

THE PLACER

A Voice of History

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In this Issue



1. Administrator's Notes
2. CCC
3. CCC
4. Museums
Intelligence
5. County Organization
News
6. Historical
Organizations/
Placer Message
7. Calendar of Events

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Administrator's Notes

Melanie Barton

I'm very excited about our "Placer" theme for 2009: *The Great Depression rolled across the landscape of the 1930s like a dust storm, yet people persevered by finding refuge in packed movie houses, sporting venues, and through various New Deal programs implemented by the government.*

Some of you lived through the Great Depression and most of us grew up hearing stories from our parents or grandparents about those difficult years. The hardships are well known and documented by multiple sources including literature, photography and art. To balance this, we have chosen to focus on some of the positive outcomes from those dire times.

The topics we will present throughout the year are the California Conservation Corps, Theatres and Movies, WPA Buildings, Hospitals and Sanitariums, Prohibition and Repeal, and Sports and Recreation.

This year's theme is timely and relevant. As the events of 2009 unfold, we may see

parallels to the 1930s. By exploring various aspects of the Great Depression, we can gain understanding and perspective that will help us weather the current storm of political and economic unrest.

We have an exciting year ahead at all of the Placer County Museums. The renovations to the historic Courthouse are almost complete and will reopen on January 12th. The Carousel exhibit has been a successful addition to the Bernhard Museum Complex. Plans are underway for the 2nd Heritage Trail, so save the dates now for August 8th and 9th. We want you all to enjoy this fun event! The full schedule of Community Education programs will include programs on Placer mining, care and preservation of wedding dresses, and a showing of the movie *Greed* that is featured in our exhibit, History on the Go, the Silver Screen edition. In March a new temporary exhibit will open in the Placer County Museum that will display wedding dresses from our collection.

I look forward to your continued support of all the county museums and

programs. This is more important than ever as we look for ways to make every dollar count while continuing to offer programs and exhibits of interest to the residents and visitors alike.♣

The Civilian Conservation Corps

Ralph Gibson

The Great Depression hit in 1929 and within three years millions of Americans were unemployed. To make matters worse, extensive farming without a plan for erosion control teamed with drought to create the dust bowl. Thousands fled west as they escaped the looming clouds of depression and dust. Out west, huge expansions of forest were decimated by over-logging and no comprehensive replanting program. Roosevelt sought to turn the tide on these three fronts by creating a works program that would employ young men to conserve our soil and forests – two vital natural resources. In 1933, he pushed the Emergency Conservation Work Act through congress, which created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC recruited young men between the ages of 18 and 26 who were unemployed and unmarried to help fight fires, create fire roads and breaks, build fire towers, plant trees, and work the land to prevent erosion.

Most of the problems the CCC was created to confront were in the west, while most of the young unemployed men were from urban centers in the east. The U.S. Army was tasked with the logistical challenge of getting hundreds of thousands of young men to their camps in the west. The U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard also provided officers to temporarily command camps and companies.

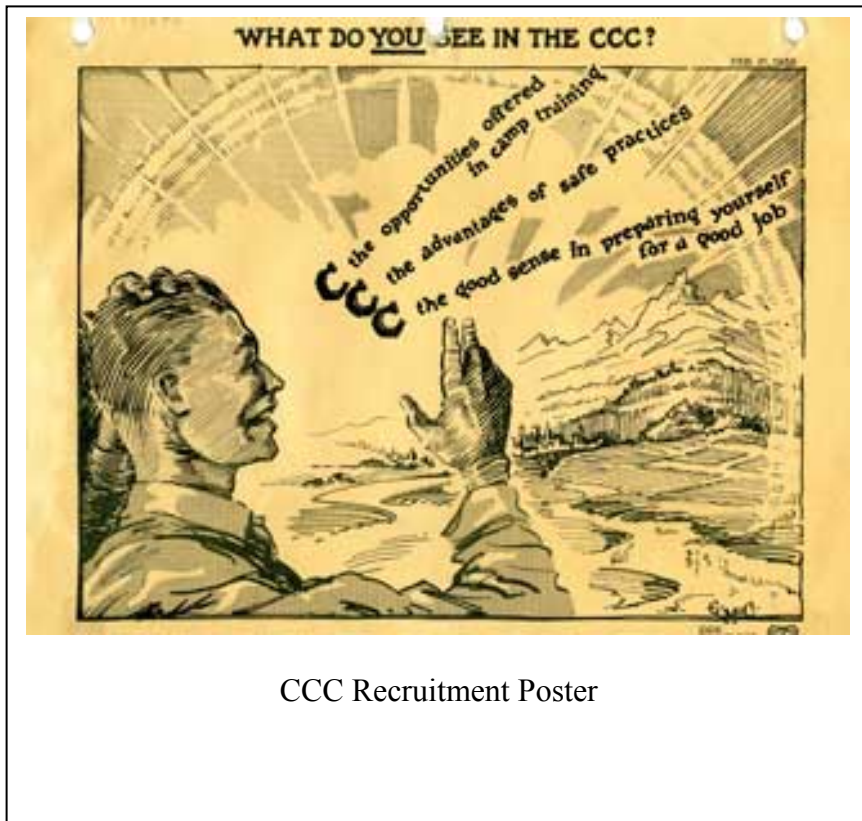
In Placer County, there were several CCC camps, with four located near Foresthill. In June of 1933, the Auburn Lumber Company was awarded a federal contract for furnishing all the lumber, hardware, millwork, roofing, and plumbing for 11 conservation camps in the region, including two in Placer County. The local CCC camps, though mostly populated with young men from the east, did have some Placer County men in their ranks. The program was immensely popular and successful as this quote from Dayton E. Jones, Registrar for the CCC in the January 10th, 1935 *Auburn Journal* illustrates:

The years of 1934 and 1935 will be referred to as the years when the country definitely turned its back on a policy of allowing our natural resources to be wasted to one of planned management of our timbered areas along lines which will result in

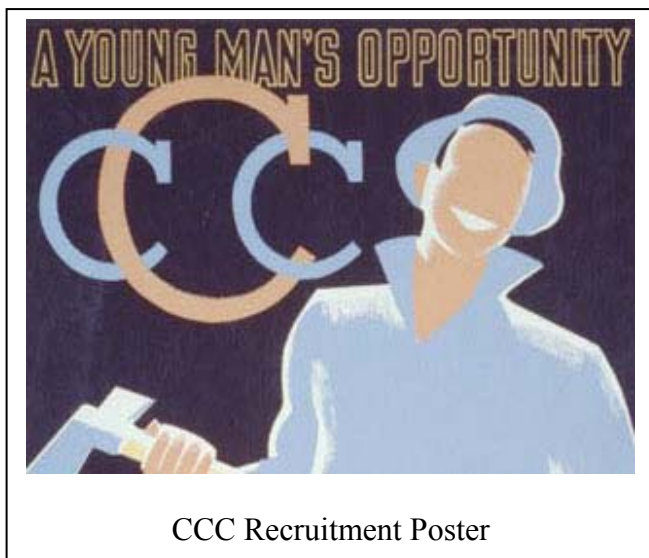
their expansion, protection, and improvement... One million men have been given employment in the forests since the program began. By 1935, \$475,500,000 has been expensed to maintain the men in the camps... The best figures indicate that about one man in every ten single men aged between 18 and 25 spent some time in the CCC during the past two years.

Indeed, Roosevelt's call to recruit thousands of young men swelled beyond his dreams. Between 1933 and 1941, over three million men served in the CCC. Their work greatly reduced erosion and deforestation, and just as important, earned them a wage. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. prepared for war. Interest in the CCC waned and, in 1942, Congress cut the funding for the program.

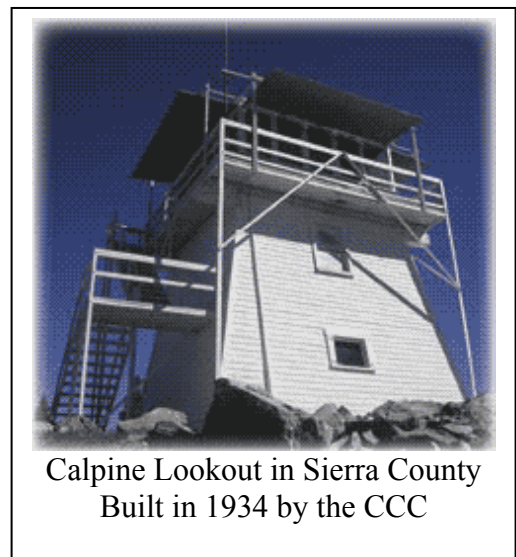
In all, 3,470 fire towers were erected; 97,000 miles of fire roads built; 4,235,000 man-hours were spent fighting fires; and over three billion trees were planted. Exact figures for the work CCC camps in Placer County accomplished are not available, but the impact of that relatively brief program can still be felt today through the successful reforestation of sections of the Tahoe National Forest and fire roads which are still used.



CCC Recruitment Poster



CCC Recruitment Poster



Calpine Lookout in Sierra County
Built in 1934 by the CCC



Museums Intelligence

Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

Snow is clinging to lower and lower elevations on the Sierras and my feet are constantly cold. It must be winter. I hope everyone had a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year. Staff has been busy and will continue to be through summer. The 4th grade Gold Rush program at the Gold Country Museum starts this month and runs through February when Living History begins in earnest. It looks to be a great year for both programs. This is the second year of the Gold Rush program and we have 10 days scheduled. The Living History program will see 60 days of bright, happy children gracing the grounds of the Bernhard Museum Complex in period costume.

The exhibit, *The Tradition of the Carousel*, is still on display in the Bernhard Museum Winery. On January 10th, guest curator of the exhibit, Sue Hegarty, will give a presentation on carousels in the winery as a Community Education program. The exhibit will run through January 25th.

Next up for our exhibit team is a spring exhibit of period wedding dresses. The dresses will be on display in the Placer County Museum in the courthouse (replacing the Curves and Compromise exhibit), the Bernhard Museum, and one may end up in the Gold Country

Museum. Look for this exhibit in March.

On December 5th, Curator of Archives, Carmel Barry-Schweyer, retired. She spent the past 10 years transforming the Archives into a true research center that is the envy of many archivists. We will greatly miss her. Former Archives intern Debbie Paulsen has temporarily joined our staff to keep the Archives and Research Center open two days a week (Mon. & Tues. 9:00 – 4:00). In February, Carmel will return as an extra-help employee.

We still have a lot planned for the year, even though we are dealing with a much tighter budget than in the past. The key word passed around all county offices is: efficiency. In order to be more efficient at what we do, we need your help. The printing and mailing costs of *The Placer* are expensive. If you have email and have not yet submitted a request to receive *The Placer* via email, please do so by emailing or calling Mary-Jane, mjcoon@placer.ca.gov or 530-889-6500.

Community Education Program: The Tradition of the Carousel

From the practice fields of French Knights to the gleaming, beautifully carved animals gently gliding in a circle during a fair, carousels have a rich and wondrous history. To learn more about this history, please join us on Saturday, January 10th at 2:00 pm in the Bernhard Museum Winery for our next free Community Education Program: *The Tradition of the Carousel*. Sue Hegarty, guest-curator, will enlighten you

and enliven the carved animals on display as she discusses the origin and evolution of the carousel.

Sue has collected, restored, sold, and exhibited over 100 carousel animals and worked as both curator and director of the American Carousel Museum in San Francisco. The Bernhard Museum Winery is located at 291 Auburn Folsom Rd. in Auburn.

Community Education Program: The Silent Film *Greed*

In 1924, Erich Von Stroheim directed an epic silent film *Greed*, which some critics claim is the greatest movie ever to grace the silver screen. Portions of the film were shot in the Iowa Hill region of Placer County. A special screening of *Greed* will take place in the Gold Country Museum on Saturday, February 7th at 1:00 pm. The film is a morality tale that illustrates the destructive nature of greed as three people, whose lives are intertwined, struggle until the bitter end for wealth. After a brief introduction, we will show half of the film, take a 15-20 minute intermission, then screen the last half. *Greed* has a running time of three hours and 48 minutes. The Gold Country Museum is located at 1273 High Street inside the Gold Country Fairgrounds in Auburn. Because seating is limited, reservations are required.

Greed is featured in a new exhibit in the Placer County Museum, *History on the Go, The Silver Screen Edition*, as one of four films shot in Placer County.

For more information on any of these events, please call 530-889-6500.♣

Placer County Historical Society News

President's Message

*Michael Otten,
President*

As we start another year some might think times are tough. Go back 75 years and most folks then would love to change places with you. Imagine having a manual labor job that paid \$30 a month and being grateful for it.

Brigades of destitute young men and World War I veterans picked up shovels and pushed wheel barrows, helping to make Placer County and California a better place. It also reminds us that California has been a crazy place. In 1934 the state Democrats nominated Socialist Upton Sinclair, a Pulitzer-prize author, for governor on the EPIC (End Poverty in California) ticket.

Yet, what they accomplished through the Franklin D. Roosevelt New Deal alphabet soup programs can still be seen all around us today.

Start with the restored Cooper Amphitheater in the newly opened Auburn Park Preserve behind Auburn City Hall. A short distance away is the Earle Crabbe Gym and much of the wall work around Placer High School.

The New Deal era brought new City Halls to Auburn and Roseville, tennis courts to Dutch Flat, the Colfax Elementary School and much of the Gold Country Fairgrounds.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was the first program in 1933, followed by the Works Progress (later Projects) Administration in 1935. At its peak, the CCC employed 30,000 in

public lands in California. The CCC built many trails still in use today, including portions of the famed Pacific Crest Trail. The entrance building to Bliss State Park was a project that still stands.

The Auburn Ski Club took part in late 1933 in a winter sports program at the Applegate CCC camp. Sewer lines, streets, ditches, culverts and sewer plants were built.

In 1938, Camp Flint was established as a joint state-federal relief and labor camp on what was then known as the 20th District Agricultural Association Fairgrounds in Auburn. Laborers who worked on Auburn area projects, including those at the fairgrounds and high school, lived in wood and canvas huts there. The camp was closed on July 5, 1941, and moved to Camp Placer near Applegate.

Of course, Placer County was a much different place as well-documented in the 1939 Guide to California, a Federal Writers Project under the sponsorship of State Librarian Mabel R. Gillis. The guide remains to this day an excellent historical and tour reference.

The guide gave these population figures for our communities: Roseville, 6,425; Auburn, 2,661; Lincoln, 2,094; Colfax, 912; Newcastle, 750; Rocklin, 724; Loomis, 319; Penryn, 300; Ophir, 250; Foresthill, 200; Sheridan, 198; Emigrant Gap, 164; Gold Run, 114; Alta, 113; Iowa Hill, 100; Dutch Flat, 90; Yankee Jim's, 16.

In November I had the good fortune to participate in a workshop at the University of California on California's Living New Deal project. The project was developed by the California

Historical Society with the UC Berkeley's Institute on Research and Labor and Employment Library and the California Studies Center.

It is a growing collaborative effort to identify, map and interpret and commemorate the legacy of the New Deal. To find out more, go to: www.newdealproject.org.

I think it is important for us in the historical community to document what took place in Placer County as well as contribute to the statewide effort. What we are looking for includes the name and location of projects, when started and completed, the original use and the current use; photos then and now, movies, oral histories, architects, artists, contractors and others involved. At some point, we'll try to put some of this on our web site. Happy New Year!
--Michael Otten, otten@ssctv.net

Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

Addah Owens, Vice President

When: February 5, 2009

Time: 6:30 Dinner, 7:30

Program

Where: Veteran's Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn, CA

***Cost:** \$14 per person

Menu: Chinese New Years Dinner

Mail Check to: PCHS, c/o Betty Samson, 8780 Baxter Grade Road, Auburn, CA 95603.

Program: A surprise!

** Please note the increased cost per person for the dinner.*

Placer County Historical Organizations

Big Bend Visitor's Center
Phil Sexton,
Phil_Sexton@Mac.com

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

Donner Summit Historical Society
Margie Powell, (530) 432-4015

Foresthill Divide Historical Society
Sandy Simester,
(530) 367-3535
www.foresthillhistory.org

Friends of Griffith Quarry
Doug Brown, (916) 663-1837

Fruitvale School Hall
Community Association
Nancy Peterson,
(916) 434-1727

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

Historical Advisory Board
Tracy Falk, (530) 889-6500

Joss House Museum and
Chinese History Center
Charles Allen, (530) 878-4602

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

Loomis Basin Historical Society
Dot Shiro, (916) 663-3892
www.ppgn.com

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

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

Old Town Auburn Preservation Society
Donna Howell, (530) 885-2891

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

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

Placer County Museums Docent Guild
Joy Williams, (530) 823-3553

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

Roseville Historical Society
Michael Bryant, (916) 773-1520
www.rosevillehistorical.org

Sierra College Natural History Museum
Don Juergenson,
(530) 269-0443

The Placer

Do you receive a copy of *The Placer* in the mail and you have an email address? If so, we'd like you to switch to receiving an electronic version of *The Placer* through your email. Printing costs are going up and our budget is going down. There are benefits to receiving an electronic copy. Some of the photographs and graphics in *The Placer* are in color, but we only print in black and white. A full color copy arrives in the inbox of everyone on our email list. You also get the newsletter much faster. *The Placer* is sent via email usually the day after it has been sent to the print shop.

So, if you have email, please make the switch by contacting Mary-Jane Coon at (530) 889-6500 or mjcoon@placer.ca.gov and give her your name and email address.

Thank you for helping us become more efficient!

Calendar of Events

January

- Jan. 10th, 2:00 pm** Community Education Program: *The Tradition of the Carousel* at the Bernhard Museum Winery. Contact: (530) 889-6500.
- Jan. 19th, 7:00 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Business meeting at the Foresthill Divide Museum. Contact (530) 367-3535.
- Jan. 19th, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Rocklin Library. Contact (916) 624-3464.
- Jan. 21st, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library. Contact (916) 652-7844.
- Jan. 22nd, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogy Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact (530) 885-2216.
- Jan. 28th, 5:30 pm** Auburn Joss House Annual Fundraising Dinner at the Chang Brothers Restaurant in Auburn. \$27 per person, reservations required. Contact: (530) 346-7121 or (530) 885-0210.

February

- Feb. 5th, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Society Dinner meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall. Cost is \$14 per person. Contact Betty Samson (530) 885-5074.
- Feb 7th, 1:00 pm** Community Education program: *The Silent Film "Greed"* at the Gold Country Museum. Reservations required. Contact: (530) 889-6500.
- Feb. 10th, 9:00 am** Historical Organizations Committee meeting at the Lincoln Area Archives Museum. Contact: (530) 889-6500.
- Feb. 16th, 6:30 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Potluck meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall. Contact (530) 367-3535.
- Feb. 16th, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Rocklin Library. Contact (916) 624-3464.
- Feb. 18th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library. Contact (916) 652-7844.
- Feb. 18th, 6:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting in the Bernhard Winery. Contact: (530) 889-6500.

Placer County Museums
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603

