



The Placer

2023 July-August

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Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

It's almost July and summer has finally reared its flaming head. July is bringing the heat, but that hasn't stopped the Heritage Trail! We've had good numbers at almost all participating museums thus far and trail goers are not shy about visiting museums during the regular hours to get their cards stamped. I've already had to reorder Student Scavenger Hunt cards.

I hope you are all having a terrific summer thus far and that you've visited some of the museums on the Heritage Trail. This year you only need four stamps to qualify for the drawing of one of three gift baskets at the end of the year. Students also need only four stamps to qualify for the drawing in



**Students registering at Lincoln Way School, September 1958.
 Placer County Museums, Auburn Journal Collection.**

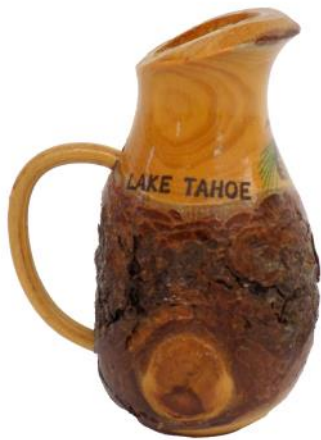
September for either a Samsung Galaxy tablet, Kindle Fire tablet or one of three backpacks filled with school supplies.

As the days begin to shorten as summer marches on, flip a page or two on your calendars and mark a couple fall events we're already planning for: The Old Auburn Cemetery Tour will be on Sunday, October 1st from 1:30 to 4:00 pm and the Fruitvale Schoolhouse Museum Fall Festival will be on Saturday, October 7th from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Souvenir Selections

by Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections

Souvenirs have been around for centuries. Pilgrims traveling to holy places in medieval Europe purchased metal badges decorated with the images of local saints or collected soil and rocks from sacred sites. Mementos were acquired during the Grand Tour, a 17th-19th century rite of passage of young men who traveled around Europe to learn about art, history, and culture, signified sophistication, and experience. They often included paintings, furniture, sculptures, coins, and architectural models. When travel became more common in the second half of the 19th century souvenirs became popular as well. Shopping while on vacation became a pastime and gift stores and souvenir shops began offering inexpensive keepsakes, postcards, teaspoons, plates, and other mass-produced objects that could serve as reminders of the trip and as gifts for friends and family. Souvenirs are artifacts with emotional value that can have many forms. Here are examples from our collection:



Miniature wooden pitcher, a souvenir from Lake Tahoe. 1940-1960. PCM Collection.



Wooden souvenir plaque from Santa Cruz. C. 1920. PCM Collection.



Small plate with an image of the Auburn courthouse. Made by Wheelock Imperial Austria for the Robert J. Hancock Hardware Store in Auburn c. 1905. Wheelock was an importer of souvenir china. Its designs were produced in Austria and Germany and sold in the United States. PCM Collection.



Miniature replica of one of the Guidepost Bells, which were installed along the historical El Camino Real that connected the 21 California Missions. PCM Collection.



Alaskan Inuit souvenir doll. Made of seal hide c. 1940-1948. PCM Collection.



Souvenir Penny of Philadelphia (front and back). Medals known as “lucky pennies” have been sold since the early 1900s and often featured heads of Presidents, Native Americans, or landmarks. PCM Collection



Small souvenir glass cup from the Panama Pacific International Expo in San Francisco in 1915. The expo celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal and the recovery of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. PCM Collection.



Set of 20 Bardell Fototone Miniatures of Niagara Falls in a cardboard case. 1925. PCM Collection.



Souvenir letter box with the picture of the Freeman Hotel in Auburn. PCM Collection.



Box set of 23 mini photographs of Washington, D. C. 1926. PCM Collection.

New Exhibit at the Placer County Museum!

When: Saturday, July 22 at 9am

Where: The Placer County Museum,
101 Maple Street, Auburn.

Come join us as we unveil a new display at the Placer County Museum featuring an incredible piece of history from the S.M. Stevens Drug Store in Auburn. When it was purchased in 1885 it cost Stevens nearly \$1100 (that would be \$34,000 today). Wet your whistle while you are here and stick around after to enjoy our festive day on the Heritage Trail! To find out what it is, you'll just have to stop by.



Interior of Stevens Drug Store in Auburn, c. 1890. Placer County Museums, Placer County Historical Society Collection.

Summertime, and the Living is Easy

by Katy Bartosh, Curator of Education



For most of us, these couple of months provide at least a little more time for relaxation and fun. This is particularly true of Placer County, given the variety of recreation on offer. Now, one might think this is a recent development given the rise in new sports and entertainment technology, but people have been enjoying fun activities here since the Gold Rush.

Most miners worked 12+ hours a day, six days a week, with only Sundays for respite. This work continued throughout the year but changed depending on the season. When given a break, and with a little

gold in their pocket, they often indulged in a little excitement and diversion. Despite images the early California as a vast and rugged landscape, mining camps and early towns had a variety of entertainment and cultural diversions – and a captive audience to profit from.

As evening fell, miners could find dancers, musicians, comedians, or theatre. During the 1850s, a multitude of plays circulated throughout both makeshift and permanent theaters, including an impressive 22 Shakespearean plays. The Gold Rush boasted its own talented performers who could rival those found in Europe or America's East Coast. Lola Montez, known for her captivating Spider Dance and flamboyant lifestyle, danced her way into the hearts of miners. Public dances provided miners with a opportunity to spruce up their appearance and socialize with one another or the few women in town.

Saloons and other gathering places where miners congregated were filled with an abundance of gambling and alcohol. The predominantly male audience favored bull and bear fights, wrestling matches, and fighting spectacles, which frequently resulted in brawls. Even public hangings attracted huge crowds until they were restricted to the Jail's courtyard in 1858.

Circuses regularly made their way through towns, showcasing displays of wild animals, trapeze artists, and highly skilled equestrian performances. In September 1853, the Placer Herald announced a unique exhibition at the National Hotel in Auburn: the head of the notorious robber and murderer, Joaquin Murrieta, along with the hand of his accomplice, Three-Fingered Jack.

A certain amount of calm came to the region as the Gold Rush petered out, agriculture increased, and the 20th century roll in. However, the spirit of fun, sport, recreation, and entertainment, is still alive and well, especially this summer in Placer County,

No Hands Bridge

by April McDonald-Loomis, Placer County Historical Society

This bridge is the very symbol of summer time activities in the American River Canyon whether it be crossing it on foot or horseback, paddling under it by canoe or kayak or just sitting underneath it on the bank with your toes in the river.

The simple design of the three arch bridge fits perfectly into the surrounding landscaping. It was designed by John B. Leonard, a pioneer architect promoting the use of concrete for bridges. Work began on construction in 1910 by the Duncanson-Harrelson Company for the Mountain Quarries Company of San Francisco. The Mountain Quarries Company had a limestone quarry on the El Dorado side of the river. Before the bridge was complete in 1912, three men had lost their lives working on it when one of the arches collapsed. In 2015, the local chapter of the Native Sons of the Golden West placed markers in the Old Auburn Cemetery honoring these fallen men.

The bridge has been known as the Mountain Quarry Cement Bridge, the American River Quarry Bridge, the Pacific Portland Cement Company Bridge, the Auburn Concrete Arch Bridge but the name that stuck is No Hands Bridge.

The narrow bridge originally had no guard rails. Local lore credits veteran equestrian Ina Robbins Robinson for naming the bridge. Ina was the granddaughter of E. T. Robie of the Towle Brothers Lumber Company and niece of Wendell Robie, the founder of the Tevis Cup 100 mile Endurance Race.

According to the story, Ina often rode with Wendell and when riding with her dynamic uncle, they rode fast. Her horse always hesitated when crossing this bridge. It was a common occurrence and many riders walked their mounts across the bridge. Ina worked with her horse and when next riding with Wendell, her horse was so comfortable, she dropped the reins, raised her hands and proclaimed “look Mom! No hands!” The name stuck.

For one hundred and eleven years, the No Hands Bridge has been a significant, enduring symbol along the river. The No Hands survived when more modern bridges failed. In 1964 the No Hands survived when the Hell Hole dam burst and sent a torrent of water down the river and it stood firm in 1986 when the Valentine’s Day flood submerged the bridge. There was some damage and over the years, the problems worsened, in the early 1990s, the Bureau of Reclamation put gates up and closed the bridge. In 1999 the foundation was repaired and the bridge reopened. A steel railing was put in in 1984 and a chain link mesh railing was put up in 2018. Although the bridge retains its dignity, the newly installed heavy five-foot high galvanized mesh fencing recently installed by the Federal Highway Administration and the Central Federal Lands Highway Division has received virtually no positive reaction from local residents who love the grand old bridge. All the daring of the crossing has been lost to safety concerns, the meaning of the name will hold no relevance in the time to come.

The bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 and became a California Historical Landmark in 2014.

This article was informed by Hal V. Hall’s National Registration Nomination Form, Lynch & Lee *The American River Canyon*, Gold County Media, Sept. 3, 2009, Feb.24, 2023, *Mountain Democrat* March 24, 2009



News from the Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

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Greetings from the Historical Society

We regret to start this article with the notice of the passing of one of our very dear board members, Karri Samson. Karri served on the Board for many, many years serving as the board's historian and being the Landmarks Committee chairperson. Many of the plaques you see around town have Karri's work behind them. She will be sorely missed by the whole community.

Heritage Trail at the Benton Welty was a big success this year thanks to the efforts of Delana Ruud and Carol Cramer and their band of helpers. We are still working on increasing the use of this terrific showcase and hope to have it open more in the future. We are looking for volunteers to have the classroom open from 11:00 – 2:00 on a daily basis. There would be a short training session but nothing else required. If you could volunteer even once a month that would certainly help us out with this project. Just let me know if you are interested. Speaking of showcases, we are still looking for a carpenter who can replace the shelving in the glass cases in front of the classroom on the second floor of City Hall. We would pay for materials and a reasonable amount for labor. Anyone wishing to make use of their fairly minor carpentry skills please take a look and maybe you could help us.

We are still working on getting the plaque up at Ashford Park for the Bear River Ditch and those pesky signs on Nevada Street are still in limbo.

Our next dinner meeting will not be until October 5th, Troy and Sandy Simester will do a presentation about Foresthill.

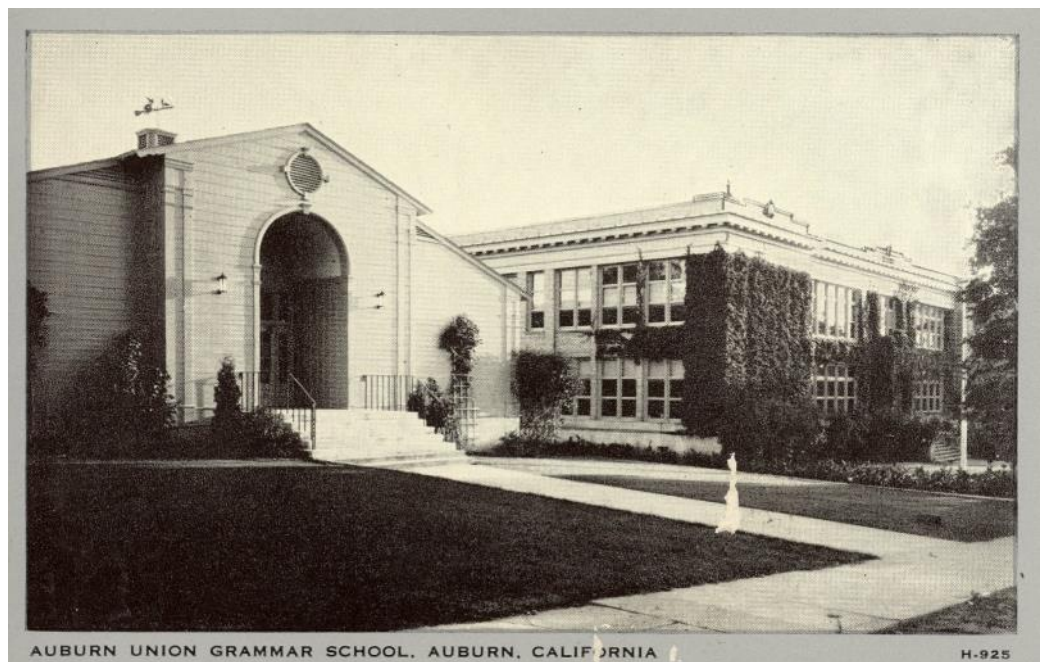
At the last dinner meeting the following were elected and reelected to the PCHS Board.

- * Director – Jean Allender
- * Director – Delana Ruud
- * Director – John Knox
- * Director – Carol Cramer

Have a wonderful summer!

April McDonald-Loomis

President



AUBURN UNION GRAMMAR SCHOOL, AUBURN, CALIFORNIA

H-925

Auburn Union Grammar School, now the Auburn Police Department and City Hall buildings. PCM Collection.

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

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

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
pcgs.pcgenes.com

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

Jim Hammes (916) 624-3464
rocklinhistorical.org

Roseville Historical Society

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

S.N.O.W. Sports Museum

Jill Short Milne, (415) 254-5686
thesnowmuseum.org

Calendar:

Please confirm all meeting times and locations which each organization

Foresthill Divide Historical Society Meeting: Monday, July 17th at 6:00pm

Golden Drift Historical Society Meeting: Monday, August 7th at 7:00pm

Historical Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, August 16th at 5:30pm

Historical Organizations Committee Meeting: Tuesday, August 1st at 9:00am

Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting: Wednesday, July 19th at 6:00pm; Wednesday, August 16th at 6:00pm

Placer County Historical Society Meeting: Thursday, July 6th at 2:00pm

Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society: Tuesday, July 25th at 7:00pm; Tuesday, August 22nd at 7:00pm

Placer Genealogical Society Meeting: Monday, July 24th at 7:00pm; Monday, August 28th at 7:00pm

Rocklin Historical Society Meeting: Monday, July 10th at 6:00pm; Monday, August 14th at 6:00pm

Roseville Historical Society Meeting: Tuesday, July 11th at 4:00pm; Tuesday, August 8th at 4:00pm



PLACER COUNTY MUSEUMS

101 Maple Street
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