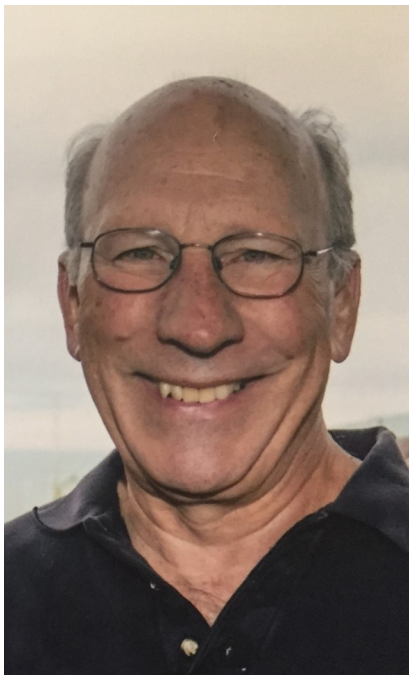


## president's message

Hank Lohse

July 4th is just a couple of days away and that means we are half way through 2018. Several people have asked about the yearly yard



*Hank Lohse*

sale at the Johnson homestead. I'm sad to say that there will not be a yard sale this year. The event over the last couple of years had become too big to handle. Looking for storage space though out the year, working on setting it up over a period of three weeks in-

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Gene Johnson: a man of action

Gloria Beverage

"Let's do something" has been Gene Johnson's mantra for the past 20-plus years. As various historic

as he continues to lead and otherwise be involved with projects for the betterment of the community," says Gary

Day, a longtime Historical Society member.

Born in Sacramento and raised in Rocklin, Johnson spent 30 years pursuing a career as a mechanical engineer, working on the East Coast and the Bay Area for Rock-etydyne, Aerojet, IBM, United Aircraft and Varian.

When his parents moved to an assisted living facility in Auburn, Gene and his wife, Marg, decided in 1996 that it was time to return to his

hometown. They moved into his childhood home, an aging two-story farmhouse on Fifth Street that had been owned by his grandparents and parents, and slowly renovated the structure.

Johnson's interest in preserving the city's history may have been fostered by his grandparents and parents, who were active in the city's leadership as well as longtime members of the Historical

*(Continued on page 2)*



Gene and Marg. Johnson

restoration projects have been proposed, Johnson would take a leadership role – pushing proposals from vision to reality.

He has been the force behind restoration of Old St. Mary's Chapel, the development of the Rocklin History Museum and the building of the Rocklin Fire House replica as well as other projects.

"He is the backbone of the Rocklin Historical Society

*(Continued from page 1)*

Society. His grandfather and father had served on the City Council, including terms as Mayor.

But, his passion was sparked by a gift from his parents – membership in the Rocklin Historical Society.

“I got hooked partly because of Roy (Ruhkala). He wanted a museum. We worked together to make that happen,” Johnson recalled.

The house at the corner of San Francisco Street and Rocklin Road was offered to the Historical Society by the Moon family, he said. After the city used state-funded redevelopment money to purchase the property, Johnson and a team of volunteers spent two years refurbishing and filling the museum with furniture, artifacts and memorabilia donated by longtime residents.

Johnson is proudest of the history-making move of Old St. Mary’s Chapel from its original site at the end of Front Street to its current location in Heritage Park.

“St. Mary’s is the most re-

warding in terms of how people pulled together,” he said, adding that he has remained active in the restoration and preservation of the historic building.

And he’s proud to have been part of the committee that organized the annual Holiday Tree Lighting Festival on Front Street.

Johnson also joined volunteers in the building and furnishing of a replica of the city’s first firehouse in Heritage Park.

He points with pride at the number of parks the city has created over the years. One of the first, Johnson-Springview Park, was made possible after Johnson and another longtime resident sold the city several acres of land owned by their families. Johnson later donated the three acres surrounding the Indian grinding rocks.

And yet, there’s one piece of history that Johnson fought to preserve but couldn’t. He was unable to convince the city to keep the Big Gun Quarry shed on Rocklin Road, even though the site had been added to the state’s historic regis-

try.

“My saddest memory will be not saving the shed at the quarry. The city spent \$145,000 to tear down that shed. Now it’s rotting away in the City Corporation Yard.”

He holds out hope the shed – or a model – will someday be recreated somewhere in the city.

At 81, Johnson claims he has slowed down, but only a bit. He remains active with the Rocklin Kiwanis Club and the Fix-It Crew, a group of volunteers responsible for small repairs and updates needed at the museum and chapel.

While the upkeep on his own home takes up the rest of his time, Johnson looks forward to Sunday breakfasts with friends as well as road trips with his wife of 54 years and their dog, Otto.

“(Gene) absolutely loves Rocklin, its past and future,” adds Gay Morgan, a lifelong resident of Rocklin. “He is funny, kind, generous, a good friend. I wonder if the people of Rocklin know and appreciate what he has done.”

## Rocklin Elementary School photos

Charlene Rhodes



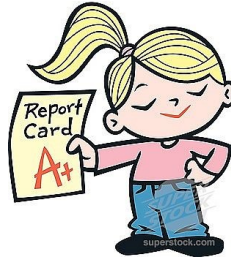
The museum has a large collection of Rocklin Elementary School photos, some from the school on Pacific but most from the Meyers Street location, dating 1940s to 1970s. They are class photos, graduation photos, special events, sports; they have been scanned into our collection and put into binders for easy viewing. Unfortunately, we do not have everyone identified. We are asking for your help. Please stop by the museum, open Wed. Sat. Sun. 1-4 to take a look at the books and help with identification. If you cannot get to the museum during their open hours, contact Charlene at (916) 622-9816 to arrange an alternative time. The sample photo is from 1956-57, Mrs. Harmon’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade class.



## Gay Morgan's Riprap Page

In case you are wondering, rip rap refers to the small pieces of granite left after shaping larger pieces. The railroad used a lot of rip rap for rail roadbeds in construction of the Transcontinental railroad in the 1860s

### A good question and the correct answer



One of our School Tour Docents was hoping to get her kids a little more involved in the tour and asked them what they noticed about the display portraying Women in History. The prompt reply was, "They're all old."

### Bill Woods is 100-years old



Long-time Rocklin Historical Society member "Bill" Woods celebrated a milestone birthday in April. One hundred years and doing well. Laura and Bill now live in Martinez with their eldest son Bruce and his wife Becky.

**Happy Belated-Birthday, Bill!**



On Sunday May 27 we celebrated another tradition, The Rocklin Homecoming Reunion with lunch catered by member Randy Peters. The crowd gets larger every year. If you missed it, we'll do it again next year on the Sunday of Memorial Day

### Rocklin and the Kentucky Derby



Recently a horse named Justify won the Kentucky Derby on the way to racing's Triple Crown. Okay, I know that's old news. But it reminded me of a connection to Rocklin History.

Rocklin had a racetrack long ago and Joel Parker Whitney owner of the fabled 27,000 acre Spring Valley Ranch had a stable of racehorses. Always innovative and ambitious, Whitney decided to try for the big time. He took his best horses to the Kentucky Derby three times, 1917, 1918 and 1919.

The jockey was Johnny Morys, son of Rocklin saloon owner John Morys and his wife Annie. He rode horses named Top 'o the Wave, Lucky B and Frogtown, none were winners. There is a picture of Johnny on a horse named Embroidery.

Johnny never returned to Rocklin. He married a girl from Kentucky. Her name was Callie. Several years later Johnny

died in an automobile accident. He is buried in Kentucky.

## Old Saint Mary's Chapel news

Nancy Lohse  
Old Saint Mary's Chapel Chairperson

Turning 100 is always a big deal. Turning 135 is huge! Old St. Mary's Chapel turns 135 this August and we want you to join us as we celebrate this milestone! We will be having a special event on the patio on August 12th following our speaker's series. Please put this on your calendar and join us at 7:00 at the chapel. Expect ice cream and cake of course!

Old St. Mary's was dedicated August 13, 1883 by Archbishop Joseph Alemany of the San Francisco Archdiocese as St. Mary's of the Assumption Catholic Church. It remained a Catholic Church until 1983 when the expanding congregation moved to Ss Peter and Paul on Granite Drive.



If only this building could talk - the stories it could tell! Nancy and Alek Ustaszewski remember the bees being an issue. With no air conditioning, closing the windows and doors wasn't an option. They also remember standing outside in the rain during Christmas service when the congregation outgrew the building. They all remember the rail going across the front of the sanctuary and the red curtains that hung on each side of the front.

Kathie Nippert remembers the children being called up to the altar to sit when the masses became crowded. Fast forward to 2005 when the chapel was moved and renovations started thanks to many volunteers! The chapel now has heat and air, a great sound system and many more years ahead serving the community as Rocklin's oldest public building. Join us on August 12th at 7:00 PM to celebrate this majestic lady!

If you have any photos or stories of the chapel, please share them! You can email me at: [nlohse@hotmail.com](mailto:nlohse@hotmail.com) or just drop them off at the museum.



Photo: David Baker

Visit us for a chapel tour on Wednesdays from 5 pm until 7 pm  
916-415-1150

[www.OldStMarysChapel.com](http://www.OldStMarysChapel.com)  
email: [oldstmaryschapel@gmail.com](mailto:oldstmaryschapel@gmail.com)

## Rocklin grocery shopping

Gay Morgon



There were quite a few “Mom and Pop” grocery stores in Rocklin when I was growing up. Families had their favorite place to go, somewhere close by because you often had to walk there, and a friendly place where everybody knew your name.

We liked to go to Bottomley’s. It was in an old building near the old railroad round house site. It had once been Trott’s Hotel but in my life, it was a grocery store. It is now a church.

It was already a grocery store when James and Mary Bottomley purchased it from the Berg family. The Bottomley family consisted of James, Mary, their two young daughters, Sally and Marilyn, and Grandma and Grandpa Bottomley. They moved into the living quarters above the store. Later they built a house on the corner of Rocklin Road and Second Street.

Jim and Mary took turns manning the counter and cash register. They always greeted you by name and some

personal comment or question.

I walked over there many times growing up—sometimes to buy several things Mom had forgotten or to buy penny candy or to look at the comic books and magazines.

Shopping there was really an adventure. Of course, they had the usual cans and boxes. There was a big wheel of cheese and you could cut whatever size wedge you wanted. If you wanted lunch meat they would slice it to the thickness you preferred and wrap it in old-fashioned butcher paper.

The big walk-in freezer was fun to go into on hot summer days and during hunting season you might be greeted by a deer carcass or two. They sold Levis and overalls in a store-room off the main store. If you couldn’t find an item they would often order it for you.

The Bottomleys became almost like family. After I grew up and got married I continued to go there and they let me and many others run a charge account. Sometimes I thought I would never pay it all off, but I did.

Mary and Jim were like an extra set of grandparents to my kids. One time my daughter became upset with me and decided to run away. She was three. When I intercepted her loading her little red wagon, I asked, “Where are you going?” She answered, “To Mary and Dims.” That’s not a typo—she had trouble saying j’s.

I miss those days. Maybe they didn’t have the variety of foods our super markets have but they cared about and knew all their customers. They said personal things to everyone, not the fake “Have a nice day.”

Other people must have loved Bottomley’s too. Two different paintings of the store are on display at the Rocklin History Museum.



## Quinn Quarry and the mystery car

Charlene Rhodes

**W**illiam Quinn, a native of Ireland and naturalized citizen, arrived in California around 1871. He squatted on government land in Rocklin and began operating what became known as Quinn Quarry (the quarry is currently part of Quarry Park). By 1874, his quarry was one of Rocklin's leading granite producers.

Mr. Quinn died in 1874, the result of a fall from a malfunctioning hoist pole to the rocks below. He was survived by his wife Mary and five children. Mary, along with help, continued to operate the quarry until 1897. Later it was owned by John Mantyla and later Oskar Anderson. The last major granite contract provided rock for the Monterey breakwater in 1932. Mary Quinn died in 1921. In the late 1930s or early 1940s, a tow truck driver/engineer named Stanley Hakl from Roseville was hired to remove a car from the quarry.

It looks like quite a production. It is possible that the crane used to bring up the car was borrowed from one of the quarries. So how did this happen? There are many stories floating around. Insurance fraud? Joy riding gone wrong? Stolen car? The actual date and circumstances of how or why the car was in the quarry are lost to history.

Most of the town turned out to see the car being removed.

Some locals were told not to swim in this quarry because there may be bodies in it. There is no truth to those rumors.

We would like to know more about this event and if anyone in your family has any information or photos, please call the museum.



Quinn Quarry—an early view

This quarry is on the south border of the Platinum Living Amphitheater in Quarry Park



pulling a car from the Quinn Quarry

*President  
(Continued from page 1)*

cluding organizing and pricing, and then taking another week to tear down and dispose of the excess items was a lot of work for our team. Not to mention the wear and tear on Gene and Marg Johnson and the upheaval on their lives during all of this. In the future, if any yard sales are done, they will be smaller and at a new location.

The \$3500 to \$5000 that we made will be hard to give up but with the new source of income from the BIG DAY OF GIVING the first week of May it should even out. This year we had \$2800 donated to us.

Heritage Trails Days was a great success. Thank you to all who participated and volunteered.

A special thank you to Paul Ruhkala for demonstrating



how to split granite. It was great having Roy Ruhkala

present to supervise.

## dirt work on 5<sup>th</sup> Street:

Gene Johnson

PCWA crews have been at work on 5<sup>th</sup> Street replacing leaking plastic water lines with copper. Sounds like "Back to the Future". The flagman said it takes 13 or more years for the leaks to develop.

## plaque dedicated at Meyer's Quarry site

Nancy Lohse



On May 18, 2018 the Ruhkala family and Rocklin third graders from Ruhkala Elementary dedicated a plaque at the Rocklin Library on Granite Drive. The plaque explains the historic importance of the Meyer's Quarry located in front of the library. It was once quarried by the Ruhkala family.

## Rocklin Historical Society scholarships awarded

Nancy Lohse



Congratulations to our amazing winners for the 2018 scholarship awards. Seniors Ashley Bliss (Whitney), Emma Silva (Rocklin), and Dylan Finley (Rocklin) were each chosen to receive a \$500 scholarship from the historical society.

The society feels honored to help these young people achieve their educational goals.

Pictured is RHS president Hank Lohse with Dylan Finley.

RANDY PETERS  
CATERING & EVENTS  
PLAN. PARTY. REPEAT.



## fun with kids

Gene Johnson

Placer County Heritage Trail day visitors included a large number of children. I spent some time as docent in our Museum's Laundry Shed and what fun it was to see the kids "dry washing" with the old wash tubs, plungers and scrub boards. They fished rags out of the "hot water" with the giant chopsticks



(more properly called the washing stick) and hefted the unbelievably heavy iron that Mrs. Moon used to iron her husband's store clerk uni-

forms. They took turns operating the manual vacuum cleaner and checking out the wringer washer. Later, I was told that an actual hands-on "wet washing" experience at Auburn's Bernhard Museum is very popular.

## no Yard Sale

Gene Johnson



Spread the word. Don't save articles for a RHS yard sale but remember that Rocklin arti-

facts and documents continue to be needed for the RHS collections. The outstanding success of the Old St. Mary's team and the consistent revenue stream have made elimination of the yard sale possible. We can devote that energy to direct support of the chapel, museum and firehouse. Thanks to all who made one of Rocklin's greatest yard sales successful for years.

## more fun with kids

Gene Johnson



On June 22 the City of Rocklin held its GATHER outdoor movie night in Peter Hill Heritage Park. The City asked that we have the Firehouse/City Hall/Marshal's Office building open for visitors. In the hose cart bay, people were particularly curious about the use of the 5 gallon Indian backpack extinguishers that are used to fight grass fires. In the Marshal's office, the wanted poster for stage robber Rattlesnake Dick caught the eye of most. (Dick was from the Rattle-

snake Bar area and had relatives in Rocklin's Clover Valley.) One young girl, nice and precocious, dug through our display files and revealed the 1942 burial records of trapper George Baker who had owned two of our museum artifacts - gold scales and a pocket compass/sundial.

## Help preserve Rocklin's history and support history-related arts projects.



## The Rocklin Heritage Fund at the Placer Community Foundation supports the Rocklin Historical Society

Now it is possible to make tax-deductible gifts and perpetual endowments that will support Rocklin Historical Society programs including both visual and performing arts related to Rocklin's heritage. Please contact Veronica Blake at 530-885-4920 to learn how you can contribute, or go to [www.placercf.org](http://www.placercf.org).



*Local giving. Lasting value.*



## Kiwanis Festival parade

Gene Johnson

The Rocklin Historical Society had a commanding presence in the Kiwanis Festival parade celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the City's incorporation. The Cemetery gang "Voices of the Passed" marched to the beat and the Jubilee Train carried ex-mayors Connie Cullivan, Brett Storey and George Magnuson. With engineer Alec Ustaszewski and firemen Ken Gerard and Don Schuman the Jubilee Train earned First Place in the Motorized Float category. (Portions of the train first appeared 50 years ago in Rocklin's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary parade.) Our planned third entry, a 1947 John Deere Tractor, went bum the night before the parade and was replaced by the Johnson's 1965 El Camino driven alternately by Marg and Gene.

## the Downing carriage step

Gene Johnson

Vintage granite gate posts and a 2 step granite block were located on Mike Goodwin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Street property. The block (or carriage step) helped ladies and gents mount carriages. It is the only known carriage step in Rocklin. Widening of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street resulted in the step being moved to



Mike's back yard where it rested for a few years. This year Mike donated the carriage step to the society for display in Peter Hill Heritage Park. Downing, the name inscribed in the step's granite face, was possibly W. J. Downing, Joel Parker Whitney's office manager and sometimes business partner.

## Osella granite borders

Gene Johnson



Quarryman Victor Wickman's home on High

Street, one block from our museum, was one of the nicest in Rocklin's quarry district. It was a two story home with extensive gardens. Straight and curved custom granite edged the walkways. Time took its toll and the house fell to disrepair but prior to its removal the Osella family donated the bathtub and "Aunt Tillie's" kitchen range to the museum. Now, Victor's grandson, Doug Osella is donating the granite walkway edging to the society - curator David Baker already has ideas for its use - possibly edging a rose garden.

## St. Mary's shutdown

Gene Johnson

The OSM team will soon close the doors of Old St. Mary's for maintenance. Items on the week's agenda include: patio and front step sealing, vestibule floor paint, touchup inside and out, pressure washing of exterior and restrooms, removal of spider webs inside and out, new lights on pergolas, and the list goes on - we will be looking for help.

## Ruhkala tin barn

Gene Johnson



Never resting collections manager David Baker now has his eyes on a small, picturesque tin barn on property to be developed on Ruhkala Road. It seems a likely candidate for display in Quarry Park. Jo Ann Lawson (a Granddaughter of Matt Ruhkala) has gained the current owner's permission to transfer the structure to the society. What next?

## Mark your calendar

### Events Schedule

#### Old St Mary's Chapel Open for Tours

Wednesdays from 5 to 7 p.m.

Come take a look at the perfect location to host your next event!

#### History Walks

Second Saturday of the month

Meet noon at Finn Hall for a 75-minute walk led by Dr. Jim Carlson. The route is on flat surfaces and covers a variety of historic sites. For more information call or text Jim Carlson at 916-624-0682.

#### Rocklin History Museum

Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Docents always needed. For information call Gay Morgan at 624-2355.

#### RHS Board of Directors

Second Monday of month at 6 p.m. at City of Rocklin, Parks and Recreation Building in Springview Park

If you have comments or questions for the board of your historical society, this is your chance.

#### Fixers and Small Repair Crew

Second and fourth Tuesday of month

Meet at Old St. Mary's Chapel at 9:30 a.m.

For more information, call Gene Johnson at 624-2378.

#### RHS Planning Meetings

Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. in the cafeteria at Oracle on Sunset Blvd.

#### Museum Committee

First Monday of month at 10 a.m. at Museum

#### Old St. Mary's Birthday Party

August 12 at 7:00 at the Old Saint Mary's Chapel on Front Street.

#### Springfield History Club

Fourth Monday of month at 1 p.m. in the Whitney Room at the Gables' main clubhouse on Park Avenue. Contact Joyce Marcroft 251-7054.

July 23

Sherry Joyce

Mysteries

August 27

Joyce Marcroft

Alexander & Afganistan

#### "Voices of the Passed"

October 28th

now live on [www.rocklinhistorical.org](http://www.rocklinhistorical.org) for ticket purchase.

For a \$10 donation you can join us for an afternoon of history and entertainment



#### Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors

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**Support the Rocklin Historical Society by becoming a member. Annual dues, \$20 a year, can be mailed to Rocklin Historical Society, P.O. Box 1, Rocklin, CA 95677.**