

President's Message The Summer Season

Well, the Fourth of July is behind us and summer looms ahead. But RHS is as busy as ever.

The Museum has been spruced up with fresh paint on the front porch and the wood portions of the building thanks to Gene Johnson, Shorty, and a number of volunteers. The museum landscaping is in full bloom so the old Fletcher-Moon house now is at the apex of its charm.

The RHS is involved in a new program promoting local history with all the Museums of Placer County. "Heritage Trail Museum Days" is sponsored and coordinated by the Placer County Museums Division. On August 9th and 10th groups such as running and biking clubs, Cub and Boy Scouts and others interested will pay a nominal fee for a guided tour of the Museums of Placer County. Brochures and a road map are provided. Residents of Placer County will have a special opportunity to visit and marvel at our Rocklin History Museum.

If you have driven by St Mary's lately, you will see the Heritage Park public restrooms are under construction on the south side of the building. M.S. Clark Roofing, the roofer for St Mary's will install the restroom roof which will have the same look as St Mary's.

Landscaping by Alex Miller and the "Touch of Grass" company at the front of the chapel is in progress and should lend more "curb appeal" to the building.

The pergolas (arbors) for the Bride's Patio have been designed by Bill Merkel and Associates. Bill is the structural engineer who has worked with RHS during the St Mary's restoration. These pergolas are 10' x 22" in size and will give the Bride's Patio two shaded areas and bring a distinctive appeal to the patio area.

The Children's Fountain has been ordered and will be delivered in September. This fountain recognizes the consistent donations from the Rocklin Elementary third-graders who were the first donors to the restoration effort!

Tall, delicate shutters for St Mary's windows will be installed in July. They will

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The Old Saint Mary's Chapel is ready for your event.

Gary Day

In September 2005 the Rocklin Historical Society's moved the vacated Saint Mary's of the Assumption church building 1000 feet south along Front street to become the centerpiece of Rocklin's new Heritage Park. The Park is an early step by the City of Rocklin and the society to revitalize downtown Rocklin. The Park is at the corner of Front Street and Rocklin Road in Rocklin's Front Street Historic District, near Rocklin's new train station.

After two years of restoration the 125 year old church is now a non-denominational chapel glistening white with a new steeple and bell tower and ready for weddings, memorials and other events. Tour the chapel to see if it will fit plans for your upcoming event.

Go to www.oldstmaryschapel.com or call society President Roger Lokey at 415-1150 for more information.



Ashley Updegraff Chapman and her groom Patrick Chapman pass under an Arch of Swords after Ashley tolled the steeple bell signaling the end of the couple's formal, full-dress military wedding ceremony at Old Saint Mary's Chapel on July 5, 2008.

Photo is courtesy of Ronna Davis

Reminiscences Redux

Gary Day

In 1906 Joel Parker Whitney, called Parker then, chronicled his lifelong hunting and fishing exploits in a 467 page tome which he named "Reminiscences of a Sportsman."

The Museum has an original of this book, but the pages are crumbling with age so it is not available for circulation.

"Reminiscences" is important to Rocklin historians because western Rocklin is astride the southern 12,000 acres of Parker's "Spring Valley Ranch"

and Parker is Rocklin's most noteworthy historical character.

Rocklin Historical Society member Ken Morrow recently developed an interest in Parker's life and accomplishments while writing a short history of Whitney Oaks and nearby neighborhoods for a Whitney Oaks Community Association "Trail Guide".

During his work on the trail guide he created a text searchable version of Reminiscences which he has made available to the society for our research projects and entertainment.

Ken recommends this book because it is more than a book for sportsmen, although it is a lot of that. It

contains a significant recounting of Parkers travels in the western part of the country before the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869.

The following paragraphs from Reminiscences describe the genesis of the Spring Valley Ranch. It is 1852, Parker is 17 years old. He is travelling on foot from Sacramento to find gold in Auburn. And 54 years later he writes this about the part of his journey through the Rocklin area.

The country beyond Sacramento to the

placer mines of Auburn was the most attractive I had ever or have since seen, comprising valleys and moderate hills grown over with groups of live and white oaks, inhabited by quantities of magpies, robins, larks, and other small birds. Beneath the trees were many quails and hares, with antelopes to be seen in the distance.

It was midwinter, yet the weather was bright and warm, and the temperature seldom fell to freezing.

How trivial are the incidents which oftentimes become important in our after lives! The casual observation of a fellow foot-traveler who

walked on with me for a while, that it was an ideal sheep region, gave a color to my thoughts, which half a dozen years afterwards matured in my mind to the commencement of an industry there in which I engaged.

An elder brother had imported from Australia a few hundred high-grade sheep, of which all but one hundred and twenty had died upon the passage to San Francisco, and my brother's death occurring shortly afterwards, I became interested in them, and they were placed on a tract of one hundred and sixty acres midway between Sacramento and Auburn as a desirable locality, and I have carried on the business until the present time in

connection with other interests, and now after nearly half a century the interest has grown to an area of thirty thousand acres with nearly twenty thousand sheep.

Ken's key word-searchable version of Reminiscences is on the web at Rocklinhistory.org under the Written Histories Section.



Joel Parker Whitney with his third child and only daughter Helen Beryl, 15, in 1900. Helen Beryl eloped with Harvard football star Thomas Graydon in 1904 and was the last Whitney to occupy the Oaks mansion where she died in 1935 after her third marriage.

Docents and members: Please attend a Get Up and Go planning meeting on Wednesday July 30 at 1 PM at the Rocklin Museum

Barbara Chapman

As you see by the colored flyer with this newsletter, the weekend event promoting local history of Placer County is scheduled for the 2nd weekend of August. Our museum will be open 10 AM to 4 PM each day on Saturday and Sunday, August 9th and August 10th. We plan to offer water for sale and cookies. We also need you to volunteer your presence at the Museum so we can share our history with families throughout Placer County.

To help promote this event, visitors will be eligible for prizes. Get Up and Go cards will be available at every museum. Travelers on The Heritage Trail must get their card stamped at four different museums in order to participate in the prize drawings. Each museum will have a different stamp. Two to five special prizes will be selected for this drawing depending on what can be collected. Tickets will be sold at each museum. The cost is \$1 each or 6 for \$5. All ticket stubs will be collected at the end of the event and the drawing will be held on August 11th at the Historic Courthouse in Auburn.

We will meet at our museum on Wednesday, July 30th, at 1 PM to go over our plans for that weekend. This meeting should be no longer than an hour. Who will sell tickets? Who will stamp Get Up & Go cards? Who will sell cookies and waters? Ice chests are needed, ice will need to be purchased early that morning so the waters are cold, etc. (this is August remember) so can you help?

If you can help out on either of these two dates, or both, please let me know.... Both men and women, docents or not, we need a presence of Rocklin supporters to share our history with all Placer County visitors this particular weekend. Please support this effort

Bchapman1234@sbcglobal.net

415-0153

**Is there another word
for synonym?**

Rocklin's Ansel Adams photos continue to languish at Crocker

Gary Day

In the late 1950s and early 1960s Sunset International Petroleum Corporation bought up the southern 12,000 acres of Joel Parker Whitney's 22,000 acre Spring Valley Ranch and started to develop a self contained metropolis of 100,000 residents called Sunset City. Sunset abandoned the project in the mid 1960s because of slow real estate sales but during the past 40 years, the property has been the site of Rocklin's expansion to the north and west. Stanford Ranch, Clover Valley, Whitney Oaks, and other neighborhoods north and west of the historic downtown Rocklin are astride Sunset's intended city.

In 1962 Sunset's Assistant Vice President Dale Stringfellow hired world renowned naturalist and photographer Ansel Adams to produce publicity photos of scenic features of the Whitney Ranch. Stringfellow remembers seeing Adams in action. "He thoroughly loved his work," said Stringfellow. "He would pick a scene and then observe it from dawn to dusk, finding the precise sun angle that suited his eye. I had dinner with him twice during his stint here and he was struck by the beauty of the property,"

The photos went on display in several downtown Sacramento businesses to promote home sales. Xeroxed copies of eleven of the photos appear in a Sunset City promotional booklet called Echo in Spring Valley, copies of which are available at the Rocklin History Museum.

In 1965, as Sunset gave up their Sunset City dream and started to reorganize and sell off assets, Stringfellow negotiated a gift of the photos to Sacramento's Crocker Art Museum. According to Stringfellow, the agreement was that Sunset would donate 22 photos to Crocker with the proviso that Crocker would put them on permanent display. Sunset delivered the photos in late 1965 or 1966. Crocker received them and, according to Crocker staff, lost track of them in their storage area until the Rocklin Historical Society inquired about them in 2002, almost 40 years later.

Sunset was downsizing their Rocklin presence at the time of the donation and apparently failed to follow up with Crocker to

ensure that the photos went on display. Also, Rocklin's population then of about 1,600 people was less than 4 percent of today's population and photos of the Spring Valley Ranch on Rocklin's western border but centered 3 miles away and not yet annexed to Rocklin, must have seemed less important to Rocklin residents than they are today..

"There was talk about Adams' work here at the time he was photographing," said Historical Society co-founder and former mayor Roy Ruhkala, "but the significance of the event was lost over the years".

Historical society members started to focus attention on the photos as they completed

tos in the Echoes in Spring Valley booklet showed a rock outcropping in the backyard of his family's home.

Crocker eventually compromised by locating the 22 photos and putting them on display in one of their downtown Sacramento galleries for a few weeks in early 2007. Most of the prints show oaks, rock outcroppings and other natural features of the Spring Valley Ranch countryside. Nine of the photos show man-made features of the ranch, including Whitney's pyramid tomb located near the Whitney Oaks Golf Course, and two of Whitney's granite bridges, one of which is now the centerpiece of Clover Valley Park.

The society noticed that six photos copied for the Echo in Spring Valley booklet were not among the Crocker collection. Possibly there were originally 28 photos and Sunset executives kept six for their private collections. According to a website that markets original Ansel Adams prints these six could be worth as much as \$50,000 each.

The 22 photos are back in Crocker's storage area and staff members there say that there are no plans to put them on display again.

"We would like to see them available for public viewing on an on-going basis and also available for annual viewing in a Rocklin setting as the prints are of Rocklin's Whitney Ranch" said society President Roger Lokey.



Clover Valley Bridge 2005

This 19th century granite bridge in Clover Valley Park is one of 12 bridges that connected Joel Parker Whitney's Oaks mansion with downtown Rocklin, three miles away. The bridge is the subject of one of 22 Ansel Adams prints now in storage at the Crocker Art Museum.

work on the Rocklin History Museum in 2002. Since all of the photos were scenes of today's Rocklin and since they were still, after 40 years, out of sight somewhere in storage at Crocker shouldn't they go on display at the Rocklin museum? Not according to Crocker's Director Lyle Jones who said that Rocklin's museum facilities are insufficient to protect the photos from environmental damage and theft.

Nevertheless the society encouraged its members and Rocklin's grade school children to appeal to Crocker to release the photos for display in Rocklin. One third grader's appeal noted that one of the pho-

"It isn't only a game if you are winning"

George Carlin

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President

help control the afternoon summer sun that now overwhelms the interior of the building.

The Updegraff-Chapman wedding on July 5th was our first formal military wedding at St Mary's. This included the "Arch of Swords" exclusive to military weddings. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first formal military wedding in the 125-year history of St Mary's! Once again RHS not only preserves but makes history! Enjoy a great summer and plan on attending the annual September Barbeque where we will kickoff a New Year of historic activities.

Roger Lokey
President

Please Send Us your Email

Address

Christy Barros
Publicity Chairman

If you have access to Email, please send me an Email message and I will add your Email address to the roster.

Christy Barros
christy@inetinc.net

Are Your Dues Due?

If you received this newsletter in the mail, please look at the address label on the envelop. If the number after your name is not an 8 your dues are due.

Please send your renewal dues to:

Rocklin Historical Society
P. O. box 752
Rocklin California, 95677

To join the Rocklin Historical Society call Gay Morgan at 624-2355



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Newsletter proofreading by **Allan and Marie Stone**

Mark Your Calendar

September 15, 2008

Annual Rocklin Historical Society Picnic
6:30 to 8:00 pm at the pavilion behind the Rocklin Library

October 20, 2008

General Meeting
7:00 pm at the Rocklin Library
Speaker to be announced

Rocklin Historical Society Planning Committee - Meets every Wednesday at 7 am in Oracle's cafeteria

Rocklin History Museum Open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 4

Also, watch for an announcement of a garage sale this fall. Gene Johnson wants to clear antiques and other old stuff from his garage.

Granite was an important part of Rocklin's early history

GaryDay

Downtown Rocklin is astride a 100 square mile belt of high quality and easily accessible granite that extends from Folsom to Lincoln. Assisted by easy access to rail shipping, granite mining and creation of finished granite products formed the backbone of Rocklin's economy from the mid 1860's until the early 1920's. The industry's heyday began during construction of the transcontinental railroad.

The Central Pacific Railroad started laying rails eastward from Sacramento in early 1863. By early 1864 they had crossed the valley floor and were preparing to ascend the western Sierra. On March 21 that year, the Sacramento Union reported that more than half of the members of the State Legislature and many of their friends "traveled by train 22 miles to the new granite quarry at the end of the tracks". They detrained there and children gathered wild flowers while "grave legislators and solid men" gathered at the quarry rim "conversing learnedly and geologically" while "matrons and maidens wandered off among trees and rocky knolls according to their own sweet will".

That account of the legislators' train trip appears to be the earliest documented evidence of Rocklin's granite industry, although old timers in the 1920's talked of quarry activities as early as 1855. Some quarries operated for just a few months, others for several decades. 62 quarry pits were eventually opened and abandoned. One was used as Rocklin's garbage dump for several years and later filled to underpin a new building. At least one lies under the westbound lanes of highway 80. Another is water-filled and beautifies a mobile home park's landscape.

Although one or two quarries continued to ship building stone, monuments and other specialty products until near the end of the last century, the industry had ceased to be important to Rocklin's economy by the early 1920's. The Big Gun Quarry near Pacific Street and Rocklin Road was Rocklin's last active quarry. It produced small amounts of specialty granite products as recently as 2002 but it closed permanently in 2005.