



# The Placer

2019 March-April

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## Inside this issue:

Administrator's Notes	1
Old Is Made New Again with a Little TLC	2
All Signs Point to Success	4
News from PCHS	5
Historical Organizations	6
Calendar of Events	7

## Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad and we're doing a few things to highlight this significant milestone. The first will be a new exhibit at the Golden Drift Museum in Dutch Flat. The Golden Drift Historical Society contracted with a local Railroad historian and train model enthusiast, Steve Bush, to build a model of the three phases of the Secret Town Trestle near Dutch Flat.

fornia State Parks will give a presentation on the railroad at our Gold Rush Museum.



Once he's installed his model, we'll add other railroad objects and photographs. We're also expanding the Chinese History exhibit in the same room.

At the Gold Rush Museum we will be installing outdoor interpretive panels that focus on the Transcontinental Railroad and the history of the Auburn Depots. On May 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm, Phil Sexton with the Cali-

Another train themed project we're working on is a small documentary-style film on the Transcontinental Railroad from the perspective of Placer County history. Further, this year's Heritage Trail will highlight the anniversary with events, exhibits, and programs throughout the county over the summer.

Lastly, it is my sad duty to report the passing of a longtime volunteer for the Placer County Museums, Jerri White Turtle. She was a volunteer for 22 years, working at all three Auburn museums. Lately, Jerri and her husband Sam were regular fixtures at the Old Town Country Christmas events at the Courthouse. Her infectious smile and warm, outgoing personality will be greatly missed.

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Tarnished silver? Not a problem for our Collections Curator!

Think it's hard to make professional signage? It's easier than you think.

The Historical Society and Docent Guild are teaming up to add to the Placer County Archives.

Get out and see what's happening in the world of history.

## Everything Old is New Again

by Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections

A large collection of awards and trophies was recently transferred to us from the Placer County Treasurer – Tax Collector's Office. They were awarded to Placer County by the California State Fair and Exposition, the California Agricultural Society, and the Los Angeles County Fair. They date between 1940 -1957.

They were awarded to Placer County for excellence, quality, and artistic creativity of exhibits and displays, contributions to agricultural development, and fruit shipping sweepstakes. They are silver-plated and made by Wallace Silver Plate and the International Silver Company, the world's largest manufacturer of silverware.

The awards were in storage for a long time and were all in need of cleaning and polishing. It was a big project, but the result is a shining example of how a little silver polish can make a huge difference.



Wearing gloves is very important when handling metal objects. Human skin secretes oils and acids that when deposited on metal surfaces cause corrosion and loss of the original surface. Most of our pieces had clearly visible fingerprints before they were cleaned.

## How can I treat my own silver?

Silver objects react with different substances in our environment and become tarnished. Materials like wood, wool, leather, rubber, and newspaper emit gases that cause damage.

Before this collection was donated each item was wrapped in newspaper and stored in a cardboard box, which accelerated tarnish. Tarnish in its earliest stages can be cleaned with diluted Dawn dishwashing liquid, as long as it's citrus free. It can be applied with a cotton ball, a makeup pad or a cotton towel, rinsed and dried immediately. This technique is the safest because it removes no metal, but it's not

very effective on heavily tarnished objects.



There are currently no silver polishes on the market that are truly non-abrasive and every time the object is cleaned a small part of metal is removed. Some of the least abrasive and widely available silver polishes are made by Blitz or Goddard's. Examine a piece of silver carefully before cleaning and removing tarnish. Do not allow liquids to enter hollow handles or other places that are difficult to clean and dry.

Silver polishing cloths might be most effective in those cases. To protect the object after cleaning apply a small amount of microcrystalline wax polish. We use Renaissance Wax. It protects objects from water and air-born pollutants and adds an anti-corrosion barrier.



Metal objects in regular use, like silver flatware, copper pans or pewter plates should be cleaned as soon as possible after use.

## Peeking Under the Hood

by Jason Adair, Exhibit Technician

One of the aspects of our new Gold Rush Museum that has received rave reviews are the artifact labels. I thought I'd take a minute and deconstruct how we thought about them; an exhibit case case study, if you will.

It's no secret that I'm not a fan of extensive labeling. I know how to read but I just don't like doing it in public because sometimes my lips move. Also, if you watch people read labels as they walk through a museum you'd see that they mostly don't because every time they start to, they get a text.

We also wanted to reframe the artifacts in each case as part of an overall story so that in most cases there is little to no text that is unrelated to something inside. Not only does that make the story we tell with them more interesting and accessible, it also allows us to have less in the way of paragraphs worth of text dumped on passersby or a big "find the artifact that corresponds to this number" chart.

These ideas manifested themselves in different ways throughout the museum but I think they were particularly effec-

tive in the Assay Office. This whole case is basically an almost life-sized, non-specific, diorama crammed full with tools of a trade. Our goal was to



### ASSAYING

An assayer processes ore samples to determine what kind of metals are in them. Using methods like fire assay, they can tell how much gold or silver a mine can produce as well as determine the purity of the metals. Assay methods have not changed much since the 19th century.

### FIRE ASSAY PROCESS

1. Crush ore sample into dust and mix with flux (sodium bicarbonate, potassium carbonate, borax, lead oxide, and flour).



Mortar and Pestle

2. Melt mixture in a crucible until it forms two distinct layers: a glassy surface and a mixture of metal on the bottom.



Clay Crucibles

make the process that would happen in an office like this understandable in a way that would encourage people to search out the items being talked about so they could see first hand how each tool was part of the process.

After researching the process we broke it into six steps that corresponded to the artifacts in the case. I took photos of each piece and then made illustra-

tions of them. (I basically traced over the photos in Adobe Illustrator. A skill I acquired by watching a couple YouTube videos about how to draw with the program tools.)

The hardest part of the whole process was writing the text. The assay process is pretty straightforward, but it's also very technical. It took a lot of editing and rewriting and rewriting and rewriting to get to the truth of the matter without overcomplicating it to the point of losing comprehension.

Even after the text was approved there were several changes. This had to do with the fact that some-

times (very often) when you're putting text into a box, or mixing it with graphics, the way the lines break in the space can decrease readability. For

example, look at how messy the break is between the third and fourth lines of this paragraph. It derails the whole sentence. When people are casually reading things like labels, all it takes is a bump like that for them to lose focus and walk away toward some other thing on display, or to their phone. Unless they're looking at our displays on their phone. Or reading this article. Do you ever put your phone down?!?

## News from Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

Here's the news from the Board. We are still working on the Old Town Plaque Project. We plan to provide each Old Town business with a large format, cardboard type plaque telling the history of each particular building and/or business that was historically on the site. John Knox and I are doing the research and as always, we are finding new stuff all the time! We will need some additional help when it's time to have the plaques made. Anyone with any artistic ideas about how the approximately 12' by 18' plaques should look? Do let us know.

Thanks to a donation from John and Sharon Blodger we have a new large-scale hanging map in the Benton Welty Schoolroom. It is a real beauty and will be an asset to the classroom tours.

We have been busy funding some new projects. The first is the continuing effort to get all of the Art Sommers Collection of memorabilia to the Placer County Archives. Art made a donation a few years ago, which the Society helped to fund, and he is now ready to part with most of his collection. The Society and the Docent Guild have joined together to make the purchase for \$2,000. It is a remarkable collection and a real bargain for us. Art probably doesn't want to think about how much he has actually spent over the years collecting Placer County items. I have personally seen many single postcards and other ephem-

era sell for \$75.00 or more, and that is just a few examples from the hundreds of items in the collection. We are so fortunate that Art is committed to saving our history. So much would be lost without his efforts over the years.



An example from the Art Sommers Collection

The second project we are helping to fund is the Chinese Workers Monument. We hope it will be installed in time to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the completion of the transcontinental railroad in May. (By the way, board member Mike Holmes is the only person I know of who can say "sesquicentennial" without stammering or bungling up the pronunciation!) The plan was to put the Monument at the Gold Run rest stop along Interstate 80. That may change though as there seem to be some issues with the State over funding for on-going maintenance. The city of Colfax is also being considered. The Society has contributed \$1,000 to this project.

The Society is still looking for one or two people to serve on the Book Com-

mittee. This is not a labor-intensive job, just visiting a few shops in town and keeping them supplied with our publications.

We are in the process of changing caterers for our dinner meetings. We desperately need someone to complete the set up and take down at the Veteran's Hall. This is a paid position and only entails going in early and to take the chairs off the tables, set the tables with cloths, add table decorations (that we already have) and at the end of dinner, to replace the chairs on the tables. No dishwashing involved! Please contact me or Al Stoll for the details.

The Dinner meeting will be April 4<sup>th</sup>. See our website for more details. [Placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://Placercountyhistoricalsociety.org). We will have some representatives of the Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen (DOTA) as our speakers. It should be a very interesting evening.

Please note that for the first time, we are setting an RSVP deadline. Although we are pleased that folks decide to come at the last moment, the caterer is not so pleased! For the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting the RSVP deadline will be March 31<sup>st</sup>. We will be unable to accept RSVP's later than that date and will be unable to take folks who just show up at the door. So sorry!

## Placer County Historical Organizations

### Colfax Area Historical Society

Gayle Sorensen

(530) 346-8599

[colfaxhistory.org](http://colfaxhistory.org)

### Lincoln Highway Association

Bob Dieterich

[bobd@iname.com](mailto:bobd@iname.com)

[lincolnhighwayassoc.org](http://lincolnhighwayassoc.org)

### Old Town Auburn Preservation Society

Lynn Carpenter

(530) 885-1252

### Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest (209) 606-6859

[donnersummithistoricalsociety.org](http://donnersummithistoricalsociety.org)

### Loomis Basin Historical Society

Karen Clifford

(916) 663-3871

[ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html](http://ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html)

### Placer County Genealogical Society

Toni Rosasco

(530) 888-8036

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

### Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Sandy Simester

(530) 367-3535

[foresthillhistory.org](http://foresthillhistory.org)

### Maidu Museum & Historic Site

Kaitlin Kincade

(916) 774-5934

[roseville.ca.us/inianmuseum](http://roseville.ca.us/inianmuseum)

### Placer County Historical Society

April McDonald-Loomis

(530) 823-2128

[placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://placercountyhistoricalsociety.org)

### Fruitvale School Hall Community Association

Lyndell Grey

(916) 645-3517

### The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics

David C. Antonucci

(775) 722-3502

[tahoemuseum.org](http://tahoemuseum.org)

### Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Fran Hanson

(530) 878-6990

### Golden Drift Historical Society

Sarah Fugate

(530) 389-2121

### Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor #59

Dave Allen (530) 878-2878

[dsallen59@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsallen59@sbcglobal.net)

### Rocklin Historical Society

Hank Lohse

(916) 624-3464

[rocklinhistory.org](http://rocklinhistory.org)

### Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard

(916) 747-1961

### Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association

Mario Farinha

(530) 269-2412

### Roseville Fire Museum

Jim Giblin (916) 538-1809

[rosevillefiremuseum@gmail.org](mailto:rosevillefiremuseum@gmail.org)

[rosevillefiremuseum.org](http://rosevillefiremuseum.org)

### Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center

Richard Yue

(530) 346-7121

### North Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Marnie Carr

(530) 583-1762

[northtahoemuseums.org](http://northtahoemuseums.org)

### Roseville Historical Society

Christina Richter

(916) 773-3003

[rosevillehistorical.org](http://rosevillehistorical.org)

### Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen

(916) 645-3800

[laamca.org](http://laamca.org)

# March

- 7** 2:00pm Placer County Historical Society Board Meeting, Room 10, Auburn City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn. (530) 906-4901
- 11** 6:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464
- 12** 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003
- 16** 1:00pm "Nancy Kelsey Comes Over the Mountain," Bernhard Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd. Auburn. (530) 889-6500
- 18** 6:00pm Forest Hill Divide Historical Society business meeting, Forest Hill Divide Museum. (530) 367-3535
- 20** 6:00pm Loomis Basin Historical Society General Meeting, Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871
- 28** 7:00pm Placer Genealogical Society Meeting, Beecher Room, Auburn Library, Auburn. (530) 885-2216

# April

- 4** 6:30pm Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting - Auburn Veteran's Hall, 100 East St, Auburn. (530) 906-4901
- 8** 6:00pm Rocklin Historical Society Board Meeting, Parks & Recreation Office, 5460 5th Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464
- 9** 4:00pm Roseville Historical Society Board Meeting, Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003
- 17** 5:30pm Historical Advisory Board Meeting, Bernhard Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd. Auburn. (530) 889-6500
- 17** 6:00pm Loomis Basin Historical Society General Meeting, Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871
- 20** 5:30pm "Wartime Swing," Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East Street, Auburn, (530) 889-6500
- 25** 7:00pm Placer Genealogical Society Meeting, Beecher Room, Auburn Library, Auburn. (530) 885-2216

## Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

**When:** April 4, 2019

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

**Where:** Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East Street, Auburn

**Cost:** \$16 per person

**Menu:** TBD

**Program:** The Speakers will be members of the Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen. They will relate individual stories of the airmen, the history behind the unit and the story of the DOTA organization.

**We must have all RSVPs by March 31st.**

**Mail Dinner Checks to:**

PCHS c/o Jane Hamilton,  
1871 Crockett Road, Auburn, CA  
95603. (530) 885-7839 or  
[hamiltonjane1@me.com](mailto:hamiltonjane1@me.com)

**DO NOT BRING ALCOHOL.**



PLACER COUNTY MUSEUMS

**101 Maple Street**  
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