# THE PLACER

### A Voice of History

Nov.-Dec. 2010 Volume 13, Issue 6



#### In this Issue

- 1. Administrator's Notes
- 2. Christmas
- 3. Christmas
- 4. Museums Intelligence
- 5. PCHS News
- 6. Historical Organizations/ Artifact Highlight
- Calendar of Events

Melanie Barton, Museums Admin. Placer County Museums Division 101 Maple St. Auburn, CA 95603 (530) 889-6500 mbarton@placer.ca.gov

Michael Otten, President Placer County Historical Society PO Box 5643 Auburn, CA 95604 www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org

> Editor and Staff Writer: Ralph Gibson (530) 889-6502 rgibson@placer.ca.gov www.placer.ca.gov/museum

#### Administrator's Notes

Melanie Barton

I've spent several hours reading oral histories and firsthand accounts of Christmas during the Depression. There are several recurring themes other than the obvious accounts of very difficult economic times. First and foremost, is the importance of being with family. Everything I read described in some detail the holiday food preparation and the meals shared. Another common account was that stockings were filled with an orange or tangerine, an apple, nuts, and hard candy. These items were looked forward to each year and were prized and enjoyed slice by slice or bite by bite. It appears that a gift other than fruit was usually something needed such as a pair of socks or hat and gloves. Rarely did a child receive a toy. I think there is something to be said for a holiday that focuses on being with loved ones and less on giving and receiving gifts. With that in mind, I invite you to attend the holiday activities at the Placer County Museums and take a stroll back in time.

On December 2<sup>nd</sup> our newest exhibit at the Placer County Museum, *A Leap of Imagination*, will open. It

showcases a private carousel collection that includes 24 pieces. You won't want to miss seeing the tiger, giraffe, rabbit, dog, bears and horses of various shapes, sizes and colors. If you ever rode on a carousel, you will delight in the variety of animals on display and will enjoy reminiscing about your experience. Carousels are not as popular today as they were before modern amusement parks, so this is a great opportunity to bring your children and grandchildren to see something that was important to you as a child.

December 4<sup>th</sup> through the holidays, the Bernhard Museum will be decked out in Victorian splendor. Christmas quilts form the Foothill Quilters Guild will be on display on the second floor of the winery. The Gold Country Museum will be decorated for a Gold Rush Christmas. You will enjoy reading journal entries recorded on Christmas day 1849 by real 49ers.

You won't want to miss Old Town Country Christmas on December 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at the Placer County Museum this year. Join us at the historic Courthouse en route to Old Town Auburn and enjoy the carousel exhibit, Christmas tree, and holiday treats.

All our events and museums are free...you won't find a better value!

Best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## Christmas in the Great Depression

Ralph Gibson

Christmas during the Great Depression – the very thought is well, depressing. Imagine the millions of families that couldn't afford a nice Christmas dinner or presents for their children. Of course, many families will face the same problem this Christmas. Tragedies and unfortunate events like a depression or recession seem to have a greater impact on us when they happen around the holidays. This is why it's easy for us to believe the myth that the suicide rate is higher this time of year.

Yes, the holidays can be tough, but at the same time, there is an extra sparkle in people's eyes; smiles seem warmer and more genuine; and many walk with a spring in their step. Christmas cheer is infectious. That cheer is reflected in a higher number of monetary and food donations to charities that support the poor.

Canned food drives and toys for tots – these wonderful programs are built around the holidays.

The same was true during the depression. People persevered and they celebrated the holidays however they could with help from local charities that pitched in whenever they were needed. Many of those who lived through the Great Depression as children acknowledge the difficulties that surrounded the holidays, yet they still reflect fondly on Christmas morning. Something as simple as an orange in their stocking thrilled them with joy. Tears would often flow when a gift their father or mother made for them was unwrapped. Though there wasn't any of the glitz and sparkle of a modern day Christmas, it was still just as special, if not more so.

Some were able to scrape up enough money to buy Christmas gifts and purchase cakes and pies from local bakeries during the depression. Locally, this is reflected in the number of advertisements in the Placer Herald. Believe it or not, the first Christmas advertisements between 1929 and 1933 in the *Placer* Herald ran Thanksgiving weekend. This might be because local businesses wanted people to think about Christmas earlier so they could better manage their money to afford a few gifts.

Another method of managing one's funds for Christmas gifts were the Christmas Club accounts offered by many banks. Though Christmas Club accounts started in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they became extremely popular during the Great Depression. These accounts were somewhat tricky because they offered very little to no interest and the penalties were high for withdrawing the money before December 1st, when the funds in one's account became officially available. Of course, this kept many from withdrawing the funds early and helped preserve their savings for the purchase of Christmas gifts.

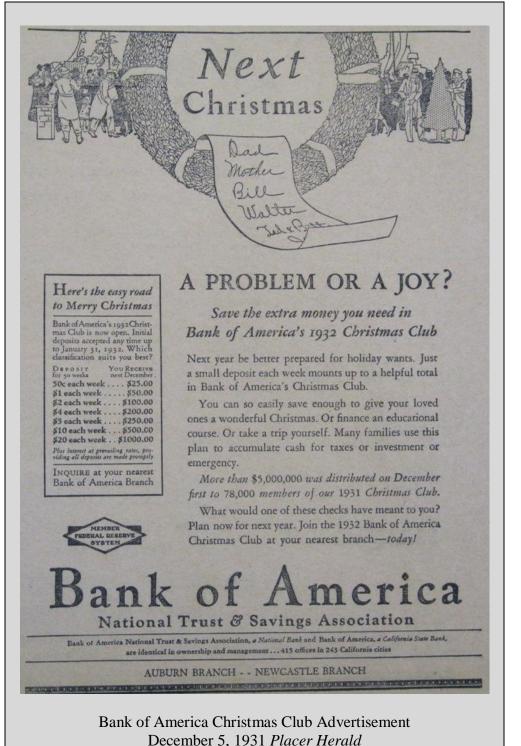
With some people saving money in Christmas Club accounts, local businesses tried to sway holiday shoppers into entering their stores. G.E. Lukens & Sons renamed their establishment "The Christmas Store" when the holiday neared and offered everything from toys to rugs. To make things even more confusing, a women's clothing shop also added "The Christmas Store" to their title as well. Local bakeries offered baked goodies and PG & E peddled electric ranges and refrigerators.

Bad things that happen around the holidays tend to hit us harder than if they happened any other time of year, but those who survived the Great Depression, especially the children, still

hold onto warm Christmas memories. Perhaps heartwarming events and good fortune have a greater impact on us than negative ones. This would be good to remember as we head into another Christmas during poor economic times. So have a little gleam in your eye, smile a little broader, and get that spring back into your step. Christmas cheer is infectious and a lot of local charities need your cheerful support.

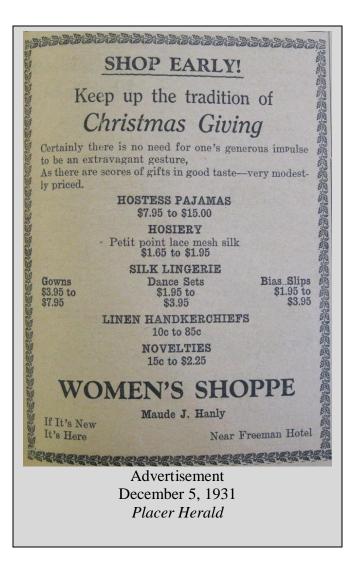


Advertisement December 13, 1930 Placer Herald





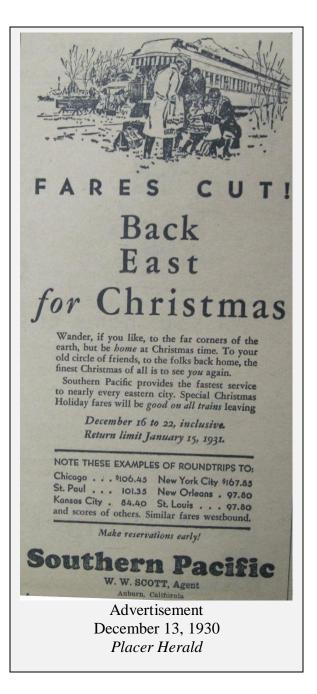
Advertisement December 5, 1931 Placer Herald





Advertisement
December 13, 1930
Placer Herald







### Museums Intelligence

#### Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

I can't believe it's time to start thinking about turkeys and Christmas presents again. Of course, for those of you who shop at Costco or Sam's Club you've been exposed to aisles of the latest Christmas decorations since September – so maybe it isn't so unbelievable after all.

This is always a busy time of year for the museums. We're just wrapping up Volunteer Training, we're planning a new carousel exhibit to replace the Native Sons exhibit in the Courthouse, and we're in the planning stages for decorating our museums for the holidays.

Last year, staff submitted dessert recipes for a cookbook we created as our Christmas present to each other. Below are two recipes from that book, which is now available on the museums website

(http://www.placer.ca.gov/museum) and our blog (http://www.placercountymuseums.blogspot.com).

Because of printing costs, our cookbook will only be available online.

#### Karen's Washboard Cookies

These are really great if you work at a history museum and everyone knows what a washboard looks like.

2 cups flour

1 cup flaked sweetened coconut

½ tsp baking powder

1/4 tsp soda

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp nutmeg

1 egg

2 Tbs milk

8 Tbs butter

1 cup light brown sugar

Mix butter and sugar, add dry ingredients. Shape into rectangular log 2 x 3 by 15 long. Wrap in plastic and chill 2 hours. Slice about 3/8 inch thick and make "washboard lines" with floured fork. Bake at 350° for 15-18 minutes. Rotate pan if needed. Yum!

## Tom's Black Bottom Cupcakes

Batter: 1½ cup flour

3/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup cocoa powder

1 tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

1 cup water

⅓ cup oil

1 Tbs vinegar

1 tsp vanilla

Filling: 8 oz. cream cheese

1 egg

¼ cup sugar

1/8 tsp salt

1 cup chocolate chips

Glaze: 3 oz. semi-sweet chocolate 2 oz. unsalted butter

½ tsp corn syrup

Batter: Preheat oven to 375°. In a bowl, put all dry ingredients, and then add remaining ingredients. Mix with an electric mixer until combined. Pour into greased muffin tins ½ full.

Filling: Beat cream cheese, egg, sugar and salt in a small mixing bowl until combined and smooth. Add chocolate chips. Spoon two heaping tablespoons into the middle of the batter. Bake 30-35 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes, remove from pan and cool completely.

Glaze: Combine chocolate, butter and corn syrup and melt in microwave on medium heat or over a double boiler. Dip top portion of cupcakes into chocolate glaze.

#### Community Education Program: Old Town Country Christmas at the Historic Courthouse

This year Country Christmas comes to the historic Courthouse in Auburn! A carousel exhibit, A Leap of Imagination will be on display in the Treasury and a large Christmas tree will stand in the hallway. The museum will be open and we'll serve some old fashioned treats.

The Courthouse will be open from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm Saturday December 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> during Old Town Country Christmas. For more information, please call 530-889-6500.

# Placer County Historical Society News

occupation and the company of the co

#### **President's Message**

Michael Otten, President

Isn't it about time to recognize the American River for what it really is, a national treasure? It's value lies not only in the recreational opportunities and its wilderness aspects but also in its history, most notably the 1848 gold discoveries by James Marshall at Coloma and Claude Chana in Auburn.

Safeguarding the future of this vital resource, including providing fire safety for canyon communities such as Auburn and property owners along the canyon rim, was the focus of a special forum that attracted an overflow audience to the Board of Supervisors' chambers Oct. 26.

Supervisors Jennifer
Montgomery and Jim Holmes
and Auburn Councilman Mike
Holmes hosted the event to find
ways to maintain funding to
keep the Auburn State
Recreation Area and Lake
Clementine open and provide
fire safety.

Mike Finnegan, area manager for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which provides funding for the ASRA to manage the 40 mile stretch of river, and a representative for Congressman Tom McClintock, were confident that the needed \$2 million annually to fund the area operations would be in place through at least Sept. 30, 2012. They said it would buy time to come up with a longterm solution and it would take the efforts of everyone there to achieve it.

Mike Holmes said one possibility is to combine the Folsom and Auburn State Recreation areas into a single funding unit. The two areas attract more than 3 million visitors a year.

My suggestion was to convene another forum and include representatives from EI Dorado and Sacramento Counties and work toward having the President declare the area a National Monument under the American Antiquities Act of 1906.

Presidents have designated some 100 areas as national monuments, and many of those receive far fewer visitors. The area's gold production not only impacted the creation of the Golden State but secured the Union and bound it together with the Transcontinental Railroad.

At least conceptually such a monument could link the Folsom and Auburn State Recreation Areas with the Coloma State Park and the 271-acre Gold Hill Ranch that was home to the former Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony, the first Japanese settlement in the nation that is being proposed by Rep. McClintock as a national historic site.

President Theodore Roosevelt used the Antiquities Act to proclaim more than 800,000 acres of the Grand Canyon as a National Monument. Other presidents used the act to protect many other areas, many of which later became national parks such as Death Valley. President Clinton used the act to declare 19 monuments and

expand three others. One of these monuments is Pompeys Pillar, near Billings, Montana, one of 16 managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM has proposed another 14 areas to President Obama's Department of Interior for monument designation, including three in Northern California--Bodie Hills, the Modoc Plateau and Berryessa Snow Mountain.

Pompeys Pillar is of some local interest as it was named by William Clark after the youngest member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, the son of Sacagawea who spent the biggest chunk of his life in the Auburn Area and along the American River where he had served as a ferryman and surveyor. Clark nicknamed Charbonneau "Pompy" and had called the Montana outcropping "Pompy's Tower," which was changed to its current name in 1814. The 51-acre monument. that includes Clark's etched signature on July 25, 1806, attracts about 50,000 visitors a year. It has a nice visitors' center and interpretative programs.

By creating a national monument locally we can bring extra focus to resolving a lot of the funding, recreational, historical and health and safety issues, especially if we work cooperatively.

It is as Steve Evans, state conservation director for Friends of the River, says: "we have the basis for a national park in our back yard." Evans contends the canyons lands won't be really protected until it became "an entity unto itself."

Thanks to all who participated in the PCHS's first official dedication of a grave marker on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Old Auburn Cemetery. The Bernhard headstone dedication provided another interesting chapter honoring the lives of a Gold Rush era family who established roots here and whose stories continue to be retold almost daily at the Bernhard House Museum complex. About 40 people attended the ceremony, including Auburn Mayor Bridget Powers, Councilman Mike Holmes and County Supervisor Jim Holmes. The headstone denotes the birth and death dates of Bernhard "Benjamin" Bernhard and his wife, Rosa Hau, who died in 1902 within a few months of each other, and three of their children, who predeceased them.

The idea for such a marker came from Ralph Gibson, Program Manager for the Placer County Museums, who noted that headstones for this prominent family were missing. Special thanks goes to Roy and Paul Ruhkala and the Ruhkala Monument Co., Ken Hash and Sue Burkett of the Auburn Cemetery District, John Knox and Carol Cramer for their research on the Bernhard family and our Landmarks Committee: Karri Samson, chair; Doris Viera, Richard Hubbard, Gayle Russell, Rose Ford and Lila Swesey.

Other notes: Thank you George Lay for chairing October's dinner meeting while I was in Europe. Auburn is soliciting a volunteer City Historian. Contact the City Clerk's office for qualifications, expected duties and a one-page application.

--Michael Otten, otten@ssctv.net

# **Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting**

Addah Owens, Vice President

Cost: \$14 per person

When: December 2, 2010 Time: 6:30 Dinner, 7:30 Program Where: Veteran's Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn, CA

**Menu:** Roast Baron of Beef, Roast Turkey, Seasonal Vegetables, Mashed Potatoes, Salad, and

Dessert.

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

**Program:** Walt Wilson will present a slideshow program of photographs on the train filled with bombs that exploded in Antelope in the 1960s.

We will also have Christmas music and our annual raffle.



Christmas Display at the State Theatre in 1939

# Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society Ed & Nilda Duffek, (530) 305-3209 www.colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society Margie Powell, (530) 432-4015 www.donnersummithistoricalsocie ty.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society Merilee Reed,(530) 367-2430 www.foresthillhistory.org

Fruitvale School Hall Community Association Lyndell Grey, (916) 645-3517

Golden Drift Historical Society Jim Ricker, (530) 389-8344

Historical Advisory Board George Lay, (530) 878-1927 Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center Richard Yue, (530) 346-7121

Lincoln Area Archives Museum Shirley Russell, (916) 645-3470

Lincoln Highway Association Norman Root, (916) 483-8669 www.lincolnhwy.org

Loomis Basin Historical Society Dot Shiro, (916) 663-3892 www.ppgn.com

Maidu Museum & Historic Site Glenie Strome, (916) 782-3299 www.roseville.ca.us/indianmus eum

Native Sons of the Golden West, Parlor #59 Tom Potts, (916) 412-3910

Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association Aileen Gage, (530) 885-9113 Old Town Auburn Preservation Society Ross Carpenter, (530) 885-1252

Placer County Genealogical Society Alice Bothello, (530) 885-2216 www.pcgenes.com

Placer County Historical Society Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837 www.placercountyhistoricalsociety .org

Placer County Museums Docent Guild Sandi Tribe, (530) 887-9143

Rocklin Historical Society Barbara Chapman, (916) 415-0153 www.rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Historical Society Phoebe Astill, (916) 773-3003 www.rosevillehistorical.org

### **Artifact Highlight**

Kasia Woroniecka

Shirley Temple Doll, c. 1934

Shirley Temple brought hope and optimism to Americans who went to the movies to forget their problems during the Great Depression. As her popularity grew during the early 1930's, a great number of Shirley Temple related merchandise was being produced including dolls, photos, books, dresses and jewelry. Her break-through 1934 movie "Stand Up and Cheer" inspired a doll wearing a polks dot dress. The pictured doll from our collection was made by the

wearing a polka dot dress. The pictured doll from our collection was made by the Ideal Toy and Novelty Company, the only company licensed to sell Shirley Temple Dolls. The company was founded as Ideal Novelty and Toy Company in New York in 1907 by Morris and Rose Mitchom. It changed its name to Ideal Toy Company in 1938. It is a composition doll made of sawdust-based wood pulp with a mohair wig showing off Shirley Temple's trademark curls. The Shirley Temple doll was a very popular Christmas present in 1934.



### **Calendar of Events**

### **November**

Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum.

Contact: 916-773-3003.

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm Foresthill Divide Historical Society Business meeting at the Foresthill Divide Museum.

Contact: 530-367-3535.

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.

Contact: 916-624-3464.

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.

Contact: 916-652-7844.

Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 pm Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn

Library. Contact 530-885-2216.

### **December**

**Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4:00 pm** A Leap of Imagination exhibit opens in the Treasury in the historic Courthouse.

Contact: 530-889-6500.

**Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall.

Contact: 530-885-5074.

**Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>** Old Town Country Christmas at the historic Courthouse from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Contact: 530-889-6500.

**Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society Meeting at the Carnegie Museum.

Contact: 916-773-3003.

**Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.

Contact: 916-652-7844.

**Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Winery.

Contact: 530-889-6500.

Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm Foresthill Divide Historical Society Dinner meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.

Contact: 530-367-3535.

**Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society meeting at the Old St. Mary's Chapel at 5152 Front Street.

Contact: 916-624-3464.

Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 pm Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn

Library. Contact 530-885-2216.