



## Administrator's Notes

2015 May-June

Volume 18, Issue 3

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*By Ralph Gibson*

It's been a very busy spring so far. Living History is in full swing, we are in the midst of a mini volunteer training session and building improvements are

nearly completed at the Auburn Depot – site of The Gold Rush Museum. In fact, by the time you read this, nearly all the work will have been completed. It looks like we'll be able to start installing exhibits as early as May 12<sup>th</sup>. Once we complete the indoor panning stream and add five essential exhibits, we'll have a

soft opening (Friday through Sunday 10:30 am to 4:00 pm). We hope to get to this stage by the last week of June. Once we are finished with all the exhibits, we'll have a grand opening – probably in late summer or early fall.

Work will commence soon on the building that will house our DeWitt History

Museum. Building upgrades are expected to be completed August 1<sup>st</sup>. We will plan a special sneak-peek at the museum on September 2<sup>nd</sup> to commemorate



VJ Day with temporary exhibits and exhibit sketches showing what the museum will look like. Please stay tuned for more information!

Finally, the Heritage Trail is sneaking up fast! This year's event will be August 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> so please mark your calendars!

## The Dutch Flat Hotel is...For Sale



*The Dutch Flat Hotel is for sale and the history community is hoping that a buyer with an interest in preserving the historic integrity of the building can be attracted.*

*When the building was for sale in the early 1990s, the Golden Drift Historical Society raised money in an effort to purchase it. They didn't reach their goal, but they did raise a lot of money that went into museum improvements.*

*We don't usually allow this kind of free space in our newsletter, but this is a call to anyone who might know someone who would be both interested in buying the Dutch Flat Hotel and preserving the historic integrity of the building. The hotel is on the National Register of Historic Places and we'd hate to see this vaunted Gold Rush era building lose that status.*

*-Ralph Gibson*

Once Dutch Flat was one of the richest gold mining towns in the state and was an important stage-coach stop, which is why it's a registered California Historic Landmark. Today, this quiet community has a small population of permanent residents who choose to live here for the slower pace of life.

At the heart of this historic community is the Dutch Flat Hotel and Event Center. The first floor of this 3-story, gold country bed and breakfast was built in 1852, and it operated as a hotel until it was abandoned in the 1970s. It didn't lose its charm, however, and the current owners, Sussy and Tom, were inspired to buy and renovate the hotel in 2004.

Modern convenience now meets historical accuracy in the Dutch Flat Hotel. All new electrical wiring, plumbing, septic tank, water

fixtures, heating system, pillowtop mattresses and support beams make this Old West hotel feel like home - plus it's now ADA compliant.

The wooden floors are original, as are all other elements that could be salvaged. The hotel's decor brings together the rough, Old West feel with the softer Victorian touch.

Every corner of the building features antiques and period art prints.

The tourism industry has recovered from its previous dip, and the Dutch Flat Hotel is poised to take advantage of that. Three ski resorts and the city of Auburn are within 30 minutes driving distance, adding meaning to the hotel's slogan "Long ago, but not so far away."

The current owners are relocating, so this turnkey business is currently for sale, ready for a new owner.

See [www.1852DutchFlatHotel.com](http://www.1852DutchFlatHotel.com) for more details on the sale of this historic icon.

# Placer County Historical Society News

By Michael Otten,  
Immediate Past President

Please welcome Walt Wilson as the new president of the Placer County Historical Society. After a decade plus it is time to pass the reins to a fellow multitasker. His term began May 1.

Whether it is planes, trains, teaching, history, trivia, church or other activities, Wilson pitches in with enthusiasm and aplomb. He is one of those consummate do-it-yourselfers.

When Wilson isn't volunteering, you might find him substitute teaching or in his office at the Auburn City Airport handling operations.

Wilson and his wife, Bonnie, a pediatric nurse, came to Placer County in the late 1970s after purchasing four acres in Christian Valley. He eventually spent some 17 years building his own home. He took classes at Sierra College to learn how, enabling him to do most of it from the plans to the foundation, framing, wiring and plumbing. He said the county tired of annually renewing his building permit that inspectors gave him a 20-item list to quickly complete before finally signing off in 2003. Twelve years later, Walt still says he's not done. He can't remember when they

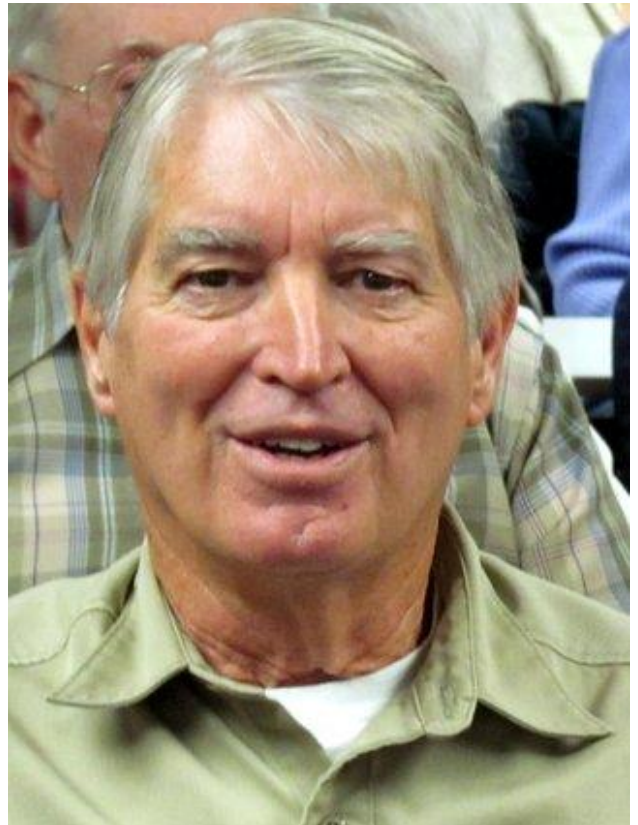
moved in, but it was an April 1 after spending four years living in a trailer.

His longest ongoing volunteer gig goes back 35 years with the Friends of Auburn Library and their Wednesday-Saturday monthly book sales to help fund the library. Wilson said they have come a long way since 1980 when books were kept in the closet and sold in the library community room.

Walt was a key figure in building a book sale annex and later a 12 by 32 storage and office.

Other particulars:

Plane stuff: Commercial pilots license, instrument and multi-engine ratings; manager for Riley Air Service at China Airport 1961-2; owned and piloted a Piper Cherokee 235 for 15 years, visiting most of California's airports, volunteered for the Auburn Aviation Association 15 years, served on the Airport Advisory Committee for eight, going back to when Nick Willick was Auburn City Manager.



Train stuff: Switchman, conductor, engineer, assistant trainmaster for Southern Pacific during a 40 year career; currently vice president of Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society, chronicler of the 1972 Antelope war ammunition explosions.

History stuff: Has collection of some 3,000 history books, from local to state to national and some international, active in Colfax and Placer Historical societies and a new member of the Conference of California Historical Societies.

Other: West Covina High class of 1959, bachelor of arts in history and math, CSU Los Angeles; US Navy Reserve, 1963-1968, called to ac-

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tive duty in Vietnam for 18-month stint as Radarman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, served last 8 years as head usher at Pioneer United Methodist Church, father, grandfather.

Trivial: Walt, life member Dean Prigmore and Michael Otten as the Rusty Wranglers two-time winners of the Placer County AAUW Trivia Bee didn't three-peat this year.

Walt can do it.

--otten@ssctv.net

## New PCHS Officers for 2015-16

**Walt Wilson** on May 1 succeeded Michael Otten as president of the 105-year-old Placer County Historical Society.

Other officers elected at the annual meeting in April are: **George Lay**, 1st vice president; **Addah Owens**, 2nd VP (programs); **Melanie Barton**, secretary; **Al Stoll**, secretary; **Michael Otten**, immediate PP.

Board members (Two-Year Terms, 2015-16 to 2016-17): **Mike Holmes**,

**Jean Allender, Karen Bleuel, John Knox.**

(Carry over elected Board Members--2014-15 to 2015-2016 term--with additional year remaining): **Sherri Schackner, Penny Watson, Karri Samson).**

Nominating Committee: **Betty Samson**, chair, **Karri Samson, Susan Hubbard, Sherri Schackner.**

## Artifact Highlight

By Kasia Woroniecka

Summer vacations are near and many of you will dust off your suitcases and bags, double check carry-on allowances and locate your passports. The leather suitcase from our collection has been to many exotic and faraway places as evident by the travel stickers attached to its leather surface. It belonged to John Carroll Nicholls, son of John Nicholls, the senior member of the banking firm of W. & P. Nicholls in Dutch Flat. John Carroll, a graduate of University of California, became a mining engineer. He worked in Korea, and then joined the International Nickel Co. in Ontario, Canada. His father accompanied him on



some of the trips. Sacramento Union reported on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1910 that John and his son were in Auburn, on their way to Alaska, having recently returned from the gold mines of Africa. One of the stickers on the suitcase is from the Durban railway station in South Africa. There is also a sticker from the Hotel Atlantic in Hamburg, Germany. This five star hotel opened in 1909. In 1997 parts of

the James Bond movie, *Tomorrow Never Dies* were filmed there. Another sticker is from Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo, Egypt. The Shepherd's Hotel was one of the most celebrated hotels in the world. It was

built in the early 1840s, burned down in 1952 and rebuilt in 1957. Some of the notable guests included Winston Churchill and T. E. Lawrence. There is also a sticker from the Shamrock Hotel in Bendigo, Australia. It was built in 1854 and serviced miners during the Australian gold rush. Prince Charles and Princess Diana stayed there during their visit to Australia in 1983. Happy travels!

# Gold Rush Museum Update:

By Jason Adair

We're busy out at the museum exhibit shop. Eagerly anticipating the finishing of the depot building, we're building a bunch of stuff to go in it. Here's a sneak peek at what we're working on. To see some of these things in action, check out the blog version of The Placer at: [avoiceofhistory.blogspot.com](http://avoiceofhistory.blogspot.com)



In addition to exhibits, we're also working on a gold rush card game called *Strike it Rich!* that will be posted on Kickstarter for funding/purchase soon.



## Placer County Historical Organizations

**Colfax Area Historical Society,**  
Chris Miller (530) 346-8599  
[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,  
[bobd@iname.com](mailto:bobd@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**  
Jim Giblin, [JGiblin@roseville.ca.us](mailto:JGiblin@roseville.ca.us)  
[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

**Placer County Historical Society**  
Walt Wilson, (530) 878-6640  
[placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://placercountyhistoricalsociety.org)

**Placer County Museums Docent Guild**  
Tom Innes, (530) 888-8969

**Rocklin Historical Society**  
Barbara Chapman, (916) 415-0153  
[rocklinhistory.org](http://rocklinhistory.org)

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

**North Lake Tahoe Historical Society**  
Rebecca Phipps, (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 Society Dinner Meeting\*

*By Addah Owens, Vice President*

**When:** June 4th

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

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

**Cost:** \$15 per person

**Menu:** Barbecue Chicken and Ribs, Potato and Green Salad, Tom Stout's Award-Winning Special

Beans, Rolls, Desert and Coffee.

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

**Program:** Gene E. Bigler, Ph.D., a Stockton historian and retired diplomat, will give a PowerPoint presentation on "The Golden Horse and the California-Panama Gold Rush Connection."

Gene Bigler says his fascination with the Gold Rush is due in part to

the fact one of his ancestors was Henry William Bigler of the Mormon Battalion who worked with James Marshall at John Sutter's Coloma sawmill. It was Henry Bigler's detailed diaries that helped fix the famous gold discovery date as Jan. 24, 1848.

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

# Calendar of events

## May

7 2:00pm  
Placer County Historical Society board of directors meeting, Room 10, Auburn City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn. (530)878-6640

11 6:00pm  
Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting at Old St. Mary's Chapel, 5152 Front Street, Rocklin. (916) 415-0153

12 9:00am  
Roseville Historical Society meeting at the Auburn Depot, 610 Lincoln Way (916) 773-3003

16 7:00pm  
Colfax Area Historical Society Meeting at the Colfax Depot. Nancy Hagman presentation on Grace Hubley. At the Colfax Rail Depot.

18 6:00pm  
Forest Hill Divide Historical Society business meeting, at the Forest Hill Divide Museum. (530) 367-3535

20 6:30am  
Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis library. (916) 663-3971.

28 7:00pm  
Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting, in the Beecher Room, at the Auburn Library. (530) 885-2216

## June

4 6:30pm  
Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting. Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn. (530) 885-5074

8 6:00pm  
Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting at Old St. Mary's Chapel, 5152 Front Street, Rocklin. (916) 415-0153

9 4:00pm  
Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum. 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville. (916) 773-3003

17 6:30pm  
Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting at the Loomis Library. (916) 663-3871

18 5:30pm  
Historical Advisory Board Meeting at the Bernhard Winery 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd. Auburn. (530) 889-6500

25 7:00pm  
Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. (530) 885-2216

**HERITAGE TRAIL**  
20 Museums 2 Days

**August 15&16**  
**Placer County Museums Tour Weekend 2015**

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

