

President's Message



Gloria Beverage

Here's a nugget of a story that connects Rocklin with the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill.

The "Wimmer nugget," believed to be the piece of gold that started the California Gold Rush was found by James Marshall, superintendent in charge of a sawmill project on the South Fork of the American River in January 1848.

Peter Wimmer, head of the construction crew building the sawmill and his 6-year-old-stepson, Martin Dickinson Bayes (also spelled Bays and Baiz) were alongside Marshall when he plucked the pea-sized nugget out of the riverbed.

Initially, the residents of the camp scoffed at Marshall's "discovery," arguing it was fool's gold (iron pyrite).

Wimmer didn't agree and he knew how to prove them wrong.

He asked his stepson to deliver the nugget to his wife, Jennie, knowing she was the only person in camp (indeed, the only woman) who had ever seen a nugget of placer gold. She had grown up panning for gold alongside her father in Georgia.

Jennie had just finished making liquid lye soap, a task that involved leaching creek water through wood ashes and adding it to a pot of leftover cooking grease when Martin presented the nugget to her.

After submerging the nugget overnight in the vat of caustic potassium carbonate, Jennie showed Marshall and the other camp residents that, indeed,



Jennie Baiz Wimmer

Quarry Quarterly

Our History Our Heritage Our Community

ROCKLIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Spring, 2024

Society member honored with Pioneer Award

By Gloria Beverage

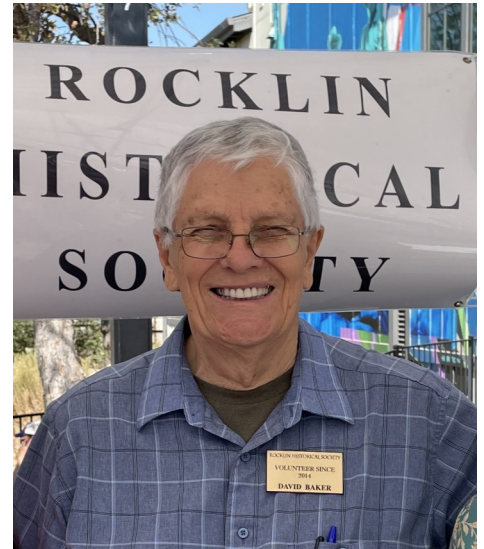
David Baker's passion for preserving the history of Rocklin is incomparable, particularly for someone who did not grow up in the area. Active with the Rocklin Historical Society since the creation of the Rocklin History Museum, David is the driving force behind the preservation of historic artifacts and buildings for display at the Museum, Quarry Adventure Park and other sites throughout the city.

In recognition of his commitment to preserving Rocklin's history, David will be presented with the Ruhkala's Pioneer Award during Rocklin City Council meeting on April 23. The annual award recognizes exemplary community service efforts in the city. The award was created to honor Roy and Peggy Ruhkala, longtime residents who worked for improvements in Rocklin for more than 40 years.

Gene Johnson first enlisted David to help with work on Rocklin's History Museum at the corner of San Francisco and Rocklin Road. After that, he became a docent, joined the board of directors and has served as the museum's team leader for several years. In 2010, David took on the massive task of updating the society's processes for collecting, cataloging and preserving our historical objects.

As the primary liaison with the city, David has been instrumental in preserving quarry artifacts, placing historic plaques and protecting the natural habitat throughout the city. His current mission is to find a permanent home for the historic Quarry Mining office. David has researched, written the text and designed nearly all of the historical plaques placed throughout the city. Thanks to his efforts, students participating in our third-grade field trips as well as residents and visitors can learn about our city's history from the monuments placed throughout the city.

And, as a member of the Dry Creek

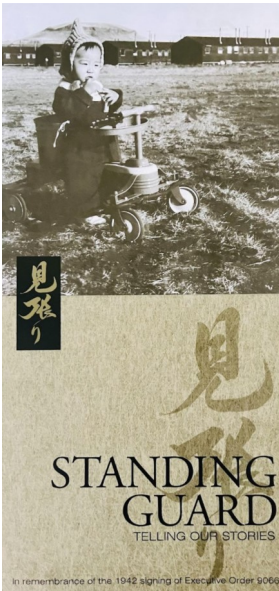


David Baker, recipient of the Pioneer Ruhkala Award

Conservancy, David participates in projects that protect and restore the nature areas surrounding Antelope Creek, Miners Ravine and Clover Valley.

As the museum's curator, David has envisioned bringing the museum into the 21st Century by designing a three-phase long term plan, including updating the technology, archives and planning exhibits. Without his leadership, we would not have acquired the Past Perfect system for documenting history or purchased new computer monitors that will present historic photos to museum visitors. Most importantly, he hired our archivist Sharalee Cartier, who is developing a standardized database and correcting earlier acquisition errors. The goal is to make the museum archives available to the public, researchers and genealogists.

David has also led the effort to protect the Society's photo collection, carefully preserving and digitizing our photo collection, oral histories, personal correspondence and newspaper articles. He is the primary source for making copies of these photos available to residents or local businesses. David has



Still Standing Guard sponsors presentation

By JoAnn Takemoto

“Still Standing Guard”, a Placer County grassroots organization, will be sponsoring an event to remember the life of Loomis Nisei, Paul Yokote, May 7th, at 2:18 PM for a Student Assembly, and 7-9 pm for the Public. Both events will be held from at the Del Oro High School Theatre, 3301 Taylor Rd, Loomis. Suggested donation for the evening event is \$10.

Paul Yokote was born and raised in Loomis, Placer County. During World War II Paul was incarcerated in Amache, Colorado where he contracted polio that left him paralyzed forever in a wheelchair. Paul's life was changed again in 1959 with the opening of Del Oro High School and his affiliation as a photographer there and friend to multi-

tudes. Come learn his amazing story through a power point presentation and the oral stories and memories of those were a part of it.

The Still Standing Guard Committee was initially formed in 2022, twenty years after *Standing Guard* was published by the Sierra College Press, under the auspices of the Loomis Library & Community Learning Center with a focus on “Month of Remembrance”. We remembered the 80th year anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, which ordered the incarceration of approximately 2,000 Japanese Americans from Placer County (*Revisiting internment camp history necessary, Gold Country Media, 2022.*) We sponsored several events in May 2022, the highlight being a panel discussion with local people who had been personally touched by this history. When the group gathered

(PRESIDENT con't from pg. 1)

there was gold in the river.

Unconvinced, the superintendent took the nugget to Sutter's Fort where it was subjected to a number of tests – in the end proving that Jennie Wimmer had been correct.

Although Sutter made every effort to keep the discovery of gold quiet, Jennie wrote to friends in Georgia alerting them to the discovery. Word quickly spread.

Among the first gold-seekers to arrive weeks later was a group of gold seekers from Jennie's hometown in Lumpkin County. Enroute to California, they stopped to prospect for gold in the Rocky Mountain region.

Nearly 10 years later, they returned to the site and made the big strike that started Colorado's Gold Rush.

The Wimmers left Coloma shortly after the gold discovery – moving to different locations throughout California.

Martin Baiz, who delivered the first nugget of gold to his mother, moved to Placer County as a young adult. According to www.ancestry.com, he resided with the W. Dana Perkins family from 1860 to 1865 and served as deputy tax collector in Placer County's District I.

He was 26 when he married Sarah Minerva Rawles in 1866 in Rocklin. Three years later, he was mysteriously shot to death while standing in the doorway of his Newcastle home.

And that, as Paul Harvey famously said, is the rest of the story.

Only in this case it's not.

In the years I've been active with the Rocklin Historical Society, I've listened as family members share memories of their

見張り
STILL STANDING GUARD

Remembering
Paul Isamu Yokote
1925 - 1996
A Loomis Treasure

May 7, 2024
Del Oro
High School Theater
3301 Taylor Road,
Loomis, CA 95650

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

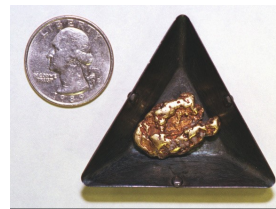
Loomis Library & Community Learning Center

sp
SIERRA COLLEGE PRESS

PROGRAM

2:18 PM - Student Assembly
7-9 PM - Public Presentation
Suggested Donation for 7 PM event is \$10. All Proceeds benefit the Standing Guard Project at Sierra College.

again in 2023 our focus evolved as did our name. Our current goal is to still support the Standing Guard Project - conveying “through oral history narratives, the impact of WWII on Japanese-American residents of Placer County”. The accompanying book was created by Sierra College Press in 2002 (available at the public library). With the passage of time, our group, along with Sierra College is recognizing the importance of that work. We hope to help sponsor a second volume from Sierra College Press with even more narratives that have been discovered in their archives.



The Wimmer nugget

childhood years as well as the tales told by their grandparents and other family members.

And then to hear the story of Rocklin's connection to the discovery of gold from our museum curator David Baker. What a unique tale.

If you're as interested in collecting stories as I am, consider volunteering three hours a month as a docent at our History Museum. It's an opportunity to learn more about Rocklin's history from a “seasoned” docent, who will share stories about the founders and the legacy they built.

Please join the Rocklin Historical Society in preserving the stories of Rocklin's past. Who knows what nuggets we will discover? For information on volunteer opportunities, visit rocklinhistorical.org.

(PIONEER, Cont. from page 1)

also archived books, letters, tools and equipment that have been donated to the museum.

The editor of our Quarry Quarterly has found a valuable resource in David. He has submitted articles to the newsletter, offered ideas for articles (as well as background and photos), suggested “Mystery Place” questions or filler items as well as provided photos to accompany articles.

David is also the leader in a number of other projects. He consulted with the developer of Quarry Park Adventures – offering information and guidance in protecting the history of the granite operation, including the placement and exhibit of a surfacing machine currently underway. He assembled the exhibits for the Firehouse replica on Front Street. He obtained and arranged for the refurbishment of the dining room chairs from the J. Parker Whitney mansion. And he saved the stained-glass windows from the Whitney Ranch and is overseeing how they will be displayed in the museum. David is working on the development of a mini park/rose garden in honor of Rocklin’s first librarian as well as updating the existing signage at Huff Springs.

He is the leading advocate for the recognition of the first Chinese and Native American residents. As a member of the AAPI (Asian-American Pacific Islander) joint organizing committee, David helped plan the festival hosted during Rocklin’s 130th Anniversary celebration. He continues to advocate for an annual event honoring this population as well as the development of an area adjacent to the roundhouse rose garden to recognize their contribution to Rocklin’s early history.

David was instrumental in working with the Kiwanis Club in hosting the annual tree lighting ceremony when it was held on Front Street as well as organizing the Historical Society’s participation in their community carnival.

Prior to his retirement and move to Rocklin in 2000, David trained as an analytical chemist at Fresno State. His career took him to jobs with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Product Safety Commission and the U.S. Bonneville Power Administration in Washington.

After a 3-1/2-year stint in Tokyo with the U.S. Army Materiel Command’s Science and Technology Center, he re-



David helps Gene Johnson and Raul Campos replace the information sign at Huff Spring. This is one of the many improvements and projects Baker plans and executes for Rocklin that illustrates his dedication to the community

turned to work at McClellan and then held a position at the Alcohol Section, U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

On a personal level, David has a gentle way of eliciting support from people who don't think they have the time or energy to preserve Rocklin’s history. Over the years, he has managed to ferret out little bits and pieces of information from the descendants of the first families.

He is admired for his availability to help whenever there’s a problem or a need for additional information. Just send him text or call and he’s right there to help solve the problem.

We appreciate David’s heart and commitment to preserving the history of his adopted hometown. And we think Roy and Peggy Ruhkala would agree that he deserves the 2024 Pioneer Award.



Give during the donation window from April 18 through May 2

Although advertised as a 24-hour period of giving, much like a telethon, the giving window opens on April 18 to adapt to people’s convenience and schedules. Find out more about this program that serves Sacramento, Placer, Yolo and El Dorado Counties by click on this link: [Big Day of Giving](#)

Or, you can go directly to the Big Day of Giving Rocklin Historical Society link below, to make your donation beginning April 18 through May 2.

[Rocklin Historical Society Link](#)



Chapel bell connects to history

By Doug Osella

Old St. Mary's bell has a history going back to 1885 when it was cast in San Francisco at the W. T. Garratt foundry for the First Congregational Church in Rocklin. Old church records show that it was "hung in May, 1885, ringing for the first time on Children's Day ." Then, 121 years later an agreement was made between the owners of the bell, Community Covenant Church, and the Rocklin Historical Society for a long term loan of the bell to be located in the newly restored St. Mary's Chapel in Heritage Park on Front Street.



The community gathers as the new bell is revealed during the renovation of Old St. Mary's Chapel

The minister and his wife, responsible for the bell being made and hung, also have a history worth noting. According to church records, the board of the First Congregational Church of Rocklin extended a call to Rev. Hiram Cummings to be pastor in 1884, which was accepted. Although in poor health, he served faithfully until compelled to resign due to severe illness in August, 1886. Lavina Soule Cummings (who was a direct descendant of George Soule of the Mayflower) worked earnestly alongside her husband for the advancement of Christ—especially in the Sunday School, and it was by her efforts the church bell was procured.

During the early years of Rev. Cummings' long ministry as a clergyman in the Congregational denomination, he was closely identified with the national cause of emancipation, which brought him into close association with prominent abolitionists working in Boston in the 1830-40s.

The Rocklin church held their pastor and wife in high esteem as was evident in June, 1885, when Rev. and Mrs. Cummings celebrated their golden wedding anniversary and the church sponsored the celebration honoring the couple. Friends and the community joined in the ceremonies. Letters of congratulation were received, and the following letter (below) from the poet John Greenleaf Whittier was read, remembering earlier times when they worked together to end slavery.

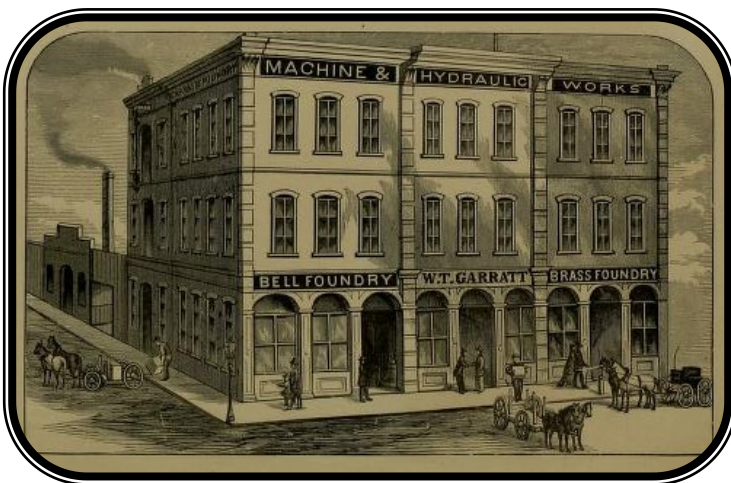
Amesburg, Mass., May 27, 1885

My Dear Friend:

I am glad to hear from thee, glad thou art still alive and glad that thy worthy life-companion is still with thee to celebrate your golden wedding. I know thee feels as I do, grateful to the divine Providence that gave us an opportunity to labor in the anti-slavery field, and to sow the seed of the emancipation. God has been good to us, my dear old fellow laborer. Nearly all the signers of the Anti-slavery Declaration in 1833 are gone onward, Eliza Wright and myself and Robert Purcis are all I know to be alive. I wish I could comply with thy request, and put a few thoughts in verse, but I am now in my 78th year, and the poetic machine is out of order, "and the sound of the grinding is low." Let me congratulate thee and thy dear help-mate on the fiftieth anniversary of your marriage, and wish you all possible happiness here and hereafter.

I am very faithfully, your old friend,

John G. Whittier



W. T. Garratt Brass and Bell Foundry was more than just a maker of church bells

W. T. Garratt & Co., Brass and Bell Foundry, opened in 1850, was the primary foundry in the Western United States, making everything from fire hydrants and bells to stamp molds for coins. It was the largest manufacturer of church and steamboat bells west of the Mississippi. Perhaps the most famous product of the W.T. Garratt foundry was the creation of the Golden Spike, used in the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Exhibit tells story of women’s impact on early Rocklin history



Anita Grinnell, left and Hilma Pernu
California Granite Company, 1912

Rocklin Historical Society’s newest exhibit, “Her Story: Women Who Impacted Rocklin’s Early History” is now open at the History Museum.

The new exhibit features women who served in the Armed Forces, owned businesses and held public office, including the first woman mayor and a Justice of the Peace from the time of Rocklin’s founding through the WWII era.

Rocklin’s first librarian, a telegraph operator, women who served as aircraft spotters during World War II and, of course, the women who managed the ranches tell amazing stories.

On display is a collection of trunks and suitcases used by immigrants as well as a collection of handcrafted items on loan from the descendants of these women.

These women were probably unaware of the impact they made on Rocklin as they were accepted in roles where women were not normally found in those early years, said History Museum Director Susan Brooking. Their place in Rocklin’s history is a gift to be shared today.

Admission is free. The museum, located at the corner of San Francisco Street and Rocklin Road, is open Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Group tours may be arranged by contacting the historical society on rocklinhistorical.org.

The Rocklin Historical Society appreciates those who researched and curated Her Story: The Women Who Impacted Rocklin’s Early History:

Gloria Beverage	Lisa Morgan
Susan Brooking	Doug Osella
Royce Ann Burks	Charlene Rhodes
Sharalee Cartier	Linda Wampler
Alfred Corral	

The Rocklin Historical Society would like to thank the generous donors who contributed their artifacts and stories to our museum exhibit. Their gifts enrich our cultural heritage and captivate visitors from far and near.

Royce Ann Burks (Ruhkala)
Alfred Corral
Shirley Espley (Corral)
Karen Files (Minkkinen)
The Hebuck family
Gene Johnson (Wickman)
Betty Latvala-Soininen (Sonne)
JoAnne Lawson (Ruhkala)
Lisa Morgan (Morys)
Lila Sasaki
JoAnn and Gordon Takemoto (Sasaki)
Patty Whitmire (Dias)
Jim Williams (Ruhkala)
Carnation Wright (Basque)



Behind the Scenes

The volunteers who keep us going!



Don Callahan

When and why did you join the Rocklin Historical Society?

I first joined the Rocklin Historical Society in 2020. I was wandering around some city event and passed the Society's pop-up booth. I was snatched up by Susan Brookings and talked into joining RHS. I was actually looking for a group to join and to do volunteer work of some type. RHS is a great way to give back to the City of Rocklin through volunteer work and to promote and preserve its interesting history.

What did you do in your previous life (before retirement)?

In my former life I worked for the Social Security Administration for 32 years. I began as a claims representative taking people's Retirement, Survivor and Disability claims. Over my career I worked dozens of different jobs across California and Nevada and retired as the manager of the Roseville SSA office.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the Rocklin Historical Society?

The greatest part is working with the people who belong to RHS and hearing them talk about the City's history. I also enjoy working on the maintenance (Fix-it)

crew to keep up the repairs on our buildings, clean things up for the 3rd graders' tours, and setting up markers and plaques commemorating our history.

Interesting story to share?

My first phone call during on-the-job training at Social Security in Santa Ana was a bomb threat which caused me to rethink my career choice, but I stuck with them. Because I initially worked in Santa Ana and Anaheim, and most business was done face to face – no internet or smart phones then – meeting old time actors/actresses was quite common. Three days into the job, I met Buddy Ebsen, the actor/dancer – think Beverly Hillbillies' Jed Clampett. He danced his way out of the office after the interview.



Nancy Ustaszewki

When and why did you join Rocklin Historical Society?

After I retired from teaching in 2012, Nancy Lohse approached me about helping in the chapel and being a docent for the third-grade field trips. I love history and was fascinated by how much I learned after retiring. Rocklin has a wealth of great history, which I wanted to know more about and share with the community. As parents attended our field trips, they also learned about their city with a thriving downtown which was on

First Street.

I have a special place in my heart for OSM. It is the little chapel my family attended when we moved to Rocklin in 1975. Both children were baptized at St. Mary's.

What did you do in your previous life (before retirement)?

Before retiring, I worked as a first-grade teacher in Rocklin School for 38 years, starting in 1975. There were great stories of the early Rocklin days, one elementary school-K-2 (Parker Whitney) and a 3-8th grade school (Rocklin). The District Office was at corner of Meyers (now Rejuvenate Wellness Spa). Times have certainly changed. In those days, everyone knew everyone. Close community. When I retired, there were over 12 elementary schools, 2 junior highs and 3 high schools.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the Rocklin Historical Society?

I love helping the brides the most. Every wedding is different. You can watch closely while each bride and groom create their own special day.

Interesting story to share?

I am reminded of two special weddings. The groom wore a kilt (Scottish ancestry). Unfortunately, he was late to the wedding; the bride was waiting. The kilt was coming apart at the backside and had to be properly fastened. I had to perform a quick stitching job.

Another time the wedding couple arrived to practice walking up the aisle. The groom instructed the poor bride-to-be to sashay up the aisle from left to right in time with the fast music playing. He said it was more interesting that way! My thought to her was to run as fast as you can in the opposite direction.

(See BEHIND THE SCENE, pg. 7)

(BEHIND THE SCENE, con't from pg.6)



Ronna Davis

When and why did you join the Rocklin Historical Society?

My husband, Neil, and I rented for a year in Springfield Adult Community in Rocklin in 1999. Our home was being built nearby at Silver Peak. I have always enjoyed history and we went to a meeting of the Springfield History Club. The guest was Gene Johnson. Need I say more? He told us they were working on turning a small, 1905 Victorian house into Rocklin's first history museum. I had completed my training in Health Care Design, Commercial Design, and Residential Design and felt I would be able to help with this project. That was just the beginning!

After the museum opened, there was a new "opportunity" on the horizon to

help with the moving and restoration of Old St. Mary's Chapel. I thought that I would skip this one. Ha! The next thing I knew I was in a parade, dressed in old time costume, passing out fliers and urging people to "Save Old St. Mary's." I was hooked.

What did you do in your previous life (before retirement)?

I taught third through sixth grade in New York and California. One of my roommates, who was also a teacher, wanted me to go with her when she had an interview to become a flight attendant with Pan American World Airways. They only flew internationally, so we would be "seeing the world" right away! I agreed to go with her to the San Francisco International Airport. If we were hired, we expected to fly a couple of years, then return to teaching. We were hired and flying became our careers!

After I left flying in 1990, I went back to college to study Healthcare Design. I had always wanted to spend more time in design work and this was my opportunity. It was very different from anything I had studied before, and I felt it was the kind of design that would benefit the most people. I was able to work on some very satisfying projects.

When we left the Bay Area and moved to Rocklin, following our kids, I was able to help restore Old St. Mary's Chapel. Jean Sippola and I worked together on the interior of the chapel. It was a privilege to be a part of the team of volunteers who brought Old St. Mary's all together.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the Rocklin Historical Society?

I think the most exciting thing about being a volunteer with the Historical Society is the tremendous variety of ways that I have been able to help with the preservation of Rocklin history!

What you do on any given day depends on what is needed at the time. From scrubbing down the kitchen walls with Marg Johnson, to prep them for painting in what is now the museum, to contracting with Bridal Show producers, to setting up the booths both indoor and outdoor for advertising our chapel and museum. This we have done in locations as different from each other as Cal Expo is to Front St. Fridays to the California Archives in Sacramento.

From serving refreshments at our history series to serving on the Board of Directors. From being a museum and chapel docent to dressing our chapel stage for a candidates' night presentation before a local election, to decorating tables on the patio for a jazz concert. From making photo handouts for the museum and chapel to creating presentation signs for our speaker series. From creating photo albums about our chapel to showing brides and grooms how to ring their wedding bells, this has been an exciting journey!

Interesting story to share?

I did share one story about the day before our first chapel wedding when the crane showed up to lift the belfry and steeple into place. I have many stories, but honestly feel that this is enough for now.

Dedicated RHS members install a new sign at Huff Spring



The old sign was cracked, faded, and water-damaged. The graphics and information were dated. Time for a makeover!

Members of the Fix-it Team received the city of Rocklin's blessing to replace the aging sign with a new one. The sign was redesigned with new graphics, better quality, more informative photographs, and the text was updated.

Thank you, Fix-it Team. Beautiful job!

Huff Spring was featured on KCRA's series Explore Outdoors. Click to view the segment: [Explore Outdoors](#).



49 STRATEGIES
PUTTING HEADS TOGETHER

John Chase, of 49 Strategies in Jackson, redesigned the graphics with better quality and more informative photographs, and the text was updated.

Events to plan for:



April 27th—Rocklin Civic Celebration - Train and 3 booths

May 11th—City/Kiwanis Carnival - Saturday, - at Springview Park.

May 27th—Annual Membership Appreciation Luncheon

June 22—Heritage Trail Days last all summer, but OUR special day will be June 22.



A Griot for our time

By Twiana Armstrong

Note: Twiana Armstrong was born and raised in Texas where she graduated from The University of Texas at Austin. She transplanted to California in 1993, raising her daughter, Alix, in the Rocklin community since 2004. Semi-retired, she is a small business owner and nonprofit owner who works tirelessly in many organizations to give back to the community.

In the Africa American/Black culture they are called a "griot." Also spelled "griot." They are storytellers, the keeper of history, caretakers of truth, artisans of the oral tradition whose assignment is to narrate how history happened during their lifetime. Al Corral is a griot. A Placer County icon who recites history through the lens of growing up in Rocklin.

Born and raised in Rocklin, he didn't venture far, preferring to stay near his roots, entering the noble profession of an educator for 37 years. He matriculated through the local school system, graduating from Sierra College and Sacramento State University.

Asked to describe life in his neighborhood, he brightens up and says "We all played together." The Finnish, the Irish, the Spanish and the Native Americans -

we all played together. He recalls the Greek families, the Scottish families - "lots of visiting with families." A community built on trust and bondship. Roller skating at the Roller Skating Rink. The Jr. High Dance with girls on one side of the room and boys on the other. Each story elicits sights and sounds of a community steeped in everyday life.

In keeping with his assignment, Al joined the Spanish Club, helping the club create a book of testimonials from family members. Testimonials and stories captured in the first person from relatives who wanted to preserve their lineage.

He credits his mother with sparking the flame to protect and archive the past. Listening to Al recall memory after memory, one cannot help but sense the tremendous wellspring of pride emanating from his words. He truly is a Rocklin icon and his stories are treasures for those lucky enough to hear them.



Alfred Corral, in the middle of other griots Shirley Corral Espley, Gordon Takemoto, JoAnn Takemoto, and Royce Ann Ruhkala Burks

Stewards of the history of us

The Centuries-Old History of Griots, with roots in West Africa

Griots, whose origins date back nearly a thousand years, are the living men and women archives of their communities, preserving history, customs, beliefs and traditions through the arts—storytelling, music, riddles and poetry.

The art of being a griot is passed down from one generation to the next. The earliest known griots date back to the 7th century. They are the keepers of history, narrating stories of births, deaths, marriages, and other life events.

In America, through the years, this cultural tradition has been kept alive. Today, it is also the subject of StoryCorps Griot Initiative. Recordings are collected in the U.S. Library of Congress, creating a valuable historical archive.

What is StoryCorps, and should we use this as a model for our own Rocklin histories?

StoryCorps is a non-profit organization committed to recording and sharing the stories of Americans from diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Their mission is to help us believe in each other by illuminating the humanity and possibility in us all—one story at a time.

Since their founding in 2003, they've helped nearly 700,000 people narrate stories of their lives. These recordings are collected in the U.S. Library of Congress and constitute the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered. Their stories are broadcast on NPR and they share select stories through a variety of media. Watch a short video about it here: [Introduction to StoryCorps](#)

Daniel Lessard finds his fame in the museum

By Gloria Beverage

Daniel Lessard, a 2010 Rocklin High School graduate, was surprised to find his 15 minutes of fame had been preserved at the Rocklin History Museum.

On a whim, Daniel decided to check out the History Museum one Sunday afternoon in February.



Daniel Lessard is joined by his mother, Sandra, on Senior Night at Rocklin High School.

As he explored the exhibits with docent Susan Brooking, Daniel discovered the football helmet signed by Rocklin High School's 2009 Section Championship team on display.

He picked up the helmet and proudly pointed out his signature. No. 5, he was defensive captain for the 2009 All-State team.

Rocklin High played Carson High in the state finals, losing by one field goal in the final minute of the game, he recalled.

After graduation from Rocklin High, Daniel attended Sierra College and Sac State. However, an injury ended any plans for a college football career.

"There's more to life than football," he said.

Before she died of liver cancer in 2018, his mother, Sandra Lessard, was employed at West Park Communities. She is the reason he decided to pursue a career in the real estate industry, he added.

Daniel will return to the gridiron this fall – this time coaching freshmen linebackers at Rocklin High School.

He and his fiancé, Gabby, are planning to be married next year.



Daniel holds the football helmet signed by Rocklin High School's 2009 Section Championship team. He was defensive captain.

Mystery Item



Do you know the story behind the Smurfville sign by the Amtrak station (now Heritage Park)? If you do, please write to us at rocklinhistorical@gmail.com, or stop by the museum (Saturdays and Sundays, 1-4pm) and let us know! Responses will be printed in the next issue of the Quarterly.

SAVE THE DATE

Rocklin Historical Society's

Annual Membership Appreciation Luncheon

A MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC IN THE PARK @ OLD ST. MARY'S
5251 Front Street

MONDAY - MAY 27th - 11:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Bring stories, mementos & photos to share!

Save your spot! Please RSVP by May 18th
rsvp2rhs@gmail.com

Speaker Series brings Lincoln Highway to Rocklin

Spoiler Alert—It was already here!

By Linda Wampler

“Infotainment.” That might be the word to describe the presentation on the Lincoln Highway held on Sunday, April 7. Thanks to Patsy Pattison for setting up the speaker for this month’s speaker series. Trey Pitsenberger, Vice President of the Lincoln Highway Association, as well as Vice President of the California branch, provided an informative and entertaining presentation on the Lincoln Highway in California.

A brief introduction about the genesis of the highway started the presentation. The Lincoln Highway stretched 3000 miles from New York City to San Francisco. Prior to this, finding your way across all or part of the U.S. in a vehicle was at best a difficult undertaking, and at worst, impossible. Automobile use was new, but was quickly growing. In the beginning decade of 1900 sales jumped from 8000 to over 2 million. The desire to connect the two sides of the continent was strong, and



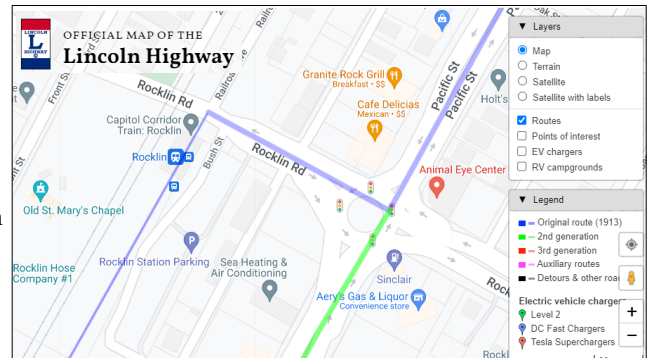
This was part of the original path of the Lincoln Highway, which parallels Pacific Road near the intersection of Pacific and Sunset. It was paved over as highway 40.

funds were raised to that the Lincoln Highway project was completed and dedicated in 1913. In California it was particularly important, as the Pan American Expo in San Francisco was going to be held in 1915, and a clear route to the city would bring many visitors. Trey then focused his presentation on the highway in California.

“We have an interactive map on our website that people can spend time exploring ([Lincoln Highway Map](#)).”

One of the things people notice on the map is that there were two Lincoln Highways in California, he pointed out. The two routes diverged in Reno, and came back together in Sacramento. Why was that? Thanks to one beautiful alpine lake, the Southern route was created to allow travelers to view scenic Lake Tahoe. The Northern route took travelers on a more direct route through Truckee and near Donner Lake. Watch Trey’s 5 minute video on this topic at the link below.

The Lincoln Highway could be seen as a “work in progress” in many ways, as better roads, bridges, and other infrastructure improvements were made and re-routings occurred.

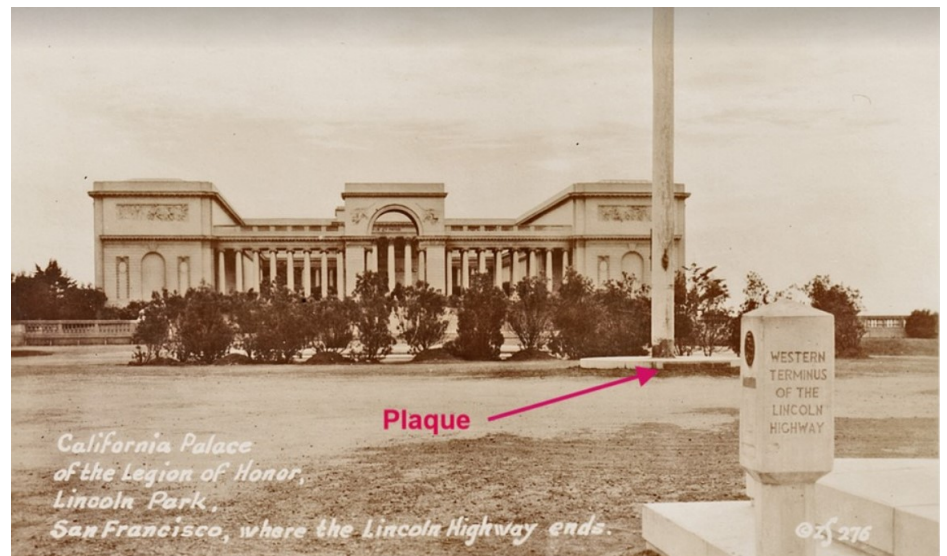


The original route (in blue) turns from Rocklin Road onto Railroad Ave., east of the railroad tracks. The wider blue line indicates road that can be driven on, the narrow line shows where the highway was, but today is not drivable.

Before 1926, highways were named rather than numbered. There was the Dixie, the Yellowstone, the Jefferson, among many others. Use of names became cumbersome, and in 1926-1927 named highways were replaced by a number system. The Northern route, through Rocklin became Highway 40, and the Southern route, Highway 50.

One of the Association’s goals is to place road markers along the highway, and they are excited to build a report with Rocklin and the Rocklin Historical Society because of the highway’s passage through here.

Hopefully, we will meet again, and enjoy even more of the Lincoln Highway and its history.



Trey brought one artifact to Old St. Mary’s—the brass inscription at the base of the flag pole at the highway’s terminus, the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.



[The Lincoln Highway in California](#)

Whitney stained glass to be featured at museum

By Linda Wampler

After several years of sitting in Gene Johnson’s garage, a plan is finally coming together for at least two of the four stained glass panels saved from destruction by Gene and fellow accomplice David Baker.

In 2017, Gene received a call from Carol Ellis who was very concerned about the vandalism that was taking place at the defunct Sunset Whitney golf course. David says, “vandalism was running rampant with windows being broken and fire extinguishers exhausted. We checked it out and made arrangements for purchasing the windows to protect them.” They were able to save one of the few items the museum owns that came from the iconic Whitney mansion, The Oaks.

Originally part of two sets of interior doors, the doors were dismantled and the panels were used behind the bar at Sunset Whiney. Then, in 2015, the golf course closed, with the building sitting empty for the next few years. With the high risk of the windows being destroyed, it was time for Gene and David to act. Shortly before the city purchased the property in 2018, they took it upon themselves to procure the beautiful antique panels.

Now two of the four will be installed in the parlor (known as the Whitney room) at the Rocklin Museum. They will be backlit so continuous “sunlight” will illuminate the translucent glass fragments.

The panels are in surprising good

condition, considering they are well over 100 years old. However, they needed a complete cleaning before they could be installed.

Once cleaned, the frames were primed and painted, and then will have to cure for their final stage of the process.

The installation of the electrical hardwiring and lighting is next with hopes the entire project will be finished by our Heritage Trail day in June.

It is fitting that the panels that came from J. Parker and Lucy Whitney’s grand home were from the “Aesthetic Movement” which began in the 1880s in Britain. Lucy was from England, and J. Parker was enamored with all things British.

The Aesthetic Movement emphasized the creation of art that was beautiful purely for itself, rather than for any deeper philosophical meaning or to depict a moral lesson. It was “Art for Art’s sake.”

In America, this movement gained popularity following the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition held in Philadelphia, and lasted to the early part of the 20th century.

The historical society as well as our entire city owe our gratitude to Gene and David for safeguarding this gift to our community. Says Gene, “We did what we could to preserve the tangible heritage of one of Rocklin area’s most influential characters.”



The four panels saved by Gene Johnson and David Baker were used as a backdrop for the bar at Sunset Whitney Country Club.



In preparing the panels for installation, they first needed a thorough cleaning. Among the helpers who cleaned the glass were, from left, Carole Durbin, RoyceAnn Burks, Lynda Hammes and Bonnie Neumann.



Now clean as a whistle, the frames are primed and a group of 3rd graders from Valley View Elementary School get to view the progress, along with “the King of Rocklin,” Gene Johnson (as Nancy Lohse likes to describe him to the students).



The next step is painting the frame, with Dan Durbin, left, and Raul Campos taking their time to do a professional job.



Now the panels are cured in the firehouse for about a week

Never a dull moment with the Fix-it Team!



Above: Between exhibits, repairs are made to the walls for a new exhibit. Here, Raul Campos uses his professional expertise to restore the walls in preparation for the Her Story exhibit.

Right: David Baker and Jim Hammes look on as Gene Johnson smooths out the dangerous uneven walkway around the museum.

So far, 2024 has been a busy time for the Fix-it Team. From changing lightbulbs to installing large historic quarry equipment at Quarry Park Adventures, to setting up pop-up tents and tables at our events, the crew keeps the museum, Old St. Mary's and the firehouse humming.

In addition to the physical work, they also help plan many of the events that promote the society.

The team meets on Tuesday mornings for planning, a good bit of comradery, and a hearty breakfast before setting out to work on their tasks. If you would like to join them, contact [George Salgado](#) or [Don Callahan](#) for more information.



Left: Third Graders from Rocklin Elementary School view the location of the Chinese homes behind the roundhouse on a recent field trip. They are only able to do this because the Fix-it team worked hard cleaning up trash, weed-eating the location of the houses, re-taping the perimeters, and weed-eating a path around the grinding rocks and culvert nearby.



April seems to be the month for field trips! With seven this month, and 12 total, the docents are keeping busy!

About six-hundred-fifty third graders will have learned about their local history by the end of the school year. The field trip docents include Nancy Lohse, Susan Brooking, Patsy Pattison, Diane Wade, Linda Wampler, Pat Woessner, and the addition of two new docents, Gayle Goldsmith and Carole Durbin.



Nancy Lohse instructs students from Sierra Elementary School the trick to ringing the chapel bell. Look at the expectant faces as they see if they have the "knack!"



Happy Birthday to Marg! Gene Johnson got a few of Marg's Rocklin Historical Society friends to gather outside their home to sing Happy Birthday for her 91st birthday, then went inside for cupcakes provided by Susan Brooking!

Rocklin Historical Society

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