



# The Placer

2023 March-April

Volume 26, Issue 2

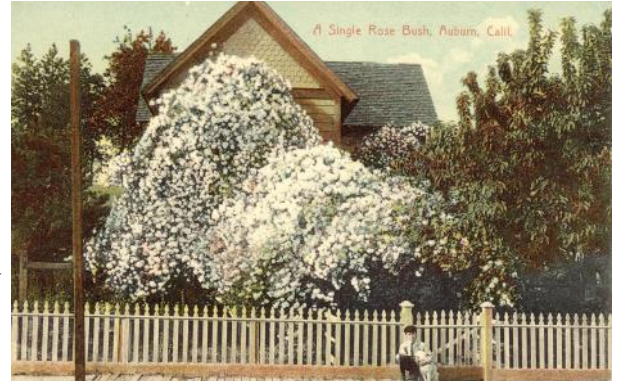
## Inside this issue:

Administrator's Notes	1
Milk Glass Covered Animal Dishes	2
A Glimpse into Placer County Water Reservoir History	4
Tragedy on the River	5
News from the Placer County Historical Society	6
Historical Organizations	7

## Administrator's Notes

*by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator*

It's starting to snow outside, but all I can think about is the coming spring because we have some projects in the air and planning for summer and fall projects will soon be underway! Spring Living History begins at two sites: The Bernhard Museum and the Fruitvale Schoolhouse Museum and we expect about 2,800 students. Also this spring,



Postcard of Rose Bush in Auburn, Undated. Placer County Museums, David Dashiell Collection.

staff is finishing up the installation of exhibits on Placer County tourism with an emphasis on history and museums at the Placer County Visitor's Center in Auburn. Planning is underway for the Heritage Trail, but I'll have more on that in the next issue of The Placer. One thing to note is that the Gold Country Medical History Museum closed its doors and the collection will now be a part of the University of Nevada-Reno's Medical History Museum. However, a new museum in Auburn is on the precipice of reality, The Western States Trail Museum, which may participate in the Heritage Trail with a sneak-peek at some of the great artifacts in their collection.

The temporary security cameras at the Bernhard Museum will be replaced with new, permanent security cameras the first week of April and later this summer the historic building gets a new roof.

Planning will start this spring for our fall programs: The Old Auburn Cemetery Tour and the Old Town Auburn Ghost Tours. I hope all of you have a terrific spring and I look forward to seeing you in one of our museums!

### Ralph Gibson

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Take a look at these im-peck-able milk glass dishes!

Page 2

A brief look into PCWA's Middle Fork Water Project.

Page 4

A tragic story of the beautiful yet dangerous North Fork of the American River.

Page 5

Local history news and happenings.

Pages 6-7

## Milk Glass Covered Animal Dishes

by Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections

Milk glass, also known as opal ware, opaline, or opal glass, was first made in Venice in the 16th century and was meant to resemble enameled porcelain. Milk glass became very popular during the Victorian Period and was sold as an affordable alternative to fine china. Its popularity decreased during the Great Depression when colored glass came into fashion, and made a comeback in the 1940s, often considered a “golden age” of milk glass.

Milk glass was produced in the United States as early as the 1850s. Dozens of companies produced different types of milk glass dishes in the past 150 years, including Gillinder & Sons, Indiana, Westmoreland, New England Glass Company, Atterbury & Company, Bryce Brothers, and Fenton. The production often included candy dishes, creamers, sugar bowls, salt and pepper shakers, vases, lampshades, darning eggs, soap dishes, jars, and many variations of covered “hen on a nest” dishes.

The “hen on a nest” dishes had different purposes depending on their size. The smaller dishes held salt, condiments, or trinkets. The larger ones were often used for candy or nuts. The “hen on a nest” name was most likely created by the Westmoreland Glass Company in the 1930s. It was later shortened to “hen on nest” by other companies and collectors. Westmoreland company was founded in 1889 in Grapeville, Pennsylvania. It began producing milk glass in the 1920s and soon became one of the top milk glass manufacturers in the United States, known for its high level of craftsmanship. The company closed in 1984.



The Morning Herald December 14, 1949



Milk glass “hen on nest” with red comb. Circa 1910-1940. PCM Collection.



Milk glass “hen on nest” with blue head. Made by the Westmoreland Glass Company c. 1910-1920. PCM Collection.

Although the most commonly produced color of milk glass is white, it was also made in other colors, including blue, yellow, green, purple and black. A green colored milk glass called “jade,” “jadite,” or “jadeite” was produced in the 1930s and was popular in kitchen and table wear.

We have several great examples of milk glass in our collection. This group was donated in 1997 by the estate of Irene W. Gilker Schnaus of Auburn. Irene was born in Missouri in 1895. She was a member of the Donner Garden Club, which was organized in 1948 and participated in beautification projects in and around Auburn. She died in 1996.



Milk glass “hen on nest” with red comb. Circa 1970s. PCM Collection.



Covered milk glass duck dish c. 1887. Made by Atterbury & Co. of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The company was in operation between 1859-1902. It produced a huge variety of glassware, including fruit jars, lamps, and tableware. This popular design known as the “Atterbury Duck” was made in many color combinations, including all white, all purple, or two-tone. It was later heavily reproduced by Westmoreland Glass Company and others. PCM Collection.



Milk glass rooster candy dish. Made by Westmoreland Glass Company c. 1950s. The company was founded in 1889 in Grapeville, Pennsylvania. It shut down production in 1984. PCM Collection.

## A Glimpse into Placer County Water Reservoir History

by Christina Richter, Administrative Clerk, Archives & Collections

Ten years after the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) was established in 1957, the Middle Fork Water Project was completed in the deep canyons of the Foresthill Divide. The ambitious project included five power plants, seven dams, the Afterbay (aka Ox-bow) Reservoir and two very large reservoirs, Hell Hole and French Meadows.

The Middle Fork project was known as a “bold and imaginative undertaking” as Placer was the first county in California to develop its own water resources and claim water rights to local supplies. For Placer County, these two large reservoirs were integral to this mission.

Hell Hole reservoir, currently still the largest county water storage, is located at an elevation of 4,650 feet on the Rubicon River. During its construction an 80-year-old dam building expert viewed the area from a helicopter and exclaimed “I have worked on the building of a lot of dams and the Hell Hole site is one of the best locations I have ever seen.” It was built to contain 207,590 acre-feet of gross water storage, with the height of the dam at 410 feet and its surface area at 1,253 acres.

Beautiful French Meadows was once the site of Native American trade events. It also housed a cabin belonging to a resident who was not happy to be relocated. Overall, many hurdles were overcome before the 1963 dam and reservoir groundbreaking, but once finished the French Meadows project was praised as the “strongest and boldest water development in the state.” The dam was completed at a height of 231 feet, at an elevation of 5,273 feet. Its gross water storage is 134,993 acre-feet with a surface area of 1,253 acres. This site is currently a popular destination for campers and fishermen.

Water history in Placer County goes back to the Gold Rush days. This glimpse into our relatively recent water storage history is only a glimpse of the complex picture of water use in our county. If you want an up close and personal view, both of these reservoirs are well worth the visit.

Ref: Placer County Water Agency



Hell Hole Reservoir. Courtesy of Placer County Water Agency.



French Meadows Reservoir. Courtesy of Placer County Water Agency.

## Tragedy on the River

by April McDonald-Loomis, Placer County Historical Society

The North Fork of the American River has played an important part in the history of Auburn and still has impact on our lives in current times. The river rises from near Lake Tahoe and today runs unrestrained until it flows into Folsom Lake. The upper reaches are known worldwide for the challenging white water rafting and kayaking opportunities. The part of the river running right below Auburn is much tamer during most of the year. The level of the river rises and falls according to the snowpack and spring runoff: sometimes rising quite high, at other times you can wade across it.



In August 1894, the river was quite low and the sun was quite hot. Four young women decided that it would be a good day for a picnic by the Birdsall dam. The dam had been built in 1880. It provided irrigation and city water via the North Fork Ditch downstream to the flatlands.

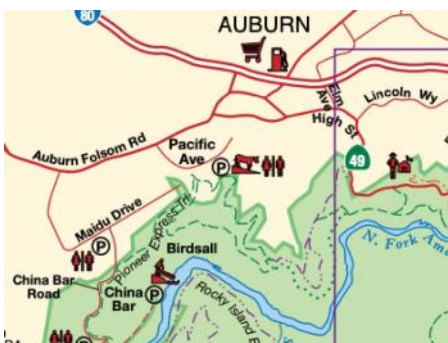
Despite the fairly strenuous climb, about two and one half miles at a steep incline, the ladies set out about 10:00 am wearing their long dresses with full petticoats. Alice Seavey was 19 years old, Cora Johnson was 18 years old, Traxie Lowell, known as Grace, was 16 years old. They brought along a friend Annie Cardwell, about the same age as the other girls, she was from Lathrop and was visiting Grace Lowell.

Arriving at the river, no doubt hot from the hike, they discarded their shoes and overskirts and headed into the shallow water to cool off. The river, while shallow at that time of year still had some deep channels and an undercurrent.

Grace and Alice were holding hands, when one of them he slipped into deeper water pulling the other girl with her. Cora ran into the water to help her friends. Tragically all three girls were swiftly taken by the river and were drowned.

Poor Annie Cardwell, left alone and no doubt frightened beyond reason, headed back up the trail looking for help. She first came upon George Enos' home. George and his son, ran to the river but they were too late and could only recover two of the bodies. The other girl was found later by Johnny Predom. Annie Cardwell, continued up the trail but when she came to the railroad tracks, not being familiar with the area, continued in the opposite direction from town but soon came upon Judge Myres home on Baltimore Ravine. Mrs. Myres brought the girl to town and spread the word but by that time there was little anyone could do. Frank Coker

was able to bring the bodies of the girls to their respective homes where devastated families received them.



The entire community was stunned by the tragedy. A funeral was held for all three girls at the Opera House and it was the largest ever seen in the county at the time. Flags were flown at half mast and "Auburn turned out en masse" for the event. A tragedy repeated too often today.

Sources: *Placer Herald* Aug. 18, 1894, *S. F. Call* Aug. 12, 1894.

## News from the Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

april.pchs@gmail.com (530) 823-2128

Greetings,

Good news about our plaque project for the Nevada Street/Spanish Flat signs and the plaque for the Bear River Ditch at Ashford Park! Some actual progress! We are finally talking with the City of Auburn to maybe/kind of/sort of/ start working on this project. I know it doesn't sound like much but this is finally some amount of progress after a year or so of nothing from them! Cross your fingers but don't hold your breath! We will need some help creating some kind of pedestal for the Bear River plaque so if anyone can help please let us know.

On the subject of plaques, the county has commissioned local artist Douglas Van Howd for a memorial to fallen sheriffs and deputies in Placer County. Like all of his work (he did the dancing Maidu in Central Square) the one he created is a beauty. The only problem is that on their memorial plaque they are not including the name of Sheriff Echols who was killed in the line of duty in Old Town Auburn in 1850. The trouble is that at the time Auburn was part of Sutter County, Placer County had not been formed until 1851. So far neither county has recognized this Sheriff. If you want to read about this Sheriff, go to our website [placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://placercountyhistoricalsociety.org) under articles and look for The Forgotten Sheriff. If you can drop an email to the Board of Supervisors and request that Sheriff Echols be honored please take the time: [BOS@placer.ca.gov](mailto:BOS@placer.ca.gov). Better yet, if you know one of them, give them a call!



Hal Hall at the Stevens Trail plaque.

Another worthwhile project is happening at the Griffith Quarry Museum. An Eagle Scout has chosen the museum grounds as his project. It is an admirable project but he needs help with the cost of materials (fencing, etc.) He has set up a gofundme account. If you can please donate: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/griffith-quarry-beautification>.

An upcoming event for your calendar is happening on March 5 at the State Theater at 1:00. The same hardy group that retraced the steps of the Donner Party rescue expedition last year are doing a similar trek retracing the steps of the Grosh Brothers who were the actual discoverers of the fabulously rich Comstock Lode. They are trekking from Silver City, Nevada to Last Chance Cemetery where one of the brothers is buried. More information on the Grosh Brothers can be found at: <https://historyexp.org/gb-expedition-summary/>

The next general dinner meeting is April 6, 2023

Happy almost Spring!

April McDonald-Loomis



Placer County Historical Foundation Board at the Earl Crabbe Gym dedication. Al Stoll, Donna Howell, Hal Hall, Mike Lynch, Patsy Lynch

## 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  
[donnersummithistoricalociety.org](http://donnersummithistoricalociety.org)

### Foresthill Divide Historical Society

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

### 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  
[pcgs.pcgenes.com](http://pcgs.pcgenes.com)

### 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

Jim Hammes (916) 624-3464  
[rocklinhistorical.org](http://rocklinhistorical.org)

### Roseville Historical Society

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

### S.N.O.W. Sports Museum

Jill Short Milne, (415) 254-5686  
[thesnowmuseum.org](http://thesnowmuseum.org)

### Calendar:

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

**Foresthill Divide Historical Society Meeting:** Monday, March 20th at 6:00pm

**Golden Drift Historical Society Meeting:** Monday, April 3rd at 7:00pm

**Historical Advisory Board Meeting:** Wednesday, April 19th at 5:30pm

**Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting:** Wednesday, March 15th at 6:00pm; Wednesday, April 19th at 6:00pm

**Placer County Historical Society Meeting:** Thursday, March 2nd at 2:00pm, **Dinner Meeting:** Thursday, April 6th at 6:00pm

**Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society:** Tuesday, March 28th at 7:00pm; Tuesday, April 25th at 7:00pm

**Placer Genealogical Society Meeting:** Monday, March 27th at 7:00pm; Monday, April 24th at 7:00pm

**Rocklin Historical Society Meeting:** Monday, March 13th at 6:00pm; Monday, April 10th at 6:00pm

**Roseville Historical Society Meeting:** Tuesday, March 14th at 4:00pm; Tuesday, April 11th at 4:00pm



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Volume 26, Issue 1

January – February 2023