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Administrator's Notes

by Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

This year it truly will be "Home for the Holidays". Because of the pandemic the Bernhard remains closed, which means no *Victorian Christmas*. However, we will be doing something special at the Gold Rush Museum, so expect a little more Gold Rush Christmas Spirit than usual. At the Courthouse we will decorate as usual with the big tree in the foyer and a smaller tree in the Treasury.

Shopping over everything else was emphasized – with a nod to donating to the Red Cross (WWI and Influenza).

Join the Red Cross



Your Heart and a Dollar

The Christmas Morning Visit---Make it cheery by the gift of Shoes

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While the Bernhard Museum is closed, the grounds are open, and we will once again install exterior Christmas lights. The grounds will still have that holiday flare. Speaking of exterior lights, expect something more dramatic than usual at the Courthouse this season. Classic Christmas in Old Town will be very muted this year with an emphasis on shopping, so we will not be open those evenings.

We will still be full of Holiday cheer, so feel free to visit us any time. The Placer County Museum in the Courthouse is open everyday 10-4, the Gold Rush Museum Fri-Sun 1-4, and the DeWitt History Museum will be open the 1st Wed of the month 12-4. It's been a crazy, awful year and we all deserve a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

The same thing happened in 1918 when large, public Christmas gatherings were canceled.

All public gatherings being called off on account of the "flu." Christmas will be more quiet than was expected.



Beautiful handkerchiefs from the Placer County Collection.

Archives released an exciting new project this year!

Retracing the steps of the Forlorn Hope.

Finish out the year with your favorite historical organizations.

Handkerchiefs from the Collection

by *Kasia Woroniecka, Curator of Collections*

Handkerchiefs used to be a part of every man and woman's wardrobe. They came in many shapes and sizes. They were often embroidered, trimmed with lace, and showcased their maker's needlework skills. They were prized as holiday and birthday gifts, purchased as souvenirs during vacations, and even used as a means of flirtation.

Handkerchiefs were often made of cotton, linen, or silk. The most beautiful ones were used for special occasions, like going to church or a party. Most women carried them in their purses or tucked them in their sleeves. Men's handkerchiefs were plain, usually white, sometimes monogrammed and were usually carried in their pant pocket.

The fabric handkerchief began to fall out of favor when disposable paper facial tissue came on the market in the early 1920s. There are many beautiful handkerchiefs in our collection. Here are a few examples:



Cotton handkerchief with lace trim. It belonged to Mabel Carrie Bergholdt of Newcastle c. 1900 - 1910.

PCM Collection, 2012.5.21 (*left*)

Donated by the estate of Drucilla Barner. Barner was born in 1914 in San Rafael. She came to Auburn in 1957 and became vice president of Heart Federal Savings and Loan. She was one of the founders of the Western States Trail Ride Association. She won the Tevis Cup in 1961.

PCM Collection, 1982.50.125 (*right*)



The following handkerchiefs were donated in 1983 by Vincent Gianella and belonged to his wife Catherine and her mother Lydia Helmich Thiele. Vincent Gianella was a professor of geology, who spent his career at the University of Nevada and the Mackey School of Mines. Catherine was born in Los Angeles in 1890. She married Vincent Gianella in 1917. She was active in the Reno Women's Civic Club, the Reno Twentieth Century Club, and the Women's Faculty Club of the University of Nevada. In 1957 she was awarded the title of Mother of the Year in Reno by the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs. She died in Auburn in 1974.

Silk handkerchief with embroidery and scalloped edges. Used by Lydia Helmich Thiele when going to church c. 1892-1895.

PCM Collection, 1983.9.183 (*right*)



This silk handkerchief belonged to Lydia Helmich Thiele and it was her favorite c. 1880-1900.

PCM Collection, 1983.9.220 (*left*)



Linen handkerchief made by Catherine Gianella when she was 7 years. This was her first attempt at fringing and hemstitching.

PCM Collection, 1983.9.226 (*right*)



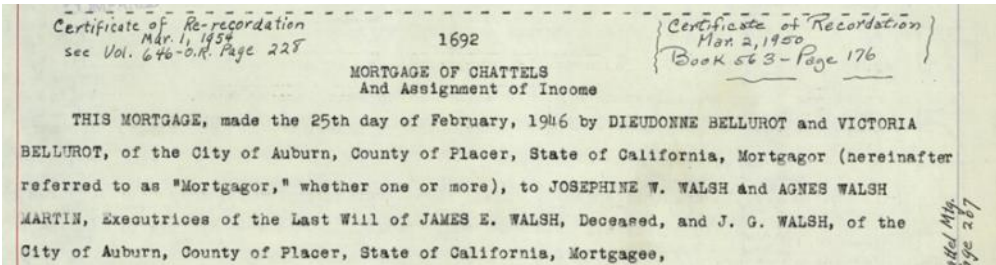
From the Archives: The Placer County Museums Digital Collections

by Kelsey Monahan, Curator of Archives

In October, the Archive and Research Center launched the new Placer County Museums Digital Collections website: <https://placer.access.preservica.com/>. This launch is just the first step towards not only getting all our archival records online, but also our map collection and photograph archive.

For now, you can view records from the Placer County Clerk-Recorder Collection, which date to the beginning of the county in 1851. The largest group of records in this collection are the Deeds and Official Records, which span the years 1851-1960. The name of the collection is almost so plain as to disguise all the information it might hold. Deeds and Official Records contain deeds, deeds of trust, reconveyances, decrees, bills of sale, agreements, and more. The collection can be used in genealogy research, property research, and even research into the history of Placer County businesses.

For example, if we navigate to Official Records Book 475, pages 307-315 (check out [this guide to getting started with the collection!](#)) we find a Chattel Mortgage (where personal property or moveable property was used to secure a loan) between Dieudonne Bellurot and Victoria Bellurot, the mortgagors; and Josephine Walsh, Agnes Walsh Martin, and J.G. Walsh, the mortgagees. This mortgage record documents the transfer of the Freeman Hotel in Auburn from the Walsh family, which had been involved with operating the hotel for 50 years, and the Bellurots, who would own and operate it until the 1950s. The Freeman Hotel was originally built in 1868 as the West Hotel, in 1872 it became the Borland Hotel, and in 1880 W.A. Freeman purchased it and renamed it the Freeman Hotel.

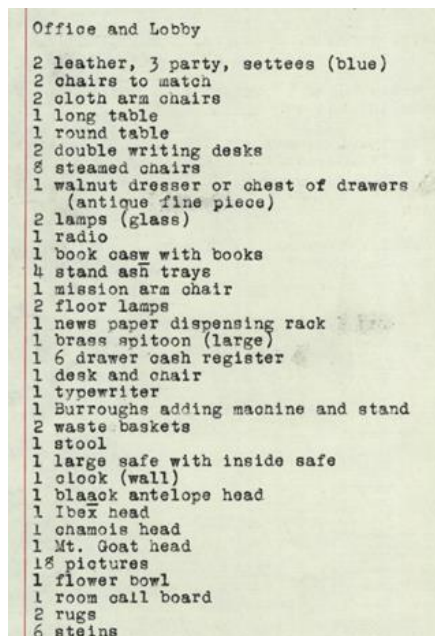


Detail from Official Records Book 475, Page 307. Placer County Clerk-Recorder Collection.

Part of what makes Chattel Mortgages so interesting are the inventories of property, in this case, an inventory of all the furnishings inside the hotel from 1946. Not only can the listing tell us how many rooms there were and how they were furnished, but also how the hotel was decorated – the inventory lists 10 taxidermy mounts in the bar alone! It also gives some insight into the services

they offered, like the hotel's barber shop and in later pages their banquet supplies and dining room equipment.

Sadly, the Freeman Hotel was torn down in 1970, but records like this can give us a glimpse into the past. To read the record and inventory in its entirety be sure to check out pages 307-315 of Official Records Book 475.



Detail from Official Records Book 475, page 311. Placer County Clerk-Recorder Collection.

Interior of the Freeman Hotel, undated, PCM Collection. Are the spittoon and wall clock the same ones listed in the 1946 inventory of the lobby?

Retracing the Steps of the Forlorn Hope

By Bill Oudegeest, Donner Summit Historical Society

On December 16th, presuming the weather is cooperative, four people, experienced long-distance runners and history and outdoor enthusiasts, will leave the State Park at Donner Lake to re-enact the travels of the Forlorn Hope.

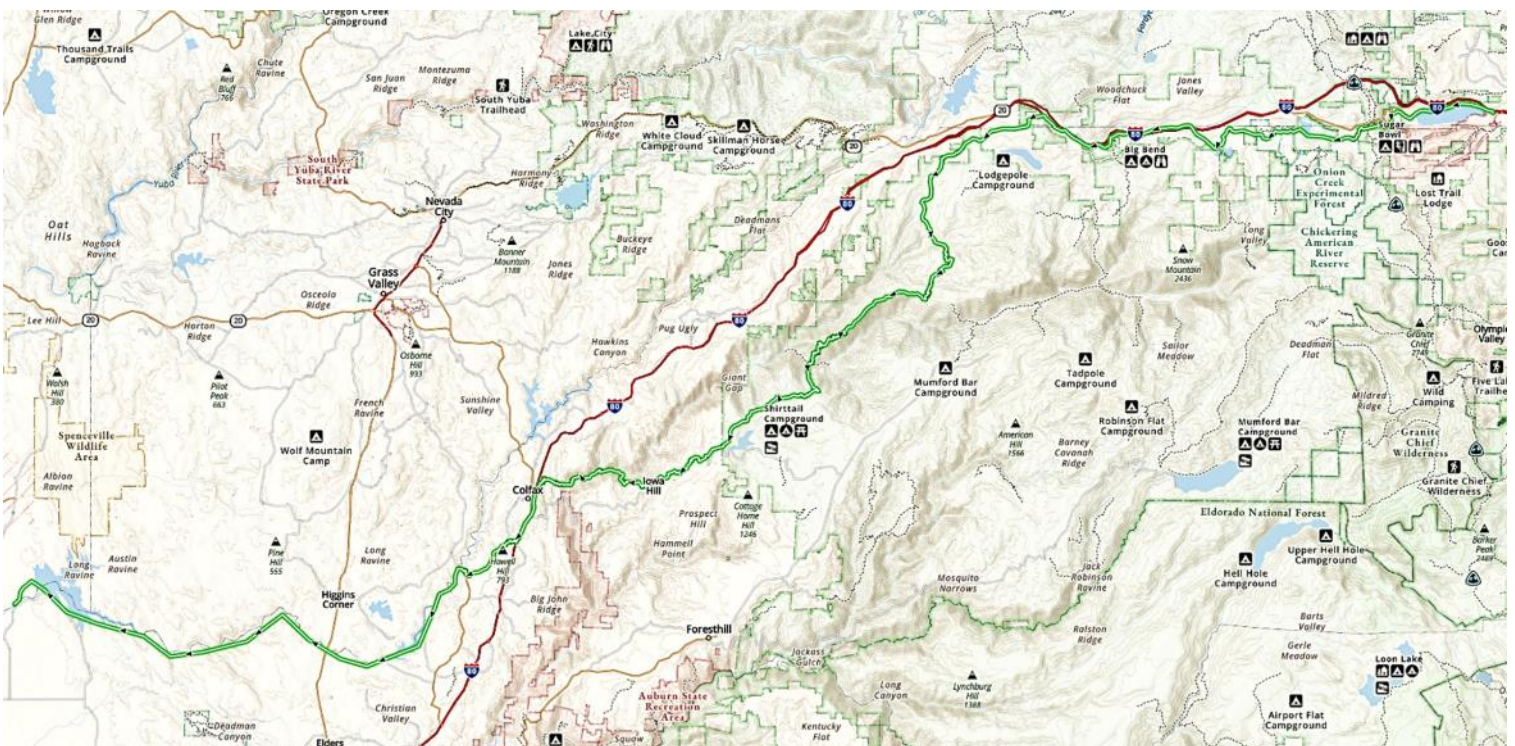
First, a little background. At the end of October 1846, the Donner Party was trapped by snow. They had made mistakes, but they'd have gotten over the Sierra if the weather had not turned against them. Over the ensuing weeks snow continued to fall, they lost their cattle, and made four attempts to escape. They were trapped and starving.

On December 16th, fifteen people made a final escape attempt. They thought they could snowshoe to California in ten days and bring back help to their desperate families. It took thirty-one days and only seven survivors, five women and two men, made it to California. When the first man, helped by Native Americans, knocked on a settler's door, the woman who answered broke into tears. Bloody footprints trailed behind him; he was emaciated and almost dead.

The Forlorn Hope is the name of the escapees from Donner Lake. They galvanized a response that resulted in four rescue parties over the following months that rescued about half of the Donner Party. All that is well-known and repeated in many books and articles. This year's re-enactors hope to make the trip with modern clothing, equipment, and adequate food—with all members surviving until the end, in five or six days.

You can imagine the work these four have undergone figuring out the logistics, trying to divine the route of the Forlorn Hope, and preparing mentally and physically. In 1846, they were more interested in survival than plotting the route, besides, they got lost. The story of this re-enactment will be compelling and remarkable, though not quite as compelling as remarkable as the original. Look for future articles on this endeavor.

If you want to get more background on the Donner Party, the Summit, and the Forlorn Hope, read the [“Donner Party and Donner Summit: Heroism, Pathos, and the Human Spirit.”](#) You can also go to the [Heirloom](#) indices for a series of articles on the Donner Party and Donner Summit, parts I-V in the December 2016 to April 2017 issues.



News from Placer County Historical Society

by April McDonald-Loomis, President

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Happy Fall! Perhaps a new season will bring some relief from the virus and the wildfire smoke. As far as the pandemic, we have been able to hold board meetings via Zoom, but our dinner meetings are still on hold. We have reserved our regular dates and times for the Veteran's Hall next year. We still don't know when we'll be able to hold a dinner for 60 people. Patience seems to be the key in getting through this.

We've gotten a few things accomplished. The new Charbonneau plaque was installed in Old Town, many thanks to the City of Auburn for their assistance. In that same park, we will soon have a plaque dedicated to Emily Casement, the Fire Queen, with help from the E Clampus Vitas, Chapter 3.

Another group of plaques that will be put up soon by the City are new ones on Nevada Street noting the gold-rich area of Spanish Flat and the location of the Auburn fruit sheds. We are still working on plaques for several downtown businesses. If anyone has any ideas for buildings or sites you think should have markers, do let us know.

We have a couple of new publications that are available through our website. A booklet entitled *Roadhouses in Placer County*, and a full-size resource book by John Knox entitled *Auburn Dry Diggings and Water: Rivers, Ravines, Ditches, Springs, Wells and Waste*. John has done an incredible job tracing the origins of our water supply over time. Everything you ever wanted to know about Auburn's water is in this book!

Go to placercountyhistoricalsociety.org for the book order form.

The Placer County History Award went to Dave Allen this year. There was a small outdoor ceremony at the Bernhard Museum Complex on October 21st (photos below). Congratulations Dave!

Stay safe,
April McDonald-Loomis, President



Placer County Historical Organizations

Contact individual organizations for information on their event and meeting schedules.

Colfax Area Historical Society

Jay McIntyre, President
(530) 346-8599
colfaxhistory.org

Donner Summit Historical Society

Bill Oudegeest (209) 606-6859
donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Foresthill Divide Historical Society

Troy Simester
(530) 367-3535
foresthillhistory.org

Fruitvale School Hall Community Association

Mark Fowler

Gold Country Medical History Museum

Lynn Carpenter
(530) 885-1252

Golden Drift Historical Society

Sarah Fugate
(530) 389-2121

Historical Advisory Board

Glenn Vineyard
(916) 747-1961

Joss House Museum and Chinese History Center

Larry Finney
(530) 305-9380

Lincoln Area Archives Museum

Elizabeth Jansen
(916) 645-3800
laamca.org

Loomis Basin Historical Society

Karen Clifford
(916) 663-3871
ppgn.com/loomishistorical.html

Maidu Museum & Historic Site

Kaitlin Kincade
(916) 774-5934
roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum

The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics

David C. Antonucci
(775) 722-3502
tahoemuseum.org

Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor #59

Dave Allen (530) 878-2878
dsallen59@sbcglobal.net

Newcastle Portuguese Hall Association

Mario Farinha
(530) 269-2412

North Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Phil Sexton
(530) 583-1762
northtahoemuseums.org

Placer County Genealogical Society

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Placer County Historical Society

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Placer County Museums Docent Guild

Fran Hanson
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Rocklin Historical Society

Hank Lohse
(916) 624-3464
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Roseville Fire Museum

Jim Giblin (916) 538-1809
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Roseville Historical Society

Denise Fiddymment
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