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Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

It was 170 years ago when tens of thousands of gold hungry men settled into their tents or cabins to experience their first Christmas in the Gold Fields. Yes, there were some who spent their first Christmas here in 1848, but for the 49ers, December 25, 1849 would be their first. At the Gold Rush Museum we give visitors a glimpse into Christmas Day with three journal entries from miners who were either enroute to California, or in Auburn on Christmas Day 1849.

One such account describes a tyrant sea captain aboard a Clipper Ship bound for California with a hull full of would-be miners. Another entry reveals a cold, bleak Christmas Day on the overland journey as a group of emigrants divides their last rations. A third journal entry recounts a humorous encounter with taffy in an Auburn cabin. These reflections of Christmas Day 1849 from three different

perspectives reveal the growing significance of the Holiday in American culture. This was most likely due to the popularity of the novel A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens and the influence of Queen Victoria.



Col. William Smith, Commanding Officer at DeWitt General Hospital and Santa Claus, December 1943.

The Holidays are celebrated at our other museums as well. The Bernhard will be decked out in Victorian Christmas; the grand Christmas Tree in the foyer of the historic Courthouse will sparkle with gold ornaments outside the gallery of the Placer County Museum; the DeWitt History Museum will give visitors a touch of wartime Christmas spirit; and at the Griffith

Quarry Museum visitors can learn some of the Welsh Christmas traditions Griffith likely brought to Penryn.

I hope everyone has a wonderful, warm, merry and happy Holiday Season!

What is hiding in our collections?

Learn about Placer County Museum's newest documentary short film: Mastering the Mountains.

Learning about history in Old Town Auburn just got easier!

Visit the Historic Courthouse for Classic Christmas in December.

Mastering the Mountains

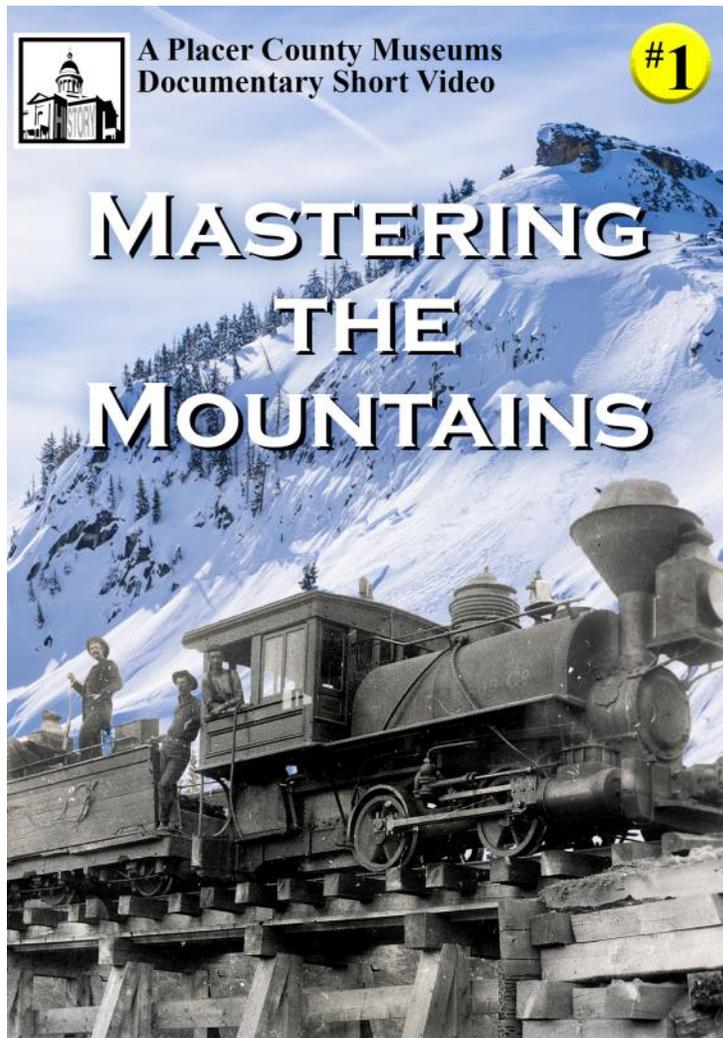
by Jason Adair, Exhibit Technician

The Educational Video Series was conceived in a way to get local history research off our shelves and out into the public eye. The Placer County Archives has more than 30,000 local photographs in our care, and a duty to make them available to the public. The museums staff put together a plan for creating a series of ten-minute single subject videos that would highlight different aspects of Placer County's history.

With a collection as large as ours, including thousands of pages of volunteer authored research, it can be difficult to choose a topic. Fortunately for us the sesquicentennial of the Transcontinental Railroad happened to be this year. Seeing as the railroad runs from one end of Placer County to the other, what better subject could we ask for to create something for all our citizens?

The staff set about the difficult work of figuring out just what story we would tell. What aspects of this infrastructure project were unique to Placer County? Who was the story about? Did it have to

be about a person, or people? Was there a way to make the County itself a main character? It was that last question that brought everything into focus.



Making the county a character was a simple enough decision, but it did set up some strange story structure elements. When you're dealing with an event that was a fight against seemingly insurmountable odds, it naturally begs

to be made into a hero's journey. With that in mind, when you're pitting man and machine against rugged terrain and the terrain ultimately loses the fight, in some ways it makes the county itself

the villain. Maybe not a villain like Darth Vader but definitely like the death star. Is that going to be okay?

That kind of thought process concerning a story may seem ridiculous but if you don't think in those terms, you run the risk of making a slide show instead of a short film. This is especially true when your video is made of still photos. The audience needs an angle in order to come along on the whole journey.

After sifting through our photo collection and reading hundreds of pages of source materials we began writing.

Whenever a group of people from different disciplines with different interests get together

to tell a story it has the habit of exploding into eight different stories. This project was no different. Since there is so much in the way of interesting source materials it was difficult to stay focused on the story.



“Have you ever heard of the Placer County Railroad wars that Griffith Griffith was a part of?”

“Stop. Not a part of the story we’re telling. Though we should definitely put a pin in that for a future exhibit or blog post or something because it sounds awesome.”

Another guiding principal in our drafts was, “We’re not a railroad museum.” This was to remind ourselves that we shouldn’t get too deep on any topic of which we weren’t adequately informed. The nuts and bolts of the railroad story was not something we could effectively tell without more research and time. Instead we chose to focus on what we did know, and that’s the geography and history of our county.

After finishing the first draft of the text things began to take shape. Several pages were added, and then pared down, and added more, and pared down again until we had a tight nine-page piece of narration. The final test with voiceover text is to read it out loud. This allows you to see where the tongue

twisters and overly long and complex sentences are. Once those were fixed or edited out we were ready to record.

I took a first run at recording the narration myself. My voice was not right but it did give me something to begin editing the video with while we searched for someone else to fit the bill. Fortunately, we had a volunteer docent named Paul Clement who seemed like the perfect candidate. We also have a small recording space in the DeWitt History Museum. This came in handy when I messed up the whole first day of recording by not knowing how to use the program.

A couple days of sitting at a computer pushing buttons and yelling at the screen later and it was done.

We uploaded the movie to YouTube and have had nothing but positive feedback. I credit this to the great staff we have working here, our amazing docents and volunteers, the fact that we focused in on our institutional expertise, and because we chose to make the story the most important part.

Hidden Secrets in the Collections

by Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections

There are several objects in our collection that are not what they appear to be or hold some interesting secrets.



This beautiful Art Deco piece of jewelry looks like a necklace until you turn it over. It has a compartment in the back that holds a pair of folding eyeglasses. Necklace c. 1920-1939, Placer County Museums.

This looks like a uniform button, but it is actually a locket, manufactured by the Liberty Manufacturing Company of Los Angeles. Known as a “liberty button,” it opens to reveal a place for photos of an unknown woman and a girl. These buttons were indistinguishable from standard issue military buttons allowing a soldier to pass inspection while holding a picture of his loved ones.

Button locket c. 1918-1940, Placer County Museums Collection.



This little brooch has a compartment on the back that holds a lock of blond hair. The popularity of hairwork reached its height during the Victorian Period. Hair jewelry was often a mourning accessory, made from the hair of the deceased family member or friend and fashioned into fobs, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings and brooches. Hair accessories also served as keepsakes, symbols of friendship or tokens for engaged couples.

Mourning pin, Placer County Museums Collection.

Schuco was the trade name for Schreyer & Co, a German toy company founded in 1912 in Nuremburg. In 1924 Schuco introduced a series of miniature bears known as Piccolo Bears. They ranged in size from three to six inches and came in many colors. In 1927 a series of Compact Bears was produced, which was designed to fit in a ladies' bag and contained a mirror, a compact, a lipstick and either a powder puff, a perfume bottle or a manicure set. This bear has a small compact and what little is left of the lipstick.

Schuco teddy bear compact c. 1927, Placer County Museums Collection.



News from Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

April400@wavecable.com (530) 823-2128



The plaques for the Old Town businesses are complete and mostly delivered! Karen Bleuel, Sherri Schackner, and Mike Holmes were the board members

who set out on “no power” Wednesday to deliver the them. Most of the businesses in Old Town were open and had power, unlike most of us in town. The overall response was very favorable, and several merchants are planning to frame the plaques. We have a few more to make as some of the addresses now have two storefronts. Thanks to John Knox for being the consum-

mate researcher.

The December dinner is always special. The speaker will be Michael Stark and

the topic will be Yankee Jim. Plus, we will have our annual fundraising raffle/drawing. The menu will be prime rib, roasted red potatoes, seasonal vegetable, rolls & butter, and ambrosia. Please RSVP at least a week before to assist our caterer.

Speaking of dinner meetings, it has been suggested that we try using the back room at Sizzler for one of our meetings next year. Please let me know what you think. We would still have a speaker.

If you are coming to the dinner, remember to bring something for our annual raffle/drawing.

Cemetery Tour Review

The cemetery tour put on by the Docent Guild and museum staff was a huge success and brought in over four hundred people. This is such a fun outing, look for the next one if you missed it this time.



Diane Fishburn as Mrs. Mabel Spear.



Carol Cramer, planner, April McDonald-Loomis, researcher, and Delana Ruud, greeter.



Jim Vessely as John Kern.

Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society

Chris Miller
(530) 346-8599
colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest (209) 606-6859
donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Troy Simester
(530) 367-3535
foresthillhistory.org

Fruitvale School Hall Community Association

Lyndell Grey
(916) 645-3517

Golden Drift Historical Society

Sarah Fugate
(530) 389-2121

Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard
(916) 747-1961

Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center

Richard Yue
(530) 346-7121

Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen
(916) 645-3800
laamca.org

Lincoln Highway Association

Bob Dieterich
bobd@iname.com
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

(530) 583-1762
northtahoemuseums.org

Old Town Auburn Preservation Society

Lynn Carpenter
(530) 885-1252

Placer County Genealogical Society

Toni Rosasco
(530) 888-8036
pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society

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

Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Fran Hanson
(530) 878-6990

Rocklin Historical Society

Hank Lohse
(916) 624-3464
rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Fire Museum

Jim Giblin (916) 538-1809
rosevillefiremuseum@gmail.com
rosevillefiremuseum.org

Roseville Historical Society

Denise Fiddymont
(916) 773-3003
rosevillehistorical.org

November

December

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| <p>5 9:00am Historical Organization Committee Meeting, Bernhard Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd., Auburn.</p> <p>7 2:00pm Placer County Historical Society Board Meeting, Room 10, Auburn City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn. (530) 906-4901</p> <p>10 4:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464</p> <p>12 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003</p> <p>18 6:00pm Forest Hill Divide Historical Society Business Meeting, Forest Hill Divide Museum. (530) 367-3535</p> <p>20 6:00pm Loomis Basin Historical Society General Meeting, Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871</p> | <p>5 6:00pm Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting, Auburn Veteran's Hall, 100 East St, Auburn. (530) 906-4901</p> <p>9 6:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464</p> <p>10 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003</p> <p>14 5:00pm Classic Christmas at the Historic Courthouse, 101 Maple Street, Auburn. (530) 889-6500</p> <p>18 5:30pm Historical Advisory Board Meeting, Bernhard Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd., Auburn. (530) 889-6500</p> <p>18 6:00pm Loomis Basin Historical Society General Meeting, Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871</p> <p>21 5:00pm Classic Christmas at the Historic Courthouse, 101 Maple Street, Auburn. (530) 889-6500</p> |
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Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

When: December 5, 2019

Time: 6:00 Dinner, 7:00 Program

Where: Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East Street, Auburn

Cost: \$16 per person

Menu: Prime rib and sides.

Program: The speaker will be Michael Stark on the subject of Yankee Jim. The program will also include the annual fundraising raffle/drawing.

PLEASE RSVP BY Nov. 27th and mail dinner checks to:

PCHS c/o Jane Hamilton, 1871 Crockett Road, Auburn, CA 95603. (530) 885-7839 or hamiltonjanel@me.com

DO NOT BRING ALCOHOL.



PLACER COUNTY MUSEUMS

101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603

