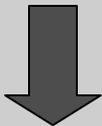


# THE PLACER

A Voice of History

September– October 2012  
Volume 15, Issue 5



## In this Issue

1. Administrator's Notes
2. Westville
4. Museums Intelligence
5. PCHS News
6. Historical Organizations/  
Artifact Highlight
7. Calendar of Events

Melanie Barton, Museums Admin.  
Placer County Museums Division  
101 Maple St.  
Auburn, CA 95603  
(530) 889-6500  
[mbarton@placer.ca.gov](mailto:mbarton@placer.ca.gov)

Michael Otten, President  
Placer County Historical Society  
PO Box 5643  
Auburn, CA 95604  
[otten@ssctv.net](mailto:otten@ssctv.net)

Editor and Staff Writer:  
Kasia Woroniecka  
(530) 889-7705  
[kworonie@placer.ca.gov](mailto:kworonie@placer.ca.gov)  
[www.placer.ca.gov/museum](http://www.placer.ca.gov/museum)

## Administrator's Notes

*Melanie Barton*

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Heritage Trail event was a rousing success in spite of the triple digit temperatures. Placer County Museum staff and volunteers worked hand in hand to make the activities at each museum memorable for visitors. The new board game at the Gold Country Museum was a hit and the Goldhounds made finding that elusive piece of gold both educational and fun. All the hands on activities at the Bernhard including fruit crate building, wheat grinding and ice cream making (and eating) were especially enjoyable for children of all ages. Our partners and event sponsor, the Native Sons of the Golden West, Auburn Parlor 59, captured the day's activities with photographs to the delight of visitors. At the historic Courthouse, Alma Bell shared her story with anyone who would listen. Local authors and the Genealogical Society were busy in the foyer answering questions and sharing their wide knowledge of local history. And for a small donation, visitors could enjoy an old fashioned root beer float.

Outside of Auburn, the other three Placer County Museum's,

were busy as well. At Griffith Quarry, engaging docents shared the early history of the granite industry and of Penryn.

### Heritage Trail Fun!



Family making fruit crates at the Bernhard Museum



Gold panning with the Goldhounds at the Gold Country Museum

Visitors also enjoyed a guided tour of the quarry and a 1908 era horse drawn wagon. Up the hill at the Forest Hill Divide Museum, the blacksmith shop was in full swing. Friendly docents greeted every visitor and gladly shared their local history. Other volunteers and docents shared the local Native American history and provided Indian fry bread samples. At the Golden Drift Museum in Dutch Flat, visitors were met by an army of docents ready to guide them through the museum.

In addition to visiting all six of our museums, I also stopped by nine other museums on the tour between Roseville and Tahoe. At every location, people were having fun and learning about the history of this wonderful area we call HOME. It takes many people to put on an event of this scale and I can't thank everyone enough for their efforts. Job well done!

Without our sponsors, this event would not be possible. Please join me in thanking them all including: the County of Placer; Capital Public Radio; the Native Sons of the Golden West, Auburn Parlor #59 and Lincoln Silver Star Parlor #63; and WAVE Broadband.

We are in the process of setting the date for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Heritage Trail event which will probably be on August 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Plan to be in town to enjoy this event next year and bring a friend.

---

## Westville

*By Kasia Woroniecka*

Westville never developed into a town and yet from the late 1890s until the early 1950s it was one of “the” places to be on the Foresthill Divide. Westville consisted of a hotel, a few cottages and a large barn. Its post office operated from 1889 to 1919 and the name Westville honored the first postmaster, George C. West. Around 1900, Westville was the center for quartz and drift mines and had two stamp mills. In 1924, Westville was a voting precinct of 12 votes. By 1947 it was listed as having a population of four.

The Southern Maidu, who inhabited the area and used it as a summer camp, referred to it by a name that meant “buck

brush hill.” They would come up to the higher elevations to escape the summer heat, trade with the Washoe, collect acorns and fish.

Mel Locher, a long time Auburn resident, recalled a trip with his father to the Foresthill Divide and Westville in August of 1921. The one-way roads were in poor condition, “full of rust, dust, sharp rocks and pebbles,” and very steep so the drivers were limited to 15 to 25 mph at the most. “There were as many horses and wagons at the time as there were cars” and backing up or passing them made the drive difficult. They arrived in Westville in the later afternoon and checked into the Westville Hotel. The hotel attracted visitors from as far as San Francisco and was known for its beautiful setting and good food. “Each room had its traditional commode, complete with its pitcher of water and tin dipper, a bar of Ivory soap, a wash bowl and on each end hung the



Westville Hotel, circa 1900

wash towels. Above the commode was a small square mirror hung on the wall for shaving. A big, white, somewhat fancy solid iron double bed, wooden rocking chair and straight chair, hanging coal oil lamp, and naturally a brass spittoon sitting on a circular piece of linoleum to catch the near misses "...” completed the room. A 25 ¢ fee would get you a tin bath tub, extra towel and a large wash bucket full of hot water, and after your bath, the used water went out the side window "...”. Outside there was a large barn with its corral, carriage house, and a couple of storage sheds and other than a large fenced-in pasture, hitching rails and horse watering troughs, that was Westville. "...” I remember the bar was downstairs under the rooms, and they whooped and hollered and danced all night. Nobody got any sleep, and the many complaints fell on deaf ears.”

James Terry Evans remembers a trip to Westville in the summer of 1948, when he was 10 years old, to visit his great uncle and aunt, Bill and Mildred Palmer. His uncle and aunt were two of the four people that resided in

Westville. They owned 88 acres in Westville that they bought after WWII and ran the Baker Ranch Hotel, located four miles north of Foresthill. Much like Mel Locher’s description of the tough roads in the area, James Evans noted that “the dirt roads and trails have a lot of fine (make it very fine) red dirt. Uncle Bill Palmer used to say that it did not matter what color car or truck you bought, it would be some shade of red.”

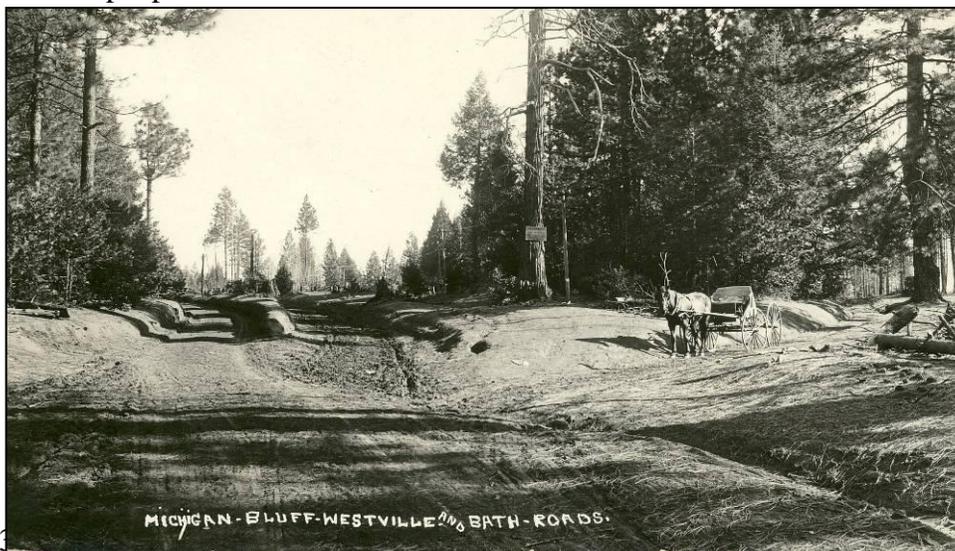
There is not much left of Westville today. The 25 room hotel burned down in 1901, but

was rebuilt the following year. It burned down again in 1931 and was not rebuilt.

**Westville is located 14 miles (22.5 km) northeast of Foresthill. It lies at an elevation of 5249 feet (1600 m).**



Ray Capels, Mary Evans, Phyllis Evans, Bill Palmer, Newton Evans, Wilbur (Bill) Evans at Westville about 1948.



Driving on dirt roads requires a lot of skill and attention to the changing terrain, as seen in the picture above titled *Michigan Bluff, Westville and Bath Roads.*



## Museums Intelligence

### Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

Fall is around the corner and that means two things: Volunteer Training and Fall Living History. Volunteer Training will get underway on September 20<sup>th</sup> and will run through the first week of November. We have a goal of 20 new volunteers, so keep your fingers crossed. If you know of anyone who would like to volunteer, please give us a call, 530-889-6500.

This October we will have 13 days of Living History with over 650 students in attendance. That's the most ever for the fall program. Because we're short-staffed, we are only offering Living History on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. But as you can see, we're still going to be quite busy with the program.

The exhibit team is also working on adding an exhibit to the stained glass Courthouse display in the Placer County Museum. This exhibit will be comprised of photographs and text that will interpret the history of all three Auburn Courthouses. This new exhibit should be installed just before winter.

This issue of *The Placer* will encompass both Halloween and the 106<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hanging of Adolph Weber, one of Auburn's most notorious murderers. So I thought I'd add this little article from the September 29, 1906 *San Francisco Call*:

#### Big Crowd Views Assassins Body

Sacramento, Sept. 28 – The announcement that the body of Adolph Weber had been brought down from Folsom Prison and was at the morgue led thousands of men and women to that place tonight. The crowd poured into the room where the body of the young murderer lay confined and filed out to make room for others.

Many fashionably dressed women were in the long procession, and as they emerged to the sidewalk could be heard discussing the appearance of the executed murderer with the same apparent enjoyment they would display on leaving a theater.

Weber lay in his coffin as though asleep. A livid mark around the neck showed where the rope had robbed him of life. Aside from this mark, however, there was nothing about the body to reveal to the curious the manner of his death.

The body will be sent to San Francisco tomorrow for cremation. It is understood an examination of the brain will be made at the request of relatives.

Weber's brain was examined by Dr. A.A. Cavagnaro of Cooper Medical College (now Stanford University). He found no abnormalities and promptly cremated the remains. The final resting place of Adolph Weber is unknown.



A group of Dazzling Divas enjoyed our "What Killed the American Hat?" exhibit so much that Diva Fran Neves of Lincoln wrote this poem:

*What killed the American  
hat?  
The Dazzling Divas will bring  
it back!  
So ladies, whenever you go  
out,  
wear your hats! That says a  
lot.  
Red ones, green ones, yellow  
ones, blue,  
the hat you wear says a lot  
about you.  
Feathers, ribbons, flowers,  
lace,  
round ones, square ones  
frame your face.  
Wear your hats; hold your  
head up high.  
Bring back the American hat.  
It's "Do or die!"*

## Placer County Historical Society News



### President's Message

*Michael Otten,  
President*

I hate to say it. The Placer County Historical Society is now the sad possessor of an 80-pound box of bronze junk. It is the remains of State Registered Historical Marker 463 on Lozanos Road in Ophir. In early January the plaque was literally ripped off. It denoted the historic role quartz mining played in the Spanish Corral area that in 1852 made Ophir the most populous community in Placer County. On June 22, the culprit, James Anthony "Tony" Karas, 48, of Lincoln, was sentenced to 210 days in jail, placed on three years formal probation and ordered to pay \$2,424 in fines, fees, assessments and penalties. The Placer County Historical Society, a nonprofit 501c3 organization is raising funds to restore the plaque. Donations can be sent to the organization at P.O. Box 5643, Auburn, CA 95604.

Special thanks go to Jean Allender and Bonnie Parodi, co-chairs who made this year's Heritage Trail Benton Welty historic classroom tour special. Thanks to the other volunteers who staffed the event, answered questions and took photographs. They include Karen Bleuel, Mary Lou Hardy, Betty and Karri Samson, Doris Vierra, Jane Hamilton, Barbara Burdick, Kathryn Kratzer-Yue,

Dorothy Hall Overton and Barbara Van Riper. Van Riper was featured in the Auburn Journal by photo-journalist Michael Kirby.

With the elections right around the corner and the controversy over proposed piping of mid Placer sewage to Lincoln for treatment, I offer a couple of notes from the past.

There is an interesting proposal on the San Francisco ballot (Proposition F) asking voters to have the city study the feasibility of creating a plan to drain the 117-billion gallon Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in Yosemite and find alternative water and power sources. The reservoir, now serving 2.5 million people in the Bay Area, was built in the 1920s after a controversial campaign following the 1906 earthquake. But a more controversial and costly water shift from the Sierra to the Bay Area raised its head back in the late 1860s and 1870s to take Lake Tahoe (then Lake Bigler) water via a pipeline to transport a million gallons a day. It would require boring a tunnel near Truckee to the west of Soda Springs and a massive reservoir near Auburn. A Santa Clara lawmaker wanted Placer County taxpayers to approve a \$250,000 gold bond measure to help finance the ambitious project. The rest of the Sierra and the Sacramento Valley joined in the opposition and were able to convince the Bay Area to look for more feasible and cheaper projects. It was back in 1904 when polls were open from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. that Placer County Supervisors voted to use Auburn for a trial

run with its first voting machine. The cumbersome machine arrived in October and was carted from the Freeman Hotel to the Conroy Hotel and then to the City Trustees' (now Council) office in the Odd Fellows building on Lincoln Way, across from today's City Hall. Though it seemed to work well enough, civic leaders soundly rejected the notion of paying \$650.00 a machine to expand the program for future elections. I wonder if the machine is still around.

[otten@ssctv.net](mailto:otten@ssctv.net)

---

### Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

*Addah Owens, Vice President*

**When:** October 4<sup>th</sup> 2012

**Time:** 6:30 Dinner, 7:30 Program

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

**Cost:** \$14 per person

**Menu:** Roast Pork with pineapple glaze, roasted red potatoes with butter and herbs, green beans, salad, corn bread with honey butter and gingerbread cake.

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

**Program:** Sheila Toner will present a program regarding *The Russian Influence – 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ft. Ross*

## **Placer County Historical Organizations**

---

---

Colfax Area Historical Society  
Helen Wayland,  
(530) 346-7040  
[www.colfaxhistory.org](http://www.colfaxhistory.org)

Donner Summit Historical Society  
Bill Oudegeest, (209) 606-6859  
[www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org](http://www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org)

Foresthill Divide Historical Society  
Gerda Percival, (530) 367-2366  
[www.foresthillhistory.org](http://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  
Glenn Vineyard, (916) 747-1961

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

Lincoln Area Archives Museum  
Shirley Russell, (916) 645-3800

Lincoln Highway Association  
Bob Dieterich, [bobd@iname.com](mailto:bobd@iname.com)  
[www.lincolnhwy.org](http://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](http://www.roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum)

Native Sons of the Golden West, Parlor #59  
Dave Allen, (530) 878-2878  
[dsallen59@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsallen59@sbcglobal.net)

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

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

Placer County Genealogical Society  
[www.pcgenes.com](http://www.pcgenes.com)

Placer County Historical Society  
Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837  
[otten@sctv.net](mailto:otten@sctv.net)

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

Rocklin Historical Society  
Jean Sippola,  
(916) 652-1034  
[www.rocklinhistory.org](http://www.rocklinhistory.org)

Roseville Historical Society  
Phoebe Astill, (916) 773-3003  
[www.rosevillehistorical.org](http://www.rosevillehistorical.org)

North Lake Tahoe Historical Society  
Javier Rodriguez, (530) 583-1762  
[www.northtahoemuseums.org](http://www.northtahoemuseums.org)

### **Artifact Highlight**

#### **Maidu Cradleboard**



Various methods of transporting children have been used across different cultures and periods. Native Americans treated cradleboards as more than just baby carriers. They symbolized continuity of the family, community and tribe, and of human life. This cradleboard was made of willow with loops of seed beads attached to the rim of the small hood. It was made by Lizzie Enos in 1909. She was a Maidu Indian who was born in Placer County in 1880 and lived most of her life in the Meadow Vista and Clipper Gap area.

## 2012 Calendar of Events

### September

- Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum. 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville  
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm** Forest Hill Divide Historical Society business meeting at the Forest Hill Divide Museum.  
Contact: 530-367-2366.
- Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.  
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library.  
Contact 530-885-2216.

### October

- Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Society Meeting at the Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall. 100 East Street Auburn.
- Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum. 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville  
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm** Forest Hill Divide Historical Society Dinner meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.  
Contact: 530-367-2366.
- Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Winery.  
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.  
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library.  
Contact 530-885-2216.

**Placer County Museums**  
**101 Maple Street**  
**Auburn, CA 95603**

