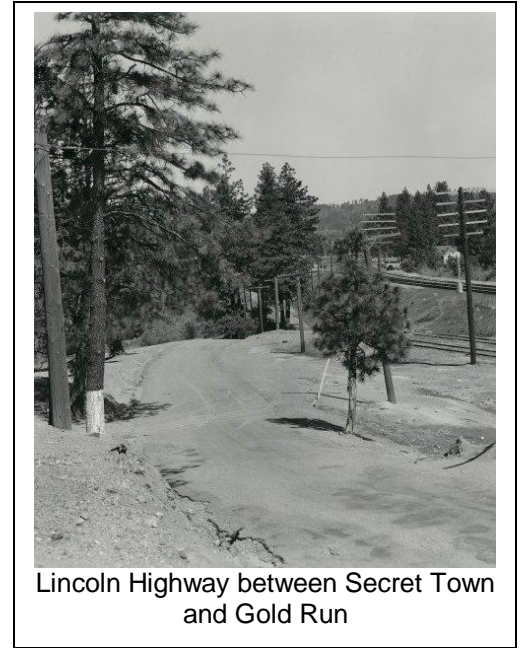
The State Highway from Hallbom's to the Auburn City limits is nearly ready, so that the cement and crushed rock can be hauled. The widening of the turns and the grading has practically all been done. The cement material

will be hauled by large motor trucks.

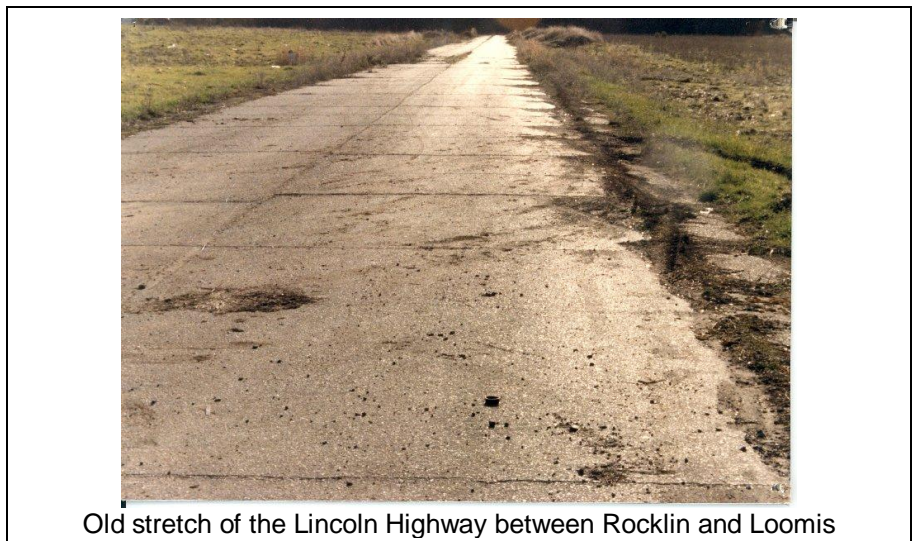
By 1925, there were many named highways that crossed through sections of the country besides the Lincoln Highway. This led to the creation of the U.S. numbered system to replace named highways. The Lincoln Highway would be chopped up into several different numbers as it crossed the continent, such as Hwy 30, Hwy 40, and Hwy 50.

The Lincoln Highway Association ended its active promotion of the highway in 1928 at which time the dream of a coast to coast rock highway had not yet been realized. However, work continued and by 1938, all but 42 miles of what was once the Lincoln Highway had been paved in some manner – and those 42 miles were under construction.

The Lincoln Highway, though never quite measuring up to the dream of Carl Fisher, nevertheless paved the way for improved roads all over the United States and helped make the automobile an integral part of our culture.



Lincoln Highway between Secret Town and Gold Run



Old stretch of the Lincoln Highway between Rocklin and Loomis



Museums Intelligence

Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

Many times while conducting research for an article for *The Placer* or an exhibit, I go to the Archives and Research Center to look through the ancient brown pages of *The Placer Herald*. I love how reading an old newspaper can transport you into the past.

Beyond the main articles there are great advertisements and little bits of news about the happenings of people's lives in the region. Although I might be looking for a specific article, I do pay close attention to everything else that's in the paper. The bulk of the paper gives me a better sense of the context of an event or person I am seeking information about. Research is fun, and often I find things that make me chuckle.

But research is not without peril; I sometimes come across a story that hits me quite hard. The one I remember most is a 1913 article that related the sad story of a young man, who was 19, and a young boy, who was 10. They were shooting a gun at various targets near their homes in Loomis and during their practice, the 19 year old accidentally shot and killed the 10 year old. Once he knew his friend was dead, he immediately called out to other boys nearby and told them which of his younger brothers would get what worldly possessions he owned. Then he put the gun to his head and committed suicide.

It was a rough story to read and though it happened almost 100 years ago, I felt as sad as if I had read that story in today's paper.

There are also stories that are somewhat horrific to the person who endured the incident, but not so for those of us who read them. The following *Placer Herald* article relates the tale of a woman who, had she perished, would have been eligible for today's Darwin Award:

Mrs. J.B. Levy of Sacramento Street was severely burned about the face and breast by an explosion of gasoline while heating a preparation of ammonia and gasoline for washing clothes Monday morning.

The ammonia and gasoline had been mixed in the open air and taken into the house and placed on a stove for heating, and by some means the gasoline exploded...

Mrs. Levy survived her injuries. I just wish the newspaper reporter had thought to ask what stain it was she was trying to remove with a mixture of ammonia and gasoline. Today that mixture on a stove might qualify as a weapon of mass destruction.

These are just a couple of the stories and people I come across every time I do research at the Archives and Research Center. Some are sad, some are funny, but all are a part of the growing, complex tapestry of our history.

Community Education Program: **Campfire Storytelling**

Campfire stories are fun! Do you remember sitting around a campfire listening to a great story? Whether it's the long, embarrassing story your Dad told about your first bicycle accident or

the ghost story your Uncle told that kept you up all night, stories have been, and continue to be, an important form of communication. For thousands of years, stories have been told to impart information, teach valuable life lessons, and enhance one's understanding of their culture. If you would like to learn more about the history of storytelling and to hear a few good ol' yarns, please join us on July 23rd at 8:00 pm on the Bernhard Museum grounds for *Campfire Storytelling*. This Placer County Museums Community Education program is FREE! No ghost stories will be told, so parents are encouraged to bring their children. You may either sit on the grass or you can bring your own blanket or lawn chair to sit on. And yes, we will roast marshmallows and make S'mores!

Community Education Program: **Hands-On Archaeology**

Learn the methods archaeologists use to uncover our past! This is the second part of our excavation at the Bernhard Museum Complex. Join us on August 27th at 1:00 pm where you can help us excavate a small test pit and sift through soil for artifacts. We will also have a small kid-friendly excavation pit stocked with interesting artifacts they can study. Tahoe National Forest archaeologist Nolan Smith will lead the excavation. All the historic artifacts recovered will be accessioned into the Placer County Museums' collection and will be displayed in a future exhibit. This FREE Community Education program is kid-friendly, so bring the whole family!

The Bernhard Museum is located at 291 Auburn Folsom Road. For more information about either of these programs, please call: 530-889-6500.

Placer County Historical Society News



President's Message

*Michael Otten,
President*

Auburn will roll out its history and make history as it hosts its first quarterly meeting of the State Historic Resources Commission on Aug. 5. The commission will be considering 11 nominations for the National Register of Historic Places, six of them from Auburn.

It will be a great learning opportunity so put it on your calendar: 9 a.m. Friday, Aug. 5, Auburn City Council Chambers. Your Placer County Historical Society will be co-hosting a tour and reception at the Bernhard Winery after a 10 a.m. Commission workshop on Aug. 4 in the Civic Center Rose Room.

The nominees:

1). The Auburn City Hall and Fire House, 1103 High Street, used most recently as the Boys and Girls Club and under negotiations to become the new Placer County Visitors Bureau and California Welcome Center location. City government moved from the basement of the Auburn Public Library into this WPA Art Deco civic building in 1937. It was designed by master architect George Sellon.

2). Auburn Fire House No. 2, Washington, Main and Commercial Street, which is currently undergoing a \$134,000 renovation and upgrade using redevelopment funds. This 1891 Victorian shingle style building, Old Town's firehouse for 50 years plus was moved to its present location in 1957 to make way for Interstate 80.

3). Auburn Hose Company No. 1, El Dorado Street, Highway 49 and Lincoln Way, moved to present location in 1973. This ornate 1888 Stick/Queen Anne Building housed Auburn's fire department and later the office of Frederick Birdsall, Bear River Water Co. and the Auburn Water and Mining Co. Exterior was recently renovated and landscaped by Placer County Contractors Association.

4). Auburn IOOF Hall, 1256 Lincoln Way, across from current City Hall. This 1894 Italianate three-story commercial building and social hall was built by Henry T. Holmes, one of Auburn's founding fathers.

5). Auburn Masonic Temple, 948 Lincoln Way. This 1914 two-story building with the dramatic Gladding-McBean terra cotta facade was designed by architect Allen D. Fellows, who had earlier designed the Carnegie Libraries in Auburn and Lincoln, both now on the National Register. At one time the J.C. Penny Co. occupied the ground floor.

6). Placer County Bank, 874 Lincoln Way. This 1913 Beaux Arts bank building was designed by San Francisco architect Charles Summer Kaiser with George Herdal of Auburn as the builder. Due to its role in Placer County gold mining during the Depression, more gold was shipped from it to the San Francisco Mint in 1937 than any other bank in the state.

These carefully detailed nominations were prepared by Auburn historian and author Carmel Barry-Schweyer, the retired Placer County Archivist who put in hundreds of volunteer hours in the effort.

Credit Auburn Councilman, Mike Holmes with bringing the Commission meeting to Auburn by

offering the City Hall and a working sound system. The Commission had originally been set to meet in San Francisco but because of travel budget constraints it opted to take Holmes up on his offer.

Updated Articles of Incorporation Await State Approval

Our first update to the Society's original articles of incorporation as a nonprofit incorporation in 1920 has been approved by the board and membership, duly signed and forwarded to the Secretary of State. Whereas the record indicates the original process took four days to get things voted on, signed, sealed and delivered, today's process takes months. The Secretary of State's website indicates we may have another two-month waiting process. But we have time. The original articles expired in 1970.

Help Wanted: 2-hour shifts, free parking...

And yes, a lot of fun. Join us at the Benton Welty Historical Classroom Aug. 6th and 7th for the 4th annual Heritage Trail weekend. Help our visitors step back into the past when they visit this special place on the second floor of the Auburn Civic Center, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn, which was developed by the Auburn Union Retired Teachers, Placer County Historical Museum Foundation and the Placer County Historical Society. The Civic Center/Auburn City Hall was once the main building of the Auburn Union Elementary School and the Benton Welty Room was an upper grade classroom. We need at least a dozen volunteers to work at least one two hour shift between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. that Saturday and Sunday. Please contact Bonnie Parodi, 530 885-4246; Jean Allender, 885-5334 or myself, 888-7837.



Auburn City Hall and Fire House



Auburn Fire House No. 2



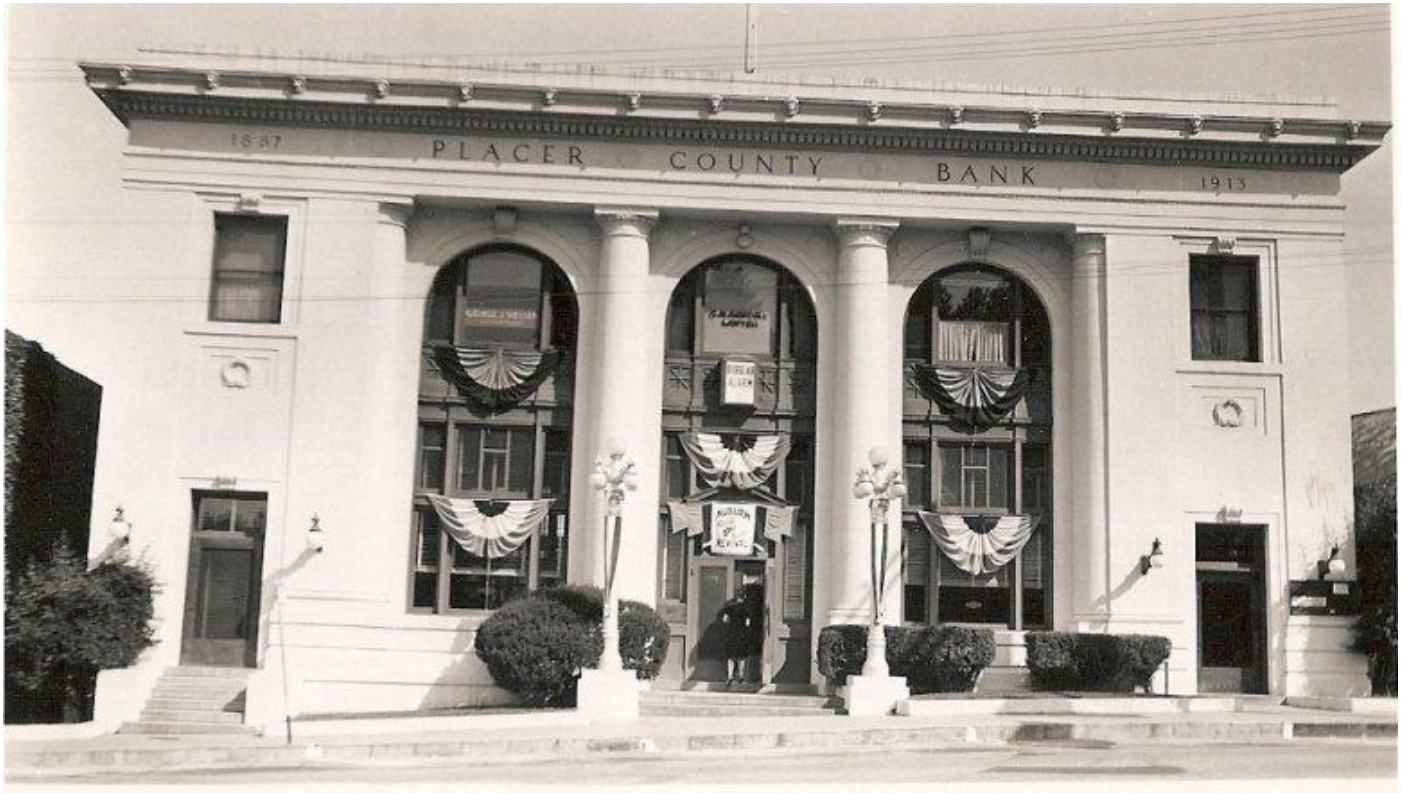
Auburn Hose Company No. 1



Auburn International Order of Odd Fellows Hall



Auburn Masonic Temple



Placer County Bank



Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society
Ed & Nilda Duffek,
(530) 305-3209
www.colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society
Norm Sayler, (530) 426-3376
www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society
Donna Coffman,
(530) 367-3437
www.foresthillhistory.org

Fruitvale School Hall Community Association
Lyndell Grey, (916) 645-3517

Golden Drift Historical Society
Jim Ricker, (530) 389-8344

Historical Advisory Board
George Lay, (530) 878-1927

Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center
Richard Yue, (530) 346-7121

Lincoln Area Archives Museum
Shirley Russell, (916) 645-3470

Lincoln Highway Association
Norman Root, (916) 483-8669
www.lincolnhwy.org

Loomis Basin Historical Society
Karen Clifford, (916) 663-3871
<http://www.ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html>

Maidu Museum & Historic Site
Glenie Strome, (916) 782-3299
www.roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum

Native Sons of the Golden West, Parlor #59
Dave Allen, (530) 878-2878

Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association
Aileen Gage, (530) 885-9113

Old Town Auburn Preservation Society
Ross Carpenter, (530) 885-1252

Placer County Genealogical Society
Alice Bothello, (530) 885-2216
www.pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society
Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837
www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org

Placer County Museums Docent Guild
Sandi Tribe, (530) 887-9143

Rocklin Historical Society
Barbara Chapman,
(916) 415-0153
www.rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Historical Society
Phoebe Astill, (916) 773-3003
www.rosevillehistorical.org

Artifact Highlight

Kasia Woroniecka

The first automobile license plates were issued in California in 1901 by Counties and Cities. In 1905 the state legislature recognized the need for a state-wide system of car registration and began issuing round metal tags with individual numbers. Deteriorating roads as well as public safety led to regulations that enabled the state to raise funds for road maintenance and keep vehicle records. Car owners were required to display the metal tag on the vehicle and paint the numbers on the back. The actual license plate was issued in California in 1914. It was red with white characters. Vehicle license plates were standardized in 1957 with three basis standards worldwide. California license plates today measure 12 inches wide and 6 inches high. The plate from our collection dates back to 1940 and is slightly bigger at 14 inches wide and 6 1/4 inches high.



Calendar of Events

July

- July 12th, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum.
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- July 18th, 6:00 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Business meeting at the Foresthill Divide Museum.
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- July 20th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-652-7844.
- July 23rd, 8:00 pm** Community Education Program: *Campfire Storytelling* at the Bernhard Museum.
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- July 28th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact 530-885-2216.

August

- Aug. 6th & 7th** **The Heritage Trail!** 10:00 – 4:00 pm. Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Aug. 9th, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum.
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- Aug. 17th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.
Contact: 916-652-7844.
- Aug. 17th, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Winery.
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Aug. 27th, 1:00 pm** Community Education Program: *Hands-On Archaeology* by Nolan Smith.
Bernhard Museum. Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Aug. 15th, 6:30 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Dinner meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- Aug. 25th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact 530-885-2216.