



The Placer

2024 March-April Volume 39, Issue 2

Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

Spring Living History begins on February 27th and runs through June 5th. We have a full calendar and will be running Living History at both the Bernhard and Fruitvale Schoolhouse Museums.



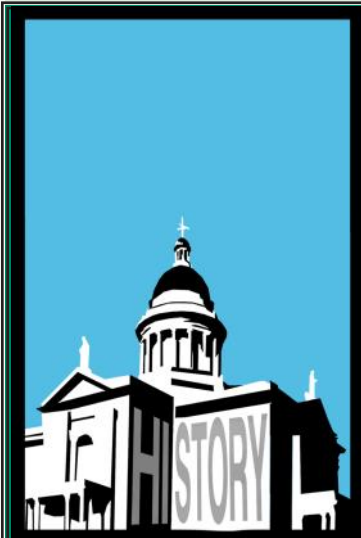
Wanda and Wilma Ludwig, 1953. PCM Collection

Staff is also busy working on an exhibit that will replace the 1918 exhibit in the Placer County Museum gallery that focuses on the Ludwig Twins of Auburn who were trick horse riders. The local twins became very popular in

the 1950s. We hope to install the exhibit sometime in March. After that, the Exhibit Team will focus on completing exhibits for the Forest Hill Divide Museum, which includes an interactive touch-screen display, in time for their seasonal opening on Memorial Day weekend.

Hollywood came to the Gold Rush Museum on February 15th as a large production crew, extras and a couple of stars (Billy Baldwin and Isabella Ferreira) filmed scenes by the railcars for an upcoming film on homelessness titled: "No Address."

Preparations are underway for Heritage Trail 2024, but more on that in the next issue of The Placer. I wish you all a wonderful spring!



PLACER COUNTY
MUSEUMS

Ralph Gibson
Museums Administrator
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-6500
rgibson@placer.ca.gov

Kasia Woroniecka
Editor and Staff Writer
(530) 889-6500
kworonic@placer.ca.gov

The Placer is produced and edited by the Placer County Museums Division
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-6500
Museums@placer.ca.gov

New Donation Highlight

by *Kasia Woroniecka*, Curator of Collections



This beautiful toilet set was made around 1890 by the George Scott Pottery, a family-owned business in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was established in 1846 and by 1870s was one of the largest producers of ironstone china.

It is through donations like these that we can continue to bring history to life for our visitors. If you have items with Placer County history that you are interested in donating, please contact the Curator of Collections, Kasia Woroniecka (kworonie@placer.ca.gov) or the Curator of Archives, Kelsey Monahan (kmonahan@placer.ca.gov) to find out how.

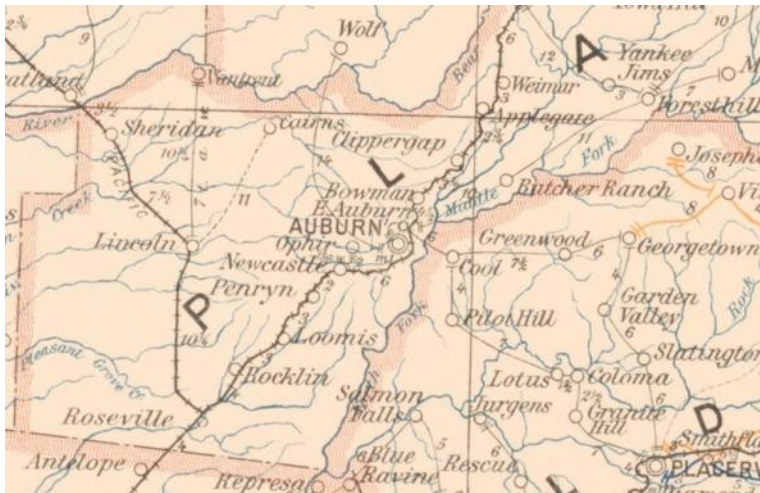
Uncovering the Postal Legacy of Edith M. Cairns

by *Kelsey Monahan*, Curator of Archives

If you've been around the Archive and Research Center recently, you may have heard me talk about a new book I've acquired: *History of California Post Offices 1849-1976*, by H.E. Salley (thanks to a recommendation by a volunteer!). While delving into the records of Placer County post offices, a particular name caught my attention – Cairns. The entry simply stated: “Estab. 6/19/1906. Disc. 3/30/1907. MT: Lincoln. Named for Edith M. Cairns, the 1st PM. Located 11 miles NE of Lincoln.” Intrigued, I began researching to uncover the story behind Edith M. Cairns and the post office bearing her name.

Edith Mona Cairns was born in 1876 in Colorado to John Wesley Cairns and Annie (Kennish) Cairns, immigrants from the Isle of Man. John W. Cairns was a miner, and the family moved around the country for many years, living in Colorado, Kansas, and Utah. In 1906, John W. Cairns purchased an interest in the Al Gol Mine (also spelled Algol or Argol) Northeast of Lincoln close to the Bear River.

The announcement that the Al Gol mine was being reopened appeared in the January 18, 1906, Sacramento Daily Union. However, it was not until April 13, 1906, that the Post Office Department received an application from John W. Cairns to establish a post office in “Cairns.” The application stated that about 50 people would be served by the new office, and proposed that his daughter, Edith M. Cairns, serve as the postmaster. The post office was officially established June 19, 1906, but closed less than a year later on March 30, 1907. The closure was likely due to the family’s relocation to Christian Valley, where John W. Cairns assumed the role of Superintendent of the Iron Mine. Because of its short-lived operation, Cairns only appears on one map- a 1906



1906 Postal Routes Map showing Cairns. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

postal route map of California.

However, that is not where the postal history stops! Edith M. Cairns went on to marry David M. Kennedy in San Francisco on October 27, 1909. They had one son, David Mackie Kennedy, on November 23, 1911. The family resided in Auburn until 1912 when David M. Kennedy purchased the general merchandise business at Weimar, and shortly after was appointed postmaster of the Weimar post office. While the

Kennedy family lived in Weimar the town would undergo a significant transformation with the

opening of the Weimar Joint Sanitarium in 1919. According to the 1924 History of Placer and Nevada Counties: “It was largely through the efforts of Mrs. Kennedy that the Weimar Joint Sanitarium was located at Weimar. She has taken an active part in working for the improvements to the town and county and is held in high esteem for her many qualities of mind and heart.”

After her husband David M. Kennedy's passing on May 5, 1922, Edith took over as acting postmaster, and was officially appointed in August 1922. She served the Weimar post office for two decades, overseeing its transition from a 4th class to a 3rd class office due to the increased mail volume from the Sanatorium. Her son, David Mackie Kennedy, assisted in the post office before joining the Marine Corps in 1942. Edith retired the same year and passed away on December 18, 1946. Her obituary hailed her as a pillar of the community, describing her dedication and service as postmaster with warmth and respect.

In tracing the journey of Edith (Cairns) Kennedy from her brief stint as the postmaster of a small community to her pivotal role as postmaster of a town undergoing a transformative change, we can uncover not just a piece of postal history but also a testament of the enduring impact of individuals on the places they call home.

History Explored

by Natalie Brennan, Museums Volunteer

Inside the New Auburn Cemetery, there is a grave marker bearing the name Vern Knipp. This grave is a local historical landmark because Knipp was aboard the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was sunk during the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Knipp was one of 422 sailors lost aboard Oklahoma when it capsized after taking multiple torpedoes in the beginning of the attack. Knipp was buried as an unknown soldier for many years until recent DNA testing found that his sister lived in Auburn, and Knipp was identified and reburied in Auburn. Every December 7, the Placer County Council Navy League hosts a Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony at the grave of Vern Knipp. I have spoken at these ceremonies, discussing another individual who survived the attack.

The attack on Pearl Harbor was the event that brought America into World War II. I first started delving into the subject in my junior year of high school with my big writing assignment where I had to analyze and discuss the Day of Infamy speech by President Franklin Roosevelt on December 8, 1941. My late grandfather, a member of the Placer County Council Navy League, told me that there was a man who survived the attack who regularly attended. Since the speaker that day was a sailor who served on the USS Hornet, I was eager to learn more. By luck that Pearl Harbor survivor, Lt. Commander Lou Conter, sat right across from me. Since I was the only kid in the room, Mr. Conter started quizzing me on why I was attending a meeting, which turned into a quiz on World War II. He then smiled and said that he was at Pearl Harbor when it was bombed, aboard the battleship USS Arizona, the vessel that contributed to half of losses that day, losing 1,177 men in mere seconds to a bomb in the forward ammunition magazine.

Mr. Conter, then a twenty-year-old Quartermaster 3rd Class, happened to have an image of the ship's memorial close at hand, and he pointed out where he was near the third gun turret by the stern as compared to where the bomb hit. He said that had he been five minutes earlier in securing his battle station, he would have been in the bridge with Captain Van Valkenburg and Admiral Kidd, who perished in the attack. Since then, Mr. Conter and I became really great friends. I guess I made such an impression on him that he invited my family and I to several anniversaries held at Pearl Harbor and introduced me to his fellow Arizona survivors now gone to their rest. The first time I went, the 73rd anniversary, I was so moved that I made him a graphic design piece for that year's Christmas, of the Arizona memorial spanning the width of the vessel. His late wife, Val Conter, later wrote me a letter thanking me for the gesture, saying he was so happy and couldn't wait to show her. I am truly honored to know and be friends with Lou Conter, I credit our friendship with my drive to learn everything there is to know about World War II and Pearl Harbor and pass on their stories to the future generations. It's the very least I can do for them and all he and the others have done for us.

Docent Spotlight

by Kaitlin Grebe, Curator

The Placer County Museums operate with the help of over 150 active volunteers. These remarkable individuals, including enthusiastic docents like Eve Gutierrez, play a vital role in maintaining eight museums, ensuring that over 160 calendar openings are filled every month.

In a recent interview conducted at the Placer County Museum, Eve Gutierrez shared insights into her volunteer journey. Having started in December 2012, Eve's commitment spans over 11 years. When asked about her initial motivation, Eve credited Fran Hanson, a tai chi companion and museums volunteer, for introducing her to volunteering opportunities. Despite turning 90 on February 16th Eve radiates energy and offers valuable advice for prospective volunteers of all ages. She emphasized the social benefits of volunteering, highlighting the importance of staying connected and engaged with others. As the interview drew to a close and visitors flooded the gallery, Eve graciously welcomed them and began sharing the museum's history with enthusiasm. Her warmth and dedication embody the very essence of volunteerism at Placer County Museums.



Eve Gutierrez

SNOW Sports Museum

By Eddy Ancinas

Greetings from the SNOW (Sierra Nevada Olympic Winter) Sports Museum, dedicated to preserving and celebrating 150 years of Sierra Ski History and the 1960 Winter Olympic Games.

While North Lake Tahoe and the world wait for the future SNOW Sport Museum to be constructed in the Placer County Park at the entrance to Olympic Valley, visitors and locals can visit the Boatworks Shopping Mall in Tahoe City, where artifacts, photos and stories of Sierra skiing from the 1800s to the present, including



- are displayed upstairs in an 1800 square foot space.

The SNOW Sports Museum is a cooperative venture with the Batiste Family, the Boatworks owners, and the SNOW Sports Museum Foundation. Rare items from the Stan and Maryanne Batiste 1960 Olympic collection, Auburn Ski Club's stories, photos and artifacts fill half the space, while memorabilia

from local Olympic skiers Daron Rahlves, Julia Mancuso and Travis Ganong and David Antonucci's collection of artifacts from the Olympic cross-country ski venue on Tahoe's Westshore fill the other half. The evolution of ski equipment, longboard racing and the development of ski areas from Sugar Bowl to Granlibakken to Alpine Meadows and Palisades Tahoe are also on display. A large conference table makes this location an ideal spot for meetings and social gatherings. **Open Daily 10-5PM**

Placer County Genealogical Society

The Placer County Genealogical Society invites everyone to tour the new website found at www.placergenealogy.org. On the website, you can find information about upcoming meetings, membership, several Placer County record indexes and much more.

The Society participates in Heritage Trail each summer and the annual Cemetery Tour in October, and also undertakes record preservation projects.

Our genealogical interests extend far beyond Placer County. Recent meeting speakers have addressed Portuguese-Azorean genealogy, Irish roots, Quaker records and much more.

Our March 25th General Meeting will feature a presentation by Glenn York on Ancestry DNA – Tools and Tips, and on April 22nd, Jaqui Stevens will discuss the California Gold Rush. General meetings are held in the Beecher Room of the Auburn Library, and the Day Study Group and DNA meetings are held in the Jessie Helms Room of the Loomis Library. More information is available on the website.

All meetings are free and open to the public.



Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

When: **Thursday, April 4, 2024**

Meeting at 6:00, Dinner at 6:15, Speaker Hal Hall at 6:45
Topic: Western States Museum progress

Location: **Veterans Memorial Hall**

Dinner cost: \$20.00.

100 East Street, Auburn, CA

Speaker presentation: Free



Please RSVP to Jane Hamilton hamiltonjane1@me.com or 530-885-7839

Please go to www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org for more information

Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society

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

Donner Summit Historical Society

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

Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Annie DeMaria-Norris (916) 206-4479
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
laam-

ca.org

Lincoln Highway Association

Trey Pitsenberger
 vice.president@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

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

Placer County Genealogical Society

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

Placer County Historical Society

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

Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Craig Norris

Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

Chuck Spinks
Psrhs.org

Rocklin Historical Society

Hank Lohse, (916) 624-3464
rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Historical Society

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

Calendar:

Please confirm all meeting times and locations with each organization

Foresthill Divide Historical Society Meeting:	Monday, March 18th at 6:00 p.m.
Golden Drift Historical Society Meeting:	Monday, April 1st at 7:00 p.m.
Historical Advisory Board Meeting:	Wednesday, April 17th at 5:30 p.m.
Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting:	Wednesday, March 20th at 6:00 p.m.
Placer County Historical Society Meeting:	Thursday, March 7th at 2:00 p.m.
Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society:	Tuesday, March 25th at 7:00 p.m.
Rocklin Historical Society Meeting:	Monday, March 11th at 6:00 p.m.
Roseville Historical Society Meeting:	Tuesday, March 12th at 4:00 p.m.



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