



2015 Jan-Feb

Volume 17, Issue 1

## Administrator's Notes

*Ralph Gibson*

It's been a heck of a year for the Placer County Museums. On the Living History front we rolled out online Parent Training videos that proved to be more successful and effective than we ever dreamed. They certainly helped as we guided just under 3,000 students through all the activities in the Spring and Fall. We completed five exhibits this year (four offsite and one at our Archives and Collections Facility) and handled over 1,700 research requests. We also said goodbye to Mary-Jane Coon after 22 years with the museums and welcomed Renee Thomsen.

Two big projects we started in 2014 will be completed in 2015. The move of the Gold Country Museum from the fairgrounds to the Auburn Depot will be completed in late spring and the new DeWitt History Museum will open sometime in the fall. Work has already begun on exhibit design and fabrication for new exhibits in the Gold Country

Museum and research is underway for the new museum at DeWitt.

One important project we will have completed before you read this article is the official close out of the building that was once our Gold Country Museum. As I write this, there are a few stacks of wood and debris inside the building and large artifacts still keeping watch over the front, but everything will be gone by December 30<sup>th</sup>. As we look forward to the future in a new building, it's impossible not to look back as we move artifacts that were seated in place by former museum employees who themselves were excited about the future of a new Gold Country Museum. Though there will be plenty of new exhibits, visitors to the new Gold Country Museum will still find exhibits that harken back to the original museum that opened in 1990. In a way, what they started in 1989 will be finished in 2015 and we couldn't have done it without their help.

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## Attention! This may be the last issue you ever receive by mail.

In an effort to save trees and printing/mailing costs, we have decided to move The Placer almost entirely online. As a matter of fact, this issue is already online at: [avoiceofhistory.blogspot.com](http://avoiceofhistory.blogspot.com)

We are still willing to send out a limited number of hard copies to those who do not use/trust/like the internet. Simply call Renee at (530)889-6500 and let her know you can't live without it and we'll make sure you stay on the mailing list.

"Attention! This may be the last issue you ever receive by mail."

## California and the Civil War

*TJ Meekins*

Placer Museums presents *California and the Civil War*, opening January 27, 2015 at the Placer County Courthouse Museum in Auburn. Guest-curating the exhibit are historical novelists Richard Hurley and TJ Meekins, with historian and seamstress Lizzie Lowrie, all of Grass Valley. Artifacts from the Placer Museums Collections will be prepared by Kasia Woronicka.



General John C. Frémont. "The Pathfinder," was the first Republican candidate for the US Presidency in 1856. He ran on a "free soil" platform and lost to pro-slavery Democrat James Buchanan.



In 1861, General Albert Sidney Johnston commanded the US Army Department of the Pacific from the Presidio in San Francisco. In 1862 he was killed leading the Confederate Army of Tennessee at the battle of Shiloh.

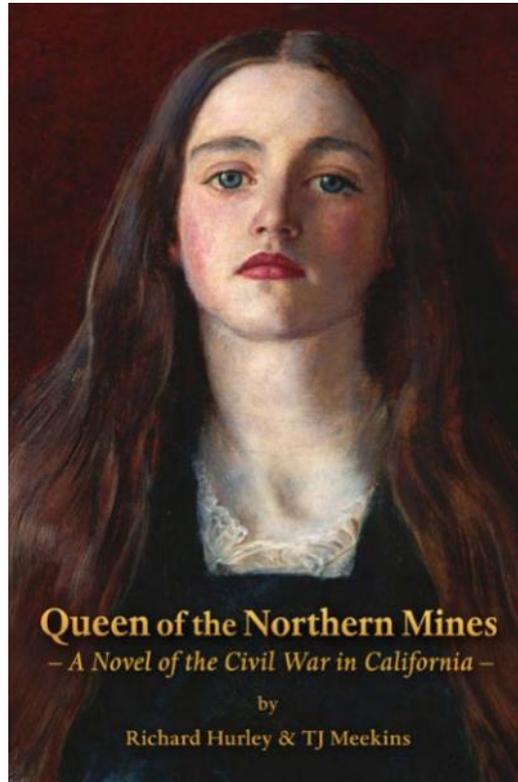
Part One of the exhibit, on display from January 27 to March 31, examines American California from the Mexican cession in 1848 to the eve of the Civil War, revealing the Golden State's surprising alliance with the South. Part Two, showing from April 1 to June 1, recounts tales of the determined Unionists

and daring Rebels who shaped California history.

A gallery of Illustrated panels, created by Hurley and Meekins from research for their historical novel *Queen of the Northern Mines*, tells the story of the Golden State's role in the great national conflict. Low-

rie's authentic re-creations of Civil War attire reveal the inner and outer lives of those who wore them. A shotgun, pistol, and militia-issued powder flask from the Placer Museums Collections speak to the hardships and dangers faced by California's Volunteers, who took over the regular army's role in the West.

Part One tells the tale of the Bear Flag Revolt of American settlers against Mexican rule – at a time when John C. Frémont happened to be in the area with a party of sixty heavily-armed “surveyors.” The discovery of gold and the ensuing Rush transformed the sleepy colony overnight into a bustling US state, teeming with eager miners from all over the world. Part One culminates in the story of the fateful Broderick-Terry duel of September 1859, when our state’s US Senator (a Free Soil Democrat) encountered the Chief Justice of our Supreme Court (a pro-slavery Southerner) on the “field of honor.” The ensuing bloodshed outraged California voters, crippled the Democratic Party, and swung the popular vote toward Lincoln.



Part Two features the story of Albert Sidney Johnston, the Rebel general whose personal code of honor spared California the nightmare of partisan warfare. Also described is the Reverend Thomas

Starr King, the tireless orator whom Abraham Lincoln called “the man who saved California for the Union.”

Visitors are welcome every day, excluding federal holidays, 10 am to 4 pm at 101 Maple Street in Auburn. Admission is free and donations are appreciated. Permanent exhibits of Placer County history are also on view. Guided Walking Tours of Historic Lower Auburn begin at the gallery door at 10 am every Saturday morning, rain or shine.

Find out more about the Courthouse Museum and the five other Placer County Museums at [www.placer.ca.gov/museums](http://www.placer.ca.gov/museums). For more about *California and the Civil War* visit

[www.bearriverbooks.com](http://www.bearriverbooks.com).

## The Scoop

*Beth Rohlfs*

Curator of Education

2014 marked my first *full-time, permanent* year with Placer County Museums, and in February 2015 I will have been working with the Living History Program for two years. In the blink of an eye! Many of you have been a part of this grand adventure, both with me and with Placer County Museums. And you know what great things we’ve

accomplished here together in 2014—and, of course, the amazing things we look forward to in 2015.

Together we’ve seen the Living History Program go high tech—at least where we can get away with it. The new parent training videos we introduced in the spring of 2014 have made us wonder how we

ever operated without them. Parents, teachers, docents and staff all love the results. And in spring 2015 we’re launching a video for teachers as well. With these we have not only become more relevant, we have made some tedious prep work more fun and more efficient.

In 2014 museum docents helped

Continued From page 3

plan some great summer events at the Bernhard Museum Complex. Both Jump into Summer and Heritage Trail introduced new, crowd-pleasing activities. In a thank you note one Jump into Summer visitor said it all. *“The event was more of everything than I expected: more to see and do, more interesting, and just more fun!”*

December’s holiday events were some of the best ever. Our Christmas Volunteer Luncheon sent everyone home pleasantly full of good food and comradery, with visions of a red velvet ice skater dancing in their merry little heads. Country Christmas packed the Courthouse with our highest numbers yet. Docents turned up their holiday spirit

to welcome guests with hot cider and cookies. Kids decorated Christmas cards with holiday stickers and an abundance of glitter, then hung their sparkling masterpieces on our Courthouse Christmas tree.



Docents at the Courthouse making merry.

Basking in these 2014 successes, all of us here at the museums are eager to dive into 2015. The former Gold Country Museum will be emptied so that we can, at last, focus our energies at the new site. Docents are chomping at the bit to get their hands on the new and improved

museum, their feedback already contributing to exhibit improvements.

We’ll be recruiting and training new docents for both the Gold Country and the DeWitt museums. We’ll offer training sessions and walk throughs for our staff and docents as we near grand openings. The 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Gold Rush Program will be reevaluated and fitted to the new site, while schools wait eagerly to discover our new program options in 2016. There will be lots to learn as we prepare—with unbridled enthusiasm—to welcome our public and engage them in yet more intriguing stories about the history of Placer County.

## PCHS 2015-16 Nominations Report

2015-16 Nominations for the Placer County Historical Society:

President: **Walter Wilson**

1st Vice President: **George Lay**

2nd Vice President (programs): **Addah Owens**

Secretary: **Melanie Barton**

Treasurer: **Al Stoll**

Immediate past president: **Michael Otten**

Board members (Two-Year Terms, 2014-15 to 2015-17): **Mike Holmes, Jean Allender, Karen Bleuel, John Knox**

(Carry over elected Board Members from 2014-15 to 2016 with additional year remaining: **Sherri Schackner, Penny Watson, Karri Samson**)

--Respectfully submitted, **Betty Samson**, chair, Nomination Committee, **Karri Samson, Susan Hubbard, Sherri Schackner**.

Officers for 2015-2017 will be elected at the annual membership dinner meeting April 2, 2015, Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn

This is the Nomination Committee's first report. Additional nominations may be made at the April 2 membership meeting and a vote taken. A nominee must give their consent. If a candidate is unopposed, election to that office may be made by voice vote. Should there be more than one nominee for an office then there shall be an election by ballot for that office, or offices should there be more than one contested position. If there are no contested offices, a motion may be made to elect the entire slate by voice vote. Those elected will assume office May 1, 2015, the start of the PCHS year.

# Placer County Historical Society News

## President's Message

By Michael Otten

*"You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore."*—William Faulkner

Last year closed on an intriguing possibility.

Placer County and Costco strongly hinted the historic DeWitt Post Theatre can be saved from demolition.

The Board of Supervisors Dec. 9 essentially told Costco to go ahead with developing its 16-acre mega store and gas station on leased property the county essentially acquired for a song.

The supervisors said it is in the best interests of taxpayers for the popular Music and More Arts Academy to vacate the premises by June 30 and find a new home after 17 years in the leased facilities.

However, both Costco and the county left the door open to allow the 70-year-old theater at D Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street to stay as a historic property with limited-yet-to-be-determined-uses.

Under the scenario nearby structures such as the Senior Center and Courthouse Athletic Club will be demolished. Roads will change. The county plans to have the property ready for Costco construction sometime after March 1, 2016. The Theater would stay, shuttered and fenced off.



*Post Theatre  
De Witt General Hospital - Auburn, Calif.*

Credit in part goes to Michael Murphy, the Auburn architect and artist who has successfully rescued endangered historic buildings. He helped convince the County and Costco that contrary to its previous conclusions the Theater is structurally sound. Murphy joined with Michael and Kay Coder, Renee Berg and others to also establish the historic value.

It is up to the PCHS and the like-minded to explore with the County and Costco what can be done. Call it a new horizon to swim for.

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Happy New Year. For as little as \$10 you can join or provide a gift membership in the society. See the application at [www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org) --[otten@ssctv.net](mailto:otten@ssctv.net)

## Placer County Historical Organizations

### Colfax Area Historical Society

Helen Wayland, (530) 346-7040  
[colfaxhistory.org](http://colfaxhistory.org)

### Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest, (209) 606-6859  
[donnersummithistoricalsociety.org](http://donnersummithistoricalsociety.org)

### Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Sandy Simester, (530) 367-3535  
[foresthillhistory.org](http://foresthillhistory.org)

### Fruitvale School Hall Community Association

Lyndell Grey, (916) 645-3517

### Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard, (916) 747-1961

### Old Town Auburn Preservation Society

Lynn Carpenter, (530) 885-1252

### Lincoln Highway Association

Bob Dieterich,  
[bohd@iname.com](mailto:bohd@iname.com) or [lincolnhwy.org](http://lincolnhwy.org)

### Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen, (916) 645-3800  
[laamca.org](http://laamca.org)

### Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center

Richard Yue, (530) 346-7121

### Loomis Basin Historical Society

Karen Clifford, (916) 663-3871  
[ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html](http://ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html)

### Roseville Fire Museum

Shari, (916) 538-1809  
[rosevillefiremuseum.org](http://rosevillefiremuseum.org)

### Maidu Museum & Historic Site

Glenie Strome, (916) 782-3299  
[roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum](http://roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum)

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

Dave Allen, (530) 878-2878  
[dsallen59@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsallen59@sbcglobal.net)

### Golden Drift Historical Society

Jim Ricker, (530) 389-8344

### Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association

Aileen Gage, (530) 885-911

### Placer County Historical Society

Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837  
[placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://placercountyhistoricalsociety.org)

### Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Tom Innes, (530) 888-8969

### Rocklin Historical Society

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

### Roseville Historical Society

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

### North Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Javier Rodriguez, (530) 583-1762  
[northtahoemuseums.org](http://northtahoemuseums.org)

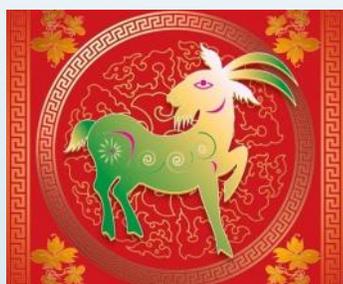
### Placer County Genealogical Society,

Toni Rosasco, (530) 888-8036  
[pcgenes.com](http://pcgenes.com)

## Placer County Historical Dinner Meeting\*

*Addah Owens, Vice President*

**When:** February 5, Celebrate the Year of the Goat



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

**Where:** Auburn Veterans Hall  
 100 East St, Auburn

**Cost:** \$14 per person

**Menu:** Chinese New Year Dinner catered by Tom Stout and crew.

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

**Program:** Premiere of "Chinese Builders of Gold Mountain." PCHS' Bill George is back with the third of his Nimbus Films historical documentaries filmed by award-winning Brendan Compton. George takes a look at how Chinese Immigrants overcame discrimination to shape California.

**\* DO NOT BRING ALCOHOL. County directives prohibit it and we can't get liability coverage.**

## Calendar of events

### January

8 2:00pm

Placer County Historical Society board of directors meeting, Room 10, Auburn City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn. (530)888-7837

13 4:00pm

Roseville Historical Society meeting at Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln St., Roseville. (916) 773-3003

19 6:00pm

Forest Hill Divide Historical Society business meeting, at the Forest Hill Divide Museum. (530) 367-3535

20 7:00pm

Rocklin Historical Society Meeting at Old St. Mary's Chapel, 5152 Front Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464

21 6:30am

Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis library. (916) 663-3971

22 7:00pm

Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting, in the Beecher Room, at the Auburn Library. (530) 885-2216

### February

5 6:30pm

Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting. Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn. (530) 885-5074

10 4:00pm

Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum. 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003

17 7:00pm

Rocklin Historical Society Meeting at Old St. Mary's Chapel, 5152 Front Street, Rocklin. (916) 624-3464

18 6:30pm

Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting at the Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871

18 5:30pm

Historical Advisory Board Meeting at the Auburn Depot at 601 Lincoln Way in Auburn. (530) 889-6500

26 7:00pm

Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. (530) 885-2216

## Artifact Highlight



This pitcher was produced in 1907 by the Buffalo Pottery Company and became part of the PCM permanent collection in 1973.

The Buffalo Company was established in 1901. It specialized in pottery for commercial use and was the first American-based company to produce a line of Blue Willow ware, first produced in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The pitcher is covered with scenes and quotations from *The Roosevelt Bears*, a series of children's

books written in 1905 by Seymour Eaton and illustrated by Floyd Campbell. Theodore Roosevelt was president at the time and the Teddy Bear was invented in his honor, inspired by his bear hunting trip to Mississippi in 1902. The bears in Eaton's stores are wearing Teddy Roosevelt's trademark spectacles and have many adventures going to the circus, to school and driving a car. Seymour Eaton died in 1916 and the *Roosevelt Bears* books fell out of favor in the early 1920s.



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