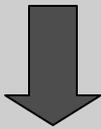


# THE PLACER

A Voice of History

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## Administrator's Notes

*Ralph Gibson*

Summer is finally here and we are gearing up for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Heritage Trail! This year, 19 museums from Roseville to Tahoe will participate on the weekend of August 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Each museum will offer a unique view of their local history through tours, exhibits or activities. This event is your opportunity to learn and experience the incredibly rich history of Placer County.

The amazing thing about the Heritage Trail is that you get to do things you wouldn't normally get to do when you visit any of these museums on a regular day. There will be a granite splitting demonstration at the Rocklin

History Museum; Alma Bell will once again grace the Women's Jail beneath the steps of the historic Courthouse in Auburn; and the Railroad Regulators will be at the Gatekeeper's Museum in Tahoe City to settle their dispute with gun play – just to name a few. There are other participating museums that are difficult to visit any other time of year because they are either open by appointment only (the Benton Welty School Room and the Gold Country Medical History Museum, both in Auburn) or don't keep regular hours of operation (The Joss House, also in Auburn).

Don't let this opportunity slip by! If you need help traversing

## Heritage Trail 2013

August 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

Hit the road for this year's  
Heritage Trail Weekend  
and visit any of Placer  
County's 19 museums  
from Roseville to Tahoe.

[theheritagetrail.blogspot.com](http://theheritagetrail.blogspot.com)



the trail, we have a bus tour that will take you to some of the mountain museums on Saturday and visit some of the valley museums on Sunday. Bus tickets are \$10.00 per person each day and we suggest packing your own lunch. For more information about the Heritage Trail or the Bus Tours, please visit our website at: <http://www.heritagetrail.blogspot.com> or call 530-889-6500.

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## The care of metal objects

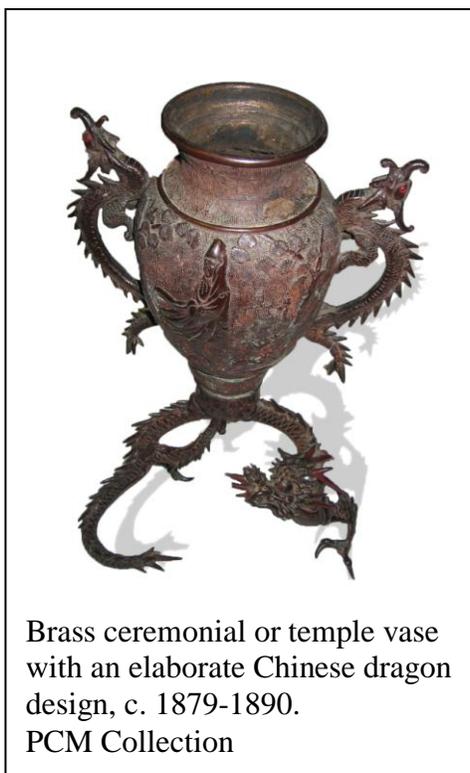
By *Kasia Woroniecka*

Metal objects are plentiful not only in our collection but in many other museums and private collections. Metals have played an important role in many cultures throughout history and they are part of every numismatic, military, religious, science or decorative art collection. Iron, copper, tin, lead, gold and silver are among the most commonly found.

In order to properly care for, store, exhibit or handle metal objects the metal or metals used need to be identified. Generally iron is used in making kettles, door hardware, stoves, nails and structural materials. Copper, brass and nickel are used in making scientific instruments, lighting devices, cookware and decorative objects. There are many uses for silver, among them coins, jewelry and tableware. Tin and pewter are

used in making cans, toys and kitchenware. When identifying your object consider the color, weight, hardness or magnetic properties of the metal. Do not use chemical spot tests to identify metals as they can damage or even destroy the object.

After identifying the metal examine the piece in good light and identify additional materials used in its manufacture, like wood, ivory, gems, glass as well



Brass ceremonial or temple vase with an elaborate Chinese dragon design, c. 1879-1890. PCM Collection

as any coating or patina, visible signs of corrosion or other damage. Next, decide what needs to be done- removing dirt and dust or removing tarnish. Metals and their surfaces are softer and damage easily, so excessive cleaning can do more harm than good. Polishing uses abrasives, so every time tarnish is removed part of the original surface is removed as well.



Gold filigree brooch with fresh water pearls c. 1890-1900. PCM Collection

Repeated use of chemical or dipping solutions will gradually eat away the plating, decorations or engraver's marks. Make sure you wear gloves when handling or cleaning your metal object. Human skin secretes oils and acids that when deposited on metal surfaces cause corrosion and loss of the original surface. Prepare your work area before moving the object. Improper handling can lead to denting, bending or other serious and expensive damage. Remove any loose dirt or dust with a soft brush directed at a vacuum nozzle. Rough vacuum brush attachments can scratch the surface.

Use mineral spirits on cotton swabs to remove a waxy surface or old polish residue. If the residue cannot be removed with mineral spirits consider a solution of very mild detergent and distilled water. Make sure that areas that are difficult to dry quickly are not exposed to liquids that can penetrate the surface, like objects made of variety of materials. In some cases, light tarnish can be removed by wiping the surface with cotton moistened with denatured alcohol. Traditional

home remedies, like soaking your object in coca cola, baking soda, denture cleaner or lemon juice should be avoided since those treatments are aggressive and difficult to control. Surfaces treated with ammonia tend to tarnish rapidly and become slightly pink.

Metal objects in regular use, like silver flatware, copper pans or pewter plates should be cleaned as soon as possible after use, especially after contact with fruit juices, garlic, onions or salt. They should be washed in warm soapy water, rinsed thoroughly and dried with soft cotton cloth. Avoid dishwashers and soaking.

Once the object is free of dust, dirt, and any residue, a coating of wax is sometimes applied to slow down the tarnishing process. It is not always necessary and the process has to be reversible. Museum Wax gives a good layer of protection against the elements, fingerprints, etc. Any wax must be applied evenly so that corrosion does not occur in the areas that were not coated. Make sure that the wax used is suitable for your object. Many commercial polishing products contain ammonia, so check the product before use. When in doubt consult a conservator.

A controlled environment is one of the most important elements in preserving your objects. Low relative humidity is key, since most metals corrode quickly in moist conditions. Copper turns green, silver turns black, iron rusts and lead disintegrates into a white powder.



Victorian silver plated collapsible cup c. 1887. Notice large area of damage caused by corrosion. PCM Collection

Corrosion is the chemical reaction between the metal and its environment that causes its deterioration. Active corrosion can be identified by a change in color and powdery or flaky spots or layers on the surface. Tarnish is considered dry corrosion. Metals that are subject to tarnish are aluminum, copper, gold (below 14 carat), magnesium, iron, nickel, chromium, zinc, cadmium, and silver.



Tin can of marker powder, c. 1920. PCM Collection

The most serious threat to metal objects is water damage. Objects that become wet during a flood or other water emergency should be rinsed with water, preferably distilled, as soon as possible. They will corrode quickly when left wet. They should be dried with cotton or paper towels. It is important that all dirt and grit is washed off before the towels are used, because the residue can scratch the surface.



Brass teapot c. 1890. PCM Collection

Ideally, metal objects should be stored in closed cabinets or drawers that protect them from dust, pollutants and changes in relative humidity. Metal cabinets are preferred, since wood and plywood emit acids and gases that are harmful to metals. Newspaper and cardboard boxes should also be avoided. Store items in acid-free boxes, soft cotton cloth or anti-tarnish silver cloth bags. Store away from windows, vents and heating units. Since dust retains moisture even large objects should be covered to protect from dust buildup.



# Museums Intelligence

## Placer County Museums News

*Ralph Gibson*

We continue to be pretty busy at the museums. Not only are we heavily involved in the Heritage Trail preparations, but we are also knee deep in an exhibit that will grace the foyer of the historic Courthouse in Auburn. This exhibit will focus on historic preservation and will call on viewers to act on an important object in Placer County history that is in need of restoration: the Neff Fountain. Plans have been drafted to restore the exterior of the fountain and run new wiring so that the lights will once again cast a glow in the shadow of the Courthouse. A committee is being formed that will raise the funds necessary for the project and our exhibit will be one small piece of that effort by calling attention to the fountain and by requesting donations. We are also hard at work preparing for a Tour of the Old Auburn Cemetery this fall. Many of our archives volunteers have begun to research the notable plots in the cemetery and we hope to have a good draft of the tour completed in September. The tour itself will be on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 at the Old Auburn Cemetery. A lot of work has to happen between now and then to make it

happen, but we are confident it will be a successful, annual event on our Community Education calendar. But, the next big annual event on our calendar is the aforementioned Heritage Trail. For those of you that like lists, here is a list of the 19 participating museums:

**Valley Museums** – Located in South Placer  
 Lincoln Area Archives Museum  
 Maidu Museum & Historic Site (Roseville)  
 Roseville Historical Society  
 Carnegie Museum  
 Roseville Telephone Museum  
 Rocklin History Museum  
 Griffith Quarry Museum (Penryn)

**Auburn Museums** – Within one mile of the Historic Courthouse  
 The Benton Welty School Room  
 Bernhard Museum Complex  
 Gold Country Museum  
 Placer County Museum  
 Joss House Museum  
 Gold Country Medical History Museum

**Mountain Museums** – Located in the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe  
 Forest Hill Divide Museum  
 Colfax Area Heritage Museum  
 Golden Drift Museum  
 Donner Summit Historical Society Museum (Soda Springs)  
 Western SkiSport Museum (Boreal)  
 Gatekeeper's Museum (Tahoe City)  
 Watson Cabin (Tahoe City)



4th of July postcards, 1909-1910. PCM Collection

## Placer County Historical Society News



### President's Message

*Michael Otten,  
President*

For the sixth straight year, the Benton Welty Classroom museum in the 1915-built Auburn Grammar School will be open for history lessons the weekend of Aug. 10-11. It is one of 19 stops from Roseville to Tahoe on the 2013 Heritage Trail. We need tour guides for this increasingly popular stop only open to the public (except by appointment) this one weekend of the year. All we ask is a minimum of two hours of your time. The museum will be open from 10 to 4. That means shifts begin at 10, noon and 2 p.m. though it is a good idea to be there early. Feel free to bring a team mate.

To help, contact chair Jean Allender (530) 217-9922 or myself at (530) 888-7837.

Unlike the early days, the building at 1225 Lincoln Way now has air conditioning. The City Council meets in the old school auditorium.

It is the only stop where there is a drawing for a kids-only basket of goodies. Instead of computers, look for the individual desktop blackboards with chalk. Join in the fun.

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The plaque bandits have struck again. Last year it was the 1950 Ophir Plaque. This year it is the Virginiatown plaque, State Registered Landmark No. 400,

dedicated by the Placer County Historical Society on Sept. 28, 1952. It seems they are stealing our history one plaque at a time. Replacements are expensive.

\*\*\*

Donna Howell, who lives and preserves history like few



others, successfully pushed through the listing of her home on the

National Register of Historic Places. She hosted a special plaque unveiling May 23. It is first owner-occupied home in Auburn to be listed. The home won recognition in honor of a previous resident, Irene Burns, noted educator and first Placer County elected woman official.

\*\*\*

Preliminary efforts have begun to restore the iconic Neff



Fountain in front of the historic Placer County Courthouse. It was donated to the City of Auburn in

1908 by Jacob Hart Neff. This 1850 gold rusher made it big in wealth, diversity of activities and politics. He was a popular Lieutenant governor, state senator and sheriff. The Placer County Historical Society will lead the fundraising efforts. It appears to be the only fountain of this design still existing and worthy of its own listing on the

National Register as an historic object.

\*\*\*

Michael G. Lynch never misses an opportunity to boost California State Parks. Such was the case June 22 when the California Conference of Historical Societies honored Lynch with an award of merit primarily for his work in the widely successful centennial celebration of the Mountain Quarries Railroad last year.

\*\*\*

Check out the Wendell Robie photo album of the Forest Hill Divide (produced by Bambrock Studios of Auburn). You will find 27 pages of rare images circa 1860-1916. See it at [www.placercountyhistoricalciety.org](http://www.placercountyhistoricalciety.org) Keep checking back as webmaster Jon Brommeland adds new and additional information.

[otten@ssctv.net](mailto:otten@ssctv.net)

### PCHS Picnic Time at the Bernhard Museum

**What:** Meet and greet Placer County Historical Society board members and Ralph Gibson, interim Museums Administrator  
**When:** Thursday, July 11  
**Time:** 5 pm potluck dinner, 7 board meeting

**Where:** Bernhard Museum Complex grounds and winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Road, Auburn

**RSVP and information:** 530 888-7837 or [www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org)

## **Placer County Historical Organizations**

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Colfax Area Historical Society  
Helen Wayland,  
(530) 346-7040  
[www.colfaxhistory.org](http://www.colfaxhistory.org)

Donner Summit Historical Society  
Bill Oudegeest, (209) 606-6859  
[www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org](http://www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org)

Foresthill Divide Historical Society  
Sandy Simester, (530) 367-3535  
[www.foresthillhistory.org](http://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  
Glenn Vineyard, (916) 747-1961

Old Town Auburn Preservation Society  
Lynn Carpenter, (530) 885-1252

Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center  
Richard Yue, (530) 346-7121

Lincoln Area Archives Museum  
Shirley Russell, (916) 645-3800

Lincoln Highway Association  
Bob Dieterich, [bobd@iname.com](mailto:bobd@iname.com)  
[www.lincolnhwy.org](http://www.lincolnhwy.org)

Loomis Basin Historical Society  
Karen Clifford, (916) 663-3871  
<http://www.ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html>

Maidu Museum & Historic Site  
Glenie Strome, (916) 782-3299  
[www.roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum](http://www.roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum)

Native Sons of the Golden West, Parlor #59  
Dave Allen, (530) 878-2878  
[dsallen59@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsallen59@sbcglobal.net)

Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association  
Aileen Gage, (530) 885-9113

Placer County Historical Society  
Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837  
[www.placercountyhistoricalociety.org](http://www.placercountyhistoricalociety.org)

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

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

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

North Lake Tahoe Historical Society  
Javier Rodriguez, (530) 583-1762  
[www.northtahoemuseums.org](http://www.northtahoemuseums.org)

Placer County Genealogical Society, Toni Rosasco, (530) 888-8036  
[www.pcgenes.com](http://www.pcgenes.com)

### **Artifact Highlight**

#### **Coffee roaster**



This cast iron coffee roaster was made by Roys and Wilcox Co. in the 1850's. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century people bought green coffee beans in bulk at the local store and roasted them at home. Frying them in a pan on a wooden stove required about 20 minutes of constant stirring. The design of this cannonball roaster allowed for an even roast as the ball was turned over the fire with the handle.

## 2013 Calendar of Events

### July

- July 9<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society meeting at Carnegie Museum, 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville.  
Contact: 916-773-3003
- July 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm.** Placer County Historical Society board meeting and picnic at the Bernhard Museum Complex, 291 Auburn-Folsom Road, Auburn. Contact: (530) 885-5074
- July 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm** Forest Hill Divide Historical Society business meeting at the Forest Hill Divide Museum.  
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- July 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.  
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- July 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library.  
Contact: 530-885-2216.

### August

- August 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 pm.** Placer County Historical Society meeting at the Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East Street, Auburn.  
Contact: (530) 885-5074
- August 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>,  
10:00am-4:00pm** The Heritage Trail Event - 19 Museums from Roseville to Tahoe.  
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- August 13<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm** Roseville Historical Society meeting at the Carnegie Museum. 557 Lincoln Street, Roseville  
Contact: 916-773-3003.
- August 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm** Forest Hill Divide Historical Society meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall.  
Contact: 530-367-3535.
- August 21<sup>st</sup>, 5:30 pm** Historical Advisory Board meeting at the Bernhard Museum Winery, 291 Auburn-Folsom Rd., Auburn.  
Contact: 530-889-6500.
- August 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society meeting at the Loomis Library.  
Contact: 916-663-3871.
- August 22<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogical Society general meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library.  
Contact 530-885-2216.

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

