

## President's Message

Hank Lohse



As we close 2020 and stumble into 2021, we reflect on some of the things that happened in 2020. On a sad note we lost one of our past presidents and board members, Skip Gebel. He had been in failing health for several months but still his death was a shock to all of us. He will be missed.

On a brighter note we did add two new board members, Linda Wampler and Charlene Rhodes in March. As it turned out March 9, 2020 was our last regular board meeting. We did have one board meeting on the patio at Old St. Mary's with social distancing and mask on July 29th. Starting in September we went to Zoom meetings online. If you would like to participate in one of our Zoom board meetings, please let me know. Meetings are open to all members.

We also say good bye to Kathie Nipert who has termed out on the Rocklin Historical Society board. Kathie was the go-to person for what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. She held all the offices including secretary, treasurer, vice president and president over her 20 years on the board. She is off to enjoy being a full time grandmother now that she is retired. Kathie, thank you for all you've done for the historical society through the years.

Not only were our board meetings disrupted but we also had to cancel our yearly homecoming reunion dinner in May, our yearly pot luck in September and our Christmas party in December.

Please stay safe so that we can all celebrate together next year!



This hard-working volunteer has done so much for our historical society.  
Read all about him on page 4.

# Quarry Quarterly

Our History Our Heritage Our Community

ROCKLIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

Winter, 2020

## 2020 Ruhkala Award winner—Pioneer Honoree Buck Clark believes kindness goes a long way

By Gloria Beverage

Shortly after settling into her new home in Rocklin, Allegra Hakim answered the doorbell and saw a man standing on her doorstep.

"You need to meet my wife, Dawn," he announced.

"I do? What? Why?" Hakim responded.

Her neighbor simply smiled and insisted, "You need to meet my wife."

He then turned and walked back to his home a few doors away.

"That is classic Michael 'Buck' Clark," Hakim continued, adding the seemingly random offer of friendship meant "we have been friends and found family ever since."

A resident of Rocklin's Historic District since 1989, Buck Clark follows his heart – connecting, empowering and motivating residents to work together to preserve his beloved adopted hometown and lending a helping hand when his neighbors needed one.

"Helping others is second nature to my Dad," said his daughter, Holly Clark. "He has had his share of ups and downs and knows that kindness can go a long way."

That kindness was acknowledged in October by the Rocklin City Council with the presentation of the 2020 Ruhkala Community Service Award, given in recognition of 30 years of dedication to the preservation of Rocklin's history.

They moved from Clearlake, Clark explained, because Dawn wanted to be next to the mountains and lakes. A roofer since he was 14, he opened M.S. Clark Roofing the following year.

"We found a rental house on Second Street that would take a small family with two large dogs, he said. "We were doing roofing, and this seemed like a place that would be good to grow a business and, boy, did we ever!"

In spite of the challenges, owning a small business "is still very rewarding; I have loved working for myself," Clark said. One of the joys is the opportunity to



Photo by Holly Clark

give back to the community.

In fact, Clark was the primary instigator for getting her involved in Rocklin community events, Hakim acknowledged.

"After he saw his first Rocklin Jubilee parade down the street," she said, "he decided M.S. Clark Roofing would have a float every year, which meant Dawn, I and the girls built the float and he drove it. His antics were usually the best part of the parade."

Clark also enthusiastically supported Rocklin's tree lighting ceremonies on Front Street.

"He would spend the mornings with Dawn cutting up countless chicken parts to barbecue to smoky perfection and then he would pass out free chicken to attendees," Hakim said. "He got the lights high on the first tree. He also made sure the neighbors got in on decorating/ lighting our homes, so the horse-drawn carriage riders had something to look at during their tour of Front and Second Streets."

"Community service has always been a focus, whether through supporting local kids' sports teams, helping neighbors, Rocklin Historical Society or Kiwanis,

(See BUCK, pg. 2)

(BUCK, Cont. from page 1)

community service is second nature," Clark said.

His favorite project, by far, has been the restoration of Old St. Mary's Chapel.

"I used to mow (the property) when it was nothing but weeds and blackberry bushes," he said. "I would tell the family, 'if I mow it, they will come.' And look at it today."

Clark's roofs grace the historic chapel, the Rocklin History Museum and the firehouse replica.

Throughout the years he worked tirelessly on restoration projects and helped his neighbors with heavy lifting or roof leaks.

When he wasn't installing a roof or participating in a Home Show, Clark would take barbecued Tri-tip or chicken to the fire and police stations as a thank you for their service, Hakim noted.

"My dad had an uplifting energy people loved being around," Holly Clark said. "You can work hard and still have fun, which usually leads to just being silly."

He attended almost all of Holly and Brandi's soccer games, sometimes a bit too enthusiastically, as the young refs had to contend with his good-natured, but loud calls, Hakim said.

At a school talent show, she continued, a young rock band nervously played their version of a song.

"It was almost painful – until Buck yelled out 'Free Bird' and began waving his lighter," she explained. "You could hear the chuckles and relief wash through the crowd, which helped the kids finish."



Buck gets support from his Covid Bubble:(from left) Holly Clark, Allegra Hakim, (Buck), Dawn Clark, and Grandma Sherry Decoque



Taking a walk one year post stroke



Celebrating this new year 20months post stroke

Even though a stroke in April 2019 left him disabled, Clark hasn't slowed down, continuing to encourage others to get involved.

"Pick a project near and dear to your heart so you are filled with constant inspiration to give back to others," he said. "You get back what you give."

From his vantage point on "Clarks' Corner," five lots on Front/B Streets, Clark has a daily reminder of the energy he poured into preserving Rocklin's history.

"I love looking across the street at Old St. Mary's, love the train and hearing the whistles blow."

## Sounds found around our sleepy town

**Editor's Note:** In the [Summer 2020 issue of the Quarry Quarterly](#) (pg 5), a request was made for anecdotes based on sounds heard in and around Rocklin. We would still like to hear your stories. Contact us at [quarryquarterly@gmail.com](mailto:quarryquarterly@gmail.com).

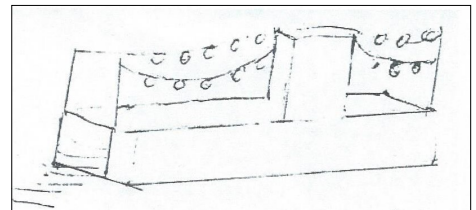
By Doug Osella

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire revived the granite quarries in Rocklin for several years, but history indicates that the town-probably exhausted from fighting too many battles (the emergence of concrete, the removal of the roundhouse to Roseville (1908), the town fires, and the big Quarry Strike of 1915)-began the slow decline into becoming a sleepy little town.

### Dances Inside and Out

During Rocklin's 88th birthday year, Ernie Willard (former police chief, city maintenance man, and head of the volunteer firemen all rolled into one), recalled the early days for an article in the Placer Herald. He remembered the Finnish people as having lots of dances and the Finn Hall being rented out most of the time for many civic events. Rocklin had its own brass band in those days. Ila Wickman Davis (1905-1994) remembered an oft quoted saying around town: "Dance tonight at the Temperance Hall, Ladies free on the hardwood floor." The old saying goes: Where there is music, there can be no harm."

Downtown and by the railroad tracks sat the open-air platform remembered by old-timers. Marie Martilla Ojala drew a diagram of it in a letter written in the 1980s to a friend.



The Rocklin band located itself on the high platform in the middle of the floor. For slickness, bales of hay were pulled over the floor. "Alexander's Rag-

(See SOUNDS), pg. 3)



(SOUNDS, Cont. from page 2)

time Band" was the rage then, Ila Wickman Davis, who grew up in Rocklin, watched Rose Morris and Alfred Willard on the stage dance the rag and the two-step. They say trains passing through town slowed down so that the engineer and fireman could get a good look at the goings-on even though they couldn't hear the lively music.

### Bells, Whistles, and Clangs

According to Ernie Willard, a typical day in Rocklin started at 7:30 A.M. with the blowing of quarry whistles throughout the area calling the quarrymen to work, and they blew again at 4:30 P.M., signaling it was time to go home. He and others remembered the strict 9:00 P.M. city curfew as well. The marshal entered the firehouse each evening and rang the bell nine times. Upon hearing the peals, kids ran home as fast as they could because the marshal rode a big horse around town to enforce the law and carried a big bull whip as well, although

no one actually saw him use it.

The doors to the blacksmith shop were always open for the kids to stop by, watch the Japanese blacksmith at work, and listen to the ringing blows of the iron hammer shaping hot iron into something useful.

### Comforting Train Sounds

My Aunt Ila and friends enjoyed hiking along the railroad tracks to the trestle outside of town where they put their ears down to the rails to listen for possible trains coming before crossing over the trestle.

My mother, Ilona Wickman Osella (1917-2016), reminisced about the clatter of the trains at the depot as being an important part of her town. In her later years, she especially missed the forlorn whistles of the old locomotives in the dead of night as they approached the crossings. She could become sentimental about those sounds. She always added that Rocklin was a quiet town when she was growing up.

### Sputtering, backfiring Model Ts

Ilona said that it was so quiet in her

days that when the Kesti family, who lived by the cemetery, fired up their Model T, the Wickman family all the way over on Granite and High Streets could hear it; and their dog Jake heard it too and would start running up and down the fence line barking because he knew the Kesti's dog liked to ride in the car, and the car with the enemy inside was heading his way.

### "Tally-i-ho!" Hide-and-Seek

The kids in the Wickman neighborhood played a game they called "Tally-i-ho". Two teams formed in front of Moon's store on Granite Street (now Rocklin Road), and the "IT" team ran off somewhere into the outreaches of the town to hide. When hidden, "ITS" called out "TALLY-I HO", and the search began. Because of the quietness of the town-especially at night-the call could be heard far off, even from the other side of the railroad tracks.

Every sound, no matter how small, can tell a story. Does the reader have any Rocklin sound stories to share?

## Centennial Quilt Quiz



"Glimpses of the Past" was created in 1993 by the Pioneer Quilters Guild to commemorate Rocklin's Centennial (1893-1993). The quilt shows Rocklin landmarks as they were in 1993. The borders represent the railroad tracks that bisect the city and the cornerstone blocks entitled "Railroad Crossing" are fashioned in the colors of earth, sky, trees and trains.

Members of the Guild who worked on the quilt were Deb Archer, Linda Dern, Miki McLeod, Enid Parrish, Sue Porter, Jackie Smith, Dottie Trumble, Mardelle Turner, and Marian Lepard, Artist/Coordinator.

How many landmarks can you name? Find the answers on [page 12](#).



# Gary Day loves telling tales, sharing Rocklin's history

By Gloria Beverage

When it comes to experts on Rocklin's history, it is best not to challenge Gary Day.

Or, at least, that is the opinion of Gene Johnson, one of the founders of the Rocklin Historical Society and a well-known expert on local history.

"We took opposite sides regarding the origin of the name Rocklin," Gene explained. "It was a polite fight that lasted for years."

Gary argued the name had Celtic roots, while Gene offered the theory the town was named after a rogue Finn named Rocklin.

"He won when he discovered that another town by the name of Rocklin had roots the same as he had postulated," Gene continued. "Congratulations! Celtic origin won!"

The two men met at a meeting of the Rocklin Historical Society in the 1970s. It wasn't long before Gary and his wife, Jean, found themselves knee deep in renovations transforming the Moon House into a history museum.

"It's hard to say no to Gene," Gary recalled.

The friendship, which has spanned nearly 45 years, took root as the two men focused on refurbishing and furnishing the museum.

"Perhaps, other than the friendship, I appreciate most his intellect and his rigorous attention to detail in whatever he undertook," Gene said.

At the museum, Gary volunteered to recondition a cook stove, even arranging to have the rusty nickel-plated parts replated.

He joined his wife in creating labels for the artifacts on display in the museum. While Jean took on the role of archivist -- scanning photos and documents into the computer and creating binders documenting various topics, Gary dived into researching the city's history and its pioneer families.

The couple then enthusiastically threw themselves into the restoration of Old St. Mary's Chapel.

At one point, Gene recalled, he left Gary in charge of the renovations while he and Marj traveled to Australia to visit her sister.

"Gary did a great job of keeping me informed of progress and problems -- phone call after phone call," Gene re-



Gary and Jean celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in November, 2020.

eye for detail -- producing a series of meticulously documented articles on the history of Rocklin. Many were published in the Placer Herald.

Now in the advanced stages of Parkinson's, Gary's vision of publishing a book -- a combination of the articles and other bits of history he unearthed in the museum's archives -- has been put on hold.

"I have six chapters done with 15 to go," he said.

Cathy Anderson said her dad loved collecting and sharing tall tales about people he observed at Thunder Valley.

He talked about the card player, who placed a live chicken on the table saying it brought him good luck. In another tale, a man dressed in fishing gear dropped several wet \$100 bills on the gambling table. When asked how they got wet, the man's wife blurted out that he had dropped them in the toilet.

"Just like the telephone game, the stories would take on a life of their own," she noted.

Born and raised in Michigan, Gary was stationed at Travis during his years of



Gary attempts to show the rest of the crew, (L to R) Dr. Jim Carlson, Leon "Shorty" Vicencio, Gene Johnson, and Kathie Nippert, that the sign is not quite level.

called. "And, with each call he reminded me of how hot and uncomfortable the work was in Rocklin while I was relaxing and cooling off in the mild Australian winter."

As editor of the Quarry Quarterly for more than 10 years, Gary demonstrated his

service with the U.S. Air Force. Years later, when he became tired of the harsh Michigan winters, Gary answered the call of California's warmer temperatures.

"My dad left my mom in Michigan with three kids and drove to California in

(DAY, *con't from pg.4*)

1968," Cathy said.

He went to the Denny's at I-80 and Madison, opened up the newspaper and applied for a job with the state.

Gary landed the job as a computer programmer, a position he held for 38 years, and sent for his family.

As the story goes, her father also asked an employee at Denny's for suggestions on the best place to live. Based on the recommendation, Gary purchased a house in Carmichael and went to Breuner's to purchase enough furniture to fill the house, Anderson said.

An avid golfer, Gary said he opted to move the family to Rocklin in 1973 because he wanted to be close to the golf course.

At that time, Sunset Whitney Golf Course was one of the best (and most affordable) courses in the area, Gary said, adding "It was \$35 to join and \$45 to play the course."

While her parents loved the sport, Gary played an exceptional game. "I think he had a 3 handicap," Cathy said.

His favorite story, she continued, involved their neighbor Bob Coker, who was showing off a new set of golf clubs. Gary bet him that he could win a round of golf playing with just his putters.

"Well, Dad did the entire 18 holes with just a putter and, yes, he won," she said.

When it came to history, however, Gary does not stretch the truth. He meticulously researches it until he is convinced that he had the true tale – going the extra mile to ensure his information is accurate.



Jean and Gary at the 2016 Christmas party. Photo by Ronna Davis

A thoughtful, generous family man, Gary's best piece of advice was given to a grandson, Cathy said. "The person you marry will be the most important decision you ever make in your life," Gary told him. "Unfortunately, you will not have the skills to make a good decision. It is all luck."

Is this sound, researched advice or another tall tale? Who knows? The fact remains that Gary and Jean marked their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in November.

As far as Gary is concerned, it's all in the details.

## The sun sets on 2020 at Old St. Mary's

By Nancy Lohse

It's been an interesting year at Old St. Mary's. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, we managed to have 33 weddings in 2020 with the majority being before the mandates begin. The rest were greatly downsized or held on the patio. Two were simple elopements held on the chapel steps. Through much creativity and adaptation, love continues to win at the chapel even during these crazy times!



The chapel was also the setting for 13 memorials. Some were held on the patio. As always, a beautiful place to say good-bye to loved ones. A memorial service for Skip Gebel brought the community together to honor one of Rocklin Historical Society's past presidents. He dedicated many hours to serving Old St. Mary's Chapel and the couples that he worked with. He is missed.

With all that is going on, our priority is to keep our clients and church ladies safe and healthy. Please stay safe, social distance and wear that mask! When this is all passed, the chapel will be opening her doors for a celebration and we want you all there!

## Fixit Team Nuts and Bolts

By Jim Hammes

So ... time still finds us observing and adhering to the Stay Safe and Home orders to comply with the current state mandates.

We continue to not gather in a group or as a Team to carry out what would be our usual schedule of activities and tasks.

It appears that we will remain in the same status until there is a clear indication that the overall Health Advisories provide us the opportunity to move back to what will be a "New Normal" in the New Year.

We certainly miss the

Friendship and Teamwork we enjoyed in past times.

Until then ... it is Imperative and Important that we ALL do our part to Protect ourselves and Community by being an example in the image and Best Practices of the Historical Society.

Let the optimism and positive hopes lead us to a Better and Safer New Year.

**"Every day we are apart ... brings us ALL a day closer to being together ... once again"**



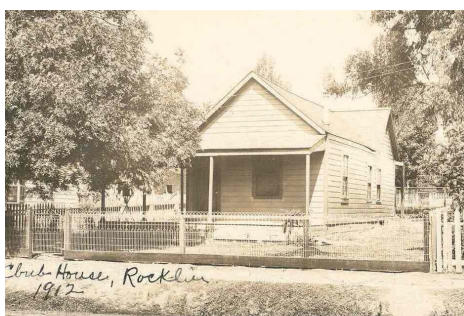
The RHS board of directors has voted unanimously to continue funding three \$500 scholarships for area seniors at Rocklin High School, Whitney High School, and Western Sierra Collegiate Academy.

Scholarships are awarded to students attending any college with an emphasis on history. Students must have maintained a 3.0 GPA, be recommended by two teachers, at least one who teaches history, and submit an essay explaining why they have chosen to study history, and what they plan to do with their degree.



## rip rap by gay morgan

While preparing to write an article about the history of the Rocklin library using newspaper articles, city records, legal documents, and resident recollection, two documents showed up that seem to indicate the possibility of a much earlier library than we knew. Both were legal documents for the incorporation of two groups; the Rocklin Driving Park Association and the Rocklin Hall and Free Library Association. Both groups intended to have a meeting hall and or "reading rooms" or libraries. These two organizations were part of the Racetrack which was active in the 1890's. However, we found no record of a library in the early days of Rocklin.



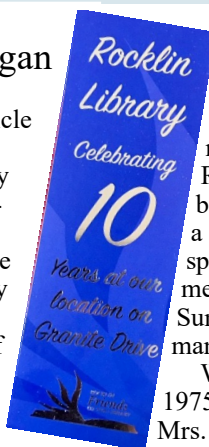
WOMEN'S IMPROVEMENT CLUB HOUSE 1912

In the late 1930's, The Women's Improvement Club established a small library in a corner of their Club House on Second Street. I remember going there as a child but there were very few children's books. The house is still there but it has been extensively remodeled.

In 1943 The Placer County Library opened a branch on the lower floor of Rocklin City Hall. (The granite building across Rocklin Road from the museum.) Mrs. Jennie Minkkenen was the librarian. The hours were limited to Monday evening 6:30 to 9 and Friday afternoon from 2 to 5. This continued for 22 years. I personally loved having so many books available. (Sometimes my Mom would substitute for



The library moved here in 1965



Jennie and I would go along and stamp the due date very officiously.)

In 1965 The library moved across Rocklin Road to a small white building that had once been a church. The City needed space for the Police Department. (I remember holding Summer Story Hours there many years later.)

When Jennie retired in 1975, after 30 years of service, Mrs. Mary Emily Smith accepted the librarian position.

She was a gracious southern lady with a charming accent, always cheerful and willing to help.



The library moved into this building in 1985

After some serious fund raising by Friends of the Library, the staff moved down Rocklin Road across the railroad tracks to 5400 Fifth St. into a brand new 5,264 square ft. building which was dedicated in April 1985. The town was growing and so were the circulation numbers and the service hours. Thanks again to the industrious Friends of the Library the building was enlarged to approximately 7,000 square ft.

1994—The library became automated! This was due to a State Library Grant. The community now had access to computers.

In 2010, a commercial building on the corner of Granite Drive and Rocklin Road became available and through the combined efforts of the Placer County Library, the City of Rocklin, the Friends of the Library and many individuals and organizations, the staff moved another time into a modern two-story building. It is light and



The library is now housed in this roomy building.

airy with lots of windows, cozy reading nooks and even an elevator.

In front is a large pond that was once a quarry much to the delight of the geese who live across Rocklin Road at Sierra Lakes Mobile Home Park which also has a pond that was once a quarry. When the birds need a change of scenery they fly to the opposite pond. Sometimes for an unknown reason they decide to walk across the road and the fast-moving traffic stops for them (that's the Rocklin I love).

Sadly, the Library closed at the beginning of the pandemic but is now operating on a limited basis hoping to return to full operation soon. This year they are celebrating their tenth anniversary in the current location.

Reprinted from *The Pacific Bee*, April 26, 1884

LEAP YEAR BALL AT ROCKLIN.

Notwithstanding the rain the leap year ball given by the ladies of Rocklin last Friday night was a grand success. Burchard's Hall, which had been tastefully decorated for the occasion by a professional from Sacramento, was comfortably filled, and had the weather been fine there would undoubtedly have been a crush. The music, four pieces, under the direction of Fisch and Watson, was excellent, and the programme of dances well selected. Tea, coffee, and a tempting supper were provided at Grant's Hall. Representatives from Sacramento, Auburn, Newcastle and other places spoke highly of the good management and kindly efforts to please on the part of the floor managers and members of the various committees. The \$118 which was cleared goes to the Rocklin Free Library Fund, and it is to be hoped we shall soon have a comfortable reading-room with a good library. A public reading-room has long been felt a necessity of this place, where so many men have no home other than the hotel or lodging-house, and where there is absolutely no place of entertainment or amusement.





## Rocklin Elementary School Band

**Editors Note:** John Kimbrough lived in Rocklin from age three until he completed his degree in mechanical engineering in 1967. He went to work for DuPont in Antioch, CA, and now resides with his wife Mimi in Vancouver, WA. John's father, Lou, was fire chief from 1962 to 1964. He is pictured with Roger Barkhurst and other firefighters on [pg. 9](#).

By John Kimbrough



The 1952 Rocklin Elementary School Band led by director Mrs. Norma Moody. Author John Kimbrough is standing behind his bass drum.



John Kimbrough's New Band Uniform  
1957

One of the funnest parts of going to Rocklin Elementary School back in the 50's was playing in the school band. I think one had to be in 4th or 5th grade to join, and I did as soon as I was eligible. Drums, I wanted to play drums, particularly the big bass drum – and I did. Mrs. Norma Moody was our band teacher and she was really exceptional, at least to an 11 year old. She knew how to play many musical instruments and whipped us children into shape for school assembly concerts and the ultimate marching band.

In 1957 we even got brand new band uniforms. They really looked neat, but were made of very heavy wool which was itchy to start with, but in 100 degree plus heat, they were almost unbearable.

Our marching band participated in a number of events, but one I remember most was the Lions Club Parade. It was during the heat of the summer and we assembled at the Rocklin Skating Rink parking lot, lining up with vintage cars, fire trucks, various floats, horseback riders, and other performing groups.

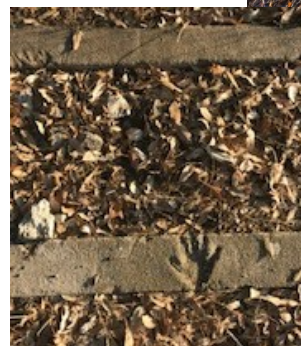
Leading off the parade was the Lions Club's vintage gold Cadillac, and usually the fire department with its red "firebug" (an airplane wing tank with a head and legs) on display admonishing us

to be careful with fire (click to see photo on [page 9](#)).

The rest of the parade followed them down old Highway 40 (Meyers Street), past the old elementary school building (then an Army surplus store), all the way to Rocklin Road where I believe the parade ended. We were sweaty messes by then. After turning in our instruments and changing out of our uniforms, some of us sneaked off for the Quinn-Anderson (fenced-in) Quarry behind the City Hall for a refreshing swim.

The last year I was at the Rocklin Elementary School, Mrs. Moody acquired a couple of mis-matched old tympani. Were they ever cool. Since I was the bass drummer, I got to play them during our Christmas concert, featuring "The Little Drummer Boy" with tympani going full blast!

**Ed. Note:** As the reader can see, being part of a school's extracurricular and community activities results in meaningful life-long memories.



Where is our mystery place this time? And whose handprint is embedded here? The answer will be found in the next issue of the Quarry Quarterly.

If you have an interesting historical mystery location you would like to share, let us know at [quarryquarterly@gmail.com](mailto:quarryquarterly@gmail.com)

From  
the desk  
of

Gene Johnson

Ref: Gloria Beverage's article in the Quarry Quarterly (....) was thought provoking.

Congratulations to Mr. Leibman on his thoughtful proposal to recognize all groups that have contributed to the Rocklin community. It seems that naming classrooms could be an excellent way to stimulate curiosity and promote awareness of our community's heritage.

As Mr. Leibman points out, the Chinese should be recognized as contributing greatly to Rocklin's early development in the building and operation of the transcontinental railroad - and as members of the community. It is also important to remember that, in 1877, they were subject of the shameful expulsion of the entire Rocklin Chinese population in a paranoid response to a single isolated incident. The town's actions were triggered by the gruesome murder of 3 per-

sons. Based on a reference to author Jean Pfaelzer's book, Diego states the murderers were unknown, with the implication that persons of Chinese descent may have been falsely accused - this would not be correct. In the interest of correctness but not justification for the town's actions I offer the following: One of the victims lived long enough to identify the murderers as persons known to him including Ah Sam who fled the area and was the subject of an extended manhunt that ended with his death by suicide. An account of the case can be found at: <https://dreamingcasualtypoetry.blogspot.com/2020/04/brutal-rocklin-murders-of-1877.html>

Also of concern is Mr. Leibman's linking of Rocklin's most important historical figure, Joel Parker Whitney, to the darker side of Rocklin's past by stating that he exploited Chinese workers. I choose to believe Whitney provided welcome voluntary employment for the unemployed. Exploitation of disenfranchised peoples is simply not consistent with Whitney's overall character. For example, on his ranch, Whitney treated

Native Americans as friends and he proactively addressed government on behalf of Native American welfare. The proposal statement that Parker Whitney Elementary School was named for Whitney's drunken son Parker Whitney is disturbing. I believe, and hopefully records can show, that the school name was intended to honor the father, Joel Parker Whitney with an explanation of why the first name, Joel, was not included.

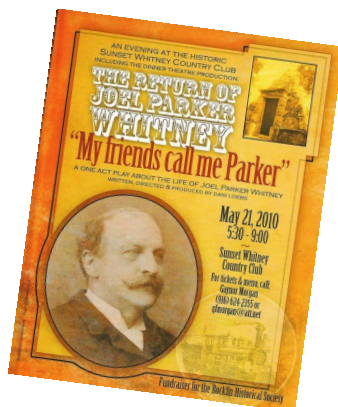
Diego Leibman proposes that classroom names recognize a person important in the overall struggle for Chinese equality in California. If local persons were recognized, the Ah Moon could be considered as one of the few persons of Chinese descent to return to Rocklin. Mr. Moon was a successful and respected businessman that operated a Rocklin grocery and dry goods store in the early 1900's. His son, Pete Moon, was a decorated veteran that served in Alamo Scout intelligence operations during WWII. Ref: *Silent Warriors of World War II: The Alamo Scouts Behind the Japanese Lines*, by Lance Q. Zedric.

## The "Egyptian Pyramid" of J Parker Whitney

Spring View Dairy was on 5th Street, the West edge of Rocklin. On the East side of 5th Street was the city, population 750; on our side of 5th Street, our farmland extended across Antelope Creek to the Whitney Ranch and the "Whitney Hill". It was good sport to roll rocks down the hill to see who rock would reach the fence, it took a good round rock 10 inches or more in diameter.

Far beyond that hill was the mansion built by Joel Parker Whitney in the 1880's. We made the hike to the area, but we dared not approach the mansion as it was occupied, and we were trespassing. But not far from the mansion within an area surrounded by a short rock wall was a curious stone structure having the shape of an Egyptian pyramid. There was a lattice style door made of bronze. The door was hanging open. Curious, we entered to see what was inside. The interior was of white marble with closed compartments. We realized this was a burial tomb and we had a very spooky feeling, we made a quick decision to leave and head for home. There was no apparent vandalism other than the door having been violated - however this was to change.

After the mansion was deserted and demolished in the 1950's vandalism became a problem. To discourage vandals the bronze door was augmented with a solid steel door. However, vandals returned, broke into the tomb and



burial vaults, and spread human remains about the site. The door was replaced again but, this time, a solid granite slab with a secret method of locking was installed by Ruhkala Monument Company. Vandalism thwarted!

The bronze door was donated to the Rocklin Historical Society and received a brief new life when it was used in a full-scale replica of the tomb constructed for the historical play society play "The Return of Joel Parker Whitney." The play was presented in the Whitney room of the Sunset Whitney Clubhouse. Dani Loeb produced the play; Professor Dan Defoe played the part of Joel Parker Whitney who returned from the grave to tell his life story. Other credits: Set construction of cardboard and sticks - Don Schuman and Gene Johnson; set decoration - the Loeb Family.

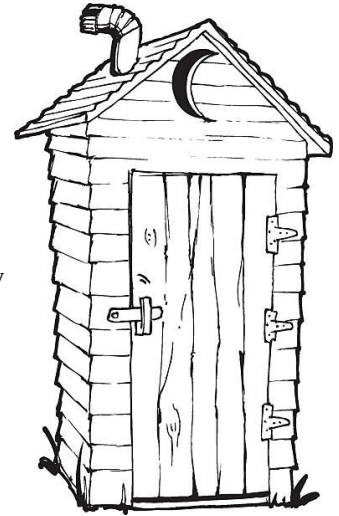


# More...

## From Gene Johnson

### Around Town...

In town I loved to visit the Brashear family on 2nd Street. In the Spring, Brothers Bucky and Jerry dug passages in the soft dirt behind their home. The passages were covered with boards and tin and with dirt on to create a network of tunnels. One time, we were extending a tunnel and encountered very soft dirt – and then, liquid. We had dug into the side of the outhouse pit. The realization resulted in much excitement – the most in Rocklin for some time. Also, it was always nice to visit the Brashears in mid-summer as they had a swamp cooler and cool air.



### Crosstown...

There was a crosstown baseball competition. In the early 1900's Rocklin had great ball teams and some of the boys of my time descended from those players. Our team included Renny Palo, Danny Tyler and Jerry Keenan (whose father had played minor league baseball). We challenged the East side team and met in Danny Shelley's field next to the cemetery. The game was going well; we had two outs on them; they had a man on second base – I was our third-base man. There was a hit, the runner ran toward third base, the ball was thrown toward me as the runner approached. Runner and ball arrived simultaneously; to boys on our team, it appeared that the runner was out. I can imagine 8 little boys jumping up and down and shouting, "he's out". But I had missed the tag and may have been the only person to know he was not out - unfortunately I said so. There may have been more games after that, but I was not invited.



The Rocklin Owls team was organized in 1927. Players were: Front row L to R: Stanley Cain, ?, Bob Palo, Arvo Minkkinen, Sulo Hebuck, Larry Hendrickson, Alex Haggman, Emil Suhonen. Back Row L to R: Wayne Minkkinen, Dave Roderick, Alex Alexson, Steve Sulo, ?, Uno Hebuck and Toivo Niskala

### Homemade fun...

Jet Propelled Cars: After WWII there was a surplus of those small metal compressed CO2 cartridges (about the size of an AA battery) that were used to inflate navy life jackets. A piece of balsa wood with a cavity to accommodate the CO2 cartridge, four wheels, and two eye-screws is all it took to have a car that would race lickety split along a string stretched from end to end of the elementary school corridor.







Photo by Ronna Davis

### Alan and Susan Brooking, with Angie Goebel

If you have ever attended a Rocklin Historical Society Christmas party or buffet, you likely would have met Alan Brooking. He may not have been quite as involved with the society as his wife, Susan, unless, as she said, "there was a party involved!"

Alan passed away peacefully on December 1, 2020. In 1999, after a successful career as a business owner in Silicon Valley, Alan and Susan moved to Rocklin in 1999. As Susan became involved with the historical society, Alan continued his interests ranging from art to cars to collecting. He was an avid antique fountain pen collector and International Pen Shows throughout the U.S. were a great excuse to travel.

Retirement also offered Alan the opportunity to pursue his interest in history, genealogy, golf and travel. He was an active member of Sons of the American Revolution and served as President of his local chapter.

Hopefully you were lucky enough to attend one of RHS's parties and meet Alan. As Susan says, "He truly enjoyed the potluck and the Christmas parties, both helping and greeting everyone."

Gay Morgan remembers him fondly: "Alan was a soft spoken quiet gentleman with a wonderful sense of humor. I and many others will miss him."

## Roger Marvin Barkhurst 1930-2020

By Gay Morgan

Roger died quietly in his sleep on Nov. 15, 2020 at the age of 90. He lived in Rocklin for 88 of those years, watching the once tiny town grow. He enjoyed sharing those memories with newcomers. There were many other stories too. He delighted in telling people he was born in San Quentin. (His father was a guard and the family lived on prison grounds.)

The family moved to Rocklin when Roger was two years old. They lived in "old" Rocklin near the corner of Rocklin Road and Front Street.

For the next 12 years he did what most Rocklin kids did; swim in quarries and creeks, build "forts," ride bikes, go to school, etc.

World War II had taken most of Rocklin's young able-bodied men. Rocklin had only a Volunteer Fire Department. Although he was just 14, Roger began to volunteer. He became an official member at 18.

In 1950 during the Korean War, he was drafted into the Navy. When he returned, he re-joined the Fire Department and eventually became Chief in 1957. He continued to serve until 1968.

In the same year he was elected to the City Council. He went on to serve as Vice-Mayor and

Mayor and continued until 1982.

Roger was a born storyteller with a great sense of humor. He loved Rocklin and enjoyed telling stories about it and the changes as it grew.

He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, The American Legion and the Rocklin Historical Society. He was not just a member, but a very active member. He is missed and appreciated by many.

Roger designed Rocklin's first departmental patch



Roger and his mother, 1959, with the "Firebug" float, as part of a fire prevention

[Return to page 7](#)



### Rocklin's Fire Department, Roger Barkhurst, Chief

Left to right: Roger Barkhurst, Larry Sanchez, Guy Ditmars, Ern Willard, Ken Bayer, Carl Engval, Merv Fisher, Arvo Minkinen, Frank DeFuentes, Chuck Lucas, Pavo Leed, Lou Kimbrough



# The Rocklin Granite Quarries – A Child’s Perspective

By John Kimbrough

Much has already been written by others about the development, history and ultimate demise of the Rocklin Granite Quarries. What has not been written is how the quarries affected us children as we grew up in Rocklin. The quarries, which surrounded us, were the source of many different emotions – awe, dread, fear, joy, anxiety. They were also the source of entertainment, heat-relief, adventure, competition, danger, and sometimes pain. They were an irresistible and (seemingly) everlasting force in our childhood.

My family moved to Rocklin in 1948 when I was just 3 years old, and my parents bought the Granite Park Trailer Court bordered by Pacific and North Grove Streets. Trash and garbage removal was always an issue at the trailer court, so we often went to the Rocklin City Dump, which was actually an old, disused granite quarry situated off (now named) Rocklin Road, just across from where Granite Boulevard joins it.

At that time, one could drive completely around the “dump” quarry, but usually there was a sign pointing to the area where the dump keeper wanted people to pile their refuse so he could go through it and pick out any items he thought he could use or sell to boost his income before he pushed it down into the quarry with the other trash.

Actually there was always a lot of refuse piled high (so it seemed to small me) all along the rim of the quarry and if one could stand the perpetual flies, bees and stink, it was always such fun to look for discarded toys or other curious stuff to pull out and beg our parents to cart home, although it was strictly against the dump rules.

One day when I was about 5 years old, my father and I went to the dump with a load of trash, as usual. However, this day, my father decided that he wanted to also get some discarded pipe that we could drive into the ground around the trailer court trash cans to keep dogs from tipping the cans over. He looked all over the trash, piled up on the rim of the quarry and found some pieces, but he also saw some further out in the trash pile where it had been shoved further back.

He started out to retrieve the pipe when he suddenly found himself sinking into the trash and garbage. What he did not know, was that the refuse was just floating on top of a quarry filled with

water, and he was up to his neck in it. The trash was so thick that he could not tread water in it, and he feared he would drown.

Luckily he was able to get hold of the branch of a small bush or tree that was growing there, and carefully pulled himself onto the floating garbage and to safety.

Of course, I was too young to understand that he was in mortal danger, but what I do remember is the ride home with him in our truck and the unbearable, unimaginable stink of his dump-water soaked clothes. Anyway, the result was that Mom told me how dangerous quarries were and that I was never to go near, much less in one, ever, a point she made repeatedly as I was growing up.

Of course, over time her admonitions just made me more obsessed with the quarries. While attending the Rocklin Grammar School, the quarries took on an even more sinister role. It was thought

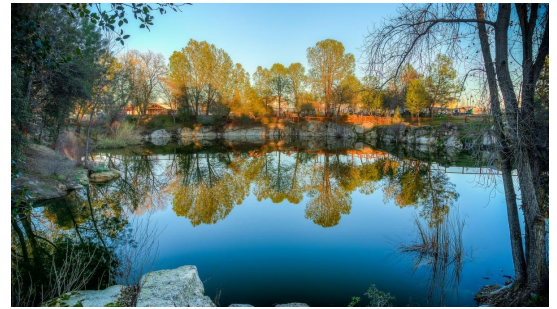


**Copp’s Quarry—source of polio outbreak?**

that the water in the quarries, especially “Copp’s” quarry was the root cause of the local polio outbreak – it certainly was the cause of the scare. Other quarries were likewise suspect, so swimming in the quarries was essentially out of the question for a while for most Rocklin youth.

As a result of the polio scare, all of us children had to eat sugar cubes with the Salk polio vaccine on them. As time wore on and the Rocklin youth resumed swimming in the quarries, I was probably the rare exception, both because of my mother’s admonitions and because, quite simply, I did not know how to swim yet.

Still, as I was 9, 10, 11 years old, the lure of the quarries was very strong. I remember that one weekend a schoolmate (and best friend), Charlie Carr and I decided to hike down into the main granite quarry behind the Union Granite Company buildings on Pacific Street. Of course we were not supposed to be there so we



**Not used as the city dump, Quinn Quarry instead was a popular swimming hole during 100<sup>0</sup> summers**

had to sneak in from behind the old stone library building on Rocklin Road.

We worked our way down to the bottom of the quarry, searching for anything interesting and spied a metal box sitting on top of a granite boulder 4 feet high or so. We were on edge to begin with, having trespassed into the quarry, and when we saw that the metal box was a timer with wires running through it, we lost all sense of reason and stumbled all over each other trying to get out of that quarry before the blast.....which never came. However, it was an adventure that made life in Rocklin worthwhile. The Roseville kids never had such opportunities – they were too busy working custom hot rods and such with their dads...

By age 12 or so, I had honed my swimming skills at the Aitken “mansion” swimming pool (Jack Aitken was a friend of mine) and at Johnson’s Hole, the local swimming hole on Johnson’s Creek, just down the dirt road from the Johnson residence on 5th Street.

One hot summer day, I literally “took the plunge” at the most popular swimming quarry, the Quinn-Anderson Quarry, because I found out that my buddies had been swimming there without me and I couldn’t bear that any longer.

The feeling was exhilarating, furtive and scary all at the same time. Over the next few months and years, I swam in the quarries many times and for many hours, but I never lied to my mother about it – she assumed I would not swim in them because she told me not to, but never asked again, until much later, at which time I confessed. But that is another story.

I have to admit that I have awakened at night with nightmares of what could have happened to us at the swimming quarry on Winding Lane. And because of some of the things we did, I deserved the nightmares. At first, we just amused ourselves by diving or jumping off vari-





You may recognize our last mystery item as a telegraph key. But do you know the story behind it?

This key belonged to Mrs. Helena Allen, a neighbor of the Johnson's. She met her husband George Allen at the 1915 Pan American Exposition in San Francisco. They both knew Morse code, and met via the telegraph!

Gene Johnson says, "Mrs. Helena Allen attended a SF Art school. The couple lived in the Palo Alto area where Mr. George Allen was groundskeeper at Stanford U. They retired to 5th St. in Rocklin where Mrs. Allen enjoyed her hobby of art in a studio Mr. Allen built for her. She also taught piano lessons. Sadly we mutually agreed piano was not for me.

Mr. Allen kept a beautiful yard. On his passing Mrs. Allen sold the home and built a new, smaller, home on property next to our house on a lot that she purchased from my parents. Over the years I ended up with, first, her Model A and then her 1941 Packard - the latter sits aging in our garage. She was a very nice lady, diminutive in stature. Incidentally, her sister-in-law was the wife of Angelo Rossi, mayor of SF."

(QUARRY, Cont. from page 11)

ous ledges on the sides of the quarry into the water. The water level was 40 feet or so below the quarry rim, so we worked our way up on the ledges, jumping and diving from increasingly higher levels, and were soon jumping and diving from the greatest height.

But that was clearly not enough. There was, and still is, a pine tree growing on the rim of the quarry, with its branches reaching way out away from the

quarry wall, and we used to climb that tree and jump from its branches into the water below. It was a little tricky because when we jumped the branches would give way some and cause us to land crookedly in the water, which hurt like the devil sometimes from that height.

That pine tree also had a thick, knotted rope strung from one of the branches that grew far out over the quarry, so we spent hours swinging out on that rope and falling into the water.



Here is our next mystery item. Do you know what it is? Find out in the next issue of the Quarry Quarterly

## Centennial Quilt Answers

(from page 3)

- 1 Finnish Temperance Hall
- 2 Old City Hall
- 3 Sheep Ranch
- 4 Capitol (Big Gun) Quarry
- 5 Old St. Mary's Chapel
- 6 Trott's Hotel (Front St. and Rocklin Rd)
- 7 Fletcher/Moon house
- 8 Moore house (Rocklin Rd and 5th St.)
- 9 Barudoni Building (Front St.)
- 10 Masonic Lodge, Levison's

Store, Store fronts, Railroad Ave.

11 Fire on Front Street

12 Roundhouse

13 Rocklin train station

14 Governor Stanford engine, Central Pacific RR

15 "The Oaks" estate of J. Parker Whitney

16 Old Rocklin School

17 Victorian cottage (Rocklin Road near Fifth St)

18 Oaks and granite outcroppings, Indian bedrock mortars

19 Old Library (Rocklin Rd)

20 Rocklin Centennial

[Return to Pg 3](#)



### Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors

Henry Lohse, President  
 Jim Hammes, Vice President  
 Allegra Hakim, Secretary  
 Russ McNeill, Treasurer  
 Ronna Davis, Board member  
 Sally Huseby, Board member  
 Nancy Lohse, Board member  
 David Baker, Board member  
 Patsy Pattison, Board member  
 George Salgado, Board member  
 Charlene Rhodes, Board member  
 Linda Wampler, Board member

Quarry Quarterly contact:  
[quarryquarterly@gmail.com](mailto:quarryquarterly@gmail.com)  
 Editor: Linda Wampler

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).

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

Placer  
 Community  
 FOUNDATION

*Local giving. Lasting value.*

